

The second concerns the level at which fidelity is a predicate. If the reconstruction is constituted by an ensemble of representations, then faithfulness is a property of that ensemble. Professional obligation, however, attaches to an individual reporter writing an individual report, and a property of an ensemble is not discharged by any member of it. The reporter is bound to a standard whose subject is at a different level from the subject of the obligation. This asymmetry is not a paradox and it is not a counsel of despair; it marks a division of normative territory that the paper later draws with some care, between what an actor can be held to and what only the arrangement as a whole can be assessed against.

1.6 The results obtained, negative and positive

The paper returns one negative result and one positive, and they are stated together here because each is incomplete without the other.

The negative result removes a family of criteria. A criterion asking of any intervention whether it preserves or enlarges the capacity of the wider system to continue generating understanding is inoperable by an actor, since applying it requires a judgement about what an intervention will do to a nonlinear system across an open horizon, and over an outcome space that cannot be specified in advance. The point is Humean and it is not merely a counsel of epistemic modesty, since it removes a class of justifications from use. Its removal is moreover asymmetric, and the asymmetry is the sharpest practical consequence in the paper. Faithful report, with nothing omitted, requires no prediction, since its justification rests on what the material supports. Every departure from that default, and suppression in particular, rests on a claim about what disclosure would do. The whole burden of prediction therefore falls on the departure, and the prediction is what the Humean point denies. Suppression justified by anticipated damage to stability, harmony or a fragile process is thereby left without the form of argument it requires.

The positive result is deliberately modest and it supplies what the negative result leaves the actor. A condition on a report can be stated that is internal to the artefact and checkable at the time of writing, with no prediction of any kind. The domain over which a claim is asserted is to be contained within the relational neighbourhood from which the material was drawn, and any extension beyond it is to carry a declared warrant. Material gathered among shoppers in one district supports a claim about those shoppers; a claim about a city requires either material from the city or an explicit statement of the extension and its grounds. The violation is termed migration here, and Part IV gives it a formal reading under which it is a quotient operation, irreversible at each application and accumulating along a chain. The condition covers considerably more than sampling scope, since the same structure governs the passage from an utterance to an attributed disposition, from a quoted phrase to a rendered summary, and from a report to the versions of it that circulate onward.

1.7 The criterion the results converge on

These two results together define what this paper means by reconstructability, which is the criterion it proposes and the word its argument converges on. Reconstructability is the

detectability of the collapses a report performs. It is not the recoverability of an original, since no original is available and quotients are not invertible. A report is reconstructable to the degree that a reader can see where distinctions were merged, on whose authority material entered, at what remove from the material a formulation stands, and for whom the account was written.

The devices that carry this are already in professional use. Attribution, direct quotation, the sourcing note, the declaration of a selection boundary, the modal qualifier and the correction column each keep a collapsed distinction on the record without restoring it to the account. The claim advanced here is that these devices are ordinarily justified on the wrong grounds, as instruments of fairness between sides, and that on the present account they do different work with different failure conditions.

A residue remains, and the paper declares it in place of dissolving it. The conditions above are complete at the level of the individual report and unavailable at the level of the arrangement. A press system composed entirely of reports each of which declares its boundaries faithfully may still be silent about whole regions of the society it covers, and no member of that system commits any fault. The residue belongs to governance, and Part IX refers it there without attempting to settle it.

1.8 The contributions claimed and their limits

Four contributions are claimed, and each is stated with the limit that attaches to it.

The paper supplies an ontology of social facts under which divergence among accounts is constitutive and not residual, positioned in Section 3 against the accounts that come nearest to it. The limit is that the ontology is a position and not a demonstration, and Section 4.5 shows that the paper's later results stand for a reader who declines it.

The paper supplies an assessment condition that is checkable at the time of writing, independent of the truth of the claim assessed, and applicable to a particular artefact. The limit is that the condition is sufficient for nothing and reaches only the individual report.

The paper exhibits a case in which two rationales for one professional practice prescribe opposite remedies, which makes the difference between the present account and the professional self-description testable in principle. The limit is that one documented case is exhibited and no claim of frequency is made anywhere in the paper.

The paper offers a formal apparatus of modest strength, order-theoretic and combinatorial, whose propositions were checked by computation before being stated, together with an illustrative dynamical and field-theoretic presentation whose use as a source of standards is declined on stated grounds. The limit is that the apparatus carries no time evolution and supports no measurement.

Beyond these, the paper is offered as a preliminary discussion. Its case material is one practice, its literature is predominantly Anglophone, and the questions it leaves open are enumerated at Section 45.

none of them would contest, which is to say one that distinguishes nothing any of them declines to distinguish. A consensus account attributed to no one removes the attributions that clause (iii) shows to be unrecoverable afterwards.

Each of these operations is ordinarily prescribed as a remedy for partiality. On the present account each removes the material in which the reconstruction consisted, and Section 25.5 takes up the case in which the two readings prescribe opposite remedies.

6.4 *Overreadings of the result excluded*

Proposition 6.2 is easily overread and three restrictions are recorded here.

The proposition establishes no prohibition on summary. Summarising is a condition of a report being read at all, and a paper that concluded otherwise would be recommending an artefact no one could use. What the proposition establishes is the cost of the operation and the location of that cost, which Part VIII uses to state a condition that summarising reports can satisfy.

The proposition recommends no maximisation of divergence. An ensemble is not improved by containing more disagreement, and nothing here supplies a reason to seek out contradictory accounts for their own sake. The proposition concerns what a given ensemble carries and what an operation on it removes.

The proposition identifies no remedy. Clause (iii) states that attribution is unrecoverable from the joint frame, which leaves open whether it might be kept elsewhere. Section 16 shows that it can, by a family of devices that hold a distinction on the record without returning it to the frame, and the argument for those devices rests on this clause.

7 MATERIAL CONDITIONS AND THE LIMITS THEY PLACE ON REPRESENTATION

The role of this section is to answer the charge that the commitments of Section 4 leave every account as good as every other. Its objective is to identify what constrains representation once a presymbolic fact is refused, to state the affiliation of that answer, and to fix the strength at which the affiliation is held. The structure is: the charge, the constraint, what the constraint supplies, and what it withholds. The method is to derive the constraint from a commitment the paper has already made, so that the answer is internal to the account.

7.1 *The charge of relativism*

If no determinate social fact stands behind the accounts given of an episode, the accounts appear to have nothing to answer to. Each party renders under its own system, no system is privileged, and comparison of accounts appears to be comparison of preferences. An account that ignores every consideration adverse to it would then be one representation among others, and the vocabulary of error would have no application.

The charge is serious and a framework that could not answer it would license the very suppression Part VII sets out to block, since a party wishing to dismiss an unwelcome account could do so by classifying it as merely another perspective.