the International Geophysical Year in which scientists from over 50 nations were able to get together and establish an agreement as to what they were going to look for; what kinds of data they would seek; how they would evaluate the data; and what they understood they meant; all of this, pulling together across cultural lines. Or, to use an even more abstruse example, the expression $E=mc^2$, means in Peking exactly what it means in Washington. It is derived the same way; it has precisely the same function; it means the same thing.

Not only do you have a sort of universal system of communication in the rational tradition, you also have a common point of view as to what is real. There is a sort of metaphysical unity within the rational tradition. This was once not true. You recall when Dr. Johnson and Bishop Berkeley were arguing about the nature of reality and the Bishop said, "My good doctor, that stone there, how do you know that's a real stone?" The doctor reared back and kicked it and said, "That, sir, is how I know it." He broke his toe in the process. And this was always thought by history to be the proper riposte; Dr. Johnson has traditionally been thought to have won the argument.

But Dr. Johnson did not win this argument; he lost it. He was just plain wrong. Bishop Berkeley was a lot closer to the mark. What a modern mind will tell you today is, "We may not know what reality is, but we do know that it is certainly not what most people think it is." Most people impute reality to their own senses, to exactly Dr. Johnson's answer. "I know that stone is real because I can feel it." This is commonsense.

Einstein said of commonsense that it is a layer of prejudice laid down before the age of 18. To the extent that a matter is commonsense, in Einstein's parlance, this is prima facie evidence that the thing is probably wrong. The chances of its being right are not good enough to take seriously.

Most modern thinkers would agree that truth is not absolute but relative to point of view; that there are many ways to look at things; that, for example, a proposition derived from sense experience--let us say, "That is a chair"--such a proposition can be true only within the realm of sense experience. In effect, it is a chair to the person who sits on it. But a physicist cannot look at it and say it is a chair. What he says is, "It is a phenomenon of waves and particles in some probablistic relationship." He would