A Made-Up Dialogue Between
Myself and Jürgen Habermas

by Shane Brant

I walked into the bar, having just turned twenty-one, to meet someone whom a few of the phantoms I hang around with have recommended: Jürgen Habermas. I find him already stationed at the bar.

At my approach, he says, "One never really knows who one's enemy is." He told me that he's done too much in his life to dwell on passing thoughts. "What's your take on cognitive relativity?" I asked him. "It's relative to infinites," he said, presumably joking, not altering his stoicism. I explained to him that this is a world made of colors that no one can see clearly; we perceive them in blurs. The blurs one sees, therefore, are equally as accurate as the blurs another sees.

"Whatever I have argued before must be so," he said. I asked him if he could specifically explain to me what he meant by emancipatory knowledge. He did, and I disagreed, though I can't remember what he said or what it meant. Language is an appendix to freedom, but the idea that the two will eventually overlap is overestimated. People are not destined to be free but must be set free. Freedom and language exist as unaligned soulmates who must meet in order for each to work.

"People must liberate each other, Jürgen; the only thing that's *a priori* is an emptiness."

A person's first sentence is meaningless, it is their last sentence in which they approximate their universe. "The limits of my language are the limits of my world," I said, "said Wittgenstein." He drank. "All fools will mention Wittgenstein."

We were the last attendants in the bar when we began our leaving. As we were separating, he already at the door, I still putting on my coat, I said to him, to conclude our talk, "After all, as Democritus and Leucippus put it-" "I will hear no more from ghosts," and he was gone.