BETWEEN TRUTH

AND ILLUSION

Kant at the Crossroads of Modernity

PREDRAG CICOVACKI

PHILOSOPHY

"A lucid and detailed analysis of the problem of truth that takes its bearings by Kant but considers a wide range of other approaches, as well as offering a fresh treatment of the split in Kant's thought and how to go beyond it to a richer conception of truth."
—**Stanley Rosen**, Boston University

"Professor Cicovacki's book supplements Kant's conception of reason and truth with an original theory that provides a critical alternative to the extremes of dogmatism and skepticism. This volume addresses a host of fundamental questions in a style of writing that is provocative and easy to follow." —**Karl Ameriks**, University of Notre Dame

"In *Between Truth and Illusion*, Predrag Cicovacki undertakes the ambitious task of critically engaging both Kant and postmodernists in developing a novel account of truth as the harmonious interaction between subject and world. Separating the historically embedded illusions that stem from Kant's commitment to the ideals of modernity from his critical insight into their limitations, Cicovacki describes the value of human creativity that starkly contrasts with the absurdity of the postmodern world. Cicovacki's new conception of truth thus leads to a radically different understanding of Kant's philosophy in particular and the project of modernity in general. *Between Truth and Illusion* is a fresh and thought-provoking examination of a series of central philosophical themes."
—**Eric Watkins**, University of California, San Diego

In *Between Truth and Illusion*, Predrag Cicovacki carefully analyzes Kant's contribution to discussions of human being and finds that he was deeply involved in the systematic development of the modern anthropocentric orientation toward liberation and dominance of the subject. On the other hand, modernity's high ideal of universal scientific and moral progress turned out to be illusory and ill-conceived.

Cicovacki focuses on Kant's important observations about the limitations of the modernist project and develops an interactive conception of truth from it. Truth, the author says, presupposes a dominance of neither subject nor object, but their dynamic and reciprocal interactive relation. The absence of proper interactions leads to various forms of self-projections or illusions.

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Between Truth and Illusion

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Predrag Cicovacki

To Jadranka, Heidi, Vera, and Lydia,
with love

Men do not understand how that which is torn in different directions comes into accord with itself—harmony in contraiety, as in the case of the bow and the lyre.

—Heraclitus

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Preface

The central questions of this book are: What is truth?, and Why do we value truth so highly? They are approached not as isolated questions but as being closely related to what Kant considered to be the ultimate philosophical concern, that is, what it means to be a human being. Kant's own contribution to this discussion is carefully analyzed and assessed as controversial. Kant was deeply involved in the systematic development of the modern anthropocentric orientation toward liberation and dominance of the subject, but modernity's high ideal of universal scientific and moral progress turned out to be illusory and ill conceived. Its failure led to Nietzsche's revaluation of all values and the postmodernist denial of any difference between what is true and what holds for truth; in the postmodern interpretation, the world appears so absurd and meaningless that we can make our lives bearable only by means of self-imposed illusions. However, when Kant was not embracing the ideal of modernity, he made several important observations about inherent limitations of the modernist project. I find this latter strain of his philosophy far more interesting and fruitful and, following the implications of this line of thought, I develop an interactive conception of truth. The basic idea is that truth presupposes neither a dominance of subject or object, but their dynamic and reciprocal interactive relation. The absence of proper interactions leads to various forms of self-projections or illusions. Truth, by contrast, consists in a harmonious interaction between its subjective and objective elements. In accordance with this understanding, I locate the value of truth between traditional absolutist claims and contemporary relativism. The relentless pursuit of truth, even without its complete realization, is a

symbol of humanity. Truth is thus the archetypal expression of our simultaneous imperfection and striving toward a better, more genuinely human world.

In my own pursuit of truth and my work on this book, I have received generous help from numerous individuals. My very special thanks go to Nalin Ranasinghe, whose enthusiastic support of my project and tireless reading of several versions of every single chapter are most deeply appreciated. I am also deeply grateful to Dr. Gerold Prauss, who was my generous host at the University of Freiburg during the 1998–1999 academic year; he read and commented on the first draft of my then-emerging manuscript and allowed me to make numerous presentations of that draft in his "Oberseminar." My sincere thanks also go to Carsten Held, Hans-Ulrich Baumgarten, Robert Holmes, Patrick Tinsley, Robert Howell, Thomas Lawler, Richard Belair, John Zammito, Eric Watkins, Karl Ameriks, Stanley Rosen, Joseph Lawrence, J. C. Ho, Prasanta Bandyopadhyay, and Thomas Müller for helping me (in one way or another) with different parts of the manuscript.

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Several portions of the book are based on previously published articles. Chapter 2 is based on my paper "Paths Traced through Reality: Kant on Commonsense Truths," published in *Kant's Legacy: Essays in Honor of Lewis White Beck*, ed. P. Cicovacki (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 47–69. Chapter 4 borrows from my paper "Rethinking the Concept of Truth: A Critique of Deflationism," published in *The Truth and Its Nature (If Any)*, ed. J. Peregrin (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 203–21. Chapter 7 is based on my paper "The Illusory Fabric of Kant's 'True Morality,'" published in *Journal of Value Inquiry* 36 (2002): 350–68. Finally, one section of chapter 9 is based on my article "Playful Illusions: Kant on Truth in Art," published in *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung*, vol. 3, ed. V. Gerhardt, R. Horstmann, and R. Schumacher (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 475–82. I thank the editors of these publications for their kind permission to republish parts of the aforementioned articles.

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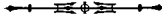
How Shall We Think about Truth?

It is right that philosophy should be called the science of truth.

—Aristotle

1.1 CHALLENGE

If we wish to understand the nature and value of truth, dealing with the following fundamental questions seems unavoidable:

1. Since we have different intuitions with respect to truth, is the question of truth to be regarded as (a) descriptive, (b) conceptual, or (c) normative?
2. What are the truth bearers? Are they purely linguistic entities, in the sense of being limited to sentences, propositions, or statements? Could speech-acts be truth bearers as well? Could reality itself be true or false? Could a way of living be true or false?
3. What kinds of truth do we recognize? If we recognize different kinds of truth, could we reasonably expect a unified account of truth?
4. What would provide a satisfactory answer to the question of truth? Are we looking for (a) a definition, (b) a complete and comprehensive theory, or (c) something in between (a) and (b), something that could be called a conception (or a model) of truth?
5. Are truth and falsity symmetrical and mutually exclusive? Or do truth and falsity admit degrees? Could there be meaningful declarative

sentences that are neither true nor false? Or perhaps both true and false?

6. Provided that we aim at truth, how can we fail to grasp it? How are errors, deceptions, and illusions possible?

7. What is a criterion of truth? Is there any significant conceptual or practical difference between truth and a criterion of truth? Is there any significant difference between what is true and what passes for true?

8. Finally, what is the value of truth? Why does truth matter to us? Should it matter?

Let us briefly discuss each of these questions.

If we are seriously concerned with the question of truth, it is hardly possible to ignore how we *use* the words 'truth' and 'true'. And it is equally difficult to overlook that we use these words in quite different ways, for instance when I say that it is true that "That person over there is my friend Joe," and then add that "Joe is a true friend."[1] While philosophers like Tarski claim that they want to capture our intuitions about truth and provide a definition of truth that would be "materially adequate," they usually leave out of their discussion cases of the latter variety.

Another difficult question concerns the extent of our commitment to the ways in which 'truth' and 'true' are used. Are we to take into account how these words are used in our culture, or perhaps also in cultures quite different from ours? And are we to limit our interest in the use of these words to the present time, as G. E. Moore suggested? Or should we extend it to include our entire Western tradition? Or should we, as Heidegger insisted, focus primarily on the Greeks, who are responsible for introducing most of the terms in our philosophical vocabulary?

Regardless of our philosophical orientation, it seems unreasonable to limit a philosophical examination of truth to a mere record of how the relevant terms are used or have been used. Hence, it seems that an account of truth should involve a *conceptual analysis* as well. Yet here we must make some difficult decisions again. Is the concept of truth metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, or axiological? Or does it involve all of the mentioned components? Put differently, are we to analyze the concept of truth in connection with the concept of being (reality, existence)? Or should we not perhaps focus on the concepts of knowledge and justification? Or perhaps concentrate on the concept of error (mistake, deception, illusion)? Or should we analyze the concept of truth in connection with the concept of meaning? Or reference? Or correspondence? Or coherence? Or satisfaction? And why not analyze the concept of truth in comparison with the concept of usefulness, as pragmatists suggest? Or, perhaps, in comparison with the more general concepts of value and evaluation?

The concept of truth is involved in a complex network of conceptual relations. Should our philosophical analysis include all or some of them? Or should it perhaps focus on just one of them? But then which one? Our decisions shall certainly be guided by the context of an inquiry, our personal interests, and our background knowledge. Yet not all of these decisions could be based on, nor justified by, purely subjective factors. A systematic account of truth involves some objectively grounded decisions with respect to the mentioned questions. An account of truth must establish some priorities and thus involve some normative elements.

Consider what appears to be one such *normative* issue, the question of truth bearers. It may seem obvious to us that the primary, if not the only, bearers of truth are linguistic entities, like sentences, propositions, or statements. This, however, was not always the case. The ancient Greek philosophers took for granted that, at least in some sense, reality itself is true, that reality itself is the primary bearer of truth, and that linguistic entities are bearers of truth only secondarily.[2] Augustine and the philosophers of the Christian tradition believed that God is the *summum verum*, and this view can be found even in the father of modern philosophy, Descartes. A radical shift occurred with Locke, who discussed the issue of truth only with respect to ideas and statements.

Locke resolved the issue of truth bearers by decree, not by means of arguments. A seemingly innocent decision with respect to truth bearers, however, can impose significant constraints on any discussion of truth. It makes a great difference whether we assume that truth bearers are linguistic entities like sentences or propositions, or whether we think that the genuine truth bearers also include, perhaps primarily, speech-*acts*. Most philosophers limit their analyses to seemingly context-free and timeless trivial sentences, such as "The cat is on the mat," and "Snow is white." However, those who take Wittgenstein's analysis of language seriously believe that making statements is not limited to talking about something, but "is one way of entering into situations in the world, of encountering them and interacting with them."[3] Making statements is thus seen as doing something, as a form of activity. Since every activity has an end, a *telos*, an adequate account of the truth of statements would have to involve a teleological account.

Consider now the third set of questions about truth. It is not controversial that there are different kinds of truth. Almost everyone would recognize ordinary commonsense truths, scientific, mathematical, logical, and even philosophical truths. What is controversial is the following: Do we also recognize any other kind of truth, and, even more importantly, could there be a unified account for these different kinds of truth?

Many of us believe that there are religious and ethical truths, even though they do not seem to fit into any of the mentioned categories. And

if we grant that there are religious and ethical truths, why not acknowledge that there are special truths characteristic of any area and aspect of human experience? Perhaps there are even truths characteristic for our experience of the great works of art.

What do these different kinds of truth have in common? Must they not have something in common? It is not easy to answer these questions. Kant, for instance, accepts as a "nominal definition" that truth consists in an agreement (or harmony—*Übereinstimmung*) of our cognitions with their objects.[4] If this definition applies to ordinary empirical statements, does it also apply to philosophical statements and theories? In what sense is Kant's account of the nature of the truth of our beliefs about the external world itself true? What is it true of? Does Kant's account agree (or disagree) with anything in the external world, or only with other philosophical theories?

Perhaps our expectation that all different kinds of truth must possess a common property is a mistake, and we should look at each case individually. Perhaps so, but we still need something that relates these different kinds of truth, some kind of "family resemblance" between them. And if there is a common element or family resemblance between different kinds of truth, how could such similarity or resemblance be captured? By means of a definition of truth? Or perhaps by means of a complex theory of truth?

It frequently appears as if there is a tacit agreement between analytic philosophers that the goal of their inquiry is to offer a definition of the subject matter they deal with. It is neither clear why this is so, nor whether definitions are really of much value in philosophy. As far as truth is concerned, definitions usually fall into two categories. Either they reduce this complex concept of truth to something so specific and narrow (like Tarski's definition of truth in terms of satisfaction), that they seem to distort the concept of truth "for the sake of truth." Or they are so vague (like James's definition of truth in terms of usefulness), that they hardly have any explanatory value.

Davidson may be right to claim that it is foolish to attempt to define truth, and that we should instead try to develop a systematic and comprehensive theory of truth. His reason for the former claim is that, "Truth is one of the clearest and most basic concepts we have, so it is fruitless to dream of eliminating it in favor of something simpler and more fundamental."[5] While we may agree with Davidson that the concept of truth is fundamental, his belief in its clarity is problematic. A glance at the history of philosophy will certainly suggest that the concept of truth is so complex and multi-layered that we may never be able to develop a theory that would completely exhaust all of its subtle nuances. It may well be the case, as Dummett is trying to convince us, that "truth is not a single, uni-

vocal notion, explicated once and for all time by Tarski, but a cluster of different notions, adhering together by being governed by various closely related principles."[6]

Keeping these difficulties in mind, it may be reasonable to settle for something that is more than a mere definition and less than a complete theory of truth. This middle ground can be called a conception (or a model) of truth. A satisfactory conception should be expected to account for many typical cases in which we use the words 'true' and 'truth'. The value of such a conception will be increased if it can handle some problematic cases as well, or if it can establish connections between different cases where these connections are far from obvious. For example, there are many clear-cut cases where our statements are either true or false, where their difference is a difference in kind: that person over there either is or is not my friend Joe, Joe either is or is not a college professor, and so on. There are cases, however, where the boundaries between truth and falsity are not nearly as sharp: I have a more or less adequate understanding of Joe's philosophical views, I have a partially correct understanding of the motives of his philosophical thinking, and so on. A valuable conception of truth could help us resolve this apparent discrepancy: Is it the case that, upon closer analysis, all statements are either true or false? Or is it the case that truth is really a matter of degree, and that in clear-cut cases this degree of difference between truth and falsity is as extreme as it could be?[7]

Since most contemporary philosophers simply take it for granted that the relationship between truth and falsity is symmetrical to the point that the two concepts are mutually exclusive, the problem of false beliefs does not really emerge for them; if we can account for truth, by means of negation we can account for falsity as well. Despite this contemporary outlook, one abiding problem of the traditional investigations into the nature of truth was the possibility of false beliefs. We aim at truth, but sometimes, even under favorable circumstances, we miss the mark. How could that happen? How could we in principle mistake X for Y? Plato, for instance, never provides a systematic treatment of truth, nor does he offer a definition of truth. Yet he discusses the possibility of false *logos* in at least four dialogues: *Euthydemus, Cratylus, Theaetetus,* and most extensively in the *Sophist.* The Greek philosophers, and after them modern philosophers, such as Bacon, Descartes, and Kant, realized that the world is not transparent. Furthermore, the absence of this awareness leads to errors, illusions, and antinomies of various kinds. Bacon develops a sophisticated theory of four "Idols," Descartes struggles with his skeptical arguments, and Kant describes the endemic transcendental illusions of pure reason. Could false beliefs ever be eliminated? Could we always even recognize their falsity?

This worry about the possibility of mistaking things for what they are not reveals why issues of correctness and criterion have become so prominent in philosophy. Consider, then, the connection between truth and a criterion of truth. Descartes's predecessors usually conceive of truth as a secret that can be revealed only to a few, either those, like the Delphic priestess, who are in a state of *mania*, or those who, like Augustine, have purified themselves and become worthy of true insight. Descartes and his contemporaries break with this tradition. They tie the concept of truth to the concepts of publicly available evidence, demonstration, and proof. This shift affects our understanding of the criterion of truth. We think of this criterion as a publicly accessible standard by means of which we test the truth value of our statements and theories.

While there seems to exist a clear conceptual distinction between truth and evidence (demonstration, proof, verification), practically it is very difficult to draw a clear line between them. This poses a difficult dilemma. If we insist on a distinction between truth and a criterion based on evidence and demonstration, this opens a gap for skeptics who point out that no degree of evidence can guarantee truth. Even the most rigorously tested theories may turn out to be false. If, by contrast, we insist on close conceptual links between truth and demonstrability, this leads to defining truth in terms of "what works" (as pragmatists do), or in terms of "warranted assertability" (as anti-realists do). While this link may provide a satisfactory answer to skepticism, it seems to open the door for relativism. What becomes important is what *passes* for true, and what passes for true is different from one time to another, from one society to another, and from one person to another. This kind of relativism challenges not only our traditional concept of truth as something objective and independent of our opinions, but also questions our traditional commitment to truth. Why do we hold truth in such high esteem? Should truth matter to us, after all?

When we consider examples like "Today is Monday," and "It is raining outside," such truths seem to have an *instrumental* value. It may be valuable to know that today is Monday and that it is raining outside. Knowing such truths helps us organize our lives and function efficiently. Put more generally, knowing such truths helps us to practically orient ourselves in reality.

Many of us think that truth may also be *inherently* valuable. As scholars, scientists or philosophers, we search for truth. The search for truth is both the motivation for and the goal of our research and reflection. Since this search is frequently tied up with the most important values in human life, we believe that knowing certain truths can help us orient ourselves in reality not only practically but also spiritually.

Without our deep conviction that there are truths that deal with the meaning of life, without believing in truths that shall make us free, our

commitment to truth would not be nearly as strong as it has been. Yet can we ever demonstrate that such truths really exist? Could we ever demonstrate that what we accept as deep spiritual truths are not merely profound illusions? And would we ever be able to distinguish genuine truths from what can be called 'protective ignorance'?

What passes for true in our practical affairs seems to suffice for the purposes of our efficient functioning. Our most rigorously tested scientific theories have good practical results; for example, accepted medical procedures help us cure patients. Why, then, would it not be the same with spiritual truths? Put differently, if there are genuine spiritual truths, and we believe in them rather than in what passes for true, what difference would it make? Would the difference be in what we believe, or would the difference be reflected in how we live? Presumably the most difficult and the most important question for any systematic account of truth is: What is the value of truth?

Contemporary deflationists and disquotationalists hold that the value of truth is minimal and that the perennial philosophical problems concerning truth are based on an inflated concept of truth. Others, like many instrumentalists and postmodernists, go even further in maintaining that truth has no special value at all and that we are misguided in looking for it.[8] Thus our cognitive and other practices should be detached from our search for truth and evaluated in different terms. What matters, the proponents of these views argue, is what works, or what makes sense within a self-contained narrative or a language game. In their views, we are finally arriving at the point at which we can break the ancient taboos concerning truth and see things in more appropriate ways.

If Hegel was right in claiming that when philosophy arrives on the scene the shape of life has already grown old, then these minimalizations and radical denials of the value of truth are not so much normative programs but reflections of a changed world. It may really be that in the present world, in which nothing seems stable and sacred, relativistic and nihilistic viewpoints prevail. It may really be that in the present world—so obsessed by flash-up appearances and the constantly changing values of the market—truth is not treated as it used to be, nor does it count for much.

But even if philosophy arrives late, when the Owl of Minerva finally spreads its wings, it has still a lot of important work to do. In the heated debate of midday, it looks as if we must either dogmatically reaffirm the old views or emphatically side with the new ones. In the cool reflection of the dusk, however, what emerges as more important is that we reexamine the horizon from both viewpoints. For, indeed, instead of throwing away the questions concerning the nature and value of truth, does not the postmodernist celebration of "a life without truths, standards, and ideals"[9] on

the contrary highlight their relevance? Whether or not we actually *value* truth, the question of whether we *should* value it remains open and challenging. And to answer this challenge requires that we rethink the most fundamental questions concerning the nature and value of truth.

Thus, instead of closing the issue of truth, postmodernism forces us to reopen and rethink it with more seriousness and depth than before. For could we really give up on truth? And should we give up on truth? Perhaps no theory and no book would ever be able to encompass all the intricacies and subtleties of the concept of truth. But try we must.

1.2 KANT AT THE CROSSROADS OF MODERNITY

How best should we approach this swarm of questions? One option would be to conduct an investigation in which all of these facets of truth would be treated, one after the other, in a systematic and comprehensive manner. A serious drawback with this approach is that these various questions concerning the nature and value of truth are so deeply interwoven that their complete separation is not only artificial, but even impossible.[10]

This problem suggests an alternative; we could focus on a few of the fundamental questions and allow a comprehensive answer to emerge over the course of the inquiry. This is the path I am going to pursue, although I am not unaware of an objection to this strategy. How can I justify prioritizing some questions over others? Is that not always an arbitrary decision? I concede that there is always an element of personal choice. My own choice is to follow Kant's lead in the discussion of the central questions concerning the nature and value of truth.

But why Kant? His remarks about truth were sketchy and he never developed any systematic theory of truth. Why then should we believe that Kant has anything significant to contribute to this inquiry?

On the surface Kant did not have much to say about truth. He had nothing like a clear and systematic correspondence, or perhaps coherence, theory of truth. It is not even clear that he subscribed to any of the classical theories of truth. So much the better for Kant, I believe, for all the traditional theories face serious difficulties and have numerous limitations. His refusal to side with any of the traditional theories may be a sign that he attempted to think about truth in a fresh way and tried to establish a different path. And, indeed, a closer look will reveal that in Kant's mature works we can find at least the outlines of original treatments of virtually all of the listed questions. He believed, for instance, that all of our conflicting intuitions about truth are important and should be accounted for. His sensitivity to these disparate intuitions can be seen in his treatment of

truths that belong to all areas of human experience: common sense, science, mathematics, logic, metaphysics, morality, religion, and even art.

This is not to say that Kant's treatment of the fundamental issues concerning the nature and value of truth was fully satisfactory. On the contrary, I will argue that it was not. What was nevertheless highly instructive about Kant was that he worked not with one but with (at least) *two conceptions of truth. To understand this, let us recall Kant's* famous Copernican revolution. It was motivated by modernity's turn away from the ancient and medieval paradigm of the object's ontological priority over the subject. On that paradigm, truth was taken to consist of a kind of adequacy between what is and what is said to be. Nevertheless, being and *logos* were not treated as ontologically equal: *logos* needs to adjust to being, but not the other way around.

The modern Copernican turn consists of two steps. The first minimizes or even denies the ontological priority of the object over the subject, of being over *logos*. The second step establishes a new paradigm by affirming the epistemological priority of the subject over the object, of consciousness and reason over being. We are accustomed to taking both steps together, without pausing to see whether the first needs not be followed by the second. A closer look shows that the first step does not necessarily lead to the second, for it allows for a possibility of a nonhierarchical and interactive cooperation between the subject and the object. When modernity rejected the lead of the ancient and medieval predecessors, it stood poised at an important crossroads. Modern philosophers could have proceeded in two fundamentally different directions; they could have made a choice between two radically dissimilar paradigms of understanding *reality and man's role in it. The choice of one path over the other was deci-*sive for the subsequent development of modernity and its present arrival at the point of disorientation and desperation, a predicament which finds its fullest expression in the relativistic and nihilistic mentality of postmodernism.[11]

It is unquestionable that, when standing at the crossroads of modernity, Kant's predominant and "official" choice was to follow the subjectivist turn of modernity. What is more, his critical philosophy provided a powerful justification for that turn and served as a model to be emulated and developed by later generations of modern philosophers, regardless of whether their primary orientation was idealist or empiricist, "continental" or "analytic." Kant's right foot was undoubtedly firmly placed on the path chosen by modernity. It would be shortsighted, however, not to see that his other foot was reluctant to follow the same path. More than any other philosopher of the modern period, Kant had his reservations concerning the ultimate success and wisdom of the choice he and his contemporaries made. Let us recall a few well-known instances. As much as he proclaimed reason

to be the ultimate criterion of truth, Kant also pointed out the insurmountable boundaries that the same reason could not cross in its theoretical use. Although he explained how objectively valid cognition of the world was possible, Kant admitted that this cognition was of appearances but not of things as they were considered in themselves. No matter how hard he tried to secure the foundations of rational knowledge, Kant limited that knowledge to leave enough room for faith: The transcendent aspect of reality was cognitively inaccessible, yet Kant could not reject it altogether since he found it indispensable for our proper orientation in reality.

Not only the German idealists, but also later generations of Kant's followers were understandably frustrated by the apparent "inconsistencies" in the master's philosophy and tried to improve it by eliminating anything that did not affirm the critical path of the dominance of subject over object, of reason over being. Looking from a considerable distance and having witnessed what the consequential development of the full Copernican turn has led to, it may be wise to give a more serious consideration to that other possibility—the path of interaction—that Kant saw and occasionally explored. Even if it is not absolutely necessary, it could yet well behoove us to go back to the same crossroads where Kant once stood and reconsider modernity's definitions of truth and illusion. What could we expect to find if we were to return to those crossroads? Will the same truth still await us?[12]

Even a cursory look at the fundamental questions concerning the nature and value of truth posed in the previous section should convince us that virtually all of them are related to the problem of human rationality; they all probe into the capabilities and limits of what reason can discern. One of Kant's greatest merits is that he treated these issues in a very broad way, by no means limited to the cognitive aspect of rationality, and that he closely related them to what he called the ultimate question of philosophy, namely: What is man?

If I am right to claim that Kant explored two paths at the crossroads of modernity, we can expect to find in his philosophy not one but two answers to this question. One of them is the official Copernican answer that culminates in Kant's practical philosophy of the moral law established by the human reason both dominant over, and frequently opposed to, anything that is designated as belonging to 'nature'. This answer is consistent with the main stream of modernity insofar as in it the subject affirms its priority over the object.

The traces and intimations of another possibility can be found scattered sporadically throughout Kant's critical opus. In the first *Critique*, for instance, they may be detected both in the "Transcendental Analytic" and the "Transcendental Dialectic." In the Transcendental Analytic indications of this concern may be found in his discussion of the mutual dependence

and reciprocity of intuitions and concepts, the sensibility and the intellect. In the Transcendental Dialectic the lack of the required reciprocity is shown to be the source of illusions of speculative metaphysics. To mention another example, this possibility is also acknowledged in various sections of the *Critique of Judgment*, where nature is not treated as a hostile and chaotic "Other" that needs to be controlled and exploited, but as a larger "playground" of our existence, which provides a ground for the complete spectrum of human experience. Nature has an ontological dimension that cannot be overlooked or reduced to anything mental. It should be expected, then, that truth itself is not a purely 'mentalistic' concept but has an irreducible ontological dimension.

The thesis of this book is that Kant's Copernican answer is illusory; it seduces us onto the dangerous road of modernity that ultimately (although not in Kant's own philosophy) ends in the despair of subjectivism, relativism, and nihilism. The second unexplored possibility lies along the path I am inviting my readers to take. On this path of interactive relationship with reality we need to learn not how to subdue this world to serve our interest, but how to harmonize with it. Truth will justify the value traditionally assigned to it only if it helps to free us from illusions so that we may orient our lives toward a harmonious interaction with ourselves, other people, and reality as a whole.
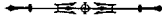
I

Truths

2

Commonsense Truths

Every truth is a path traced through reality.

—H. Bergson

2.1 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF COMMON SENSE

Kant maintained that truth consists in the agreement or harmony (*Übereinstimmung*) of our cognitions with their objects.[1] He stated that this is a "nominal" definition of truth, a mere explication of the meaning of the word 'truth', but he could have also said that this is the way in which we commonsensically understand truth. For example, my claim that you were at home this afternoon is true if, indeed, you were at home at that time. Or, to take another ordinary example, my recognition that your home is comfortable and spacious is true if that is really the case.

The mentioned definition and the given examples suggest the following triangular conception of truth (figure 1):
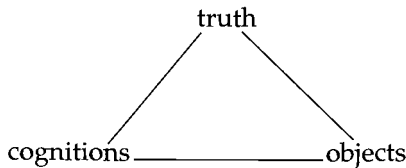

Figure 1

This conception also indicates some of the major strengths and weaknesses of commonsense understanding of truth. The truths of common sense are frequently based on direct and uncontroversial evidence of our senses, and they emerge as a result of our practical interactions with the easily observable objects in our surroundings. I claim that you were at home because you opened the door of your house for me, shook my hand, showed me around your home, we played a game of chess, and afterwards had an enjoyable conversation. When we base our claims on such uncontroversial evidence, our cognitions are right on target and it appears that we can rarely go wrong.

There are, nevertheless, serious problems with the commonsense conception of cognition in general and truth in particular. One is that, without noticing it, we easily slip away from these reliable grounds and base our claims on dubious hearsay and hasty generalizations. As a result, reliable and dubious claims get assimilated together into a common view of reality. This lack of discipline and self-criticism is where science and philosophy can improve upon common sense.

A more important problem in this context concerns the low value of commonsense explanations with respect to the nature of truth. Like a craftsman who is uncomfortable explaining what he so skillfully and routinely does with his hands every day, common sense becomes confused when challenged to account for the formation of its numerous truths about reality. Common sense has a shallow and sometimes even inconsistent understanding of how, and why, it happens that our cognitions hit their targets.

In Kantian terms, the problem for common sense consists in moving beyond the nominal and finding a "real" definition of truth.[2] As a mere explication of that word, the acceptance of the nominal definition of truth does not commit Kant (or anyone else) to any specific theory of truth. The nominal definition is compatible with various interpretations and theories, which would depend on further clarification of the base of the truth triangle, that is, of our interpretation of the relationship between cognitions and their objects. Thus, to move from the nominal toward a real definition of truth, or toward developing a theory of truth, we need to answer questions such as the following: How is it possible that our cognitions agree with their objects? How should we understand this relation between them? How is it that cognitions could refer to objects in the first place?

When pressed against the wall, common sense will offer two lines of answers to these questions, which correspond to the two distinct senses in which we use the word 'common' in 'common sense'. In the next section (2.2), we shall consider the 'realist' line of response to our questions, according to which the arrow at the base of the truth triangle will go from objects toward cognitions (figure 2):

truth

cognitions ◄───────────── objects
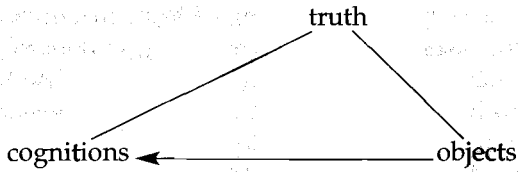
Figure 2

The idea is the following: We live in a world of common sense because we live in a world of common objects. According to this view, truth depends on the way the world is; what is true is such because of what is the case, regardless of whether we perceive and are aware of it. Accordingly, commonsense cognitions are true when we are capable of grasping the reality that surrounds us. If you were at home, then that was true regardless of whether I, or anyone else, knew anything about it.

Although predominant, this is not the only commonsense explanation of what makes our cognitions true. In the blink of an eye common sense can switch from this 'realist' perspective to what can be called an 'idealist', in some cases even an utterly 'relativist', account of truth, which will turn the arrow at the bases of the truth triangle in the opposite direction, from cognitions to objects (figure 3):

truth

cognitions ───────────► objects
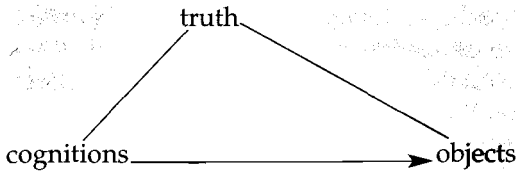
Figure 3

According to this alternative view, truth depends on the way we are, that is, on the way we think, perceive, and approach reality. We live in a common world because, and only insofar as, our needs, interests, cultures, and previous experience make it possible for us to perceive the world in a similar, or common, way. When any of these elements change, our perceptions of the world vary as well. Whether a house is comfortable and spacious depends on what we understand by that, and such an understanding varies from one culture to another, from one individual to another. The 'subjective' factors affect the way we cognize reality, and thus affect the nature of truth. In the third part of this chapter (2.3) we shall consider Kant's analysis of the relevant subjective factors of our cognition of reality.

It will turn out that a proper philosophical account of commonsense truths must involve some elements that belong to both of these opposed points of view. Following some of Kant's insights, in the last part of this chapter (2.4) I shall argue that commonsense truths depend both on how the world is and on who we are and how we think of that world[3]. The nature of the interaction between the objective and subjective elements will be explained in terms of Kant's conception of determinative judgments and the so-called craftsman metaphor. In our cognition of reality we do not simply notice and take for granted what we find in front of us. Instead, we shape and determine the material we find in accordance with our conceptual framework, goal, intentions, and background knowledge. Like craftsmen who apply their skills to the material of nature to form desired artifacts, in cognition we clear the paths that help us orient ourselves in reality. As Bergson nicely puts it, truths are paths traced through reality.[4]

2.2 TRUTH AND THE WAY THE WORLD IS

When pressed to move beyond the nominal definition and explain how truth depends on the way the world is, a realistically-oriented proponent of common sense is likely to introduce the following theses: 1. Truth consists in some sort of agreement or correspondence between our cognitions and the external reality. 2. There can be only one true and complete description of that reality. 3. Reality itself consists of a fixed and determined totality of mind-independent objects.[5]

This kind of explanation has been defended for more than two thousand years in the Western tradition, and it is hard to deny that there is something appealing about it. It insists on the thoroughly objective character of truth and claims that since truth is the truth of reality, it must thus depend on the way reality is. Despite its initial appeal, the account has always had its opponents as well. In a nutshell, they have argued that the difficulties that emerge when we attempt to develop and defend this explanation are so great that we are better off in rejecting it altogether. In this section we shall try to peel off the different layers of this account and distinguish between what in it should be preserved and what is untenable.

The first and obvious problem with words like 'agreement' and 'correspondence' is that they are both vague and ambiguous.[6] It is difficult, if at all possible, to assign them a precise meaning and still preserve the initial intuitive appeal of the broader account. 'Agreement' and 'correspondence' are taken to refer to some kind of 'fit' and 'congruence' between our cognitions and the states of affairs to which they refer. But what fit and what congruence? Could we not move beyond this pictorial and metaphorical level in our account of the nature of truth? Moreover, how

could there be any fit or congruence between elements so heterogeneous, between something mental, such as our cognitions, and something physical, such as objects to which our cognitions are supposed to refer? 'Agreement', 'correspondence', 'fit', and 'congruence' all seem to lean on the relation of reference, yet this relation itself demands an account. The nature of reference is frequently explained in causal terms,[7] but this view faces serious problems. Even if the causal aspect is necessary, it is not sufficient for the reference relation. Reality by itself does not determine for what our words stand. A sign-relation is not built into reality, and we cannot simply assume that reality consists of self-identifying objects. The identification of ordinary objects around us is always relative to our frames of reference which involve, among other things, pragmatic considerations and decisions. For instance, if the liquid we drink everyday continues to have all the functional properties it used to have in the past, we are going to continue to call it 'water', even if its chemical analysis turns out to be different than what every schoolboy now knows as 'H_2O'. There are, moreover, problems with the role of causality in the reference relation as well. Think about generalizations; when it is claimed that an average American family has 2.5 children, what could this number causally refer to? In what kind of correspondence could it stand with any one real family? Furthermore, opponents of the correspondence account of truth and the causal account of reference are quick to point out that this relation of reference is problematic not only in the case of affirmative claims, but even more so in the case of negative claims and counterfactuals; it is simply difficult to conceive what causal and referential relations take place when we formulate negative and counterfactual claims. It would be premature to claim that these problems are insurmountable. Yet they are serious and require significant and detailed elaboration of the first thesis.

While the first thesis certainly needs a better defense, the second is dubious and untenable. It claims that there can be only one true and complete description of reality. There are, no doubt, cases which appear as clear-cut as the second thesis suggests. You either were or were not at home at the particular time; our chess game either ended in your victory, or in my victory, or it was a draw; we either had a conversation or we did not. Nevertheless, there are as many cases that are not so straightforward and decisive. Not only our scientific and philosophical practice, but even our commonsense experience suggests that there are alternative, yet equally correct, descriptions of reality. Consider the following examples. You and I may disagree with respect to whether your house is spacious and comfortable and yet both be correct. We could both be correct because we use different standards when estimating what counts as spacious and comfortable. Our standards may be different because of our previous experiences; you grew up in a small family that owned a mansion and I was

surrounded by numerous siblings in an always crowded apartment. Moreover, even you yourself can correctly offer opposing appraisals of your house in different contexts. To your parents, who are accustomed to a much larger space, you can complain about how small this house is. Or, with different intentions, you can also proudly announce that your present home is much larger and more comfortable than the apartment in which you lived before.

These examples show that our descriptions and evaluations of a given situation depend on our previous experience, and our present intentions and goals. As I shall argue later (2.3), they also depend on the nature of the cognitive framework with which we approach the world. The same situation can be conveyed by different, yet nonsynonymous, truth claims. This is possible because they describe reality from different points of view.

It is even more doubtful whether we can give a complete description of any situation. Think about describing a game of chess. While it is clear what it means to say that you and I played a game, what would a complete description involve? Certainly more than the outcome of the game, and the time and place where it was played. But how much more is needed for a complete account? The actual moves of the game? An analysis of the game, with a list of good moves, bad moves, missed opportunities for both sides, and an explanation of the main strategic ideas? But then why not the psychological states of the players, the relative significance of the game for our friendship, and perhaps also the past history of our games? And would not a complete description require mention of the spectators, what they thought of the game, and so on? It is clear that the list can continue *ad infinitum*. Giving a complete description of any situation resembles the Leibnizian attempt to provide a complete concept. This task would require knowledge of the present, past, and even future, a mission impossible for finite minds.

The second thesis is unnecessarily strong. There can be more than one true description of the relevant situation, and no complete description is possible. Fortunately, commonsense experience shows that a complete description is never really needed. On the one hand, the contextual parameters determine what must be described, what information is required for making an appropriate and understandable truth claim.[8] Describing our chess game to an experienced player and describing it to someone who does not even know the rules of the game would involve quite different elements of the situation, as well as significantly dissimilar language. On the other hand, even our ordinary language includes talk about 'approximate' truths, 'partial' truths, and so on. We would not seem to be able to accommodate the widely-accepted view that there are approximate truths—indeed, are not most of our truths approximate?—if we demand

a complete description of reality. Why, then, would anyone expect that there can be only one true and complete description of reality? The second thesis finds its motivation, and at least partial support, in the third thesis; namely, that there is one true and complete description of reality because reality itself is one and completely determined, regardless of what we know or think about it. This third thesis, then, is the one in which this account of truth finds its ultimate support. Yet if this last thesis is significantly challenged, this will cast doubt over the entire account.

The third thesis is problematic as well. One reason for this is that it is based on an equivocation over the words such as 'outside us' and 'external to the mind' on the one hand, and 'mind-independent' on the other. The world that surrounds us and that we are trying to grasp is, in at least one sense of these words, outside of the mind and external to it. Yet, as Kant showed, to argue that this reality is thereby unrelated to the mind is to jump from commonsense experience to a metaphysical level; it is to shift from 'empirical' to 'transcendental' realism.[9]

Of course, in principle there is nothing wrong with making metaphysical claims; the questions to pose are whether we are entitled to such claims and whether they are needed in the particular context. And common sense is neither entitled to such claims, nor does it need any. The existence of the external world, the world of commonly perceivable and recognizable objects and situations, can be taken for granted, without thereby leaving the grounds of common sense. Our common practice and experience entitle us to accept the existence of the outside world, without postulating the complete mind-independence of that world, or its ontological priority over our thinking about it. What is more, our common practice and experience do not entitle us to postulate the ontological independence and priority of the world. To do that is to assume an Olympian "God's eye point of view" which is inaccessible to us.

In Kant's terms, partisans of the correspondence account of truth and metaphysical realism face the so-called diallele problem. This problem, known since the time of ancient sophists, but also important in early modern philosophy and the early stages of logical positivism, is the following one: If truth is conceived as a relation of correspondence between cognitions and independently existing objects (in the sense of metaphysical realism, as things in themselves), we are not in a position to judge and determine, in any noncircular way, whether our cognitions are indeed related to these objects in the appropriate way. Since we cannot step outside of our cognitive point of view, any effort to confirm the correspondence between our cognitions and the independently existent objects could only lead to further cognitions. In that case, our cognitions can only have a meaningful relation to other cognitions, but not to

objects themselves. Cognitions can only verify, and in turn be verified by, other cognitions. If that is really so, there seems to be no rational basis for claiming that truth really consists in correspondence with metaphysically independent objects.[10]

There may be more land beyond the Pillars of Hercules, but common sense is ill-equipped to pursue it. Fortunately, there is no need for common sense to leave its firm ground, its own land of truth.[11] For the purposes of our commonsense orientation in the world, we do not need to postulate the ontological priority of the world over the mind, of the object over the subject. Commonsense truths are truths about the world of our experiences and practices; they are human truths. They emerge only insofar as we are situated in the world and interact with it. What we have to consider next is how the way we are makes an impact on the nature of commonsense truths.

2.3 TRUTH AND THE WAY WE ARE

The human mind has a tendency to charge from one extreme to another. When we recognize that the pictorial relation of 'correspondence' does not sufficiently clarify the nature of truth, we tend to turn toward explaining truth in terms of 'coherence' or 'usefulness'. When the ideal of one true and complete description of reality is found inappropriate, we are quick to shift toward the relativistic position that "everything goes" and that what matters is not truth but what passes as such. When the ontological priority of the object is questioned, we incline toward the epistemological priority of the subject. Instead of the metaphysical view in which the mind is secondary to a foreign, predetermined world, we end up asserting that the only certain thing is the mind, and that—for all we know—the rest of the world may be just an apparition of that mind trapped in a mad scientist's vat.

The trap of extremism could be avoided by carefully examining the way we relate to the world in our ordinary cognitive experience. This is where Kant proves to be an invaluable ally. He helps us to understand that we bring to cognition a colorful package of subjective elements that, at least partially, accounts for how, while apparently gazing at the same object, two observers can see different things. One of Kant's many claims to greatness resides in the recognition that in the variety of subjective elements there must be something we all share, for otherwise even meaningful disagreement would not be possible. To find out what that common element is, Kant turned his attention to the structural components of cognition. He realized, more clearly than anyone else before him, that our cognition is not simply a passive reaction to the im-

mediate environment, but an intentional and thoughtful effort to orient ourselves in the world:

"For truth or illusion are not in the object, insofar as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it insofar as it is thought. Thus it is correctly said that the senses do not err; yet not because they always judge correctly, but because they do not judge at all. Hence truth, as much as error, and thus also illusion as leading to the latter, are to be found only in the judgments, i.e., only in the relation of the object to our understanding."[12]

The senses do not judge at all, argued Kant. But what does it mean to judge? And what is the final product of judging? Is it a sentence? Or a proposition? Or is a judgment something entirely different? Kant was never explicit on these issues, but we can be reasonably sure that he would distinguish between a sentence and a judgment, and even between a proposition and a judgment. If a sentence is taken to be a syntactically correct and meaningful linguistic entity, a proposition can be understood as what the sentence expresses, as a statement of thought in words. A judgment is even more than that, insofar as it adds to the proposition in question, the mind's decision with respect to its truth or falsity. The proposition may be asserted or denied, or we may suspend judgment with respect to it.

Most contemporary analytic philosophers consider the nature of truth in terms of the relation between linguistic entities (sentences or propositions) and the world. Kant, by contrast, saw this relation as one between the judging subject and the world. Essential for Kant's approach was his view that in cognition the subject is able to integrate and harmonize the perceptual and rational elements of his experience. This ability Kant called 'judging' (*Urteilskraft*, *judicium*). In the most general terms, judging consists in making a claim and taking a stand with regard to what we experience. Sound commonsense judging is normally based on much personal experience, on the experience of other people around us, as well as on the experience of past generations.

In Kant's view, judging is the ability of subsuming a particular under a universal.[13] By a 'particular' Kant meant that which is, or could be, intuited as present 'here' and 'now'. This could be a particular individual thing, or it could be a characteristic of an individual thing. By a 'universal' Kant had in mind a general (or typical) representation, such as concept or idea, which is applicable to many instances (or tokens) and thus can serve as a rule.[14] Kant's idea was to show that by means of judging we overcome the privacy and idiosyncrasy of the given and turn them into communicable and intersubjective experience. In judging, we make the transition from an isolated 'here' to many remote 'there', from an ever-present 'now' to the past or even not yet existing 'then'. Thus, we are not arrested in the immediate environment but—by means of judging—live in an all-encompassing world.

Kant argued that, as cognitive beings, we judge and orient ourselves in the world in terms of the so-called determinative judgments.[15] In commonsense cognitive experience we deal with the world insofar as it appears to us. Since we want to identify and determine what is the case, that which appears provides indispensable material for our cognition. Kant defined that which appears in a perceptual encounter, in an appearance, as "the undetermined object of an empirical intuition."[16] Cognitions, by contrast, "consist in determinate relation of given representations to an object."[17] That an appearance is an undetermined object means that what is given in perceptual encounters is not a ready-made object which we then simply register and cognize. However simple and immediate our cognitive experience may appear in the view of common sense, the story is significantly more complicated than that. In reality, what is given is not yet determined or—better yet—it is insufficiently determined (or underdetermined). What is given leaves choices open and can be seen (determined) in different ways. What is given poses a question and presents a challenge.

How then do we react to this question and this challenge? How do we, starting from underdetermined perceptual objects form determinative cognitive judgments? To clarify this, consider the following example. Suppose that, after our finished chess game, I state: "These pieces are heavy." What is it that we do when we make a judgment like that? First, we are orienting ourselves, and our audience, toward the things we are talking about. Our judgments narrow down the perceptual field and *direct attention* toward some specific things or occurrences. We thereby establish boundaries within the perceptual field: In the given judgment, for example, we are not talking about the weight of the chess board, nor the table on which the pieces are positioned. Second, we identify what our attention is focused on in terms of what Kant called 'categorial' concepts. In our particular case, the pieces are categorially *identified* as 'many' (as 'plurality', in terms of the categories of quantity), as 'real' (among the categories of quality), as 'substances' with properties (among the categories of relation), and as 'existent' (among the categories of modality). That they are 'substances' means, for example, that they are the bearers of properties and relations, rather than properties and relations themselves. It also means that they are permanent objects that are not going to disappear in the next moment, and so on. Third, by means of empirical concepts we *identify* these substances as belonging to a certain type of objects, as chess pieces. Any categorial determination still leaves open a range of possible empirical determinations. Thus, had our intentions been different, these 'substances' could have been empirically identified not as chess pieces but as pieces of wood, or as pieces of different shapes and color, or as toys that my children like to play with and throw around.

Had our intentions been different, we would not have focused on that one definite characteristic of these pieces, but could have considered whether they are new or old, expensive or not, big or small. Fourth, by asserting that the pieces are heavy, we narrow down and limit the empirical determination to one important *differentiating* property of these objects. When I state that these pieces are heavy, I mean that in comparison to other chess pieces, perhaps in comparison to my own, or to those that you used to have before. The heaviness of these pieces differentiates them from those other pieces.

This account has important implications for our understanding of the truth value of determinative cognitive judgments of common sense. Such judgments are determinative insofar as they purport to establish what is the case. Since this involves identifying what is the case, determinative judging involves identifying what is the case. If this is so, we can say that to ascribe a truth value to a determinative commonsense judgment is to evaluate the process of identification. Such a judgment is true if it properly identifies the object of inquiry. It is false if we misidentify (and mistake) things for what they are not. Identifying what something is involves establishing its limits, thereby differentiating it from other things. Thus, making determinative commonsense judgments means being involved in the processes of identifying what something is and differentiating it from other things or events.[18]

What implications does this have for our previous discussion? As we have seen, the realist version of common sense relies heavily on the idea that truth depends on reference to the external world, and assumes that this can be established without any contribution by the cognizing subject. By contrast, the idealist version of common sense points out that there is no such thing as 'pure ostension'. According to this view, reference is impossible without some 'pragmatic' decisions with respect to intentions and goals, as well as our social institutions and practices. What matters for truth is not reference but meaning.

Kant tallied up the strengths and weaknesses of both sides and identifies their underlying assumptions. His central insight was that subjectivity and objectivity, as well as meaning and reference, do not exclude each other but compliment and permeate each other. Insofar as our commonsense judgments refer to objects, insofar as they are 'objectively real', they are not some 'subject-less' and 'perspective-less' eternal sentences, but human thoughts and judgments, thoughts and judgments entertained by human beings situated in the world. Furthermore, our thoughts and judgments do not simply refer to external objects because we are causally affected by them. Identification and differentiation of objects or events are possible only within the framework of our practices, experiences, concepts, and intentions.

In this point Kant agreed with the idealist side of common sense, and this misleads many into arguing that Kant subscribed to a version of the coherence theory of truth.[19] Yet it is essential to see that Kant argued that this idealist side goes too far in overemphasizing the significance of meaning and in unjustifiably disregarding the relevance of reference.[20] 'Meaning' is simply broader than 'truth', and not everything that is meaningful is true. Put differently, while it is indispensable that our thoughts are coherently integrated into larger formations of judgments and beliefs, and while it is important to take into account our intentions and goals, the coherentist and pragmatist elements do not suffice for truth. Even if my judgment is internally coherent with the rest of my beliefs, it may still be false. No matter how many people agree on a certain point, they can all be mistaken. Regardless of how useful something may be to believe, it may still be a mistake.

Despite his occasionally ambiguous language, Kant's intention clearly was to bring together the elements of both realist and idealist positions into a unified account of truth. He offers various hints and suggestions that point in this direction, but little beyond that. Kant did not provide a full account of their integration and never offered a complete elucidation of the nature of commonsense truths; our task in the next section is to fill in these lacunae.

2.4 TRUTH AND INTERACTION

One of the deepest "truth traps" in past thinking about the nature of truth has been to assume that it must depend either on the way the world is, or on the way we are and think about the world. But why? Since the relation of "being dependent" admits degrees, in principle it is possible that truth depends both on the way the world is and on the way we are and think about it. Perhaps more than with respect to any other kind of truths, this must be the case with commonsense truths. What makes both our world and common sense 'common', is the integration and interdependence of subjective and objective elements.

Our problem now is to move beyond the initial plausibility of this thesis and further articulate and support the claim that commonsense identifications, and thus commonsense truths, presuppose an interaction of our cognitions with their objects. Let us begin by showing that, in this respect, all traditional theories of truth are one-sided and inadequate. It is not so much that they completely miss the nature of commonsense truths; it is rather that they capture only a few of the relevant aspects and disregard all others. For instance, correspondence theories correctly emphasize that truth depends on the way the world is. But they mistakenly separate

man from the world, and alienate thinking and judging from their objects. Thus they try to define truth as a dubious 'pictorial' or 'geometrical' congruence between cognitions and objects. Coherence theories, by contrast, correctly emphasize the relevance of our conceptual apparatus and background knowledge. Yet they inflate the relevance of the subjective factors and underestimate the degree to which truth depends on the way the world is. As a result, they sever ties with reality and make true judgments appear to belong to a consistent but perhaps fictional story. Pragmatists correctly underline the functional role of truth, its connectedness to our needs, intentions, and goals, and its relevance for practical orientation in the world. But, as we shall see, they tend to ignore some of the constraints on the side of the object.

What are these constraints? Roughly speaking, they are the subjective and objective conditions that both create the possibility of objective truth value and impose some limitations on what is true or false. Kant's considerations in the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic make it is easier to reconstruct the constraints on the side of the subject.

(S1) First, there is a certain plasticity, or flexibility, of the subject. It is manifested by the degree of fluidity or rigidity of the subject's goals, intentions, and expectations (which Kant called by one common term 'interest'). Rigidly defined expectations and goals blind us to certain aspects of the presented situation. Fluid and flexible expectations and goals make us open-minded to unexpected things.

(S2) Further, there is the question of the respective simplicity or complexity of the subject. It is not measured by the number of components or parts involved, but by the complexity and sophistication of their background knowledge. An amateur chess player would not recognize a certain pattern of pieces as the Sicilian Defense; a person not familiar with chess would not recognize a certain pattern of pieces as a checkmate.

(S3) Finally, there are constraints having to do with the availability and structure of the cognitive apparatus. Our senses are structured so as to make only certain dimensions of observed reality accessible. The nature of our intellectual abilities similarly opens some vistas and closes off others. In Kant's terms, human intellect—at least as far as the cognition of the world around us is concerned—is in between the *intellectus ectypi* and the *intellectus archetypi*. Our intellect is not intuitive but discursive; we have no intellectual intuition but must rely on a conceptualization of the material provided by the senses.[21]

What about the constraints on the side of the object? This question appears far more troublesome for an interpreter of Kant. All subjective constraints deal—in one way or another—with the elements of form imposed on the material of the senses in the process of cognitive synthesis and judging. The senses provide the needed cognitive material which, when properly formed, leads to cognitive contents and judgments.[22] The material provided by the senses, the underdetermined objects of empirical intuition, has a potential to be determined in various ways. But these underdetermined objects must also impose some limitations on the possibilities on the formation of objectively valid judgments.[23] What kind of limitations could Kant have in mind? He does not help us much here and Kant scholars find themselves frequently wondering what his response could be. Here is a reply based on some of the previous considerations.

(O1)   One of the constraints concerns the plasticity, or the level of underdetermination, of the observed objects or events. A simple curved line is normally more plastic than an equally simple straight line. The shape of a cloud is more plastic than the shape of a square. All objects and events have their own specific degree of plasticity which functions as a limiting factor in our attempts to perceive and grasp those objects and events.

(O2)   Furthermore, there are constraints that deal with the respective simplicity or complexity of objects or events we try to grasp in our cognitions. Objects and events contain more or less components. A geometrical figure involves more components than a straight line; a chess board involves more components than one of its squares. More complex objects and events offer more resistance to our attempts to grasp and illuminate them.

(O3)   There is also a level of relative accessability or inaccessability of observed objects or events. It is easier to grasp one billiard ball hitting another, than the action on a football field; it is easier to grasp a straightforward opening move in chess than one that starts a complex combination. Without attempting to postulate here some invisible essences of things, it may be that there are layers of reality that are inaccessible to all of our cognitive advances.[24] Without elaborating on this thesis, and without determining whether this is so because of the nature of objects or our own limitations, let us nevertheless keep it in mind, for it is important for Kant's discussion of things in themselves.

Of these six constraints, advocates of correspondence theories are mostly concerned with the respective simplicity or complexity of per-

ceived objects (O2), less frequently with the respective accessibility of presented objects (O3), and tend to overlook all others. They rely too heavily on a belief in the existence of an independent reality that is made up of its own component entities, together with their inherent properties and structural interconnectedness. Since they take it that reality is so definitely structured, they try to convince us that in cognition we disclose and faithfully copy the objectively determined situation. Partisans of correspondence theories thus make it appear as if truth is a one-way street, a unilateral relation of objects to subjects.

Advocates of coherence theories, by contrast, recognize and emphasize the relevance of the second kind of constraints on the side of the subject (S2), and in some cases also the plasticity of the object (O1) and its relative inaccessibility (O3). They rely on the idea that truth consists in the interconnectedness of our thoughts and cognitions in a unified and internally coherent system. An important shortcoming of coherence theories is that they, like correspondence theories, also make truth look like a one-way relation. The difference is that the direction is reversed in comparison to correspondence theories.

Pragmatism is based on a more dynamic understanding of commonsense cognitions and truths than the other two kinds of theories. The subject and the object are not treated as separated by a gulf that can never be fully overcome. In Dewey's words, "Knowing is one kind of interaction which goes on in the world."[25] It is thus not surprising that pragmatists come closer than correspondence and coherence theorists to a recognition of the interactive nature of commonsense truths. As James argued, "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It becomes true, is *made* true by events."[26]

Pragmatists clearly recognize the constraints on the side of the subject, especially (S1) and (S2). Our inquiry, our pursuit of truth, is an active human manipulation of the world in which we live, one guided by our needs and interests. Moreover, our inquiry is not an individual project; it is a common enterprise in which cooperation with other human beings is of vital importance. This joint action is based not only on common needs and interests, but also on previous knowledge and truths. Our various thoughts and insights are closely related to other cognitions and truths; they feed on each other and lean on each other. To quote James again, "Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on the credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass', so long as nothing challenges them, just as bank-notes pass as long as nobody refuses them."[27]

Pragmatists also recognize the plasticity on the side of the object (O1). Cognition is for them an active intervention in the world, which allows us to grasp and shape it in multiple ways. In fact, one of the fundamental weaknesses of the pragmatist conception of cognition and truth is that it

is based on belief in an almost unlimited plasticity of the environment. Yet the reality with which we interact is not a state of constant flux where everything goes. Reality has limits to its flexibility; it has its own constraints. We can change and use that reality in accordance with our needs and interests, but only within limits. When, for instance, a craftsman builds a house, his craft is constrained not only by his own, or his customers', needs and interests, but also by the natural properties of the material he works with. To be a good craftsman, he must be able to respond to the properties of the material he is working with. To be a good craftsman, he must make sound judgments.

As genuine products require the interaction of our skills, goals, and needs with the natural constraints of the involved material, commonsense truths require their interaction and integration as well. In cognizing the world and making judgments about it, we are like craftsmen who must integrate the subjective and the objective elements of the situation. Truths emerge as the result of the interaction of these elements, and do not consist in any naively conceived disclosure of a previously structured reality. The realization of our active engagement in cognition may prevent us from talking about our judgments as being 'true of the world', if that is taken to mean a uniquely true and complete description of the given situation. This does not imply, however, that our judgments are mere constructions. What is important in the craft metaphor and the interactive understanding of truth is that our judgments must be 'true *to* the world'. They can be true to the world not by disclosing it and copying it, but by being faithful to it, by taking its constraints into account. In cognition we are like craftsmen; we interact artfully with the world in which we live. The results of such interactions are determinative cognitive judgments; in judging, we firmly clear paths through the world that surrounds us. Our judgments lead to new practices, and those practices in turn lead to new judgments.

Although this conception of truth is objectivistic in its orientation, it is not expressed by any of the traditional theories of truth. It presents a Kantian attempt to move beyond the nominal definition of truth as '*Übereinstimmung*' between cognitions and objects, and brings us closer to a real definition of truth. Kant did not understand this '*Übereinstimmung*' between our judgments and their objects in any pictorial and one-directional sense. '*Übereinstimmung*' should not be understood as a relation of the finished products, but as a result of an interactive process (a two-way relation) by means of which the present situation is identified for what it is. Commonsense judgments are our responses to the challenges and questions that the situations in which we find ourselves pose. These judgments help us orient ourselves in these situations insofar as they identify the problematic and unclear aspects of these situations. They are true

when they identify these situational aspects for what they are, and false when they do not. The process of cognitive identification is, in turn, only the external aspect of judging, for this external aspect is itself based on the internal process of the interaction between the elements and constraints provided by both objects and subjects of cognition. Thus, in Kant's interpretation the truth triangle for commonsense cognitions should look like this (figure 4):
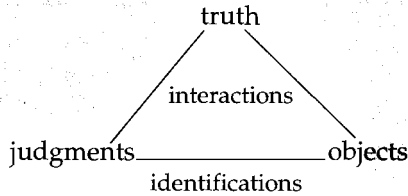

truth

interactions

judgments_____objects

identifications

Figure 4

To sum up: When Kant considered the nature of commonsense cognitions and truths, his discussion pointed toward the interactive aspect of judging and truth. Our commonsense truths are not mere reflections of a predetermined reality; nor are they ways of world-making. Commonsense truths consists neither in reactions, nor in arbitrary constructions of that reality. They consist in identifying various aspects of reality for what they are, which in turn is possible by means of our interactions with that reality.

3

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Scientific Truths

Science probes; it does not prove.

—G. Bateson

3.1 SCIENCE VERSUS COMMON SENSE

Cognitive judgments are true if they identify the considered situation as it is. Yet the same situation can be properly identified in different ways and by various means. An object in front of me can be identified as a middle-aged human being, as a father, as a philosophy professor, or as my friend and colleague, Joe. Moreover, that this is Joe could be identified by the way he looks, talks, or walks. It could also be determined by means of his ID or a driver's license. Or it could be demonstrated by means of his blood type, fingerprints, or the specific genetic structure of his cells.

There are significant differences in the ways in which commonsense and scientific judgments identify their objects and aim at truth. While commonsense truths are based on the immediate interactions with different aspects of reality, this kind of interaction does not seem to occur in the case of scientific research. In science we do not have the same kind of vital interest in the existence of these objects, since they do not affect our lives in the same way as ordinary objects around us. Furthermore, in commonsense experience there is simply no conscious effort to separate ourselves to the highest possible degree from the objects of our investigations, whereas this effort seems essential for science. With the scientific focus on the quantifiable and nomological aspects of reality, such detachment is

much easier to accomplish; we do not have the same kind of attachment to numbers, degrees, and percentages, that we do to qualities such as useful-ness, kindness, and beauty. Moreover, science searches for impersonal ex-planations of all phenomena and demands that the same type of scientific experiment must lead to the same results, regardless of the place, time, and the circumstances under which it is performed. Scientific demonstration must follow the same kind of methodological procedure, whether it is per-formed by you, me, or anyone else.

What, then, is the goal of that rigorous pursuit? According to Albert Einstein, "science is the attempt to make the chaotic diversity of our sense-experience correspond to a logically uniform system of thought."[1] 'Uniformity' is the key word here. Science strives toward a logically con-sistent system of thought which unifies and systematizes the randomly gathered views of common sense. The unsystematic curiosity of an indi-vidual is replaced by the methodological inquiry of a scientific team. Our commonsense views of the world, so pregnant with anthropomorphisms and inconsistencies, are transformed into a scientific *Weltanschauung* with mathematically precise predictions and specific laws. If in commonsense experience we trace paths through reality, then it seems that in science we attempt to create a precise map of the universe. This map is not primarily focused on the readily observable objects we deal with in every day prac-tice. In fact, the map is not primarily focused on objects at all, but on their causal and, more generally, lawlike connections. The purpose of the map is not so much to describe this vast universe but to capture its uniform structure and underlying laws; its purpose is to reveal to us the hidden or-der that pervades the entire physical reality.

Science is thus much more than a refinement on everyday thinking, for it also changes, and sometimes even flatly rejects, the 'truths' of common sense. Since Copernicus, science does not recognize sunrise and sunset. Although we commonsensically regard these phenomena as real, they are explained away by science as illusions of the senses. Moreover, science changes our understanding of who we are and our role in the universe. Since ancient times human beings have used astronomy not only to mea-sure the passage of time or the course of a voyage but also their own po-sition in the world and their relation to God.[2] The Copernican revolution challenges not only the central position of our planet in the universe; it also challenges the central position of human beings in that larger scheme of things. As Sigmund Freud once put it, the Copernican revolution de-stroyed the glory of the heavens; it was the first great outrage that hu-manity endured from the hands of science.

Science does not merely change our commonsense thoughts about real-ity and our picture of ourselves in that reality—it also changes that real-ity itself. With the help of its younger sister, technology, science trans-

forms the world at an incredible pace. Such changes are not accidental; they are based on visions that belong to the heart of the scientific project, and we can retrace their emergence along every step in the development of science. One of the forerunners of modern science, Francis Bacon, hoped that the dominance of science would lead, not to a Platonic Republic governed by the noble lies of philosophers-kings, but to a "New Atlantis," where "human knowledge and human power meet in one."[3] Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, similar ideals were still alive. Sigmund Freud emphatically maintained that our best hope for the future is that the scientific intellect should in time establish a "dictatorship over the human mind."

In the last several centuries science has become the most dominant form of orientation. It has succeeded in establishing a new world order with its own dictatorship over our minds and lives. Even our common-sense parlance suggests that this is so. When we hear that science has proved something, that is the end of the discussion. Although we usually have no clear idea when, where, or how science has done so, the announcement that science has proved something is followed by a prolonged silence. Science has become an institution that has replaced religion as the source and authority of truth.[4]

Fortunately for science (and all of us), more cautious and critical voices have been heard as well. If the twentieth century has displayed all the splendor of science, it has also taught us that some of its fruits taste quite sour. The display of the destructive and polluting powers of modern technology has made us alert to the question of the appropriate use to which scientific discoveries should be put. On the theoretical side, the revolution in physics in the first half of the twentieth century has shown that scientific theories should not be taken as immutable dogmas, but rather as working hypotheses by means of which we try to gain clearer and deeper insights into the ultimate order of reality. As Einstein pointed out, the "man-made" scientific theories are "the result of an extremely laborious process of adaptation: hypothetical, never completely final, always subject to question and doubt."[5] In what sense, then, are scientific theories true? Is the history of science a history of an asymptotic approach to the final truth? Or is it rather that the history of scientific thought is a history of pregnant errors? Does science prove its hypotheses and theories? Or is Gregory Bateson correct in maintaining that science does not prove anything; what it really does is to probe and shed more light upon the unusual and unfamiliar?[6]

The echoes of these divergent views can be heard in Kant as well. On the one hand, he took science to be a systematic form of knowledge, guided by an idea of the whole, which should serve as an exemplar for any serious cognitive enterprise.[7] Science was for him the highest form of

knowledge, and even metaphysics should be modeled on its pattern. On the other hand, Kant realized that scientific theories are constantly modified, that the actual systematic body of scientific knowledge is never complete. It was also clear to Kant that the issue of truth in science is difficult and complex. The truth of a scientific hypothesis cannot always be determined directly; if its truth can be established at all, we must try to do so both by examining its explanatory and predicative power and by comparing it against the viable alternative theories.[8]

Keeping in mind these problems, the truth triangle in the case of science will look a bit different than its commonsense counterpart (figure 5):

truth

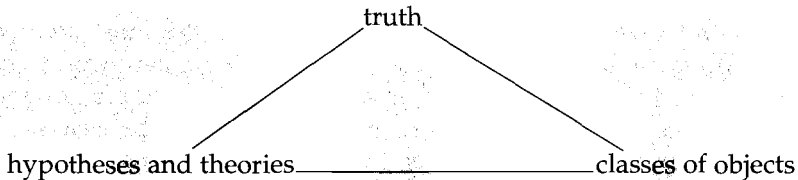hypotheses and theories_____classes of objects

Figure 5

In the lower corners of the triangle we find scientific hypotheses and theories on the one side, and classes of events on the other. The central problem in connection with the scientific truth triangle, and thus our central goal in this chapter, is not to see how our cognitive claims arise and come to agree with their objects, as it was the case in the previous chapter; our goal is to get a better understanding of how our cognitive claims are *demonstrated*.

3.2 TRUTH AND DEMONSTRATION

Karl Popper once remarked that "Our main concern in philosophy and in science should be the search for truth. Justification is not an aim; and brilliance and cleverness as such are boring."[9] All brilliance and cleverness of Popper's claim aside, he put his finger on an important point. Justification is not the aim of science; truth is. Yet when we look at the actual scientific practice we see it to be directly related to justification, not truth. The principal concern of scientific investigation is not with what is being claimed, but with why and how it is claimed. We focus on the reliable sources of scientific assertions, and even more on the evidence and demonstrations that stand behind those assertions. Evidence and demonstrations are directly related to justification. The question is: Are they not also related to truth?

Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and other founders of modern science certainly believed so. Not only did they inherit a classical Greek faith that

the universe was ordered in a manner accessible to the human intelli-
gence, but they were also convinced that the proper application of the
scientific method results in necessary and eternal truths. Their faith in
the power of scientific rationality was based on the view that, by the
proper application of the scientific method, it is possible to decisively
confirm or refute any proposed hypothesis. The proper (experimental)
method should give us, they believed, an algorithm for finding and
demonstrating truths in an objective and value-neutral manner.[10] Their
faith in the method was furthermore founded on the view that this
method reflects the order of reality. There is, it was believed, a structural
congruence between the principles of nature and the structure of the hu-
man mind. Thus, the properly applied scientific method should reveal
the order of reality itself.[11]

Subsequent developments in science and philosophy have undermined
our faith in this initial optimistic view, which in recent philosophical lit-
erature is frequently called 'scientific realism'.[12] We are no longer con-
vinced that the principles of nature and the structure of the human mind
are so homogenous and congruent, nor that science advances decisively
and unhesitatingly toward truth. Pragmatists, instrumentalists, conven-
tionalists, and anti-realists have made us more aware of the relevance of
our own active and constructive role in the systematization and interpre-
tation of scientific data. They have challenged the realist view by arguing
that truths of science are of a pragmatic and instrumentalist nature, or,
even more radically, that the question of truth in science should not even
be raised.[13] Just as mathematicians do not worry about the real nature of
mathematical objects, scientists should not be concerned with whether
their theories disclose the ultimate order of reality. The success of science,
Thomas Kuhn argued in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, consists not
in delivering the eternal truths about reality but in finding various theo-
retical constructs by means of which the universe of experiential diversity
and flux is reduced to a relatively stable and predictable order.[14]

However informative, this outline does not show us why many
philosophers, including Kant,[15] would argue that many physical hy-
potheses and theories are indemonstrable. One of the major reasons for
their suspicion came from the realization that the process of demonstra-
tion in science is far more complex than the founders of modern science
believed, and that as a result of those complexities decisive verification
or falsification is virtually impossible. To clarify one such complexity,
consider the apparently trivial example of a child throwing a ball and
breaking a window. Although it seems that this is an uncomplicated case
of the causal relation between an X and a Y, even here things are far from
being so simple. A proper explanation of this event, and, more generally,
of any occurrence or event, would include not some one relation, but

many relations together with a more or less complex set of conditions of the setting in which these relations take place. Our "causal" language distorts the fact that what occurs is a two-way rather than a one-way relation. As the ball acts upon the glass, the window acts upon the ball by changing its velocity and interrupting its motion. Causality is not a unique kind of event but belongs to the general family of interactive relations; what we call causality is just one among many kinds of interactions that take place in the world.[16]

We can appreciate the relevance of this insight more if we also notice that, when the window is shattered by the impact against it of a ball, the cause of its breaking is not merely the impact, but also the weakness of the glass, the speed of the ball, the mass of the ball, the angle of the impact, and several others factors. More generally, together with X and Y, there are numerous other factors that create a network of relations, all of which are parts of the equation. All these factors must be taken into account before the event in question is really explained, for they all belong to its "causal nexus."[17]

In the familiar cases, we need not explicitly mention all such factors (e.g., the fragility of the glass), not because they are irrelevant, but because they are obvious. In the majority of scientifically relevant cases, however, the situation is insufficiently familiar and we are not sure if we know all the relevant factors. There we are not in a position simply to observe the situation and recognize the connection between two events, as we normally do in commonsense experience. What we usually deal with in science is an event, an X, whose cause and network of underlying conditions are not directly known and observable. They are not at hand, to be conveniently *recognized* as in commonsense experience, but rather are in need of *reconstruction* by means of a scientific hypothesis, and in terms of a broader theoretical framework. One fundamental problem of scientific research is that such reconstructions require the introduction of various kinds of elements, such as abstractions and idealizations, that are more fictive than factual, and more ideal than real. Particle physics, astronomy, and cosmology, for instance, abound with such elements that can be comprehended only in terms of mathematical relations and artificially created models.

Yet another important consideration deals with the fact that scientific hypotheses and theories do not normally deal with an individual event but study an entire *type* (or class) of events. In many cases we quantify over infinite or unsurveyable domains that could not be effectively tested in any empirical way. Since we have access to only a limited sample, this makes anything like an exhaustive and reliable verification or confirmation virtually impossible. We are forced to limit our demonstration to some relevant examples, and to take into account only the factors that we

find essential. But how do we decide which factors are relevant? There is no methodologically prescribed and regulated way that would show us how to make those kinds of decisions; there is no algorithmic way of deciding whether all the relevant examples and factors are taken into account. Such a decision is always a matter of choice partially dependent on the questions we have in mind, on the contextual constraints, on pattern recognition, on background knowledge, as well as the given theoretical framework.[18] Different theoretical frameworks would include some factors and eliminate others. As was the case with the interactive processes of commonsense judgments, there is a multiple dependency here as well: A demonstration of a hypothesis is dependent not only on the state of affairs, but also on the specific theoretical framework within which the problem is treated.

In trying to demonstrate a hypothesis we do not relate it only with a segment of reality which needs to be explained and depicted. Neither commonsense nor scientific observations can be described in neutral language, because common sense and science do not possess such language. Especially in science we should be aware that we always compare and evaluate a hypothesis against its competitor(s). The Ptolomean hypothesis was not replaced by the Copernican because it disagreed with the known facts; otherwise the Ptolomean system would not still be in use today in practical courses in navigation. The Copernican hypothesis became firmly accepted when it was realized by Galileo, Kepler, and especially Newton that its acceptance might lead to the development of a unified terrestrial and celestial mechanics. Thus, when we test a scientific hypothesis, we are never certain that we are taking all the relevant factors into account and are therefore incapable of decisively demonstrating that the hypothesis in question is true or false.[19]

The conclusion that there is no decisive demonstration of scientific hypotheses may appear troublesome to us, whether or not we are advocates of scientific realism. If this is so, we could try to rescue our faith in the decisive demonstrability of scientific hypotheses by arguing that the gap between truth and demonstrability could not be as sharp as initially assumed. This is exactly the move made by early modern philosophers, such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hume. In our time this view is defended by Putnam (and other pragmatically oriented philosophers). In the spirit of early modern philosophers, he argues that "there is an extremely close connection between the notions of truth and rationality: the only criterion for what is a fact is what is rational to believe."[20] Although Putnam admits that truth cannot be identified with either a criterion of truth or justification (and thus demonstration), there is still a significant conceptual connection between them. In articulating this connection, however, Putnam does not follow early modern

philosophers but Peirce: "Truth is not actual but ideal justification."[21] Truth, then, cannot be identified with presently accepted hypotheses and theories, but with what is "fated to be confirmed," if our inquiry is continued long enough, and in a responsible and fallibilistic spirit.

Does Putnam's pragmatist proposal fare any better than the view of scientific realism? It does not, and this for two reasons. One is that, in principle, there is no way to know when we have reached the end of an inquiry. Peirce's idea was that at some point we would detect "an asymptotic convergence in inquiry," which will serve as a reliable mark of the end of our investigation. Yet such convergence may be a local and a short-term agreement, which may disappear with the next argument, or with the next experiment. A scientific inquiry is an ongoing process, because we always find new information and because the theoretical components change through time. Thus, an inquiry can only have a fictive and temporal, but not a real and absolute terminating point.

The second problem deals with the conceptual connection between the concepts of 'truth' and 'ideal justification'. Putnam is right to claim that truth cannot be identified with justification and demonstration, for it is possible to have a well-supported hypothesis that is, nevertheless, false. Is anything really changed if we rely on ideal rather than actual justification and demonstration? Despite Putnam's insistence, the answer is no. If ideal justification is different from actual justification in *degree* of evidential support, it is still possible that an ideally-justified hypothesis is false. If, by contrast, ideal justification is of a different *kind*, if it excludes in principle the possibility of ideally-justified (or demonstrated) false beliefs, then the definition of ideal justification (or demonstration) must include in itself the concept of truth. Yet if this is the case, the concept of ideal justification (or demonstration) cannot serve as a ground for an account of the concept of truth, for this account would be circular.

We must conclude that because of various empirical and theoretical factors involved, there is no decisive demonstration in empirical science. If truth in science is as intimately connected with the notion of demonstration as is frequently believed, we are not in a position to establish decisively whether scientific hypotheses are true or false. The actual advancement of science is based on trial and errors; it is based on probing, not on proving.

3.3 THE ROLE OF MATHEMATICS IN SCIENCE

A widely-accepted idea, like that of a decisive scientific demonstration, is always endorsed at several levels and for many reasons. To understand why this idea still has such a strong grip on our imagination, we need to

consider how the pioneers of modern philosophy advocated this idea by tying it to a peculiar conception of mathematics. According to the basic assumptions of early modern philosophers, the universe is a great causal mechanism that can be mastered by means of mathematical calculations. It is thus not surprising that the decisive application of mathematics in modern science begins immediately with Galileo and Descartes. For the Greeks mathematics was also an exemplar of science, but for a different reason.[22] The Greeks were impressed by the nature of mathematical objects. The circles and triangles of geometry appear more stable and perfect than the ever-changing objects of sense perception. The objects of mathematics are purely rational entities which the fleeting objects of the senses can only approximate. Galileo and Descartes admired mathematics not so much for the perfection of its objects but for the reliability of its method. Galileo was the first to combine experimental knowledge with mathematics, by insisting on the abolition of qualitative properties of observed objects and focusing instead on their quantitative or metric properties. Descartes's development of analytical geometry was, however, truly responsible for the decisive break with the ancient mathematics.

The Greeks distinguished between continuous and discontinuous quantities, between magnitudes (like points, lines, and planes) and multitudes (like numbers). Since the Greeks did not use zero, negative numbers, or fractions, they believed that there are more points than numbers. Descartes's synthesis of algebra and geometry violated the ancient distinction between continuous and discontinuous quantities and made it possible to establish the exact one-to-one correlation between points and numbers. By means of algebraic symbolism that replaced numbers with letters, and with the use of zero, negative numbers, and fractions, Descartes was able to construct a set of coordinates for the geometrical representation of equations, whereby all points in a plane have unique numerical equivalents.

The implications of Descartes's *mathesis universalis* for the further development of science and scientific rationality were enormous. Of essential significance for the scientific approach is that the threatening infinity of the physical universe can be treated as being completely uniform and homogeneous. The Cartesian coordinate system is uniformly determinative of any possible body. According to this numerical system, all bodies— terrestrial or celestial, infinitely large or infinitely small—are alike; every place is just like any other, and any moment is equally like any other. This perfect uniformity and homogeneity of nature can then be captured by the system of quantitative measuring network of the coordinate system and expressed in the form of the laws of nature. Newton's first law of motion thus states: "Every body which is left to itself continues in its state of rest, or uniform motion in a straight line, unless it is compelled to change that

state by force impressed upon it." Since this law determines how any body will behave, if we know the position of a body within our spatial and temporal coordinate system, its present speed, and a force that acts upon it, by means of mathematical calculations we can predict with great accuracy where that body is going to be located at any future time.[23]

Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and other founders of modern science were understandably fascinated by the apparent ability of mathematics to interpret all phenomena of nature by the same language and subject them to the same laws. Since they believed that mathematics was part of the universal mechanics which accurately demonstrates the act of measuring, they were convinced that mathematical analysis must be an integral part of physics. It appeared to them that the universal applicability of mathematics attests to the unity and simplicity of the plan of the universe. As Galileo put it, the Book of Nature is written in mathematical language. The conclusion which seemed to follow was that the structure of the universe is mathematical and that rationality and the validity of the scientific method are based on that structure. Precisely this idea of the homogeneity of the entire universe, together with the congruence of the cosmic order with the mathematical-like structure of the human intelligence, is ultimately responsible for the impression—or rather the illusion—that it must be possible, at least in principle, decisively to demonstrate the validity of any scientific hypothesis and theory. Yet reality is so neatly homogeneous and uniformly quantifiable only within the two-dimensional universe of high-school science textbooks.

The founders of modern science were apparently more aware of serious problems for this line of reasoning than some of their successors who embraced and later dogmatized it. They were aware that the application of mathematics is possible only when we ignore certain aspects of reality and concentrate on others. Galileo, for instance, knew that, strictly speaking, all bodies do not fall equally and uniformly fast, as his mathematical equations calculated. Yet in comparison to the Aristotelian physics, the discrepancies were so minute that he found them negligible. Newton was even more aware that he relied on idealizations and constructions that could not be said to correspond to the observed things. His laws of motion speak of "a body which is left to itself," but there is no such completely isolated body. All bodies that we can observe and know about interact with other bodies. In a similar manner Newton simply ignored the relativity of our perception of space and time and postulated an absolute medium of space and time. Furthermore, Newton knew quite well that, mathematically speaking, every body is infinitely divisible. Unlike Descartes, however, he did not believe that in the physical universe this is actually the case.

Serious problems such as these did not go unnoticed by other philosophers and scientists of that time. Kant brought them into a sharp relief by wondering about the universal applicability of the mathematical method and the "objective reality" of mathematics in general. If the mathematically-postulated infinite divisibility of every body does not guarantee its infinite physical divisibility, why should we believe that the Book of Nature is really *written* in mathematical language?[24]

When philosophers and mathematicians rejected the assumption of the parallel principles of the mind-independent reality on the one hand, and the mind on the other, they turned to the idea that mathematics consists of constructions made by the cognizing subject. One way of clarifying this subjectivistic turn would be by following Hobbes, Vico, and conventionalists such as Poincaré: Mathematical postulates and laws are our own consistently developed and conventionally introduced constructions. One set of such constructions is not more true than its alternatives, but it may be more convenient for a particular scientific application. The issue of truth, if it arises at all, becomes an issue of internal coherence and consistence within a given system; it becomes an issue of analytic truth and falsity.

Although this line of reasoning (supported by the later development of non-Euclidean geometries and symbolic logic) is frequently cited in rejecting Kant's understanding of mathematics (which treats mathematical statements as synthetic a priori rather than analytic), he would find it as unsatisfactory as he found Hobbes's view.[25] From Kant's perspective, conventionalism does not really account for the objective reality of mathematics, for it makes the application of mathematics to the real world completely accidental. It makes mathematics look like a net that we throw into the waters of reality. We will continue using the same conceptual net as long as we succeed at catching fish in it. If it fails, we will try another net, and so on, until we find one that works.

Like Plato and ancient mathematicians, Kant thought that the ties between mathematics and physics must go deeper. Kant insisted on a certain type of intelligibility in mathematics, which seems to have been endangered in the mathematical development initiated by Galileo and Descartes and developed by Newton and Leibniz. For Kant, the applicability of mathematics had an element of necessity in it that cannot be accounted for merely in terms of its own analytic or logical consistency. This insight, in addition to the unavailability of non-Euclidean geometries, led Kant to account for the nature of mathematics in anthropocentric terms; the universality and necessity of mathematics have something to do with the constraints of the cognizing subject. More precisely, Kant believed that mathematical propositions are based on constructions conditioned by the structures of space and time. What gives these constructions their objective

validity? What could serve as a ground for their application to empirical objects? To answer these questions, Kant went back to the interactive nature of human cognition and truths. Insofar as it is given to our senses, an empirical object is underdetermined. To be determined and known, an empirical object must enter into the network of experience, it must be structured and ordered. Part of that structuring, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is conceptual. What is relevant in this context is that Kant believed that one part of it is "mathematical." Through the application of space and time, as the a priori forms of human intuition, an element of necessity enters into the material of our sensibility and structures it in such a way that it allows for the application of mathematics to apparently any variety of natural phenomena. This is what, according to Kant, explains the apparent ability of mathematics to interpret all the phenomena of nature and subject them to the same laws. This is why mathematical constructions in accordance with the a priori forms of our intuition are necessary and universally valid truths.

Whether rightly or not, posterity has rejected Kant's explanation of the nature of mathematical truths. Yet this dispute is not of primary significance for us. What is more important is that modern attempts to understand the nature of mathematics have not justified the assumption of the unique structure of the homogeneous reality that could be revealed by means of numerical relations; they have thereby also undermined the support for the view that science is based on decisive demonstrations of its hypotheses and theories.

3.4 THE LIMITATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC RATIONALITY

Let us pause for a moment and review the path we have traveled in this chapter. Although science represents the highest accomplishment of the cognitive–instrumental rationality of modernity, it is not to be treated as a body of definite truths but as an eternal work in progress. The question of truth in science is more complex than initially expected, and there are good reasons why some philosophers, Kant included, opposed the general trend of imitating the scientific approach in metaphysics and other forms of human experience.

Scientific hypotheses and theories probe into the unfamiliar, where direct evidence either is not available at all, or only scarcely. Science cannot straightforwardly recognize and identify what is the case, as common sense is usually in a position to do, but instead strives to reconstruct the unknown in terms of general nomological relations. This creates a need for introducing abstractions, idealizations, and constructions of various kinds. The line between facts and fictions is quite thin,

frequently even blurred, and it is impossible to expect any literal depiction of reality.

If there are no decisive demonstrations in science, and if scientific truths cannot consist in any literal depiction of reality, are truths in science possible at all? Do we learn any truths about reality by means of science?

Although the ability to decisively demonstrate the truth value of a number of hypotheses and theories would establish whether or not we are in possession of some scientific truths about reality, our inability to do so does not demonstrate that we are not in possession of such truths. We have seen in the previous chapter that identification of what is represents only one of the several aspects of truth which, nevertheless, does not exhaust the entire nature of truth. Similarly, demonstration is also just another important aspect of truth and should be understood as such. We may truly know many things about reality without being able to demonstrate that this is so.

The reason that we are not eager to embrace this conclusion is because the early modern philosophers, who always tended to blur the distinction between truth and a criterion of truth, convinced us to accept unrealistically high mathematical standards of rationality; they tied the possession of truths too closely with the ability to demonstrate their possession. That this does not have to be so, we see in Kant, who did not believe in the possibility of decisive verification and refutation, and who nevertheless held that by means of science we learn many truths about reality. To put the matter more precisely, Kant's position should be presented in terms of a double thesis. On the one hand, by means of science we do learn many things about reality, and our interrogations of nature in the form of scientific experiments bring many answers to our questions. On the other hand, science provides not only answers, but new questions as well.[26]

Taking all of these considerations into account, we can represent the truth triangle for science as follows (figure 6):
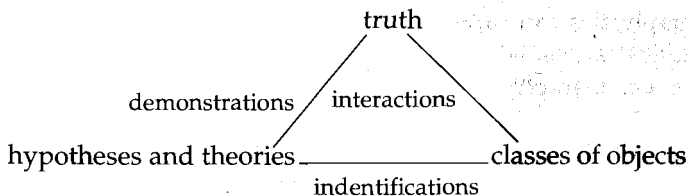
Figure 6

Another pressing issue concerns the aim of science. Kant would agree that one of the great achievements of science is the advancement of theoretical knowledge concerning various types of events and processes in nature.

But this is not its only accomplishment. As Ernst Nagel pointed out, the other achievements of science include the emancipation of men's minds from ancient superstitions, the undermining of the intellectual foundations for moral and religious dogmas, and the transformation of the traditional forms of human economy.[27]

Science has clearly undermined the old beliefs, dogmas, and superstitions. With what has it replaced them? On the one hand, it has provided a vision of a mechanically determined universe, a universe of endless chains of causes and effects in which it is not easy to find a place for human freedom, creativity, and intelligence. On the other hand, science has supplied an increasingly sophisticated technology, which seemingly makes the ancient dreams come true. Computers almost instantly connect all parts of the globe. Space ships have taken men to the moon. Telescopes open up windows into the distant and unknown stars and galaxies. Francis Bacon anticipated such changes when he insisted that knowledge gives us power and that scientific knowledge should be used for our increasing control of nature and the manipulation of the environment. Science is thus much more than "disinterested" research; it is a social force that changes what we believe and the world in which we live. Scientific practice is shaped by the interests and needs that motivate and direct that research. But whose needs and interests are these? Do they belong to the scientific community in which many are no longer convinced that science aims at truth? Or do they belong to big corporations that sponsor most of scientific research for their own profit and interests?

Although Kant could not foresee all of the negative aspects of the application of science that we have witnessed in the twentieth century, he was wise enough to realize that science itself cannot answer these questions and that it is in dire need of guidance. In his words, "Mathematics, natural science, even the empirical knowledge of human kind, have a high value as means, for the most part to contingent but ultimately to necessary and essential ends of humanity."[28] Kant moreover thought that only metaphysics can provide the needed guidance so that science and mathematics can serve the "necessary and essential ends of humanity." What, then, is metaphysics, and what are these ends?

4
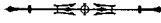
Metaphysical Truths

Thinking and being are the same.

—Parmenides

4.1 TRUTH AS A METAPHYSICAL PROBLEM

Kant believed that we cannot cast off metaphysical questions, because they are too closely tied to the interests of human reason. Better yet, they are too closely tied to the interests of each and every human being. We all wonder who we are and where we come from. We are all puzzled about the meaning of life and concerned about the ever looming threat of death. In the broadest sense, metaphysics is the natural propensity of rational, self-conscious beings to raise questions about the ultimate nature of reality and their role and place in that reality.

Metaphysics is thus similar to common sense in its concern for the vital interests of human beings. When we look at actual metaphysical inquiries, however, we quickly realize that those basic interests are relegated to the background, or even completely ignored. Metaphysical investigations assume a detached, quasi-scientific, third-person perspective. There is some justification for that, insofar as metaphysics, like science, seeks knowledge about distant, even invisible and untouchable, objects. Yet metaphysics is even more general than science, for it aims at grasping the unity, order, and ultimate grounds of reality as a whole. The Greek philosophers believed that this search for the first principles and ultimate causes of reality lays the foundation for all

other sciences and practical activities. The *prote philosophia*—last in or-
der of understanding and knowing but first in order of being and sig-
nificance—provides a general framework within which individual cog-
nitions, actions, and evaluations can be properly located and
understood. How, then, should metaphysics be pursued? What are its
truths and what is its nature?

To deal with these questions, let us recall Descartes's treatment of the
mind–body problem. Although they were never fully separated, there
were at least two mind–body problems in Descartes's philosophy. At the
micro-level there was the issue of the relationship of one individual mind
(say my mind) with one individual body (my body). At the macro-level
there was the more general concern about the very possibility of any mind
interacting with any body. Common sense and science are primarily in-
terested in the first relationship, and metaphysics in the second. It is sim-
ilar with truth. In commonsense experience and scientific practice we
want to know whether this judgment, or that hypothesis, is true or false.
At the metaphysical level we are interested in determining what it means
in principle that something is true or false.

Here again we shall approach our problem in terms of the truth triangle.
Since we are interested in the metaphysical aspect of the problem of truth,
what will stand in the corners of the base line are not observable objects
and our judgments about them, as in commonsense experience; neither are
we going to place the classes of objects and their causal/nomological rela-
tions that we seek through hypotheses and theories, as is the case in sci-
ence. Instead, we shall consider the truth triangle in its most general ver-
sion and put in these opposite corners 'reality' (being, *einai*) and 'reason'
(thought, language, *noesis*, *logos*). In the metaphysical problem of truth
they need to be brought into an appropriate relationship, if truth is to
emerge on the top of the triangle (figure 7):
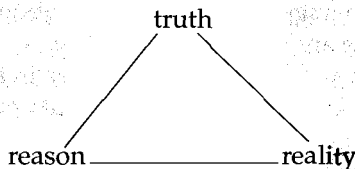
Figure 7

Parmenides was presumably the first to claim that truth requires some
kind of sameness, or more generally, homogeneity and agreement, be-
tween being and thought. Just what kind of sameness is needed, and
whether any kind of sameness is possible in the first place, has become
one of the central metaphysical problems of Western philosophy.

In section 4.2 we shall consider two interpretations of Parmenides's claim, which have brought about two versions of the triangular conception of truth. One of them, the 'classical' Greek and medieval conception of truth, can be represented as the triangular relationship between reality, reason, and truth, with the critical arrow at the bottom pointing from reality to reason (figure 8):
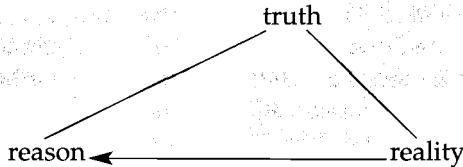
truth

reason ◄——————————— reality

Figure 8

The essential point of this conception was that metaphysical truth is based on the disclosure of an independently existing and previously formed reality. Modern philosophers, suspicious of the very possibility of such a project, performed a subjectivist turn. According to the "modern" conception of truth, revealing truths about reality has more to do with grasping how we could in principle know objects (and reality in general) than with the impossible project of knowing things as they are in themselves. Thinking and being are the same not because thinking passively reflects a pre-formed reality, but only insofar as thinking actively contributes to the emergence and formation of reality in an act of consciousness. In contrast to the previous figure, the moderns reversed the direction of the arrow (figure 9):

truth

reason ——————————► reality
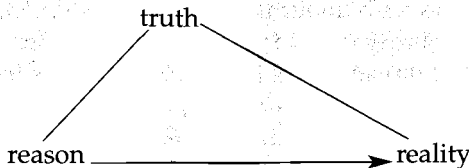
Figure 9

The modern conception treats truth as more related to the nature of our rationality than to the nature of objects, and forces us to rethink the former. How should we understand our rationality? What is it to be rational, and to what extent does the nature of our rationality determine the nature of truth? As we shall see in section 4.3, rationality has been frequently understood in terms of propositional language and the grammar that guides the use of such language. Attempts to cognize reality have been understood, by

Wittgenstein and his followers, as language games that we play, games that have hardly anything to do with truth in the traditional sense. What is the appropriate response to this Wittgensteinian challenge?

According to the popular "postmodernist" view, the proper response is that the triangular relationship between reality, thought/language, and truth completely collapses. Moreover, it becomes questionable whether the concept of truth performs any useful role and whether we should not completely dispose of it. All there is, a postmodernist would say, is a plurality of self-contained "narratives" and language games.[1] In section 4.4, we shall consider in detail the deflationist manner of handling the postmodern attempt to free ourselves from the concept of truth. Following some insights of Frege and Tarski, deflationists argue that the perennial philosophical problems concerning truth are based on an inflated concept of truth. In fact, claim the deflationists, a simple equivalence schema—'p' is true if and only if p—captures this trivial and unimportant concept better than any traditional theory. The schema gives us a way of disquoting 'p' and thus disposing of the truth-predicate.

Although this line of thought is important, it will turn out that deflationists go after the wrong target. What we should be critical of is not the concept of truth, but a very narrow approach to it that ties this concept to the propositional dimension of language. We are not wrong to treat the concept of truth as useful and indispensable; we are wrong in treating linguistic entities (like sentences or propositions) as self-sufficient entities which are the sole bearers of truth. How, then, is this problem to be solved? How should we understand linguistic entities, human rationality, and the possibility of truth?

In the last section, section 4.5, I shall offer answers to these questions by turning back to some of Kant's insights. He was certainly one of those modern philosophers who undermined the classical conception of truth, and there is plenty of textual evidence for the interpretation—widely accepted among Kant scholars—that he endorsed the modern conception of truth. I shall argue that, not only with respect to commonsense truths but also at the metaphysical level, Kant's writings suggest that he was also aware of another, philosophically more fruitful and defensible, interactive conception of truth, according to which the modern conception is as wrong as the classical one. To be rational involves much more than having a linguistic ability, for this empirically discernible ability is itself based on transcendental functions and abilities of the mind. These unconsciously exercised abilities are in turn related to the whole spectrum of human needs, interests, and goals, which are employed only in our interactions with reality. If our linguistic ability and rationality in general cannot be understood in isolation from such interactions, neither can the issue of truth.

4.2 TRIANGULAR CONCEPTIONS OF TRUTH

Consider now some of the basic elements of triangular conceptions of truth. A closer look at the triangle will quickly reveal that truth plays a double role. We can first notice what can be called the *teleological thesis*: Since we expect that truth will help us orient ourselves in reality, we aim at truth. Truth is at the top of the triangle, and the arrow must start from truth and then move toward the relationship between reality and thought. Second, there is the *outcome thesis*: Truth is the result or the outcome of our successful attempts to identify various aspects of reality for what they are. Truth is thus both the initial and the final point of movement within the triangle; the movement of the arrow starts from truth and must returns to it.

Going down from the top to the base line of the triangle, we can single out the third and the most controversial thesis of triangular conceptions of truth, which we can call the *harmony thesis*: Truth requires, or presupposes, some kind of harmony between being and reason, between what is and what is said to be.

There are obviously many ways in which this harmony can be understood, and these differences will lead to various interpretations of the harmony thesis and triangular conceptions of truth. Beginning with Parmenides, the harmony thesis was understood in terms of sameness, falsity in terms of difference, between being and reason, between what is and what is said to be. In later times, the word frequently used in place of sameness was 'adequacy'; thus the medieval formula: *Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*. To make some X and Y adequate literally means "to adjust for each other," "to make appropriate for each other," or "to make each other agree."

Regardless of how the words 'sameness' and 'adequacy' were interpreted, in the classical conception this was always a 'secondary kind' of sameness (or difference), since being and reason were not taken to be ontological equals. Being does not have to adjust to reason; being does not need any adjustment. To be is to be a definite kind of thing. It is to have a firmly-established identity and unity. It is thinking and discourse that need to adjust to being; to disclose truths about reality, they must subordinate themselves to what is. Beings are what they are, regardless of whether and how we think of them. It is precisely for this reason that they have their unity and identity so firmly established that there is something about them to get right. Thus, in the classical conception the harmony thesis was interpreted as the *ontological priority thesis* since it stated the ontological priority of being over reason.

In contrast to the classical conception, its modern counterpart interpreted the harmony thesis in the epistemological way. The difference

came from significant disagreement with the ontological priority thesis. In the modern version of the triangular conception, reason assumed priority over being. This priority was in the first place treated as epistemological, rather than strictly ontological, but, as is to be expected, it had ontological implications as well. First the Cartesian subjectivist turn and then the empiricist criticism of the concepts of substance and causality have severely undermined the priority of being over reason. They have also brought into question the essential thesis of the triangular conception, namely that of the harmony of reality and reason. Descartes's postulation of the epistemological primacy of the isolated conscious ego opened the possibility of a radical dislocation of reason and reality. Arrested by its own ideas (understood as internal mental representations), this rational ego had problems establishing any relation not only with its own body and other extended things, but with other minds as well. Descartes desperately tried to preserve the harmony he himself brought into question by arguing that there is a benevolent God who would prevent massive deceptions and guarantee the intelligibility of reality. Leibniz and Spinoza's attempts to improve upon Descartes's ontological argument made it even more obvious that it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of any creature—infinite or finite—by means of logic and definitions alone. Reason alone cannot prove either the existence of a benevolent God, or that this is the best of all possible worlds created after the design of such a Creator.

As the British empiricists argued, the appeal to experience did not help either; it also pointed toward the contingency and irrationality, not the necessity and rationality, of the natural world. Locke opened a wide crack in the thesis of the sameness of reality and thought when he sharply separated between real and nominal essences, and then categorically denied the possibility of knowing the real essences of material substances (things). Berkeley went further by rejecting Locke's unknowable material substance ("*esse est percipi*" and "an idea in the mind can be like nothing but another idea"), and Hume delivered the coup de grace by denying the spiritual (thinking) substance as well. After Hume, both the object and the subject of cognition appeared not as entities having their own identity and determining properties, but as mere "bundles of perception." These bundles are connected, if at all, by causal connections the validity of which cannot be objectively demonstrated. Hume thus imposed a terrible burden on the shoulders of modernity, namely that of showing that the formal elements which the subject contributes to cognition are not merely contingent and arbitrary. With this issue unresolved, the triangular conception was left unsupported, hanging in thin air.

Kant's Copernican revolution reestablished the harmony between reality and reason, and thus for the time being preserved the triangular con-

ception, but there was a heavy price to pay. Causality and substance, to-
gether with Kant's other categorial concepts, have their objective validity,
but only as formal principles of the cognizing intellect and not as forms to
be discovered in an antecedently formed reality. The objective order is not
given to us, but is rather contributed and imposed by the cognizing intel-
lect.[2] This reestablishment of the harmony between reality and reason has
several important implications for the triangular conception of truth. The
first is that, in accordance with the a priori forms of cognition, nature
comes to be understood in formal and functional, not in substantial terms.
The second is, that, insofar as reality is to be cognizable and meaningful
to the cognitive subject, it has to be posited as an object of possible expe-
rience, that is, an appearance, and not as a thing as it is in itself, in other
words, not an entity fully independent of how it is intuited and conceived
by the cognizing subject. Third, form is epistemologically prior to matter,
for without the form being imposed on it this matter would have no self-
identity and determination. Finally, identity and unity of an object of cog-
nition are *made*, not given.[3] Insofar as they are known, these objects are ar-
tifacts, not pregiven and preformed things. To be an object of cognition is
to be *determinable*, not to be already and originally *determined*, as the Greek
and medieval philosophers held.[4]

A few metaphors can help us further understand the significance of the
shift between the classical and modern conceptions of truth. At the most
general level, the classical conception was first captured by Plato's myth
of the Demiurge, or the Divine Craftsman. In the *Timaeus*, Plato recounted
the story of the Divine Craftsman who, out of preexisting intelligible
forms and inert matter, creates the structured cosmos, or reality, as we
perceive it.[5] This integration of form and matter by the Demiurge ex-
plained the existence of a single, definite, and inherently intelligible order
in the world; it clarified what gives the beings, as we encounter them,
their structure, unity, and identity. Aristotle had an ambiguous relation-
ship with Plato's creation account. Although he did not accept the idea of
a Divine Craftsman, he treated natural objects "as if" they were the work
of one.[6] The Christian model of creation also changed some elements of
Plato's narrative, but not its essential point. In the Christian version, for
instance, the forms that the Demiurge used were not outside His mind,
but were created by Him. Yet insofar as the conception of truth was con-
cerned, there was no relevant difference between these two accounts.
They both postulated a gap between creation and the finite human
knower, the gap that the knower must overcome in acts of cognition by
trying to grasp things as they are in themselves.[7]

Modernity changed this metaphor insofar as it changed the main actor.
It was no longer the Divine Craftsman who played the central role, but
the human being. As we have seen in chapter 2, already in commonsense

cognition Kant compared the human knower with a craftsman, responsible for the artifacts of knowledge. The role assigned to the knower was even more important in scientific cognition, where human reason was said to approach nature not "in the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say, but as an appointed judge who compels the witnesses to answer questions he has himself formulated."[8] In the true spirit of Vico's conception of maker's knowledge, Kant famously claimed that reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own plan and design.[9] Cognition, understood as a planned and intentionally guided interrogation of nature, took the upper hand. Reality was relegated to a secondary and dependent role, insofar as it was conceived as nature. Nature was nothing but a raw material for cognition, and it was brought to the witness stand through scientific experiments. Kant understood an experiment to be a publicly conducted *trial* in which an aspect of nature is artificially isolated and recreated, in order to yield an answer to the judge's question and provide the desired evidence and demonstration.[10]

To this legal metaphor of systematic interrogation and trial, so crucial for a proper understanding of modernity, Kant added a significantly new dimension. As we have seen in the previous chapter, scientific activity consists in such trials in which various hypotheses are proposed and tested. The goal of the trial is to demonstrate their truth or falsity. This process of evaluation is guided by some deeper norms and laws.[11] Kant's novelty consisted in claiming that human reason is not merely a judge that applies the given norms and laws, but also a legislator. The judge does not only regulate our cognitive trials by his questions; he also regulates how, in accordance with what rules and laws, we *ought* to judge. In Kant's words, "the understanding legislates a priori for nature, as objects of sense, in order to give rise to theoretical cognition of nature in a possible experience."[12] The judge legislates—he does not merely discover law but also imposes law—and in this point it seems that nothing could prevent man from realizing Bacon's dream of the New Atlantis, or Freud's vision of the dictatorship of human reason (see section 3.1).

Kant's judge is the modern symbol of objectivity and impartiality. He assumes a disinterested third-person perspective, has the autonomy to introduce laws and the authority to guide a trial according to rules that apply to anyone, regardless of the persons involved and the case considered. He protects the rights of the involved parties and guides the trial with one goal in mind: to establish objective truth and satisfy the requirements of justice. The judge is thereby the symbol of rationality per se. Although this symbolism may capture the intuitive idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the modern conception of truth, what we have to do next is to go beyond this metaphorical level and try to get a

better grasp of the nature of human rationality, insofar as it pertains to our understanding of truth.

4.3 RATIONALITY, COGNITIVE LAWS, AND TRUTH

In the attempt to fend off Hume's attacks on the objective validity of the concepts of substance and causality and reaffirm the harmony between reason and reality, Kant came to some far-reaching insights. The concepts of substance and cause belong to the group of a priori and universally shared concepts, which are the "root concepts" (*Stammbegriffe*) of all cognition.[13] These categories are not the most general ways in which any being could be described, as Aristotle thought, nor are they the psychological mechanism of association, as Hume reasoned. Instead, Kant tried to show that they are formal concepts, the rules of pure thinking about any object. The categories are basic functions in terms of which what is (or can be) given by means of the senses is connected and structured into objectively valid (thus true *or* false) cognitive judgments.

For Kant the issues concerning the number, proper function, and objective validity of the categories were among the central metaphysical questions. If for the sake of argument we assume that Kant's categories indeed serve as the a priori laws of our cognitive trials, we must ask the following question. Why was Kant so convinced that in various cultures or individuals there could be no alternative sets of categories, and that moreover the list of basic categories does not change through time? To understand this, it is important to remember that, like most modern philosophers before him, Kant thought that something like the perspective-neutral norms of reasoning are necessary to justify the subjectivist turn in general and the Enlightenment project in particular. Some rational norms provided by the subject need to provide and guarantee the stability and order of the known world, if the source of such stability and order cannot be found in reality itself.

Unlike many other modern philosophers, however, Kant realized that these norms cannot be borrowed from mathematics, since that discipline merely provides the external procedural rules of demonstration, the rules of analysis of the finished products of cognition. What Kant wanted were more deeply integrated norms, the rational norms that are needed for the synthesis of cognition as well as for its analysis. Furthermore, mathematical axioms are constructions and, according to Kant, in an important sense the desired norms are not. For this reason Kant turned to traditional logic. What appealed to him about traditional logic was that its laws and principles are not constructions, nor are they arbitrary. Kant similarly believed that the general forms of judgment are not arbitrary constructions; they

underlie and thus make possible all rational thinking, and belong to the *phylogeny*, not the *ontogeny*, of the human mind.[14] Kant was persuaded that, just like the laws of general logic, the categories of the a priori laws of all cognition do not change from one individual to another, nor from one culture to another. The logical laws and the forms of judgment are the functions which are responsible for the rational determination of any material of thinking, for a formally noncontradictory and coherent operation of the mind. The categories, by contrast, are functions that have more to do with the cognitive determination of the objects of judgment. The logical forms of judgment are void of all content, but the categories are not; they introduce a certain nonsyntactical content, the "transcendental content," that guides the combination and unification of the material of the senses into an object of cognition. Nevertheless, Kant thought that, for any rational being with an intellect which, like ours, is discursive and not intuitive, the origin and the precise number of the categories can be determined a priori and with complete certainty.

Hardly anyone has been convinced by Kant's apparent insistence on the existence of an unchanging, ahistorical, and culturally neutral reason. Nor has posterity been persuaded by Kant's insistence on the unique set of categories.[15] Just as the objects themselves are not fixed and fully determined on their own, neither are these functions of the mind. To capture them we also need a dynamic and more developmentally-oriented account, rather than a static, never-changing picture. Why expect that the traditional classical logic, which was appropriate for the classical ontology dominated by the conception of independently and fully formed objects, would still be appropriate for the new ontology focused on functions and dynamical interrelations? Kant's "transcendental logic" was an attempt in this latter direction, but it was not radical enough. Indeed, if Kant's legal metaphor is taken seriously, it is not difficult to see that, at any given time, different societies have laws that are not always mutually congruent, and that within any considered society the laws—even the most fundamental and constitutional laws—are changed and modified through time. Why then expect that the laws of the intellect cannot vary, or that they cannot change through time? Could it ever be shown that one set of categories is indispensable, and thereby unique?

Very similar questions puzzled Wittgenstein in the later stages of his career. Unlike Kant, Wittgenstein's favorite metaphor was not of a trial and the laws that govern it, but one of language and its grammar. This, however, need not mark a significant deviation from Kant, for in various writings Kant encouraged this metaphor as well.[16] Since they both argued against the substantial and in favor of the functional understanding of concepts,[17] Kant and Wittgenstein would agree that grammatical rules and structures are not empirical in the sense that they are based on a de-

scription of facts; the grammatical structures cannot be based on descriptions of facts for any such description already presupposes the use of language and its grammar. Kant and Wittgenstein would also argue against the thesis of ontological primacy, as it was defended by the classical conception of truth, and further agree that we must rid ourselves of the view, which Kant called "transcendental realism" and which Wittgenstein associated with the "Augustinian picture of language." That is, they would both reject the view that grammar corresponds to an essential structure inherent in reality, and that there is a unique and absolute truth of a metaphysical sort awaiting discovery by rational human beings.

There were also fundamental differences between Kant and Wittgenstein. Like most traditional philosophers, Kant was primarily focused on what is sometimes called the "vertical" dimension of cognition, that is, the relationship between the mind and reality. By contrast, the later Wittgenstein was almost exclusively concerned with the "horizontal dimension," or the relationship between different language users and the social aspects of human rationality. Wittgenstein realized that we do not acquire language by learning to relate individual words with individual things, as common sense naively assumes. Indeed, there are many words that we use and understand for which no corresponding object can be singled out. Recall here our discussion of imaginary objects and the objects of traditional metaphysics. The traditional ontology assumed that the word 'reality' represents an object of which we stand to gain knowledge; the Latin word *res*, from which the word 'reality' is derived, means 'thing' or 'substance'.[18] But, for our modern ears and the nonsubstantial ontological point of view, 'reality' cannot be a proper name for an individual object or substance. If it refers to anything at all, then we may only be able to say what it is not, or to speak about it in a metaphorical or symbolic way.

We learn a native language, Wittgenstein realized, not by learning individual words that stand for individual things or their properties, but by learning patterns of connections between words and grammatical rules that regulate their use. We learn language by engaging in linguistic practices and "language games." Of central importance for Wittgenstein was that there are many such language games, and that there are many grammatical rules governing the use of such games. This led Wittgenstein to the view that, although grammar is used in evaluating whether individual judgments within a game are true or false, grammar itself is neither true nor false.[19] Shifting the pendulum away from Kant's position in the direction of Hume's charge of arbitrariness in the basic principles of thinking, Wittgenstein argued that grammar is an arbitrary creation that can be useful on one occasion, or for one kind of purpose, but useless for another.

Wittgenstein still operated within the modern assumption of the priority of subject over object, but he understood this priority and the means used to established it in a dynamic and fluid way. The grammar that we use is not something fixed once and forever—it develops and changes through time. There is, furthermore, a multiplicity of grammars, rather than one unique and indispensable set of rules and standards. Different language games, played for various reasons and with a variety of goals and interests, require different underlying grammars. Moreover, although each game presupposes *a* grammar, that does not show that there can be only one grammar that is uniquely constitutive of the game in question. Just as one legal system is modified through time, and just as games such as chess undergo a slow but visible evolution, so it is the case with all our cognitive and linguistic games. The rules and structures of these games modulate, and so do we—the subjects—who play and participate in those games. Our own identity is not something fixed and frozen, but rather undergoes various transformations and reversals.[20]

Wittgenstein's understanding of language, and thus indirectly of human reason, brings us to an important juncture for triangular conceptions of truth. If the primacy of human reason and language is acclaimed in the Wittgensteinian way, this account certainly goes against the harmony thesis. Human reason with its arbitrary grammars and language games cannot establish any harmony between reason and reality, nor does it intend to do so. For altogether different reasons than those cited by Descartes, human reason—encapsulated in its horizontal dimension—appears both self-supporting and self-sufficient.[21]

The Wittgensteinian storm is by no means over yet, for its thunder rocks not only the harmony thesis but the outcome and the teleological theses as well. If the fundamental grammatical rules of our various cognitive and other language games are arbitrary and without truth value, how is it possible to make a rational preference among inconsistent games? How is it possible to make and evaluate a rational choice between two mutually inconsistent judgments, if they belong to two different games? Does not Wittgenstein's view lead us to accept one sort of relativism or another?

Wittgenstein's account of language and language games forces us to rethink the very conception of rationality and reason to which we subscribe. Moreover, it thereby also challenges the usefulness of the triangular conception of truth. What, if anything, do we really gain by attributing truth to our judgments, propositions, or sentences? If all there is are various language games, why would truth be important in the first place?

Wittgenstein himself did not draw such radical conclusions from his investigations into language games and their grammars. Yet such conclusions are quite consistent with his own examples and remarks, and more-

over seem to be a reasonable line of development of the subjectivist preoccupation of modern philosophy inaugurated by Descartes. These radical conclusions are drawn by various "postmodern" philosophers, who try to do away with the traditional philosophical problems and puzzles. Inspired by Wittgenstein, they call them "pseudo-problems" based on the muddles and misunderstandings of ordinary language. They challenge the triangular conception of truth and put the concept of truth itself on trial. What, then, is the proper reaction to this challenge?

4.4 TRUTH ON TRIAL: A CRITIQUE OF DEFLATIONISM

In this section we shall consider the currently-popular 'deflationist' response to the Wittgensteinian and postmodernist challenge. The deflationists agree with the postmodernists that the concept of truth is far less important than philosophers usually take it to be. The perennial philosophical problems concerning triangular conceptions are based on an inflated concept of truth. As Horwich puts it, "Nothing could be more mundane and less puzzling than the concept of truth."[22] In contrast to the postmodernists' frontal dismissal, however, the deflationists think that the concept of truth cannot be rejected altogether. Even if it should not be treated as a significant metaphysical concept, 'truth' still has a *formal* or *logical* function in our thinking and language. This function is captured by a simple equivalence schema: "*p*" is true if and only if *p*. The schema renders the nominal definition of truth in a clear and unambiguous way and eliminates the need to search for the real definition of truth, the quest that occupied philosophers for centuries. The schema says all there is to say about the concept of truth, by fixing "the extension of the truth-predicate for language L."[23] This is possible because the schema explicates "is true" not by associating this phrase with a property like correspondence, coherence, or ideal assertability, but simply by coming to accept all sentences ('T-sentences') of the form: "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white.

The schema thus provides the deflationist's interpretation of the harmony thesis; yet it does so neither in terms of ontological priority, as the classical conception does, nor in terms of epistemological priority, as does its modern counterpart; nor by means of Wittgenstein's grammar priority. The deflationists defend the harmony thesis in simple *logical* terms, in terms of logical equivalence. If this conception works, it would have the virtue of resolving the puzzle of truth, while at the same time preventing us from getting caught in the quicksand of the traditional metaphysical problems concerning truth, with which we have been struggling for so long. But does the deflationist's account work?

One crucial test consists in establishing whether the schema really fixes the extension of the truth-predicate, and this can be tested by examining whether the schema is context sensitive. If the schema cannot account for contextual (or situational) factors, it *eo ipso* cannot account for the application of the truth-predicate in all cases. And if this is so, the schema would turn out to be, if not incorrect, then at least incomplete.[24]

To make the schema work, we must introduce various non-logical elements. As the concept of truth is relative to a specific language, it is similarly relative to various situational factors. Consider, for instance, the significance of spatial and temporal factors. Without such determinations, the sentence "Snow is white" does not express anything true or false. If this is a contingent claim and not part of a definition of snow, it would be about snow in general. Yet there is no such thing as snow in general, so the sentence could not be referring to that. There is only this snow or that snow, snow now and snow then. And while perhaps snow is always white on the North Pole, it is not so in the city of Boston; a day after it falls, it is gray or black, not white. The equivalence schema is simply incomplete if it does not relate the notion of truth to spatial and temporal determinations. What is true today, need not be true tomorrow. What is true here may be false there.

The whole issue is complicated further when we realize that the notion of truth has to be related to a speaker. Despite the equivalence schema, sentences like "I am cold" do not express anything true or false, unless related to some individual speakers, for example, you and me. And when related to you and me, they can be true about you and false about me.

How can the deflationist account avoid the possibility of one and the same sentence expressing quite different things? If truth is situation related, the contextual boundaries of the situation must be identified or determined in some way. As long as this problem is not solved, the equivalence schema cannot succeed in fixing the extension of the truth-predicate for natural languages, which the deflationists take to be the main virtue of the schema.

Although deflationists advance different strategies for dealing with this problem, I argue that all of their attempts must fail because they are based on a mistaken assumption. For instance, Quine and Horwich both believe that the contextually relevant factors can be captured and formalized, and disagree with respect to how this is to be done: in terms of eternal sentences (Quine) or by expanding the schema (Horwich).[25] But why believe that *all* situationally relevant factors could be captured and formalized in the first place?

To illustrate some of the difficulties involved, imagine the following conversation. One person says: "This is the best move." After a while, the other replies: "It is true. That is the best move." It should be obvious that

we do not account for anything if we simply apply the equivalence schema here: "This is the best move" is true if and only if this is the best move. In this case we would not be sure what this assertion refers to, much less what it means.

The assertion is partially clarified if we know that these people are playing chess, and that one of them utters the sentence in question while he is making his move. Someone familiar with the chess notation could further "liberate" the original assertion from some of its contextual factors by reformulating it as follows: "In the position in which white has his king on g1, queen on d1, etc., and black his king on g8, queen on d7, etc., 1. Qd1-h5 is the best move." This reformulation gives the exact position on the board, regardless of whether we are at the site of the game, and regardless of the time when the game is played. All of this must sound promising to deflationists, and yet one difficult problem remains: How should we understand the phrase "the best move"? When the player makes his move and asserts: "This is the best move," he could have one of virtually infinitely many things in mind. For instance, he could mean: "This is the only move that prevents checkmate," or "This move starts a dangerous attack," or "This move transposes my position into a favorable endgame." Or perhaps he could have in mind something like this: "This is the best move I could come up with," or "Not even a grandmaster could find a better move," or "I am going to scare my opponent by telling him that this is the best move." The list can go on and on, and unless we can check with the player we cannot be sure what the intended meaning is.

How, then, could the relevant situational factors be captured and formalized? Deflationists may now try the following strategy: Let us "objectify" the situation by further arguing that in every position there is one best move. Let us furthermore define the best move as one that maximizes the chances of winning the game and/or minimizes the chances of losing it. The proposition in question is then true if and only if the move played maximizes the chances of winning the game and/or minimizes the chances of losing it. The proposition now appears decontextualized and assigned a definite truth value, regardless of whether we *know* its truth value. This is what deflationists want, and it seems that they can accomplish their goal.[26]

This strategy is not without its problems. For instance, it is dubious that in every position there is one and only one best move. Another problem is that a move—say an attacking move—which maximizes one's chances of winning usually at the same time maximizes, not minimizes, one's chances of losing the game. Furthermore, one excellent move in the given position maximizes the player's chance of winning by starting a dangerous attack on the opponent's king. Another excellent move in the same

position maximizes the player's chances of winning by transposing a middlegame position into a favorable endgame. In terms of our imaginary scale, both moves have the same value. The preference of one over the other will depend on the player's style, on his awareness of his opponent's strengths and weaknesses, on the momentary inspiration, or some other factors.

The player's intentions and goals cannot be dismissed; whether his move is the best or not will partially depend on them. It could be the best with respect to one goal but not so with respect to another. If the player's intentions and goals cannot be dismissed, his utterance cannot be fully decontextualized and objectified. The content of the player's assertion depends on more than the words used and their grammatical and logical connections. The content of his assertion cannot be identified independently of the act of speaking and judging. An assertion is a reaction to a certain situation and can be understood only in the context of the speaker's attempt to orient himself in it. Put even more generally, the meaningfulness of language cannot be accounted for on the discursive level alone.[27] If this is really so, if some contextual and teleological factors cannot be fully captured and formalized, the equivalence schema cannot be fully context sensitive. And this means that the schema cannot fix the extension of the truth-predicate.

We are now in a position to question whether there is equivalence between the two sides of the schema. Even a cursory look at any variation of the schema shows that the left-hand side always contains more than the right-hand side. Why, then, should we assume that they are equivalent?

Deflationism is based on the idea that claiming a proposition is true is saying nothing more than what is asserted by the proposition itself.[28] It may thus be the case that deflationists do not even need the full equivalence; an implication from left to right may be all they need. Unfortunately for them, their view is simply mistaken.

As we have seen in our chess example, the reference of a proposition need not be established clearly and uniquely by the words uttered. It is sometimes impossible to say what assertion is made by uttering a referential proposition without knowing the contextual features of the act of utterance in general, and the intentions and goals of the speaker in particular. When our assertions "aim at truth," when they aim at identifying the relevant aspects of a situation, they contain an irreducible teleological component. Consequently, the extent to which they succeed in accomplishing their goal depends not only on the features of the situation and environment; it also depends on the speaker's goals and intentions. Because of the significance of the teleological component, and insofar as performing an action can be comparable to making an assertion (e.g., taking an umbrella with me when leaving the house is comparable

to making a statement that it is likely to rain today), an analogy with action is useful. There is an analogous distinction between ["S's doing of X" is good] and [S is doing X] on the one hand, and ["S's assertion that p" is true] and [S asserts that p] on the other. To tell someone that S is doing X is to identify (or report, or describe) what S is doing. To say that S's doing of X is good, however, is to *evaluate* S's action. Similarly, when we say that a proposition is true, we say something more, and something different, than the proposition itself. To say that S's assertion that p is true is to *evaluate* S's assertion, not to repeat it. When we aim at truth, when we aim at identifying what is the case, what we mean when we assert that a proposition is true is that the goal has been accomplished and that we have successfully identified the relevant aspect of the situation.

Deflationism does not provide an adequate solution to the ancient puzzle of truth. The equivalence schema is not just incomplete but incorrect. The reason for the deflationists' failure is that they treat sentences and propositions as if they were self-subsistent entities, as something by means of which we can assert what is the case, but which are separated from the speakers who assert them and from the situations they purport to identify.[29] They forget, or perhaps overlook, that assertions and judgments are our reactions to the situations in which we find ourselves and that their content is dependent on us as speakers, on our mastery of language, and our intentions and goals. The deflationists fail to see that assertions and judgments do not stand on their own, but connect us with the situations in which we find ourselves. Making assertions and judgments is not simply talking about something, but one way of relating to the situations in which we find ourselves; it is a way of encountering the world and interacting with it.

4.5 AN INTERACTIVE CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

An old proverb has it that in everything false there is something true. Looking back at all the views we have considered so far, is there anything they are right about? Is there anything we can learn from them?

We have considered several different triangular conceptions of truth and various attempts to understand the harmony thesis. We have seen four attempts to articulate and defend this thesis: the ontological, the epistemological, the grammatical, and the logical. All of them face serious difficulties, and each is a one-sided and insufficient account of the possibility of objective truth.

But what else can be done? Where else can we find a refuge for the idea of objective truth? If we turn back upon the path traveled so far,

there are some insights worth reflecting upon. Parmenides, and many after him, thought that in order to have truth, being and thought have to be the same. Yet as much as Parmenides's legacy shaped the path of the subsequent history of Western metaphysics, it has mislead us; this legacy does not make it easier but more difficult to solve the initial puzzle of truth.

Parmenides was the first to give an expression to what has become a deceptive tendency of the Western mind, namely a tendency to see reality as completely homogeneous. This tendency leads to two kinds of metaphysical orientations. One is to argue in favor of a certain parallelism with respect to being and reason, or with respect to the basic principles of being and reason. In the previous chapter (3.2–3.3) we have already seen what insurmountable difficulties face such attempts. The realization of their failures and the desire the defend the homogeneity thesis, lead to a more radical strategy—reductive monism. Whether of materialistic or idealistic kinds, reductive monism is always an oversimplification and distortion of the real phenomena. The world is neither all matter, nor is it all spirit; living organisms cannot be adequately explained in purely materialistic terms, nor could an inanimate layer of reality be properly explained in terms of vitalistic principles.

We are all aware of the flux and variety of the world, and we all search for their underlying rational unity and order. Yet this does not mean that all layers of reality must be homogeneous with each other. Minds and bodies are not the same, and yet they relate to each other in all kinds of ways. It is similar with thought and being. Thought is a kind of being, yet they are different. Almost all of those who accept the view of metaphysical heterogeneity of the world interpret it in terms of hierarchical arrangements: Either reality is taken to dominate over reason, or reason is taken to have priority over the rest of being.

Like many others, Kant for the most part accepted the thesis of subordination of one heterogeneous element of reality over the other. Yet in his philosophy we can also find an indication of a view that the heterogeneous elements of reality are involved in a dynamic interactive relationship that does not require any hierarchical order. We can understand thought and being as different in the way in which "ϕ" and "x" in the interactive propositional function "$\phi(x)$" are different. "Different," however, does not mean completely ontologically and functionally independent and separate. "ϕ" and "x" work together and create a certain harmony together. Indeed, although distinguishable, "ϕ" and "x" need each other and depend on each other. Kant's famous dictum concerning concepts and intuitions finds its full application here: Functions without variables are empty, variables without functions are blind. It cannot be said that one is more important than the other, or that one dominates over the other, for

they have different roles, and one without the other is incomplete. Only in their interaction can they fully realize their potential and fulfill their roles.

In chapter 2 we saw a similar attempt to account for the nature of commonsense truths (2.4). What we have there called the subjective constraints are analogous to the function "ϕ," and the objective constraints are represented by the variable "x." The subjective and objective elements permeate each other and interact in order to create judgments with a determinable truth value. These elements are not the same, but by interacting with each other they create the possibility of objectively valid judgments.

In chapter 3 we saw that the concept of interaction is needed to account for the possibility of scientific truths, despite the prevailing view that science is based on fully detached, perspective-, and value-neutral research. Instead of trying to detach the subject of cognition from its object, in the way that science does, and instead of artificially separating a cognitive aspect of the function "ϕ" from all other functions of reason, we should rather consider the subject in its interaction with the object, as well as consider this subject in all the richness and ambiguity of its subjective elements. Cognitive games—scientific or otherwise—make sense and are possible only within broader practices, and these practices never involve only the manipulation of concepts and numbers. They always involve our memory and background knowledge, our senses and imagination, our goals, concerns, and volition. Human beings are not well programmed and perfectly functioning calculating machines, but living creatures that cognize sometimes correctly and at least as many times incorrectly. We are beings embedded in the world and dependent on it in incalculably many ways. Our limited cognitive abilities, guided by our aspirations and fears, lead to many correct insights, but also to many mistakes and illusions.

The function "ϕ" must be complex not only because it is codetermined by many subjective factors, but also because it is manifested in various kinds of processes relevant for the proper and comprehensive account of truth. So far, our inquiry has suggested three of them: orientation, identification, and evaluation. We are situated in the world and try to orient ourselves in it. This leads to our attempts to identify various aspects of the situations in which we find ourselves; it leads to the formation of assertions and judgments. Our assertions and judgments are evaluated with respect to whether they adequately identify what is the case. They help us to orient ourselves in reality; they provide some answers, but they also lead to new questions and new challenges. And the process continues on and on, and at every stage of this process there is a need for interaction.

If we would like graphically to represent the results of our inquiry, our truth triangle will look like this (figure 10):
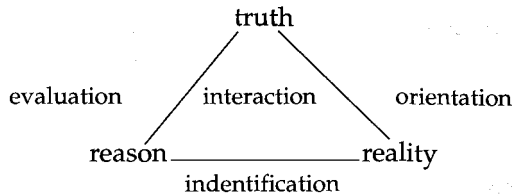
Figure 10

This interactive way of understanding the harmony thesis may be our best shot at overcoming the unnecessary separation of the subject and the object of cognition and of the unjustified overemphasis of either side. The interactive conception of truth outlined here may be our best chance of steering between the dogmatism of Parmenides and the relativism of Protagoras and solving the problem that has plagued philosophical minds for centuries.[30] But even if this is the way to go, we are still far from a developed and tested conception of truth. Instead of solving the riddle of truth, we have in many ways only crossed its threshold.

II
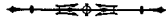
Illusions

5
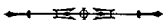
Metaphysical Illusions

What disturbs and alarms man are not the things
but his opinions and fancies about the things.

—Epictetus

5.1 DIALECTIC OF PURE REASON

"Finding a false proposition helps us in finding the true one," said Kant, "just as indicating the wrong path serves us in finding the right one among the number of roads one can take."[1] But how do we find which propositions are false? What distinguishes such propositions from those that are true?

The nominal definition tells us that truth consists in the agreement or harmony of our cognitions with their objects. Falsity, by contrast, would then consist in their disagreement or lack of harmony. We have interpreted the relationship in question in the interactive way, by means of the interactive function $\phi(x)$. Falsity can now be understood in two different ways. In one of them we get a false judgment because something went wrong with the interactive process. Both a "ϕ" and an "x" are present but they are mismatched. This happens with empirical cognitions and judgments, when factors like inattention or an absence of relevant experience come into play. More attention, careful calculation, or additional experience can remedy the problem and lead to the proper identification of the considered object, or to the adequate evaluation of our knowledge claim concerning that object.

In a different type of case the falsity arises because no appropriate interaction has been accomplished in the first place. This may happen, for example, when no suitable "x" is or could be given for the cognitive interaction. Or it may occur when the function "φ" is construed in such an inappropriate or arbitrary manner that no available "x" can interact with it. The following example may illustrate the two kinds of falsity. A newly built house may not function as intended because the constructors did not carefully follow and execute the plan of the architect; they may have overlooked this or that element of the plan, mismeasured here and there, and so on. But an even worse thing may happen. The house may collapse if the plan itself is a faulty one; the constructors followed the guidelines in every single detail, yet the construction collapsed because, say, the pillars were not strong enough to support the upper floors and the roof.

It goes to Kant's credit that he realized that the second kind of falsity is philosophically far more important than the first one; the inappropriate design of the function "φ" can lead to dangerous disorientation in reality. In such cases there is a semblance (*Schein*) of the proper interaction and, on the surface, by simply looking at the formed judgments, there is no visible difference between (true or false) judgments based on the interaction and those that are not. This semblance of interaction, the semblance of the properly formed truth triangle, is what makes it so difficult to detect this kind of disorienting falsity. This is also what makes it so fascinating for philosophers. Following Descartes's lead, Kant argued that metaphysics— the heart and soul of philosophy—should serve as "a weapon against such speculative errors, i.e., against speculative illusions."[2]

Speculative errors and illusions, which represent the second kind of falsity, indicate the presence of nonaccidental, massive, and systematic misorientations that are neither readily detectable nor easily removed. Although we shall notice differences between them, all such massive and systematic errors we shall call by the common name 'illusions'.[3] Under that name Kant understands the kind of fraudulent viewpoints in which we hold "the subjective grounds of our judgments to be objective."[4] Put more generally, illusions are the results of our false objectification and projections into objects—or reality as a whole—of what has real existence only in our thinking and imagination.[5] To clarify this kind of misleading error, in a memorable metaphor Kant compared Plato with a "light dove" who, "in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space." On "the wings of the ideas" Plato left the world of the possible experience that provides the necessary resistance and ventured in the empty space. "He did not notice that he made no headway by his efforts, for he had no resistance, no support, as it were, by which he could stiffen himself, and to which he could apply his powers in order to get his understanding off the ground."[6]

Kant was convinced that the errors Plato committed were not his alone; they illustrate "a customary fate of human reason in speculation to finish its edifice as early as possible and only then to investigate whether the ground has been adequately prepared for it." On Kant's view, Plato and other speculative metaphysicians have uncritically assumed that rationality and order permeate reality itself. Kant argued that human reason—the judge and legislator—is responsible for introducing the order into the world, insofar as we know it (see 4.3). He furthermore realized that this creative role of reason is a sword that cuts two ways. Just as an architect can design functional houses but also something like Escher's impossible-to-make buildings, and just as a real legislator may introduce a law that serves the best interest of justice but also a law that is in fact detrimental for justice, human reason may fail to "legislate" the proper order; it may mislead us to accept as real what upon a rigorous examination turns out to be illusory.

To avoid transcendental illusions and properly orient ourselves in reality, we could expect Kant to reject any other-worldly Platonic ambition and favor a conception of metaphysics similar to that of Descartes's tree of knowledge; while various scientific disciplines form the branches of the tree and physics its trunk, metaphysics provides the roots of the tree of knowledge. As is the case with the mythological "tree of life," the roots of the tree of knowledge cannot float freely in empty space but must be firmly grounded in the soil, so that they can nourish the growth of the entire tree. And if metaphysics can be so embodied, then we can expect it to be not the source of illusions but to lead us to the apprehension of order and genuine orientation in reality.[7]

Kant was fully aware of Descartes's conception and endorsed it to a significant degree, and yet could not entirely abandon the Platonic ambitions of pure reason. Indeed, it will turn out that his wavering between the two conceptions creates one of the deepest unresolved tensions in Kant's philosophy. Following Descartes's image, Kant thought of metaphysics as "a science that is indispensable for human reason, and from which one can chop down every stem that has shot up without ever being able to eradicate its roots."[8] And he also sounds Platonic in maintaining that reason tends naturally to separate itself from experience and immediate interactions with objects. Kant then looked upon reason as an entirely separate, self-subsistent unity. He regarded it as a faculty not directly related to objects and our intuitions of them, but a faculty of mediate inferring and judgment. This distance from objects makes it difficult, if not impossible, for reason to make valid cognitive claims. Kant was nevertheless convinced that the doubts and questions that preoccupy and torment our reason are by no means arbitrary and accidental. They do not fall down from the clouds of capricious metaphysical speculations, but

erupt from the underworld, from "the womb of reason itself."[9] If meta-physics really emerges from that darkness, if it has to underlie all other intellectual efforts and show them the way, as Kant believed it should, then metaphysics must really be in a close interactive relation with them rather than standing above them. But how are we to unearth these roots, this deep and hidden womb of human thinking and being? What exactly is that womb in which the possibility of objective truth may be grounded? Conversely: What is the ground of such illusions?

In the introductory sections to the Transcendental Dialectic Kant was not sufficiently clear on these issues. When he talked about the 'concepts of reason', or 'transcendental ideas' as he also called them, it was left obscure whether they are only used to make inferences that lead to transcendental illusions, or whether they first emerge as the result of reason's inferences and transcendental illusions. What speaks in favor of the first option is that Kant claimed that reason does not really generate any concept but rather converts some (not all) suitable categorial concepts into transcendental ideas. If so, the transcendental illusion would arise as the result of the inappropriate *use* of the concepts of reason. In that case the problem would consist in our illegitimate and unrestrained application of categories (such as substance and causality) outside the realm of possible experience; instead of an epistemological function, the categories would be inappropriately assigned an ontological role.

What gives support to the second possibility is that the ideas of reason are significantly different from the categories and their correlation is far from being clear. To "convert" the categories into the ideas of reason may already seem to presuppose an illegitimate inference, and it may be that this conversion is the process that leads to the formation of an arbitrary function"ϕ"—that by which a transcendental illusion arises. The dilemma, then, is the following: Does the transcendental illusion consist in having the transcendental ideas, or in misemploying them in a certain way? Is human reason "the seat of the transcendental illusions" because it possesses certain ideas, or because it misuses them?

Kant's resolution of this dilemma, the further text of the Transcendental Dialectic sufficiently reveals, was the latter one. Yet since we are in possession of some concepts which, like 'fate' and 'fortune', are fictitious by their nature, the former option deserves attention as well.[10] How can we know that at least some of our transcendental ideas are not like the faulty architectural plan mentioned before? What is to show that the transcendental ideas, and thereby the function "ϕ" as well, are not arbitrary, fictitious, or illegitimate? By analogy to the Metaphysical Deduction of the categories, Kant appealed one more time to general logic (see 4.3); he tried to establish the number and origin of the ideas of reason and found the clue to their discovery in the three kinds of syllogistic inferences: cat-

egorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive. Following this "discovery," he seemed to limit all ideas of reason to three: that of immortality, freedom, and God. This also explains why Kant insisted that there are only three fundamental metaphysical questions, namely those dealing with the immortality of the soul, the possibility of freedom, and the existence of God.

This "deduction" is certainly not as careful and is even less convincing than that in the Transcendental Analytic. It may have been closer to truth to say that in the alleged discovery of these ideas Kant simply followed the division of traditional speculative metaphysics into ontology, rational psychology, cosmology, and theology. His Transcendental Analytic assumes the role of ontology, and the other three metaphysical disciplines are treated in the Transcendental Dialectic as the Paralogism, the Antinomies, and the Ideal of reason.

A more consequential problem is that, despite Kant's claim to the contrary, all three forms of the transcendental inference discussed in the Dialectic follow the pattern of the hypothetical syllogism. This form of syllogism Kant related to "the idea of the complete series of conditions."[11] Already in the Preface for the second edition of the *Critique* Kant introduced the view that the essential aspect of metaphysics consists in the recognition that reason searches for the unconditioned. Moreover, continued Kant, reason—necessarily and quite rightfully—demands this unconditioned for everything conditioned, thus demanding that the series of conditions be completed by means of that unconditioned.[12]

Kant's "Dialectic of Pure Reason" has undoubtedly done a great service to the subsequent development of philosophy by exposing many arbitrary and illusory pretensions of human reason. What remains unclear is whether in his own pursuit of the unconditioned Kant himself was not seduced by similar illusions. We must wonder, for instance, why Kant argued that it is in the nature of reason to search for the unconditioned? Is the search for the absolute and unconditioned something that reason does on its own, or is reason only used as an instrument of some more deeply grounded needs and drives? Do we really need something absolute and unconditioned—an Archimedean point of a kind—for a proper orientation in reality, or is our search for it the source of our greatest illusions? Was not Epictetus right to suggest that it is not the things but rather our opinions and fancies about the things that disturb us?

5.2 ANTINOMIES OF PURE REASON

To see how Kant would answer these questions, let us turn to the section on the antinomies of pure reason, which ranks among the greatest discoveries in the history of philosophical thinking. Like many of his

philosophical terms, Kant borrowed the word 'antinomy' from jurisprudence, where it was used to mark a conflict between laws. In Kant's "Dialectic," this word represented the conflict of opposing dogmatic claims inherent in the 'cosmological idea' of the world as a whole. He detected four such pairs of the opposed propositions: Thesis 1: The world has, as to time and space, a beginning; Antithesis 1: The world is, as to time and space, infinite. Thesis 2: Everything in the world consists of elements which are simple; Antithesis 2: There is nothing simple, but everything is composite. Thesis 3: There are in the world causes through freedom; Antithesis 3: There is no freedom, but all is nature. Thesis 4: In the series of the world-causes there is some necessary being; Antithesis 4: There is nothing necessary in the series, but all is contingent.

In the face of such apparent contradictions, Kant realized he had to look deep within the nature of reason to come to terms with this conflict. What he found in the depths of reason was in some ways quite simple, and in others very complex. What was simple about it was that all four antinomies arise by a formally identical syllogism. The major premise is what Kant called the "principle of reason": If the conditioned is given, then the entire sum of conditions and hence the absolutely unconditioned is also given. The minor premise is: By means of the empirical synthesis, objects of the senses are given as conditioned.[13] Based on these two apparently true premises, reason succeeds in going beyond the limits of sense experience by inferring that, for any object of the senses, the entire series of the conditioned must be completed and the unconditioned must be given.

The complex part was to discern what in that syllogism is misleading and illusory. To do that, it is necessary to clarify the concepts of the 'conditioned' and the 'unconditioned'. Kant explained the concept of the conditioned in connection with the concept of synthesis, which plays a central role in the account of the possibility of empirical cognition and objectively valid judgments. Cognitive synthesis is a process of bringing together and combining a variety of the sensory material ("x") by means of the appropriate cognitive form ("ϕ"); it is the activity of the subject which results in the production of cognitive content, that is, objectively valid cognitive judgments. What, then, did Kant have in mind when he claimed that the cognitive synthesis is conditioned? And why talk about the 'series of conditions' that allegedly leads to the unconditioned?

Kant wanted us to understand our individual and fragmentary experiences not as self-sufficient entities but rather as small links in a vast chain of overall events and experiences. The question then is: What is at the beginning of the chain and at its end? While the future looks open-ended, the past must have been already determined in order for us to have an experience of it. What we want to figure out by means of the cosmological

ideas is what (or who) is at the beginning of the chain. To what is the chain attached, so that it does not float freely in the air?[14]

To pose this kind of question is, according to Kant, to search for the unconditioned. This is the task of metaphysics, and cosmological ideas are presumptive answers to these questions. Since we cannot have direct experience or insight at the beginning of the chain, our answers are not empirically verifiable or falsifiable but must be speculative. Guided by the principle of reason, we infer these nonempirical ideas that, taken individually, pass the logical tests of noncontradiction and internal coherence. The trouble is that for any cosmological thesis there is an equally well-supported antithesis so that, when taken together, these ideas appear to contradict one another. This is how reason gets caught in the antinomies.[15]

Let us take an even closer look at Kant's account by dissecting the second and the third antinomies. The thesis of the second antinomy claims that every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts, and that nothing at all exists but the simple or what is composed of it. Kant arrived at the proof of the thesis by means of the following *reductio*: Assume that the composite substance does not consist of simple parts. If there are no simple parts, there would be no composite. Hence, without simple parts there would be nothing at all, and no substances would have been given. Since this last claim is false, then either (i) we cannot think of the world without composition, or (ii) the world would consist only of simple things (and their compositions). The first of these two options implies that there would be no substance at all, which contradicts the assumption made at the beginning of the proof, thus the second option must be true. Therefore, composite substances must consist of simple elements.

The antithesis claims that no composite thing in the world consists of simple parts, and that nothing simple exists in the world. The proof is again given in the form of the *reductio*: Suppose that a composite thing consists of simple parts. Since all parts occupy space, even the simplest possible parts must occupy space. Yet everything that occupies space is composite. As a real composite, it is composed of substances. Therefore, it is contradictory to claim that the composite consists of simple parts. This demonstrates the first part of the antithesis. Kant defended the second, more ambitious claim, that nothing simple exists in the world, by arguing that the existence of the absolutely simple cannot be established from any experience. Considering that it is a mere idea that cannot be established by any possible experience, this idea is without any application in the exposition of experience. Since the world of senses means the world of all possible experience, it follows that nothing simple is to be found anywhere in it.

What can we make of these claims and proofs that apparently contradict each other? The proof of the thesis appears more ambiguous and less convincing than the proof of the antithesis. This may be because the proof

of the latter (or more precisely, its first part) relies heavily on Kant's findings in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. For this reason it is not immediately clear that the proof of the antithesis really does make any metaphysical claim, nor that it leads, in one way or the other, to the unconditioned. Besides denying the existence of simple parts, it is just not obvious that the totality of complex things is, or must be thought of, as the unconditioned that reason is supposedly searching for in following its logical principle. The proof of the antithesis certainly denies, against the principle of reason, that there is any *series* or *chain* of conditions and their first and unconditioned link. But it also challenges the principle of reason in a more fundamental way, by showing no concern whatsoever for the unconditioned. Whether conditioned or unconditioned, the proof of the antithesis seems to be saying, the world as we experience it consists of complex things that are further divisible, their parts being themselves complex, never simple. As with Wittgenstein's grammar, what matters and what makes the grammar function as the foundation of our linguistic practices, are the patterns of relations between words, rather than individual words, syllabi, or any other 'atomic' parts.

The proof of the thesis, on the other hand, seems to force us into more than we can justifiably claim. Insofar as the thesis is a cosmological idea, it makes the claim about the world as a whole, and not only about this or that composed substance. Yet this is where the trouble is, since—assuming that the world indeed is a whole—we cannot know what kind of whole that is. Is it a purely mechanical whole, or an organic whole, or perhaps something else? It is true that the word 'composite' necessarily implies 'parts' of which the composite is composed. Yet even in the case of a mechanical whole it is far from obvious that we must talk about the relation of conditioning. The bolts and nuts and the other parts of my car create a mechanically composed substance, but is their relation properly described in terms of conditioning? Or should not their relationship rather be described in terms of their respective functions? In the case of an organic whole the language of conditioning is even less appropriate, for such a whole and its parts enjoy mutual reciprocity; if we can talk about the conditioning at all, then the whole and its parts mutually condition each other. If this is the case, then the principle of reason that is supposed to guide our inference does not seem relevant at all.

Let us also consider the third antinomy, which, because of its significance for Kant's moral philosophy, plays the central role in the entire section. The thesis holds that mechanical causality in accordance with the laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances, it is necessary to assume that there is also another kind of causality, that of freedom. The proof starts with the *reductio*: Suppose there is only causality in

accordance with the laws of nature, and assume there are at least some events. By the law of causality, every event requires a previous state from which it may be lawfully derived. Since the same is true of each of these previous states, all events have only a relative beginning, which prevents the completeness of the series and the first beginning. Yet "the law of nature consists just in this, that nothing happens without a cause sufficiently determined a priori."[16] Kant took it to mean that "the law of nature" requires the sufficiency of the cause determining an event. Given that no sufficiency is present, it follows that there is no event, which contradicts the initial assumption. Thus, we must suppose an unconditioned cause, that is, an absolute spontaneity of the cause, whereby a series of appearances, which proceeds in accordance with the laws of nature, begins of itself.

The antithesis, by contrast, claims that there is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with the laws of nature. Again, the proof takes off with a *reductio*: Assume that there is transcendental freedom. In that case some free act provides a series with an absolute beginning, and has itself an absolute beginning. The law of causality demands an interconnection between all the members of a series, in order to make possible the unity of experience. But the members of the series that has its absolute beginning in the act of freedom are independent of the events prior to that act, and so do not follow from these earlier events. This would render the unity of experience impossible and we thus must deny transcendental freedom on the grounds that it conflicts with the law of causality.

In this case, as in the case of the three other antinomies, it is easier to follow the proof of the antithesis, since it relies heavily on the Second Analogy of Experience. Sure enough, the Second Analogy itself is sufficiently controversial, but we do not have to engage in the maze of its difficulties.

Kant's proof for the thesis of the third antinomy has been frequently criticized as weak and unpersuasive, and rightly so. As Schopenhauer pointed out, the claim of the thesis is really the principle of reason dressed in causal language. The proof of the thesis intends to show that the finitude of the series of causes comes from "the law of nature" which says that for a cause to be sufficient, it must contain the entire series and sum of conditions from which the present condition emerges as the consequent. This law of nature cannot be the causal law from the Second Analogy, for the causal law says nothing about the completeness and sufficiency of the cause determining an event. A more plausible suggestion is that the law in question is the principle of sufficient reason of classical logic, but it is not clear how this interpretation would remedy the problem. As Schopenhauer convincingly argued, if A is a sufficient cause of B, it is irrelevant whether A itself is caused. To ask the question whether A

itself is being caused is not necessarily to continue any series or chain, but to open a new investigation independent of the previous one.[17] What further complicates Kant's proof is that, as a cosmological idea, it does not refer directly to human freedom but to the Aristotelian–Thomistic concept of the prime mover.[18] Yet causality in terms of the prime mover contradicts any concept of causality congruent with any law of nature. As pointed out earlier (3.2), causation is strictly speaking an interactive relationship between changes or states of things, not a one-directional relationship between things themselves. Instead of a chain or a series of causes and effects, we should really be talking about the states of the existing things that are changing within the given network of conditions and relations. Since it is misleading, if not plainly false, even to speak of things themselves as causes or effects, the very idea of the first mover (first cause) is a dubious one.

The third antinomy thus amounts to a conflict of two competing conceptions of reality: The model of discontinuity or creation, together with an idea of a creator versus the conception of reality based on the idea of unbroken continuity, explained in terms of the principle of sufficient reason and efficient causality. Kant was right to claim that this dispute could not be resolved by means of experience. How, then, is it to be resolved?

5.3 RESOLUTION OF THE ANTINOMIES

No matter what we think of the validity of his proofs of the antithetical pairs, it is truly remarkable that Kant began the resolution of the antinomies of pure reason by discussing the concept of interest. Up to that point it appeared that we were dealing with the purely logical matter, considered in the best tradition of the detached and perspectively neutral reasoning. Then all of a sudden, Kant announces that dogmatism finds speculative interest in supporting the theses and empiricism finds practical interest in endorsing the antitheses. He did not have in mind any egotistical self-interest, but a "need of reason," a deeply ingrained need for meaning and orientation.[19] Moreover, Kant's point was not so much to make a distinction between 'practical' and 'speculative' interest, as to argue that both sides in the antinomical disputes made a similar mistake. Without noticing that their inferences and judgments were guided by a particular interest, both parties overstepped the limits of knowledge and accepted their claims because of their respective interests, not because of genuine cognitive insights.[20] This contention is surprising, for the respective advocates of the theses and antitheses seem to be opposed in every point and it is not immediately obvious that they have anything in common. Dogmatists defend what can be called "maximalist" metaphysics, in

contrast to the "minimalist" views of empiricists. In terms of the interactive function, dogmatists attach too much value to "ф" and do not pay enough attention to the constraints of "x." In fact, dogmatists tend to overblow this function and accept as real all kinds of entities and abstractions, regardless of whether we have, or could have, any corresponding sense experience of them. Empiricists, by contrast, are all too focused on the variables, on what is available through the senses, and completely underestimate the role of "ф." They reduce this function to the role of the mere logical and conceptual coordination of predetermined sensible objects. Neither dogmatists nor empiricists recognize the importance of the interactive balance between "ф" and "x," which is the essence of Kant's account of the possibility of cognition and objectively valid judgments.

This, however, was not the ground on which Kant criticized his opponents. His point was that, although practical and speculative interests divide their camps, dogmatists and empiricists share a desire to gain knowledge about the world as a cosmic whole. As they attempt to design a grand plan that would reveal what that cosmic whole is, both parties claim far more than they are entitled to. They both take the idea of the whole in the sense of a given object. As Kant put it, they misunderstand it as a thing in itself (*Ding an sich*) and the unconditioned. Kant took this controversial concept of *Ding an sich* to be the cornerstone of traditional speculative metaphysics. When regarded in the positive sense, the sense in which it was taken in the antinomies, the thing in itself stands for what was frequently termed *ousia* and *essentia*; it is that which makes something be what it is. This concept played the central role in traditional metaphysics insofar as it was assumed that the invisible essential and substantial properties of things are indispensable for explaining their inessential, accidental, and observable counterparts. British empiricists (and modern science) undermined this tradition by arguing that (real) essences of things are not only unknown, but also unintelligible. The empiricists broke the traditionally conceived vertical "Chain of Being" by rejecting the dogmatic view on essences and substances and by regarding reality as consisting of the network of observable properties and relations. In doing so, however, they in many ways completed the circle and came back themselves to defend a metaphysical claim about reality as a whole. The key difference was that now the Chain of Being was considered not as vertical but as horizontal. Thus empiricists rejected the dogmatists' cosmocentric point of view only to affirm one of their own.[21]

Kant agreed with many points of the empiricist's criticism of traditional metaphysics, but he redirected it toward an anthropocentric point of view. Indeed, we do not need to postulate invisible real essence of things to account for the order and systematic interconnectedness of observed objects and events. The heart of Kant's Copernican revolution was that order and

regularity are not to be found in objects but are provided by the subject, by the complex function "ɸ." Belief in an existent thing in itself in the positive sense, as the underlying invisible substratum of the observable properties of objects and their changes, should be rejected. Yet Kant thought, unlike the British empiricists, that this idea was still important, even indispensable. However problematic it may be, it serves several different roles in Kant's philosophy. For instance, under the mysterious name of 'transcendental object' it is used as the ground of appearances, that is, as the ground of unity behind the variety of appearances.[22] The objects of our senses or appearances are, as the name suggests, always *of* something, even though all we know of "them" are their appearances.[23] This idea of thing in itself serves, then, to mark a significant distinction between, for instance, Kant and Berkeley. For although our empirical cognition is of appearances, their external relations and properties do not exhaust their entire reality. There is always some unknown and unknowable remainder, to which Kant also referred by that ambiguous phrase: *Ding an sich*. To mark this distinction even more clearly, Kant used the concept of the thing in itself in its negative sense; he used it as a limiting concept, the concept that should show, and remind us, of the boundaries of our cognition and our cognitive abilities. This concept does not reveal the structure of the cosmic whole, as Kant's predecessors assumed, but only a horizon against which we can come to a better apprehension of our own finitude.

As if this concept of *Ding an sich* was not already overused by him, Kant employed it further in the sense of a concept of an object of pure thought, or *noumenon*.[24] The *noumenon* is not necessarily what underlies the appearances, but what preoccupies reason in its speculative undertakings. The concept of *noumenon* is essentially connected with the interests of reason and, as we go on with the second part of our project, it will play an increasingly prominent role in our discussions. What is important now is to see what this concept of the thing in itself and some of its relevant senses have to do with Kant's resolution of the antinomies.

Kant thought that the distinction between things in themselves and appearances is the key element to the resolution of the antinomies. Confusing them, in combination with believing that appearances are conditioned and in combination with the application of the principle of reason, misleads us to look for the unconditioned as already *given*. The theses and the antitheses then disagree with respect to exactly how the unconditioned is given; they differ with respect to what it is. The realization that appearances are not things in themselves—the central aspect of Kant's own transcendental idealism—allows us to look for the completion of the regress of conditions as something that is *assigned*, rather than already given. The difference is that now we are not concerned with the cause ("transcendental and unknown") of our appearances but with the *rule* of the ad-

vance of the experience by means of which the sensible objects are given to us. This, according to Kant, is the proper formulation of the principle of reason and a great advancement over the speculative metaphysics.[25]

What do these considerations contribute toward resolving the question of the truth value of the antinomical claims? Kant argued that if two opposed judgments each presuppose an inadmissible condition, then despite the conflict between them there is not to be a strict analytic or logical opposition. In that case "both of them collapse because the condition collapses under which alone either of them would be valid."[26] What this suggests is that for all the antinomies both the claims of the thesis and the antithesis are false, or perhaps even devoid of any truth value. Then Kant pulled another surprising sophism out of his hat. He sharply separated the first two antinomies, which he called 'mathematical', from the other two 'dynamical' antinomies. The former deal with a *homogeneous* chain of connecting conditions and the unconditioned. The latter, by contrast, do not require that the unconditioned be homogeneous with the conditioned, and thus allow for the possibility that the unconditioned is not the part of the series but outside it and *heterogeneous* with respect to it. What that meant for Kant was the possibility that the unconditioned of the dynamical antinomies is purely intelligible (noumenal). He also thought that this difference was sufficient to show that in the case of the mathematical antinomies both the claims of the theses and the antitheses are false, and that for the dynamical antinomies they may both be true. What could justify this claim?

The mathematical antinomies are concerned with an object considered as magnitude. Since magnitudes are homogeneous, both the conditioned and the sought-after unconditioned would be homogeneous, which Kant took to show that the regression of conditions must always remain incomplete. In the case of homogeneous magnitude we can never encounter a condition of the series of appearances that is not itself appearance and as such a member of the series. Since in that case there could be no unconditioned, both claims with respect to the nature of the alleged unconditioned must be false.

There is a lot that is unsettled in Kant's reasoning here. For instance, neither the atomism and monadology of Kant's time, nor the physics of the twentieth century show that we must think about the second antinomy in terms of homogeneous *magnitudes*. Once we do, it is of course difficult to think of the unconditioned as contained in the series itself. What is puzzling, however, is just who would think of homogeneous magnitudes in terms of what is conditioned and what is conditioning it? Is not Kant celebrating a Pyrrhic victory here? Furthermore, the whole language of conditioning, especially one-way conditioning, as Kant thought about it, presupposes the relation of *subordination*. This relation emerges clearly on the surface in the dynamical antinomies. In Kant's interpretation, the

dynamical subordination would either take the form of causal linkage or the ordering of the necessary with the contingent. In both cases, the unconditioned, to which the conditioned is subordinated, may be heterogeneous with and outside of the series of conditions. It may condition the whole series by standing outside it either as the first cause (causality through freedom) or as the necessary being (God). In the case of both dynamical antinomies the unconditioned may be purely intelligible and, according to Kant, the claims of the theses and the antitheses may both be true. They could both be true when, as in the case of the third antinomy, the causality of freedom and the causality of nature do not necessarily exclude each other but can be made compatible by distinguishing between the noumenal and the phenomenal world.

Whether or not we are satisfied with Kant's resolution of the antinomies, it would be difficult to exaggerate its significance for the further development of the subjectivist turn of modernity.[27] His insistence that only knowledge of the phenomenal world can be objectively valid shattered the traditional metaphysical dream of apprehending the cosmic order as a whole and led to the subsequent devaluation of reason and fragmentation of philosophy. The highest human faculty, reason, cannot be fully trusted, for in its unrestrained application it becomes the source of illusions, not the faithful reflection of the world as it is in itself. Instead of providing a single and unified root for the various branches of knowledge, philosophy itself has become fragmented. It has been divided into the consideration of the problems of knowledge and justification, the problems of science, the analysis of language, and phenomenological and existential analysis of human experience. So understood, philosophy does not provide a foundation (the roots) and a guideline for any comprehensive apprehension of reality and our place and role in reality, but itself becomes dependent on the results of investigations in other, fragmented and frequently opposed, nonphilosophical disciplines.

It is almost paradoxical that someone such as Kant, who emphasized so much those elements that we all share, ends up being an inspiration to those who focus only on our differences. Yet there is no question that Kant's insistence on the indispensable role of interest in our attempts to comprehend reality and orient ourselves in it provided a powerful impetus for the development of many specialized nonphilosophical disciplines. Kant's view that our rational thinking is partially dependent of nonrational factors opened a Pandora's box of historicism, psychologism, and numerous other "isms." If human thinking is governed by factors of history, social class, culture, habit, evolution, language, private and collective unconsciousness, and so on, it is not so difficult to understand how we ended up accepting the postmodernist creed that human reason cannot be relied upon as an accurate and reliable judge of reality.

This, of course, is not what Kant intended, nor how he understood the implications of his resolution of the antinomies. He thought that his resolution allowed him to reconcile the practical and speculative interest of reason. More generally, Kant believed that it made it possible for him to reconcile religion and morality with science. He thought that there are only four candidates for the ultimate pillars of orientation: science, metaphysics, religion, and morality. Science defends the claims of the four antitheses, and—if not constrained and guided—it leads to naturalism and skepticism. Theoretical metaphysics, at least in its speculative form, leads to antinomies and other transcendental illusion. Kant thought that he could salvage our speculative interest by making a practical turn, by limiting knowledge in order to leave enough room for faith. Not blind but rational faith can—in the form of religion and morality—serve as a foundation of our authentic orientation in reality. Whether, and to what extent, his practical turn was justified, we shall see in the next two chapters. But before going into the details of Kant's views concerning religion and morality, let us make a few critical remarks.

What remained questionable throughout Kant's "Dialectic" was just what reason is. The nature of the understanding was revealed in the Analytic through its interactive function. The problem in the "Dialectic" emerged every time when reason neglected that interactive role, attempting to compensate for the lack of relevant data by overblowing the function "ϕ." Yet when Kant came to the resolution of the transcendental illusions, the interactive function was not mentioned at all, and was perhaps completely forgotten. Kant thought of reason on the model of causality and causal subordination, not interaction. Moreover, reason was assigned to search for the unconditioned. As Kant's resolution of the dynamical antinomies revealed, even the curbing of the speculative interest of reason did not change this central orientation of reason. What Kant never explained or justified was exactly why reason must search for the unconditioned. Why did not Kant ever challenge this assumption? It seems that Kant, just like those speculative metaphysicians he criticized, took the model of creation for granted: It is only when we think of reality as something created and thus conditioned, that we expect that there must also be something not created and unconditioned, something that brought about the world in which we live. Almost the entire tradition of Western metaphysics was developed in the thick shadow of God-Creator. Yet a truly critical examination of reason, that Kant's critical philosophy aimed at, cannot leave any assumption unchallenged, including the one of the unquestionable validity of the model of creation. What would happen when it is finally brought to question? Do we really need to postulate an Archimedean point to account for the possibility of a proper orientation in reality? Could it turn out that Epictetus was right after all?

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Religious Illusions

Silence is praise to Thee.

—Psalm 4:4

6.1 FAITH AND REASON

The spiritual homelessness of modern man is most visible in his loss of faith. Nietzsche's more desperate than exuberant cry that God is dead represents both the triumph and tragedy of modernity. The origins of this utterance *de profundis* are to be found not only in Descartes's *de omnibus dubitandum est*, but go back even earlier. Giordano Bruno and other modern astronomers defended the conception of the decentralized, infinite, and infinitely populated universe. The growing acceptance of this view was a severe blow to the traditional theological explanation of the origin of the world and man's position in it. After centuries of religious dogmatism, the universe was suddenly found to be without a center, and man simultaneously lost his privileged position in it. This "acentric" view of the universe not only challenged man's cherished illusion that he was created in the image of God, but eventually also led to the denial of God.

What was traditionally taken to be the unmatchable strength of religion— that it has supernatural origin in God's revelation—modernity proclaimed to be its fundamental weakness. Revelation is not a matter of publicly accessible evidence, nor can it be scientifically tested or measured. Indeed, from the eighteenth century on, it was widely believed that, together with myth, religion belongs to a primitive, soon to be overcome stage of man's

development. The most systematic elaboration of this view was offered by James G. Frazer, the celebrated author of *Golden Bough*. Frazer argued that religion and myth have their roots in primitive magic, and—as if echoing Bacon's dictum that knowledge is power—he assumed that, like science and technology, magic is addressed to the control of external nature. With the further progress of the scientific knowledge man will come of age; then, since their role can be served more efficiently by science than by magic, myth and religion will fade away.

What Frazer, and perhaps even Nietzsche, did not sufficiently realize was that religion is not primarily addressed to external issues; it is not about the will to power. They underestimated the importance of religion for the inward life, for our will to orientation and desire for meaning. Old myths and sacred religious texts offered us, even if naive and illusory, orienting and comforting horizons.

In contrast to myth and religion, the problem with science is not that it criticized unbelievable stories and man's literal belief in them; the problem is that science utterly failed to replace myth and religion with any framework that would enable us not only to answer but even to ask the most pressing questions and help deal with the intolerable difficulties of existence. Science pushed away religion from the scene, only to leave us disoriented in a spiritual desert.

Kant provided a remarkable chapter in the development of a modern critical attitude toward religion. With some justification, he was hailed as an "all-destroyer" (Moses Mendelssohn) and "the one who murdered God" (Heinrich Heine). Kant declared war against institutionalized religions based on fear and superstition, since he regarded that form of faith as a source of harmful illusions. Regardless of the widespread popularity and long history of institutional forms of religion, he argued that popular religion does not lead us to become better persons, but, through the various forms of anthropomorphism, lulls us like opium into a passive and deceptive slumber.[1]

No less fiercely did Kant attack every dogmatic attempt to offer a theoretical proof of God's existence. In rational theology speculative reason cannot skip over the boundaries of theoretical cognition to prove either that a God exists or that He does not. It is not accidental that no philosopher was able to offer a satisfactory proof of God's existence, for in this attempt theoretical reason oversteps the boundaries of possible experience and creates a transcendental illusion.

Despite this, Kant was not an "all destroyer," nor did he intend to "murder God." Born and raised in a devoted pietist family, he never abandoned the simple and honest faith of his parents. Unlike, for instance, Dostoevsky's character Ivan Karamazov, who gets caught in the existential struggle against the cataclysm of nonbelieving, for Kant the

central dilemma of religion was not whether or not to believe.[2] Instead he pondered whether our belief is necessarily rooted in fear and superstition, or whether it could not be based on the principles and evidence of reason.

Kant agreed with other philosophers of the Enlightenment that "reason is the ultimate touchstone of truth," and thus that the "true religion" cannot be based on revelation, or the authority of the church, but must stay "within the limits of reason alone."[3] Yet he also went beyond the limitations of the Enlightenment. On his view, religion does not deal with magic, nor does not it attempt to provide a quasi-scientific account of events in the external world. The questions which religion asks belong to a different order of truth, for they deal with the problems of the overall internal orientation in reality. The Book of Job, for instance, was for Kant an eternally valid model of what it is to live as an honest and dignified human being; it offered a timelessly exemplary model of virtue.

Kant resolved what he perceived to be the central religious dilemma in the following manner. Although we can have no cognitive insight into the existence and nature of the Supreme Being, the interests and needs of reason justify the archetypal idea of such a Being. These interests and needs are not theoretical but practical, and for Kant believing in God amounted to directing oneself, consciously and tirelessly, toward moral perfection and the highest good. The *experimentum crucis* for this view is—as we shall see in the next chapter—in morality. What we have to consider here will be the following questions: What standards could Kant use to distinguish 'true religion' from those that are not? Why believe that there is a true religion in the first place? Does Kant's attempted rationalization of faith uncover a profound and hidden path toward an authentic understanding of faith, or does it lead toward the creation of yet another illusion?

6.2 LANGUAGE, ANTHROPOMORPHISM, AND RELIGIOUS ILLUSIONS

In a moment of inspiration, Schopenhauer clarified the meaning of the ancient formula that man is a rational animal by relating reason and rationality to the use of language:

> The animal feels and perceives; man, in addition, *thinks* and *knows*; both *will*. The animal communicates his feelings and moods by gesture and sound; man communicates thought to another, or conceals it from him, by language. Speech is the first product and the necessary instrument of his faculty of reason. Therefore, in Greek and Italian, speech and reason are expressed by the

same word, *logos, il discorso. Vernunft* (reason) comes from *vernehmen*, which
is not synonymous with hearing, but signifies the awareness of ideas com-
municated by words.[4]

What can be added to Schopenhauer's remarks is that language opens the
opportunity for the greatest cognitive and creative achievements by al-
lowing us not only to communicate our direct experiences but to replace
them by signs and symbols. We can, for instance, represent by means of
language what was experienced long ago and then compare the past and
the present. Or we can anticipate what may happen in the future by rely-
ing on past and present experiences. Language is symbolic in one further
respect: It creates the possibility of communicating even that which has
never been experienced at all.

   Inherent in these virtues of language is a vast potential for deception. I
am not thinking here about intentional deceptions, even though they are
possible by means of language as well. There are deceptions and illusions
that are all the more subtle precisely because they are unintentional, and
they are relevant for Kant's account of religious illusions (*Religionswahn*).
Kant understood illusions in general as the mistaking of something sub-
jective for something objective. In the case of ordinary cognitive experi-
ence, subjective and objective components interact together to create ob-
jectively valid judgments. There are many areas of human interest where
the objective element is either not given in any direct or unambiguous
way, or is altogether inaccessible. The subjective function "ϕ" (from the in-
teractive function "$\phi(x)$") is then inflated to "cover" for the limitations or
absence of any adequate variable "x." The "covering" can be so persua-
sive that it becomes common and natural to mistake the merely subjective
for the objective.

   Just as reason overinflates the subjective function in speculative meta-
physics to compensate for the lack of data, Kant identified a parallel prob-
lem with respect to religion. This is not too surprising. If reason searches
for the unconditioned and absolute, as Kant maintained, religion may be
the most natural subject of inquiry. For whether or not religious doctrines
have a supernatural origin in God's revelation, religious experience con-
cerns that which lies beyond, or perhaps beneath, the boundaries of the
natural world. Common to all of its various forms is precisely this leap
from natural to supernatural, from conditioned to unconditioned, from
human to divine.

   Although this leap over the borders of the natural and familiar does not
seem to pose a problem for our language, this leap may itself be a part of
the illusion. The unrestrained use of symbols creates serious problems,
and Kant specifically focused on one of them that he called 'anthropo-
morphism'. As the word suggests, a form (and language is a form) ap-

propriate and valid in the field of ordinary human experience is used to designate something that lies beyond its established borders. In mythological and religious traditions throughout history deities and other supernatural elements are described and conceived of in human terms. Greek Olympus, overflowing with divine quarrels, intrigues, and love affairs is perhaps the most sophisticated and imaginative form of anthropomorphism, but variations of it can be found in other religions as well. Kant even admitted that anthropomorphism is hardly avoidable. The real problems begin when loose anthropomorphic verbiage is mistakenly treated as positive knowledge of God. It is one thing to describe to children an old wise man with a long beard walking through the garden of Eden ("symbolic anthropomorphism"), and quite another to believe that this indeed is how God looks ("dogmatic anthropomorphism").[5]

Kant recognized that our ordinary language is pervaded by symbols, which he understood as *indirect* presentations of objects based on analogies.[6] Symbols are useful precisely where a direct relation is either lacking, or not possible, as is usually the case in religion. Despite the biblical warning not to create images of God, it seems to be in our nature to try to represent the invisible by analogy to the visible world.[7] Kant held that anthropomorphism is merely the threshold of religious illusion; then, for reasons of fear, superstition, or self-advantage we step fully into the temple of illusions. We not only represent and symbolize the unknown and invisible in the image of a human being who, unlike mortals, is supremely holy, wise, and merciful, but we go on to take this symbol literally and try to please and win favors from it. This explains why we have always engaged in various forms of pseudo-service to God, whether through sacrifices, festivals, or even less spectacular but nonetheless deceptive confessions of faith.[8] The pseudo-service only leads to fetish worship of the imaginary deities, and promotes irrational faith in miracles, mysteries, and other means of divine force. The situation becomes even worse when an institutionalized church manipulates our fear and superstition to further her own material and political interests. Instead of dispelling fear and superstition, instead of teaching people that the true service to God can only consist in continuous and conscious efforts to improve ourselves morally, the church frequently even encourages the fetish worship so as to increase its control over the population. Kant recognized that fear and ritualistic obedience go hand in hand; the greater the fear and insecurity and the stricter the rituals, the easier the manipulation. The peak of this religious illusion is in the fearful and obedient engagement in rituals whose meaning and purpose we do not understand any more, and whose performance has no vital significance. This form of fetish worship consumes anything that may be genuine about religion and leads to the proliferation of wholly illusory content.

Like Hobbes and Hume before him, or Feuerbach and Freud after him, Kant was uncompromisingly critical of these pseudo-forms of the traditional religion. Yet his criticism was not motivated by the desire to reject religion as such, but rather to purge it from cult, blind irrationality, and fetishism. Kant did not believe, like Hobbes and Hume, that faith and reason are necessarily opposed and that we must chose between them. Nor did he agree with Augustine and Aquinas that faith can declare the truth of more than reason can prove. Kant was convinced that "reason can be found to be not only compatible with Scripture but also at one with it."[9] He was convinced that the only true religion is the religion of reason. These were clearly "high claims"; how could Kant justify them?

6.3 PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Even if language and speech are the necessary instruments of reason, as Schopenhauer maintained, he was wrong to claim that they are also reason's first products. Speech is older than reason, and before it put itself in the service of *logos*, it was the natural ally of *mythos*. The characteristically Western conception of reason, which has always dominated philosophical and scientific thinking, emerged when *logos* was able to separate itself from *mythos* and overturn its preeminence.

Mythical accounts of the world's origin, and stories about deities and miraculous adventures emerged spontaneously in all parts of the globe and in different and unrelated societies and cultures. While the exact origin of myth was always concealed, this did not bother people, as long as these stories spoke to them and provided orientation in reality. Hesiod, who himself is responsible for one of the most beautiful theogonies, believed that myths burst from the dark Abyss, from the womb of the Mother-chaos, of which no account can be given.

Although some forms of mythical thinking have always continued to exist in the undercurrents of Western philosophy and science, the truly distinguishable conception of *logos* has been born in opposition to and as an explicit rejection of mythological thinking. The Goddess of Justice turned Parmenides into one of the founders of philosophy by revealing to him, contrary to Hesiod and the entire mythical and poetical tradition, that something cannot come out of nothing. Everything that becomes always does so in relation to something else. There must always be a (sufficient) ground, or reason, for the emergence and existence of anything.

This conviction, itself born out of *mythos* and later baptized as the 'principle of sufficient reason', was destined to become one of the fundamental cornerstones of Western thinking. If there must be a rational ground for the existence of an ordered world, and if religion is to be considered a

rational endeavor, it would appear indispensable to generate proofs of the existence of a Creator. Although we can find attempts to offer a rational proof of the existence of a god even at the early stages of Western philosophy, a need for such a proof is immensely intensified in the period that has as its motivating point a pervasive doubt. Descartes's evil demon is not just a mere epistemological consideration but a reflection of an uncertainty and fear, born out of "the silence of God," even at the face of unspeakable evil. Descartes's fear was not so much that God does not exist, but that there may be an evil deity, whose real purpose is to delude and torment us. Descartes's own philosophy, and the subsequent development of modernity, can be seen as a quest for certainty that there is an omniscient, omnipotent, and—above all—benevolent Creator, whose existence and defining attributes can be rationally proved.

One of the reasons for which Kant deserves a permanent place in the philosophical pantheon was his revolutionary stance that no satisfactory theoretical proof of the existence of such a God is possible. Whether the theoretical interest in God's existence is based on the search for the overall unity of the world, or a cause of all causes, or a purpose of all purposes, all theoretical proofs fall into one of three categories: "ontological," "cosmological," and "physico-theological."[10] The ontological proof was postulated by Anselm in early medieval times, but it received greater philosophical attention after it was revived by Descartes. The proof sets out to show that, only in the case of God, essence implies existence. In one of its versions, the proof is based on the idea of an *ens realissimum*, a Being which contains all reality in itself. Since nonexistence is the negation of reality, rather than its affirmation, the nonexistence would go against the very essence of the *ens realissimum*. It was concluded from this that the *ens realissimum*, or God, must possess existence.[11]

Kant shook the foundations of this proof by arguing that existence can never be an analytic predicate, even of the most real being. Any judgment attributing existence is synthetic, not analytic. Thus, if God does exist, the necessity of His existence cannot be logical but ontological. As a synthetic proposition, "God exists" cannot be proved without intuition, but no intuition of the supersensuous being is available. There can thus be no proof that God's essence implies His existence.[12]

The cosmological proof dates back at least to Aristotle, and in Kant's time was championed by Christian Wolff. This is a proof of the existence of the first cause from the existence of the world. This proof is a combination of the theses of the third and fourth antinomies of pure reason (see 5.2). Kant realized that even if we grant that there must be a first cause and a necessary being behind the contingent events and existences in the empirical world, this by no means leads to the desired conclusion, namely that the theistically conceived God exists. The first cause and the necessary

being can, in principle, be quite different from the Christian conception of God, and before arriving to the claim that God exists, Kant believed that the proponents of the cosmological argument were forced to use the already criticized ontological proof.

Throughout his critical writings Kant showed more respect for the physico-theological proof, on the grounds of its compatibility with common sense. In this proof God is conceived not as the *ens realissimum* or the first cause, but as a designer and architect of the world. The motivating premise of this proof comes from our observation of the purposiveness and harmonious arrangements not only among living organisms but frequently even amidst inanimate nature. The observation and investigation of nature—even when guided by the principles of mechanical explanation as in the natural sciences—compel us to interpret the world as purposively adapted to certain ends. Plants and animals, and even inanimate natural objects show signs of purpose and design. Those arrangements indicate that there is a plan according to which everything is created and purposively coordinated, and the existence of the plan presupposes a designer. The designer capable of such a task must be vastly superior to our capacities and powers, which in turn suggests a supernatural designer or a God.

Kant thought that after it moves from its initial premise, which points toward the purposive arrangements in the world, the physico-theological proof must rely on the cosmological and ontological proofs in order to approach its desired conclusion—the theistic conception of God. Since these two proofs are invalid, so is the physico-theological proof itself. Yet Kant thought that the initial steps of the physico-theological proof have some merits on their own, and he took them not only as an important methodological and regulative maxim for our investigation of nature, but also found some motivation in it for a new kind of proof, a proof based on the practical interest of reason, which he thought to be the most promising way of arguing for the existence of a God.

To understand what Kant found attractive about this proof, recall that he did not share the Enlightenment's enthusiasm for the natural goodness of human nature but was closer to the Calvinist and Lutheran tradition that assigned a low value to man. In that tradition man is treated as a sinful and pitiful creature. Kant accepted that there is a propensity to evil in human nature (the very possibility of a genuinely moral choice seems to demand it), yet he thought that what man actually is and has been in the past does not exhaust his nature. To be, according to Kant's epistemological-ontological principle, is to be determinable, not already determined (see 2.3 and 4.3). Thus, even if man is a sinful and pitiful creature, to understand his nature, we need to take into account man's "essential ends" and "true vocation." This vocation is not to be understood either in relation to man's cognitive

power or the feeling of pleasure, but only with respect to man's freedom, good will, and his capability of existing as a rational being whose behavior is governed by moral laws. If creation is to have a final purpose, reason cannot discern it anywhere else but in the pursuit of the highest good.[13] The limitations of human beings cannot guarantee the full attainment of the *summum bonum* in this life. We cannot even know whether this task could be accomplished in another world, but for practical reasons it is rational to postulate that there is another world, that the soul is immortal, and that there is a moral governor of the world, God, who will ultimately reward virtue and punish vice.

Kant was right to claim that the concept of God is far more important for the practical rather than purely theoretical aspects of life. He was also right to argue that our belief in God's existence does not have any objective validity. However, to call this subjective conviction a "proof" in any literal sense of that word sounds preposterous. According to his own admission, there is no logical connection either between the moral law and the existence of God, or between the alleged necessity to postulate God's existence as related to the *summum bonum* and the question of God's actual existence. Even if Kant was right in claiming that, for the sake of morality, we must postulate God's existence, that itself proves nothing about God's existence (or nonexistence). But was Kant even right in claiming that we must postulate God's existence if we are to take morality and the pursuit of virtue seriously? That was not the case for the ancient Greek moralists, and does not seem to be necessary for us either. Many a virtuous man does not believe in God and is not concerned with the noumenal *summum bonum*, but directs his efforts and hopes toward the goodness and improvement of this world.

Instead of accepting God's existence based on dubious eschatology, it is closer to the spirit of Kant's critical philosophy to argue that neither a pervasive doubt of skepticism and nihilism of the one side, nor a comforting but illusory eschatology on the other are acceptable choices. They are not our only alternatives, nor does their rejection show that it is not rational to preserve faith. Yet if Kant is to show that it is rational to believe in God, this must be done on different, not yet considered grounds. But what could they be?

6.4 RATIONAL FAITH

As in so many other cases, in his views on religion Kant was steering a narrow course between two opposing camps and trying to show that they were both unsatisfactory. Traditional forms of religion tend to turn religion into irrational worship harmful to genuine faith. Rational theology,

by contrast, ignores the authentic element of faith and preoccupies itself with the futile attempt to demonstrate God's existence by means of reason alone. Kant realized that between irrational superstition and rational dogmatism there is plenty of fertile ground: As faith need not be blind and irrational, it also need not be based on dogmatic knowledge.

To get a better glimpse of this new conception of rational faith, let us consider the way in which Kant compared this concept to opinion and knowledge. Opinions are factual beliefs or judgments for which we at the moment have no sufficient evidence. They have merely subjective validity that could—in principle—solidify into knowledge with better evidence and support. Knowledge consists of beliefs and judgments which are both subjectively and objectively grounded. While opinion is uncertain and wavering, knowledge is certain and stable. In contrast to opinion, faith need not be inferior to knowledge in degree of conviction. Yet unlike knowledge, faith is not grounded on evidence; in fact, it seems to be indifferent to evidence and justification, and incapable of being either confirmed or falsified by any evidence or demonstration. Against the prevailing view, Kant emphasized that faith is not partial knowledge but belongs to an altogether different category than knowledge. Faith and knowledge are different in kind, not in degree, because their functions are different. Knowledge deals with identifying and explaining various phenomena. Faith deals with orientation and guidance. Knowledge determines what something is and how it is possible that something happens; it thus makes it possible for us to predict what will happen and control the course of events in the world. Faith does not deal with controlling the world, but with our acceptance of it. Faith is a matter of trust which gives us a sense of direction; it sets goals and aspirations, and indicates a path that could lead us toward their realization. Kant furthermore stressed that this kind of orientation is indispensable even when no relevant knowledge is available. In fact, this orientation is especially important precisely with respect to the issues where no knowledge, no proof, and no control are possible or available. We must make this leap of trust at the most general level of orientation in reality, and this leap is what we call 'faith'.

Crossing the boundaries of what can be known and making the leap of trust into the abyss of the unknown does not seem to leave much room for rationality. What, then, is rational about this faith? Kant's "security blanket" throughout his discussion of reason was 'necessity'. It is necessary to orient ourselves in reality. He argued for the legitimacy of necessity in two ways. The first is already familiar, namely that even our cognitive inquiries must be guided by some general regulative principles. Although this reason is perfectly valid, it could hardly be of any use in this particular context. The fact that our cognitive experience—

and indeed all other forms of experience—presupposes some general principles of orientation that are not themselves the result of those experiences, the fact that our orientation requires a leap of faith, tells us nothing about the content of that faith. Nor does it tell us whether or not that leap is rational.

Kant's appeal to the interests and needs of reason was a more specific way of addressing the issue of rational faith. Yet this account does not satisfy either, but for different reasons. Kant conceived of reason as a faculty that searches for the unconditioned and absolute, for the highest unity of our overall experiences of the world. It is less important that by means of knowledge reason cannot find anything that would slake its thirst. More consequential is that reason's search for the unconditioned is still not specific enough to warrant Kant's conviction that rational faith had to take a certain specific form or content, which Kant associated (too) closely with the Christian understanding of God.[14]

If he wanted to stay "within the limits of reason alone," what Kant could justifiably claim would be more restrictive than positive, more general than specific. Reason searches for something that is more than the mere facts of the world and it is not irrational to do so in order to make our orientation in reality possible. Against the traditional dogmatic metaphysics, Kant was also right to claim that this something that goes beyond the facts of the matter need not be treated as an existing object or a thing. It could be an ideal, or an archetype (*Urbild*), as Kant (following Plato) called it. This is why Kant thought of Jesus as an archetype and completely ignored the issue of the veracity of the historical evidence for his existence. What we need for a meaningful and rational orientation in reality is an archetypal idea, something that will show us the way and stimulate us to direct our efforts toward realizing our highest human aspirations and potentials.[15]

It is perfectly rational, I agree with Kant, to have faith in symbols and archetypes that are not directly grounded on factual considerations. My problem with Kant's position is that he wanted far more than that. He wanted to maintain that both the content of the archetypes and their origin were due to the specific faculty of reason. This was what misled him to speak of rational faith and to identify Christianity (when understood in the proper moral sense) as the only "true religion." He was wrong on both accounts.

Jesus was important for Kant more as a symbol of rationality and a rational ideal than as an historical personality. Jesus was for him a personification of *logos*, a rational principle that stands for the possibility of overcoming evil and becoming good. As noble as Kant's ideal was, to identify Jesus with *logos* is either to distort the image of Jesus or to inflate the concept of reason beyond recognizable limits.[16] For Jesus is not an intellectual

archetype in the sense in which a perfect geometrical figure is so; he is not an ideal construction that has to satisfy our intellectual curiosity. Jesus was not created as an intellectual hypothesis, but born out of pain, fear, deprivation, and the ever present suffering of humanity. The experience of order, happiness, or harmony in the world would never lead to the emergence of religion. They may be explained and rationalized, but such explanations and rationalizations are irrelevant for those who experience order, happiness, or harmony. The happy ones can believe in anything whatsoever, or, for that matter, in nothing at all. Light is always born out of darkness, and Dostoevsky and Nietzsche were right to claim that it is those who suffer, who lose, who live with pain and fear, that need religion to console them. It is they who need (the images and archetypes of) God, Jesus, salvation, and the immortality of the soul. Since none of us can live without pain and suffering, the central "imperative" of Christianity is compassion, the ability to suffer together with those deprived and in pain, and to love ourselves, our neighbors, and even our enemies. When life is suffering, compassion and love are its healing principles; they not only make the pain of life bearable but awaken our hearts and open the path for identifying with all life and all existence. From the religious point of view, it is essential that "the Word" (*logos*) penetrates to the heart, and it may be argued that it is precisely this recognition of the significance of compassion and love, rather than that of language and reason, that marks the beginning of authentic humanity, the birth of spiritual man out of animal man. There is, then, more to Christianity than reason and rationality, and Kant's attempt to delimit religion by reason alone was unfortunate and anachronistic, to say the least.[17]

Kant was furthermore wrong in his conviction that archetypes are the ideals of reason. As Jung convincingly argued, archetypes are the dynamic patterns of preconscious and unconscious structures of the psyche.[18] The archetypes can have such vital significance and energy precisely because they are not mere rationalizations but are rooted in the lower strata of the psyche (the womb). Although a priori, these inherited tendencies are grounded less rationally and more instinctually on the creative fantasy of the entire species. Jung compared them with the specific impulses of nest-building or migration in birds; like the instinctual tendencies in animals, the primordial archetypal patterns play an influential role in our psyche with respect to its general orientation as well as with respect to specific intentions, thoughts, actions, and evaluations. The archetypes are not fully determined with respect to their form, and are even less fully determined with respect to their content. In that point the archetypes resemble the subjective function "ϕ," from our interactive function "$\phi(x)$." Like this subjective function, the archetypes cannot provide the objective element "x" on their own, and are therefore dependent on

some other source. In every past or present society the ancient archetypal patterns are fleshed out with different material, and every religion and mythology has a very complex network of archetypes. Even Kant was fully aware that there are different archetypes. He himself mentioned not only Jesus, but also a wise (Stoic) man, and the archetypal philosopher. Of course, the actual list is much longer: There are archetypes of mother, father, martyr, wanderer, hero, lover, beauty, rebirth, Narcissus, Lucifer, Prometheus, and so on. There are, hence, not just religious ideals but archetypes that correspond to various types of activities and situations, or, better yet, to different kinds of needs in response to which these activities and situations arise. While these "formal patterns" can be recognized across cultures and epochs, the variations in the modes of representations are due to the individual culture and the specific needs and outlooks of one epoch. The archetype of divinity can be represented as a God-Father separated from His creation, as in Christianity, or as an eternally flowing current of immanently present vital energy, as in Taoism. The archetype of "mother" can be symbolized as the "Great Mother," the mother who gives birth and provides unconditional loving and care, but it can also be depersonalized and represented as lifeless and inert matter.[19] Thus, what changes about the archetypal patterns is not only their content but their function and role. The specific content and role, as well as the overall evaluation of the archetypes, are not determined by reason once and forever but vary from one society to another, from one time to another.

Kant was thus wrong to consider the archetypes in general and religious ideal in particular as resulting from the need of *reason*. It is more accurate to talk about human needs and think about ideals and archetypes as attempts to address human needs. It is the complete human being, not some imaginary faculty of reason, that has a deeply-rooted need to make sense of reality. It is the complete human being that faces the tragedy and comedy of life. Religion is the general name for the struggle of human beings to come to terms with their past, present, and future. Religion is the name for our secret solidarity with that which lies beyond and beneath the facts of the empirical world.

6.5 "TRUE RELIGION" AND "THAT HONEST MAN JOB"

When Kant contrasted faith with opinion and knowledge, his idea was that faith has a different function. Faith does not deal with facts and determinative judgments about reality. It is concerned most of all with trusting something that, though lying beyond the physical world of nature and facts, helps us to find our bearings in down below. If this is the proper function of faith and religion, in what sense could Kant talk about religion

as being true or false? Is it appropriate to ascribe any truth value to religion in the first place?

Faith and religion are not about gods and deities but about us, human beings. Gods and deities do not need religion; we do. If the proper function of faith and religion is to orient and guide us, and if they can be assigned a truth value in the first place, they can then be true or false only with respect to whether they fulfill this function. The 'true' and 'false' in question should not be taken in the sense of identifying what is or is not the case, but in the sense of whether something is genuine or authentic. A fairweather friend is not false because he does not exist but because he is not going to stand for me and help me when I really need his support. Similarly, a religious outlook can be true if it can perform its function and fulfill its promise, and false if it cannot. Yet how can we know whether or not a religious outlook is true? What distinguishes a true religion from a false one?

There may be only two ways in which something such as that can be tested: 'doctrinal' or 'authentic'. The first way is based on the rational considerations of the entire religious system. This is a consideration from the outside, without stepping into the waters of the actual and authentic religious experience. Significant suspicion toward this approach has already been voiced in the earlier sections of this chapter (6.3–4), but a few more remarks should be added. The central questions of religion are not ontological and epistemological, nor are they (as we shall argue in the next chapter) moral. These approaches only side step what is important about religion, and that is its impact on our orientation in life. This is what disturbed thinkers such as Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, and this is where the question of whether Christianity can really deliver what it promises is of crucial importance.[20]

The second way of testing the truth of a religious system is from inside, from the first-person perspective. You and I can realize whether our religion is genuine or deluding by observing how it guides us through the complexities of life. Of course, we are not talking about trivial and ordinary experiences but about special and limiting cases. One good illustration is provided by the biblical narrative of Job, a character with whom Kant himself occasionally identified.[21]

The story tells us about the three stages in Job's religious life. When we first meet Job, besides being a happy and successful man, he is a morally good person and an honest believer. Satan then convinces God to test the depth and sincerity of Job's faith and goodness by creating one disaster after another for him. This sudden reversal of fortune brings us to the second act of the tale. Job is stunned by the development of events and he questions God's intentions and justice. Job is convinced of his innocence and, with full sincerity and love, he gives voice to complete moral outrage

against God. He challenges God to break His puzzling silence and explain why he is being so cruelly tested and tortured. Job's alleged friends come to console him, but they only display their insincerity and fear of God. In the final act of the drama God accepts Job's challenge and reveals Himself to Job. God allows Job a glimpse into the beautiful and also the horrible side of the creation. The best and worst stand next to each other, and co-mingle with each other. In this encounter with God, Job gains a new vision of reality and is transformed by it. A reborn Job has acquired a serenity and blissfulness he has never known before. His accusations and his previous ideas of God arose from utter ignorance and were based on illusions. Job is, as it were, awakened from a bad dream and his fortune has been not only restored but multiplied.

In his account Kant was mostly focused on the second, and partially the third part of the allegory. He was concerned with the contrast between the sincerity of heart of "that honest man Job," as opposed to the hypocritical attitudes of Job's alleged friends. In the last part we see that they were punished and Job was rewarded. The important conclusion that Kant drew from the story was that Job "proved that he did not found his morality on faith, but his faith on morality: in such a case, however weak this faith might be, yet it alone is of a pure and true kind, i.e., the kind of faith that founds not a religion of supplication, but a religion of good life conduct."[22]

Whether justified or not, Kant's conclusion does not account for the crucial point of the story: Job's transformation. For the story is not about Job's being and remaining a morally upright man; it is about a good man who was put on the worst possible trial and who came out transformed through his authentic religious experience. There are several moments worth noting that occurred on the way to that transformation. The first of them certainly is that God spoke to Job, and it is difficult to exaggerate the significance of that act. God's silence, so usual even in the face of unspeakable evil, is embarrassing and confusing. In the face of such experiences, God's silence does not comfort our fear and doubt about the ultimate meaninglessness of the world and human existence. Fear and doubt become the central elements of our overall religious consciousness, and they then lead to anthropomorphism and other religious illusions: When God is silent, when we do not hear His word, we speak and judge instead of Him; we call names and divide things into good and evil.

As Kant knew well, an urge to speak and name, to legislate and judge, is very strong. We usually associate silence with emptiness and ultimately nothingness; silence is the temptation that leads to the denial of all meaning. To resist the threat of meaninglessness and nothingness, we restore to speech, to words (*logos*). To resist the doubt in God's existence or goodness, we speak and assign names and attributes to Him.

We create anthropomorphic images and treat an unknown God as one of us, just infinitely better and powerful. Speech thus may be a way of overcoming the terror of cosmic nothingness, but it is also a way of illusion.

When God speaks—on a very rare occasion: Did He speak again to another man after speaking to Job?—He does not name names and does not ascribe to Himself any determinative attributes. Unlike His brief encounter with Moses, God spoke at length to Job. Yet He told Job in many words what He revealed to Moses in one sentence: "I am who I am." Job takes God to be saying that God is *what is*; God is so implicated with His creation that He cannot be separated from it. For this reason Job is grateful for seeing God far more than for hearing Him. And seeing God is seeing His creation, seeing and accepting the world in all its complexity, imperfection, and even evil.[23]

By accepting evil, Job is able to accept this world, with human finitude and imperfection being an essential part of it. Furthermore, by accepting evil, Job is able to reject his previous misconceptions not only about reality in general, but also about God, and thereby surrender to a totally unexpected and purified vision. Job does not need any proof, nor does he need a suitable name for God; instead of speaking further, he can restore to a trusting silence.

Kant interpreted Job's transformation in the sense that "God thereby demonstrates an order and a maintenance of the whole which proclaim a wise creator, even though his ways, inscrutable to us, must at the same time remain hidden—indeed already in the physical order of things, and how much more in the connection of the latter with the moral order (which is all the more impenetrable to our reason)."[24] Yet this misses the point. What Kant is talking about is Job's position before the transforming experience—this is Kant's perspective and it is our own as well. Job was transformed precisely because things were not hidden from him, because he could see them for what they are. And what he could see was not the illusion of order and a hidden plan of the wise Author but good and evil standing together. What Job could recognize was not a God who is analogous to our human judge, who calls names and put labels, who rewards virtue and punishes vice; this is an illusion based on our ignorance and our anthropomorphic constructions.[25]

Job was transformed when he pierced through the fog of our illusory images of God and saw how unfounded and meaningless they are. The biblical narrative of Job's awakening resembles Plato's famous cave allegory, but it is superior to it with respect to the following point: Job did not need to leave this world to see reality in its true colors; he did not have to be taken to the noumenal heights, but was awakened right here and now. It is for Kant and all of us who have not participated in a genuine religious

experience and still live in the fog of our own conceptions, it is for us that the warning from the book of Exodus was issued: "You shall not carve idols for yourself in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth." The warning is for us, ignorant and deluded, who create images and call names. Job, in his wisdom, was left speechless.

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Moral Illusions

The distinction to be made here is not between norm and norm,
but between way and way.

—M. Buber

7.1 TRUE MORALITY

Kant was the true champion of the noninstrumental conception of rea-
son and rationality. Rationality is not limited to knowledge, to iden-
tifying and demonstrating what is the case, but is also directed toward
leading the way and setting goals for humanity. In Kant's view, rational-
ity in its highest sense deals with the problems of orientation; it concerns
itself essentially with ends and norms, with what could and ought to be.

Closely associated with this understanding of rationality was also
Kant's broad understanding of truth. Just as rationality is not restricted
to the cognitive realm, truth bearers are not limited to cognitive judg-
ments about the world. Truth is also concerned with what ought to be.
This was the sense of truth in which Kant spoke about true religion and
true morality. They were true for Kant insofar as they were based on ra-
tional principles which identify our highest human potentials and orient
us toward their attainment. Kant thereby advanced in his practical phi-
losophy a new conception of truth, which can be called—to distinguish
it from the interactive version—a 'normative' conception of truth. While
the former conception requires the interaction of the subjective and ob-
jective factors and constraints, of "φ" and "x," the normative conception

of truth seems to demand only "ϕ"; it requires only a norm that would be universally binding and true regardless of whether it is obeyed. Morality would then be true, whether or not anyone lives up to its norms and ideals.[1]

Kant was convinced that this conception of morality was the culmination of his philosophy. His view that the unconditioned cannot be found by means of cognition but that it is accessible through morality narrows the gap between theory and practice that had opened in the time of Aristotle and widened greatly since then.[2] Theoretical reason and practical reason are one and the same faculty with different realms of application. Man is a rational being, but his rationality is manifested not only, and not even primarily, in cognition, but also in the practical and moral realm. It was precisely in practical philosophy that Kant offered a richer and deeper conception of man as a rational being. The limits of theoretical cognition do not show what we ought to do and what we may hope for. The central question of Kant's philosophy: "What is man?," finds its proper milieu in the consideration of our practical needs, interests, and aspirations. The highest truths, and by analogy the greatest illusions, concern the nature of man as a practical and moral being.

What is the framework within which the true morality should be discerned? Kant identified three cornerstones for his conception: (i) the moral sense and conscience of the common man, (ii) the formal exactness of the moral principles that makes morality similar to mathematics, and finally (iii) the ideal, Platonic nature of the moral norms.[3]

Kant thought that it would be foolish to attempt introducing new moral principles since all of us already have a (more or less) developed sense of what is right and wrong; moral judgments of the ordinary man clearly reveal an established sense of duty. Somewhat like Socrates, Kant held that the task of a philosopher with respect to morality is not to construct a new moral system but to recover what has been distorted by sophistry, or forgotten due to the influence of weak will and the pursuit of self-interest.

Kant's reconstruction of morality, however, with its elaborate system of duties, rights, and imperatives, resembles more an axiomatic geometrical system than a commonsense approach. Moreover, in his attempts to formalize the central concepts of morality, he was not sufficiently attentive to the distinction between the moral norms as the principles of general orientation, and the same norms as specific guidelines for actions. As a result, Kant claimed more than he was entitled to; he built his moral system in a manner that was far more rigid than necessary. We shall later illustrate these problems with reference to Kant's claim that lying is never morally permissible. While no one would question the general value and importance of truthfulness, Kant's excessive claim goes not only against our moral intuitions but also against his view that our motives finally de-

termine the moral value of actions. General moral norms and principles do not prescribe maxims for our individual actions; they do not tell us what we should do, but at most what we should *will* to do. To exercise our good will in the proper way, in our moral judgments and actions we must take into account the demands and constraints of the situations in which we find ourselves. Acting with a good will and with the proper assessment of the situation can lead us to lie, and we can be morally justified in doing so. Contrary to Kant's view, in this point there is no asymmetry between cognitive and moral judgments. In both cases the possibility of objective truth requires the interaction between the subjective and objective factors and constraints.

At the end of the chapter we shall turn to Kant's most Platonic ideal of morality—his conception of the highest good. Like Plato, Kant thought that the principles of morality cannot be obtained and evaluated by means of experience, since they stand above it and provide the ideals and archetypes which we ought to approximate as much as possible. This may well be so, but then we are required to show that these ideals and archetypes are genuine and vital, rather than mere arbitrary constructions and unfounded utopias. Kant did not succeed in doing so, and the failure of his lofty claims concerning the role of reason and the highest human vocation should force us to rethink the role of rationality and lead us to develop further the interactive conception of truth.

7.2 RECONSTRUCTING OUR MORAL PRACTICE

As he offered a detailed reconstruction of our cognitive experience, Kant sought to reconstruct the underlying principles of our moral practice. In the case of morality, however, the obstacles are more formidable. For instance, while cognitive elements are not always easily separable from non-cognitive factors, such a separation is even more difficult in the case of moral and immoral (psychological, social, cultural, religious, and pragmatic) elements. The question is not only whether such a separation is possible, but also whether it is advisable: Is morality really an isolated, self-sufficient phenomenon? Are there purely moral principles, or are they not all tightly interwoven with broader concerns and considerations?

Kant not only believed in the autonomous position of morality but elevated it to the highest possible pedestal. No one before Kant and—significantly—no one after, attempted a metaphysical reconstruction of morals that would abstract from all anthropological considerations and present a system of principles and duties binding not only for all human but all rational beings. Yet are there other rational beings besides us, human beings? Even if they exist, what is to assure us that their rationality and

morality are sufficiently similar to our own? More importantly, are all human beings even to count as rational? Are we so *in potentia*, or only when we act as rational beings? It seems more important to focus on human beings and their moral struggles, rather than to speculate about possible rational beings, whose existence or nonexistence does not affect our morality anyway.

Another obstacle to Kant's project was a rapid deterioration in all firmly-established authority. Modernity brought a dramatic breakdown of all traditional—religious and secular—authority, as well as a relativization of all values. Values, including moral values, have become treated as exchangeable commodities. Kant was not interested in offering a sociology of morals; he sought to establish a normative program. He wanted not only sharply to separate moral from immoral values, but also to establish their hierarchy and restore an ultimate authority on moral issues. But must there be an ultimate authority? Is ordinary moral practice, with its changing directions and interests, really based on any single authority?

The third obstacle was that Kant inherited a specific philosophical background and approached his project from its perspective. While for ancient philosophers morality was centrally concerned with human nature and human aspirations toward excellence (*arete*) and fulfillment (*eudaimonia*), their modern counterparts approached moral consideration with a legalistic mentality, focusing on the ethics of conduct. Moral laws and norms deal with our actions and policies, insofar as they are right or wrong, obligatory or not, and permissible or not. Moreover, Kant's understanding of morality was further narrowed down, mostly under the influence of Rousseau, to the problem of finding a way of reconciling the selfish interest of an isolated individual with the common interest of the entire humanity, or even of all rational beings. While this problem is certainly relevant to modernity's preoccupation with increasing collectivization and globalization, Kant's ultimate moral principle addresses this one particular issue and neglects many other moral concerns.[4]

Kant began his reconstruction of morality by focusing on the concept of good will: "It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a *good will*," insisted Kant, and added that good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, but because of its willing.[5] Understood in this sense, the good will is opposed to everything that is calculable and predictable; it goes against the market orientation so characteristic of Kant's age and our own. If we take Kant's absolutist claim with a grain of salt (as we should), we can see that in this point he stood in close proximity to the commonsense understanding of morality. In his elaboration of the concept of the good will, however, Kant was soon to depart completely from common sense. The good will is usually

associated with purity of heart, good intentions, trustfulness, and sensitivity toward others. We normally think of a man of good will as someone who cares about his fellow men and whose pursuit of happiness is closely bound up with that of others. Philosophy cannot teach us about the relevance of that goodness and purity, nor should it, since every man on the street knows that already. It is true that many times, in our preoccupation with daily problems and the pursuit of our own interests, we tend to forget about the good will toward others and become efficient utilitarians and pragmatists. It is true that sometimes unpleasant accidents, or even personal tragedies, affecting those we love and care about are needed to wake us up from the utilitarian and pragmatist slumber. But the capacity for a good will and genuine compassion is there, already locked in our hearts.

A charitable interpreter could argue that this conception is not opposed to what Kant understood by the good will, but that his emphasis was somewhat different. A more cynical reader would say that if goodness of the will and purity of heart were so important to Kant he would not have created a rigid system of obligations and norms. This is the result of his linking the good will to objectively valid rational rules and a conception of duty based on those rules. The good will is not a complete good, yet it is an indispensable condition for any other good. To contribute toward the realization of the complete good, the good will must be governed and directed properly, in accordance with rational laws of morality. In Kant's famous words:

> Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act *in accordance with the representation* of laws, that is, in accordance with principles, or has a *will*. Since *reason* is required for the derivation of actions from laws, the will is nothing other than practical reason. . . .[T]he will is a capacity to choose *only that* which reason independently of inclination cognizes as practically necessary, that is, as good.[6]

There is much that is disturbing and unacceptable here, starting with the first claim. As much as it can be claimed that nature works in accordance with law, it is also clear that nature constantly makes leaps; indeed, any free act is a leap that escapes through the network of mechanical causation. Furthermore, although we talk about free will, it should be clear that our will is never absolutely free; it is only relatively and partially free. Our freedom is never static and somehow given, but undergoes development. As there are different levels of intellectual maturity, there are levels in a development of freedom. There are, as is well known, also regressions into unfreedom. That is why authors as different as Goethe, Schopenhauer, Dostoevsky, and Freud reacted against Kant's identification of free

will with good will. Without a significant distortion of moral phenomena and ordinary moral practice, free will cannot be equated with goodness, any more than it cannot be identified with the intellect, or reason.

Kant brought in too close a connection between the intellectual and the moral realms, and he was able to do so because his conception of will was similar to his conception of theoretical cognition; on his view, they refer only to two aspects of the same faculty of reason. Both will and cognition exist insofar as they are based on objectively valid rules, which constitute their unity and identity. Moreover, they both submit to no other rules than the ones which reason has proposed to itself as the universal norms. In both realms reason is in this respect autonomous. It does not recognize any ready-made law, nor does it respect any authority imposed from the outside, be it natural or supernatural. Nevertheless, Kant thought that in morality reason can accomplish something that turns out to be impossible with respect to cognition: It can establish the law that is unconditioned and has absolute validity for any rational being as such. Since human will is not holy, since it is imperfect, it is related to the absolutely valid law of morality through the concepts of duty and imperatives.

'Duty' is the necessity of action done from pure respect for the moral law. To have moral worth, an action must be done from duty, and not be performed merely in accordance with duty for a selfish reason. The realization that something is a duty must be the determining reason of my action. 'Imperatives' are expressions of the moral law, insofar as they constrain our will as a command. Among the various kinds of imperatives, for Kant's conception of morality the most important is the one that he called categorical; it is defined as the unconditional command that does not borrow its validity from some further end, but instead possesses its own validity in that it presents an ultimate and self-evident value. One formulation of this imperative is: "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law." In another formulation the same imperative commands: "Act so that you use humanity, in your person as well as in that of another, always as an end and never only as a means." The last formulation demands that we "act so that the will could regard itself as at the same time giving universal law through its maxim." Kant certainly intended to convey the same idea through the different formulations of the categorical imperative. This imperative, in any of its formulations, commands a willing submission of my particular interest to the command of universal law. This universalization is not logically necessary, neither is it derived through a utilitarian calculus. Rather, its basis is a self-conscious recognition of every human being as an end in itself; it commands us to respect the moral worth of every human being. The ultimate ground of human

dignity is in our autonomy; our ability to give law and also be subject to that law is what, according to Kant, elevates us above nature and infinitely raises our worth.

Kant believed that in the conception of the categorical imperative he had found a principle that was absolutely valid and binding for any rational being; in it, the yearning for an unconditioned and absolute Archimedean point, which had proved futile in theoretical cognition and rational theology, had found its consummation. In this context, it is hard to say why Kant believed that his conception of morality, based on the absolute binding power of the categorical imperative, is a reconstruction of our customary sense of right and wrong. We are certainly not compelled to assume Kant's view in order to understand the commonsense notions of good will and duty. The metaphysical good will is a mere abstraction which has no motivating power. It is similar with Kant's rendering of duty; a virtuous person does not do good things because he owes something to some authority ('duty' derives from Latin word *debere* = to owe). He behaves responsibly not by forcing himself to obey the voice of the internalized authority, but because he responds (from *respondere* = to answer) to the world in which he is an active participant.[7]

Moreover, in his grasp of what is morally good and evil, an ordinary person does not use, or need to use, a complex formal system of obligations, right, and duties. Neither does this person require the equally formal system of imperatives and moral laws. With an already built-in network of cultural, social, and psychological archetypes (see 6.4), an ordinary mature person simply does not depend on an elaborate system of norms and rights to make a sound moral judgment. In addition to this, it is important to notice that an ordinary man would not have very many thoughts about the moral norms or duties themselves. It would look perfectly obvious to him that, say, we have to honor and respect our parents. His moral deliberation would not be concerned with how he comes up with this "norm," nor with whether it could pass Kant's "universalization" test of the first formulation of the categorical imperative. The moral deliberation would be about the ways in which proper respect could and should be shown. As Martin Buber expressed it, "The distinction to be made here is not between norm and norm, but between way and way."[8]

Instead, then, of claiming to capture the commonsense morality, it seems far more justified to say that Kant's conception is a construction of reason, a rational model of what the structure of morality should be. This discrepancy with the moral sense of the common man may, nevertheless, be a small price to pay if Kant really succeeds in fulfilling the eternal dream of reason and concluding its search for the unconditioned. But did Kant really accomplish that goal? And at what price?

7.3 GOODNESS, DUTY, AND TRUTHFULNESS

Kant certainly succeeded in transforming the morality of the common man into a formal system of laws, imperatives, rights, and duties. He opened the first section of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by claiming that no other talent of the mind, or quality of the temperament, or gift of fortune, can compare with the unqualified goodness of the good will. The more we enter into the network of Kant's moral system, however, the more this unconditional goodness of the good will recedes from sight. It is replaced by the unconditional value of perfect duties and unalienable rights.

To understand the significance of this shift in emphasis, we must recall that the good and the right are the founding concepts of ethics. Although frequently used interchangeably, these concepts have their distinguishing marks and belong to different frameworks. The good belongs to the "goal-seeking" framework, and the right to the "legalistic" or "juridical" framework. The good is related to human goals and purposes, and is founded on our intentions and aspirations. The right is related to duties and obligations, and is based on modes of social organization and regulation, involving practices, rules, and laws. The good deals with values and evaluations, the right with norms and prescriptions. To value something and judge it as good does not in and of itself tell us what we ought to do. 'Good' does not logically imply 'right', just as 'valuable' does not imply 'obligatory'. Nor is it the other way around. Thus, although closely related, the good and the right are two separable and distinct ideas, and a fundamental problem with Kant's shift from goodness on the one side to duties and rights on the other is that there is no complete overlap between them.

This creates some unpleasant "anomalies" within Kant's metaphysics of morals. One of them emerges from the realization that there may be morally benevolent and good actions which, however, have nothing to do with our rights and duties. We can do good things even when it is not our duty to do so, as we can behave benevolently beyond what duty obliges us to do. An even more dangerous kind of anomaly, seriously threatening to the formalized foundations of Kant's moral system, occurs when strict adherence to our rights and duties leave us powerless in the face of evil, and seems even to contribute to it. The most famous example was discussed in Kant's late essay "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy." Kant considered the following scenario. My friend, chased by a person who intends to kill him, takes refuge in my house. Then the maybe-murderer appears and asks whether my friend is in the house. Since lying is a violation of the perfect duty to myself, and since Kant believed that "Thou shall not lie" is a moral law, his stand was that, when asked

about my friend's being in the house, I ought to tell the truth: "To be *truthful* (honest) in all declarations is therefore a sacred command of reason prescribing unconditionally, one not to be restricted by any conveniences."[9]

There are many angles from which this and similar examples can be examined, and many reasons for which Kant's rigid formalism can be justifiably criticized.[10] Kant's own example indicates that lying need not be based on mere conveniences but on serious and deeper conflicts. Kant, or his theory, was wrong if he could not see that there are genuine moral dilemmas. A really tragic aspect of many complex life situations is that our choice is not simply between good and evil, but frequently between two evils. The motives for acting this way or that way may in both cases be pure and consequences equally repelling. In such cases grounds for the right decision, if any decision is right, are unclear and unprescribable in advance. Why expect that an ethical theory, any ethical theory, would be able to set a standard, and especially a fixed, universally applicable, and pre-given standard, between good and evil? How much less should we then expect that such a theory would offer a fixed way of resolving the conflict between two kinds of good, or two kinds of evil? Clearly, a practical decision must be made, but such cases may be without a genuine solution.[11]

What is important for our purposes is the connection of these types of examples with Kant's general claims regarding the truth of morality and his general views concerning truth and illusion. This case illustrates Kant's firm conviction that in morality, unlike our cognitive experience of the world, it is possible to establish a norm that would be true and valid regardless of the contextual and situational factors in which this norm is to be applied. The truth and validity of such a norm would furthermore not be in any way affected by, or dependent on, the cultural and ethical tradition of one's society, nor by any previous personal experience and knowledge.

Could that ever be the case? Could there be a moral norm that is as true and as independent of context and constraint as is "2+2=4"? Could such a *contemptus mundi*, with the rejection of everything that is historically, culturally, and psychologically conditioned, provide an acceptable moral theory? Is morality about real human beings and their dilemmas, or is it about beings that are more like mathematical units and their computational functions? To clarify why our answers to these questions must be negative, let us first make some preliminary considerations that can clarify some relevant issues and help us in our deliberation.

Kant thought that just as metaphysics helps me to answer the question: "What can I know?," moral philosophy should help me with the question: "What ought I to do?" A critical reader will quickly notice that

both questions are ambiguous in the same way. "What can I know?" can refer to the necessary and principal boundaries of human knowledge, or it can focus on the contingent and temporary limitations of the present stage in the development of sciences and other forms of human cognition. The question about what I ought to do can similarly be dealing with the general problem of human attitudes and orientation in reality, or it can refer to the specific actions that I have to undertake. In both cases, we can be fairly sure, Kant was interested in the most general level of considerations.[12] Hence, his moral system was intended to deal with questions like: "How, *in principle*, do I have to act?," or "What kind of attitudes toward myself and other people should I, *in principle*, assume?"

This distinction between the levels of generality is not intended to undermine the validity or truth of the most general principles but simply to show that adherence to them still leaves enough room for flexibility and even exception at the level of specific actions. What is right in principle need not be appropriate in specific circumstances, and *vice versa*. There are, indeed, some remarks compiled by Kant's students that clearly show that he was not oblivious to such anomalies. In the *Lectures on Ethics* we see him aware that they exist with respect to lying and truthfulness. If, for example, force is used to extract an admission from me, then my lie would be a measure of self-defense, and it is permissible to defend myself and thus, when necessary, to lie in order to defend myself.[13]

Surprisingly, this kind of flexibility we encounter rarely, if ever, in the moral writings published by Kant himself. One reason for it was that Kant wanted to establish the presence of the constitutive norms and rules of morality, and was obviously concerned that any exception to these principles could reduce them to the level of merely regulative rules. Important as the constitutive–regulative distinction was for Kant, he did not realize that exceptions need not threaten the constitutive status of certain principles if they are treated in the functional and dynamic, rather than purely formal and static manner.[14] To treat the principles in the functional rather than merely formal manner means to consider them according to their spirit, rather than according to their letter. Kant was certainly afraid that allowing exceptions might lead to intentional or nonintentional abuses of the fundamental principles, and such a risk is not imaginary but real. It may have thus seemed safer for Kant to cut the Gordian knot once and forever and accept a purely formal interpretation of the basic moral principles, no matter what. But would that be the most rational thing to do?

'Autonomy' means the ability to make not just free choices, but refers to the ability for self-determination. But that means that autonomy cannot be taken merely in a negative sense, in the sense that the laws that we accept must be legislated by us, rather than by God, the government, the inclinations of nature, or some other way. If we are not going to be turned

into rational moral machines, Kant's demand for autonomy must be combined with a cultivated ability for spontaneous thinking; there must also be autonomy in a positive sense. The point of the autonomous choices, taken in the positive sense, is to understand these laws, to grasp the value they advocate and the binding power they assume. The tricky part in it, the part that Kant did not like, is that my ability to choose laws for myself is intimately connected with my ability to see when such laws would be irrelevant, or superfluous, or misapplied.[15] Freedom to think and freedom to choose must involve the ability to modify or reject what is found inappropriate. Rational, nonmechanical thinking must be spontaneous and autonomous in the positive sense, because of the ever-changing demands of the situations in which we find ourselves, and because of the fluidity and multiplicity of our motives, desires, needs, and goals. Does not, then, precisely this freedom of choice, this ability rationally to choose for myself (as an unique individual), lead us to leave open the possibility of recognizing the limitations of the laws we accept, which would in some cases lead to exceptions to these laws, and in some others to their modification or even rejection?

Kant was sensible enough not to overlook these variables; yet his reasoning was that precisely because there are so many variables we need to find something stable and valuable, something that need not be part of the present make-up of the world, yet something that would serve as its leading ideal. The move that Kant made is essentially the same as the move that he made with respect to religion: Just as it does not matter whether or not God exists so long as we guide our conduct in accordance with an archetypal ideal of God, so too it does not matter that we are not fully holy and rational beings, so long as we strive toward holiness and complete rationality. As various formulations of the categorical imperative show, Kant instituted this idea at the very top of his moral system. The categorical imperative prescribes and demands that we recognize all persons as ends in themselves, as the members of the kingdom of ends. If my action is morally good, I have to be able to universalize the maxim of my action in such a way as to articulate my recognition of all human beings as having an equal moral worth and as having a disposition to act from the conception of the moral law.

At this point Kant's position is a highly dubious one, for it again denies the relevance of individuality in morality; this time it is not the individuality in my person, but in the person I am dealing with. In Kant's view, my duty is to treat every human being I interact with as a member of the kingdom of ends, but none of us is a member of that imaginary kingdom. I am commanded to treat all persons as having an equal moral worth, but do we all have the same moral worth? I should treat every human being as rational, despite the fact that so many times we do not behave like rational beings.

How can I treat the person who, for no apparent reason, is trying to kill my friend as a member of the kingdom of ends, as having an equal moral worth with all other people, and as a rational being? Why should I have any obligation to tell this person the truth? Honesty and respect for truth are certainly important qualities of one's character that have a full value in the context of equality. Without equality, in the context in which I, or any other person, am used as a means or abused, to tell "the whole truth" only fosters further dominance and control, rather than justice and integrity.[16]

Treating people equally does not mean treating them the exact same way; for they are not numbers or statistical units but individual and unique persons. To treat you equally means to treat you as my equal, or, as Buber put it, not as an "it" but as a "Thou." This in turn means to treat you in a way that is open and sensitive to who you are (just as you have to treat me that way). I treat you as my equal when I am willing to consider not just what you do and how you behave, but what motives and reasons you may have for your conduct. I do not treat you as a human being and a rational agent when I simply register your behavior in my perceptual field and then react to it "from the conception of the moral law."

Kant was afraid that when we show interest in someone's personality, we do not act because of our duty but because we are driven by inclinations and emotions. Even if he was right about that (and he was not, since our conduct is not even then a mere reaction), this does not mean that moral deliberation could be limited to a silent dialogue of the rational will with an abstract moral law. As we cannot know the world by being detached from it, we cannot behave morally by being detached either. Even the very word 'acting' is misleading. In our moral conduct we are not acting, but interacting. With our conduct, we take part in social and natural processes that are guided by norms, values, and considerations, many of which do not depend on our will and cannot be determined by it.

We can now see more clearly the paradoxical nature of Kant's legalistic approach to morality. His metaphysics of morals is both human and inhuman in the highest degree.[17] It is human insofar as it attempts to protect the humanity of every person by demanding an unconditional respect for it. Regardless of age, gender, race, or religious affiliation, every human being is to be treated as an end in itself. If we deflate Kant's pompous language, we see that the idea is to establish and protect the minimal conditions and rights for the existence and growth of every human being.

So far so good, but this cannot be the end of ethical considerations. On the contrary, it barely makes for their beginning. Ethics cannot be merely normative, for moral laws by themselves are powerless. The motivation for moral action and living a responsible virtuous life cannot come from above, but must emerge from below.[18] Moral laws know nothing about living, concrete individuals, whose lives are the only battlefields of moral-

ity. Even when morality is to be understood in terms of our duties and re-
sponsibilities, as Kant insisted, it is not to be understood as a dyadic rela-
tionship between a fallible rational agent and an untouchable rational
norm. By its very nature, the moral relationship is triangular: Moral laws
and norms are only mediators between an individual and the proverbial
"Other": other individuals and reality as a whole. Moral laws and norms
are only means of our responding to the situations in which we find our-
selves; they are only guidelines for our orientation in reality. Like cogni-
tion, morality does not consist in action but in interaction.

7.4 THE HIGHEST GOOD

Why did Kant put so much emphasis on the noumenal aspect of moral-
ity? Why did he need to talk about an imaginary kingdom of ends and the
ideal *summum bonum*?

One of the first things that Kant could mention in his defense is that
some of his central moral concepts—will, choice, action, freedom—point
toward changing things, toward the future. They point away from what
has been or is, toward what could be and perhaps ought to be. Thus,
man's practical orientation requires that we consider the following ques-
tion: What do we try to change and toward what ideal do we strive?

The first part of the question can be answered by recalling how, from
Kant's point of view, our nature is riddled by tensions and conflicts. Man
is divided between being a member of the mechanically determined phe-
nomenal world and the noumenal world of freedom. He is torn between
the propensity to evil and the disposition to good, between self-interest
and duty, between the natural inclination toward happiness and the pur-
suit of virtue. Kant paid special attention to this last conflict, since he be-
lieved (rightly or not) that all previous moral systems had mistakenly
postulated the attainment of happiness as their highest and final goal.
They also misconceived the relation of happiness and virtue by bringing
them too closely together. Instead Kant's approach was to dethrone hap-
piness from the highest moral pedestal and establish the independent
value of virtue. His reasoning was that happiness is such an ambiguous
and subjectively colored concept that it is impossible to build a rationally
defined moral system on this shaky foundation. The pursuit of virtue, un-
derstood as acting dutifully from the conception of the moral law, should
instead be the determining ground of our moral judgments and conduct.
When our desire for happiness is properly subordinated to the call of
duty, happiness can still be seen as a legitimate objective. By our deepest
natural inclinations, we hope that this goal will, somehow, sometimes,
and somewhere, be fulfilled. But how, when, and where?

Kant's conception of the highest good was intended as an answer to these questions. Virtue is neither cause nor effect of happiness; sober experience teaches us that there is no regular and predictable correlation between them; those who are virtuous are often harmed and the wicked benefited. The most we can claim, according to Kant, was that, by being virtuous, we can expect to make ourselves worthy of happiness. The problem is intensified by our expectation, even demand, that virtue be rewarded and vice punished. We are relieved to see that honest Job is at the end rewarded for his innocence and goodness.

Acting morally always presupposes a certain healthy dose of idealism and faith. Moreover, Kant was convinced that there is a "need of reason" to believe that virtue can and will be rewarded in some future, better state of affairs. This ideal state in which virtue and happiness are proportionate to each other is the attainment of the highest good. It was important for Kant in order to believe that in the actualization of that ideal we need not rely either on the benevolence of God or any other source of miracles. The only thing we need to rely on is our own rational will, our own absolutely devoted and ceaseless struggle to become as morally good as possible. As moral agents, we are good and virtuous to the extent that we are directed and dedicated to the realization of the highest good. Indeed, Kant went so far as to claim that our ultimate vocation as rational human beings is to devote ourselves to this highest goal.

This goal, however, is unreachable for us in this life. And this threatens the collapse of the entire system built with mathematical precision. Kant was fully aware that, if the highest good is unattainable for us, the whole system of morality which has this good as its highest objective, is a grand illusion. To prevent the collapse of his moral system, Kant found it necessary to postulate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. As he put it already in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, "without a God and without a world that is now not visible to us but hoped for, the majestic ideas of morality are, to be sure, objects of approbation and admiration but not incentives for resolve and realization."[19] Kant's twist was to argue in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are not necessary for morality but necessitated by it. He thereby sought in the second *Critique* to find a path that would not violate the finding of the first and yet show that the highest goal is, at least in principle, attainable. To the old problem of theodicy Kant thus offered a solution in secular terms: God is not needed as the Divine Craftsman of the world and the Provider of the moral order. Man—or more precisely his rational will—provides a conception of morality that closes the gap between irrational, mechanically governed nature and purposively oriented reason. Both the world's existence and our human existence have a common meaning and pur-

pose: Their sufficient and ultimate reason is in (striving toward) the realization of the highest good.

What to make of Kant's "majestic ideas of morality"? It is hard to resist Schopenhauer's well-known complaint that Kant only smuggled in by the back door what he had thrown out at the front. This reproach is to be taken in a dual sense. The first is related to Kant's manifest urge to reinstitute the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, even though he so convincingly argued that these ideas seduce us onto the path of illusions. The second is more directly concerned with the postulation of the utopian idea of the highest end. If the demands of the moral law make no appeal to our rational will without the postulation of the highest good, then something is deeply wrong with the entire conception of the moral law and the categorical imperative. If we are to do good things for the sake of goodness alone, then we do not expect to be rewarded for them, in this or any other life. If goodness is to be the motivating force of our judgments and actions, then it is irrelevant whether, and to what degree, we are, or could be, virtuous and happy. The whirlpool of life situations poses challenges and problems. Good will, right judgment about situations and available resources, and timely actions are what we need to provide. The norms, ideals, and archetypes are not written in stone but they are usually clear. What is not so clear are the ways of acting in accordance with them.

The significance of these remarks is in their implication that moral norms, together with the related issues of virtue, the highest good, and the highest human vocation, need not be assigned a central place in the spectrum of human experiences. It is certainly a curious historical fact that when the ethical norms were the most ambitious and stringent, the greatest evils were committed in their name. The history of Christianity, and the recent history of communism, would serve as sufficient proof of that.

Morality, as a philosophical theory, seduces us into the illusion that moral problems are essentially intellectual problems, that they are philosophical questions in need of philosophical answers. But this is certainly not so. Ethical problems and ethical norms do not have any privileged status, intellectual or otherwise. They are but a fragment of a broader constellation of problems, that concerns the art of living. If, as Kant argued, truth is related to rationality as such, and not only to knowledge and theory, and if a way of living can be rational and irrational, then it can also be true and false. Kant should have argued not for the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason, but for the primacy of the practical over the theoretical. The deepest and most important truths and illusions are not those that we think, but those that we live by.

Kant himself knew well that the old had to die for the new to be born. Illusion needs to be dispersed for truth to emerge. Kant's criticism was

intended as a deadly blow to all previous metaphysics, to all illusory pre-
tensions of pure reason. Although the wound that the *Critique of Pure
Reason* inflicted was serious, it was not deadly. The ghost of the past was
still dragging on, even through Kant's own thought. The most telling ev-
idence of it lies in Kant's moral writings, including the second *Critique*.
There Kant offered a glorious construction, in the best spirit of the meta-
physical tradition he himself criticized. He offered a vision of what ought
to be, of the highest ideal to which a rational being can aspire. Unfortu-
nately for Kant, it turned out that there was not much that was necessary
about his vision. It was at best one of many possible ideals of what could
be; it was a product of Kant's creative imagination ironed by his reason.
How appealing was this vision? If we take our willingness to act in ac-
cordance with a vision as a test of its validity and truthfulness, then
Kant's vision could not be judged favorably. For his part, Kant would
have emphatically disapproved of the test, for he believed that even if no
action was ever done from duty, this does not speak against the idea of
duty, which is an idea of reason and not derived from experience.[20] Log-
ically speaking, kant was right. Even if no action was ever performed out
of duty, this does not preclude the potential value of the conception itself.
The ideal of acting from duty may be a sufficient reason for action, yet
this ideal is not necessary. Moreover, Kant was fully aware that all too
frequently we opt not to act according to this ideal, and even when we
do, we cannot be certain that our motives are not untainted by heteron-
omy. There is a significant discrepancy between what we do and what
Kant believed we ought to do. How is this discrepancy to be resolved?
We could hardly do any better than to follow Kant's own suggestion:

> If a ball does not pass through a hole, should one say that the ball is too big,
> or that the hole too small? In this case, it is indifferent how you choose to ex-
> press yourself; for you do not know which of the two is there for the sake of
> the other. By contrast, you will not say that the man is too tall for his cloth-
> ing, but rather that the clothing is too short for the man.[21]

Kant's mathematically constructed moral system is just like that clothing.
Although it may be perfect for an ideal rational being, it is unsuitable for
the real man.

We are thus well advised to keep looking for something that will suit us
better; but what and where? If morality shares the fate of science, meta-
physics, and religion in not being able to serve as the pillar of orientation,
what can? If there is no Archimedean point to hold on to, are we doomed
to relativism and subjectivism? Does living in this world really require
life-supporting lies and illusions, or is there not some path of truth and
truthfulness that can make us free?

III
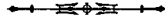
Can Truths Make Us Free?

8

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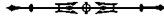
Man as the Measure
of All Things

Who does not desire to kill his father?

—F. Dostoevsky

8.1 MODERNITY'S STRUGGLE WITH ORIENTATION

The central discovery of modernity was how important, and how diffi-
cult, it is to solve the problem of orientation. In the medieval period
this problem did not exist. The medieval world-orientation was firmly es-
tablished by the Christian dogma of a benevolent God, responsible for the
creation of man's world and his moral norms. This dogma appeared unas-
sailable for centuries, and the central problems of the Christian epoch
mainly dealt with its adequate comprehension. When this Christian
epoch succumbed to multiple pressures—ranging from the internal crisis
provoked by Reformation to the external challenges posed by geographi-
cal, astronomical, physical, and biological discoveries—the medieval
worldview was destroyed beyond repair.

  The pioneers and fathers of modernity focused their intellectual energy
toward establishing a new world-orientation. Many points and chapters
of that story are well known: a radical attempt to eliminate all prejudices
of the past, an increasing reliance on the experimental method and math-
ematics, the shift of viewpoint from object to subject, and so on. The sub-
ject became the center around which, and from within which, the rest of
the world is to be rebuilt. Modernity is the result of this revolutionary

shift, the turn away from an externally grounded foundation toward an internally constituted orientation in reality.

As it is the case with every revolution, it soon became clear that the first phase of destruction was far easier than the process of construction which had to succeed it. Modernity could not come up with anything as simple, monolithic, and persuasive as the Christian dogma. It did not take long before Hume, perhaps the intellectually sharpest mind of modernity, revealed what turned out to be the fatal antinomy of modernity: How can the principles of orientation be contributed by the liberated subject and yet not be arbitrary, fictitious, or illusory? Hume's charge is understandable and justified, and the fate of modernity rested on its ability to respond to him: If our orientation is not to be externally grounded, say in the revelation of God's word, or in the grasp of the order created by God, what could reassure us that such an orientation is not arbitrary? Or, to put the question in more Kantian terms, how can something that is subjective in its origin possess objective validity?

Hume himself could not resolve the antinomy of modernity in a manner that was fully satisfactory. Subject and object, and subjectivity and objectivity, were for Hume separated by an unbridgeable gap. Hume's problem and his skeptical conclusion awoke Kant from his so-called dogmatic slumber; the entire critical philosophy can be seen as an attempt to accept the claims of both thesis and antithesis, demonstrating how they could both be true. The three *Critiques* leave no doubt that Kant wanted to demonstrate that his solution is valid not just for cognition but for all areas of human experience. The *Critique of Pure Reason* sets the stage for this undertaking and provides a model which, with some modifications, Kant tried to apply everywhere. The Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic show that, together with Hume, Kant accepts that some crucial elements of cognition are not derived from experience, from without, but are contributed by the subject, from within. The Transcendental Dialectic reveals that Kant also supports Hume's view that many of the claims of speculative metaphysics are nothing but subjective constructions that possess no objective validity. Indeed, Kant even defines illusions as subjective projections that are falsely taken to have objective validity.

Kant nevertheless displays a deeper understanding of the problem and goes much further in attempting its genuine resolution. Hume holds, for instance, that if the principles of cognitive orientation are not objectively valid, then our knowledge claims could not be objectively valid either; thus his skepticism. Kant realizes that Hume's conclusion is based on the partial confusion of what we called identification and orientation. He also recognizes that there are two different kinds of evaluation, which Hume does not sufficiently distinguish. Our commonsense and scientific knowledge claims purport to identify and reconstruct what is the case, and the

principles of orientation play an indispensable role in their formation and evaluation. Kant observes that there is another kind of evaluation, that of our principles of orientation, and also that the evaluation of our identifications is at least in principle independent of the evaluation arrived at by our principles of orientation. This means that it is possible that we can have knowledge of what is, even if we cannot demonstrate that our principles of orientation are objectively valid.[1] And it also means that the central problem of modernity should not be represented in the way in which we did in chapter 4, section 5 (see figure 11):

evaluation ⟶ orientation
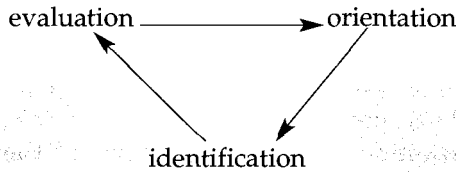
identification

Figure 11

Instead, the problem should be presented as follows (figure 12):

orientation ⟶ evaluation$_2$

evaluation$_1$ ⟵ identification
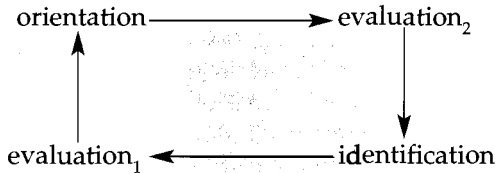
Figure 12

Kant is far less interested in the problem of evaluation$_1$ and the line that leads from identification to orientation. His central problem deals with the path that leads—via evaluation$_2$—from orientation to identification. The first problem is epistemological: What do we actually know about the world? The second problem is metaphysical: How is our cognition of the world possible in the first place? Kant presents the metaphysical problem in two stages, or by means of two questions: *quid facti* and *quid juris*.[2] A metaphysical deduction provides an answer to the first question, the question of origin. This deduction should establish a precise list of all fundamental elements of cognitive orientation and demonstrate their a priori origin. A transcendental deduction, here called evaluation$_2$ aims at establishing the objective validity of the fundamental elements of orientation. For Kant it is of the highest importance that such elements are not analytic, and that their derivation is not a mere logical deduction. Those synthetic elements are not transcendent but immanent; not empirical but a priori; not contingent and idiosyncratic but necessary and universal; they

do not belong to the matter of cognition but to its form. They are valid only insofar as they impose an order and a definite structure upon the raw material of the senses; they are valid insofar as they make our cognitive identification possible with respect to its form. This, then, is the core of Kant's ingenious reply to Hume's challenge: The very form of objectivity is provided by and contained within subjectivity itself. Although there may be many elements of cognition (and all other forms of human experience) which are indeed arbitrary, there are some elements of form contributed by the subject which are not, for without them any cognition—even false cognition—would be impossible.

It is hardly possible not to be impressed by the originality, grandeur, and depth of Kant's reply to the charge of arbitrariness. Nevertheless, the laborious and careful dissection of Kant's critical philosophy performed by generations of his successors reveals manifold flaws in his reasoning and lead to the rejection of many of Kant's conclusions. In the earlier chapters we have already analyzed a number of such objections. Our task now is not to reveal more unsatisfactory details but to challenge the big picture, the very frame of Kant's orientation and the leading paradigm of modernity. Kant and modernity's revolution consists in rejecting the Olympian theocentric point of view, and replacing it by an anthropocentric approach. Instead of God being taken as the measure of all things, man himself assumes this role in modernity. In his criticism of Protagoras, Plato already warned about the disastrous consequences of such an approach; he could not see how it would not lead to relativism and nihilism.[3] Like a rebellious son, modernity ignores those warnings and denies the authority of the father. Unlike Plato, Kant believes that anthropocentrism itself is not the problem; in his eyes the shift from theocentrism to anthropocentrism is seen as man's coming of age, an indispensable transition from childish dependence toward maturity and autonomy.[4] Unfortunately, when the smoke of revolutionary enthusiasm cleared up, hardly any sign of human maturity was revealed. The brave prodigal son looks more like an abandoned orphan than the autonomous master of the world. The human race seems to be regressing rather than progressing. To be sure, for the most part this regression does not lead back to servile dependency on Christian dogma. It is rather a retreat toward an immature, narcissistic condition of being obsessed with one's own ego. This obsessive condition of self-interest has very little regard for other people or the world as a whole. No less disturbing is the fact that this self-obsession appears blind to and ignorant of the genuine needs and highest potentials of the self.

Today, at the twilight of modernity, the cultural and psychological conditions of humanity appear far worse than those exposed in Plato's criticism of the sophists. *Homo faber* has replaced *homo religiosus*, but the bur-

den that man the maker puts on his own shoulders is too heavy for him. What initially appeared to be a victory of modern man now looks more and more like his worst defeat. Our age characterizes a profound sense of disorientation and the prospects for our species look quite bleak. But what went wrong? Are we still free to choose between truth and illusion, or is our choice at this late stage confined to finding a lesser evil? To what extent is the shift toward anthropocentrism responsible for the present situation and to what extent must Kant share the blame for the present state of disorientation?

8.2 ORIENTATION, ANTHROPOCENTRISM, AND SELF-DEIFICATION

Disorientation is a state of confusion, a feeling of being lost; it is a condition in which we do not see or recognize anything that allows us to figure out where we are, or perhaps even who we are. Disorientation can be the result of a chaotic situation, a state in which things are not sufficiently distinguished and ordered. Or it could result from the inability to recognize patterns and structures that could help us determine where we are coming from, or where we are headed.

As 'disorientation' goes along with 'disorder', 'orientation' belongs to the same cluster of concepts as 'order'. As a noun, 'order' refers to a state of affairs that is regulated, structured, and predictable, to something governed by rules and laws. As a verb, 'order' means to arrange, organize, regulate, subject to rules and laws, and even to direct and command. As in some other similar instances (think about the concept of identity, for example), the question is whether we should think of order as something to be found or discovered in the world ('order' as a noun) or as something that is to be brought about or created ('order' as a verb).

The Greeks took the first option. Already the pre-Socratic philosophers marveled at the order of the universe, which the Greeks appropriately called *kosmos*. Plato and Aristotle considered the wonder which this ordered universe evoked as the origin of all genuine philosophical thinking. Perhaps the central motive of the entire Greek philosophy was to offer a plausible and systematic account of the origin of the cosmic order. For the ancient Greeks, all words whose meaning was associated with 'boundless', 'indefinite', and 'unlimited' had a bad connotation. In their view, order is opposed not just to chaos but also to anything that is not confined, limited, and determinable.

The spatial image of a confined, limited, and determined *kosmos* was for the Greeks further related in a very significant way to another word with spatial references: *kentron* (center). Geometrically understood, the center

is equally distant from all points of the circumference of the circle or a surface of a sphere. Symbolically speaking, the center is that around which everything revolves, the focal point, the most important point. In opposition to what is 'center' and 'central' stand the 'periphery' and the 'peripheral', or those which are of little importance.

A proper orientation and a genuine insight into the origin of the cosmic order seems to require a comprehension of the center: where it is, what it consist in, and how we could be as close to the center as possible. The Greeks associated that center with two separable but related ideas: the Olympian gods on the one hand, and *nous* and *logos* on the other. Gods were responsible for transforming the primordial chaos into an ordered cosmos. Moreover, even if Zeus was not guided by *nous* or *logos* in that process of transformation, we, human beings, certainly need to use our rational capacity to unveil the secrets of the cosmic order. If not earlier, then certainly no later than Plato's *Timaeus*, a firm and indivisible link was established between a Creator-God, responsible for the cosmic order, and *logos*. *Logos* was understood as a vision, pattern, or purpose that the Divine Craftsman used in his work; it was the grand unifying theme that pervades all of creation. Christianity finally concurred with this connection by declaring, "In the beginning was *logos.*"

In Christian metaphysics the central role belongs to God, separated from his own creation, but man is situated in very close proximity to God. Man is created in the image of God, and his planet is the central point of the physical universe. As soon as the six days of creation are over, man appears to take the central stage and God assumes the mostly passive role of reacting to man's deeds and pronouncing his judgment on them. While in the beginning of history God himself appears to man and speaks directly to him, He gradually recedes from sight and His voice is only heard through his interpreters, first the prophets and then, exclusively, the Church.

Modernity's drive toward orientation and the center of the cosmic order was no less powerful than it was in the ancient and medieval times. And yet the modern understanding of that order and its center has undergone a radical transformation. Although still hailed as omnipotent, omniscient, and most benevolent, the hidden and silent God and His order appear increasingly less comprehensible to man. At the end of the Middle Ages it was widely recognized that many of the divine designs and judgments proclaimed by the Church appeared undeserved, incomprehensible, and even evil. But if God Himself could not have been blamed, the Church could; thus the feverish spreading of Reformation through Europe. In connection with this religious turmoil, the advancement of modern science completely demolished the medieval *Weltanschauung*. Despite the threatening flames of the Inquisition, the old way of orientation was neither

convincing nor functional any more. More and more people came to be-
lieve that the earth was not special in any way; it was just a minute planet
attached to an insignificant sun in an infinitely spreading universe. Nor
was man believed to be unique, since at that time it was widely accepted
that the universe is populated by infinitely many intelligent beings, at
least some of whom were far more intelligent than us.[5]

The natural response to this new perception of the universe and our
place in it is not wonder but doubt, a radical and all-encompassing doubt.
This doubt was directed not only toward the source of the cosmic order
but it went on to question even the very existence of any such order. Some
sense of order was needed, however, for man cannot live for a long time
with a feeling of disorder without losing his sanity. But where to find a
source of order that would provide the basis for an authentic orientation
in reality?

Modernity has chosen to battle the problem of orientation on two
fronts. Using Kant's terminology, these areas can be called the meta-
physics of nature and the metaphysics of morals. The first appeared less
central and easier, since it did not have a direct impact on human affairs.
To the modern mind, nature does not function as a living *kosmos*, and nei-
ther does it participate in any universal hierarchy with Heaven above it
and Hell below. Nature is now understood as a giant, centerless mecha-
nism, a soulless and spiritless infinite, mostly empty space, without pur-
pose or meaning, and operating according to its own laws.[6] Although
God was initially considered necessary for creating and putting in motion
this mechanism, Kant and many others argued that this did not have to
be so; the origin of the universe and its law-like functioning could be ex-
plained by purely mechanical means.

Although the starry heavens above are a source of constant fascination,
the moral law within is even more intriguing. Man no longer feels bound
by any objective world order given from above. Modern man feels free
and he is endlessly fascinated and puzzled by his freedom. He neither
fully understands how he can be free in the midst of the completely de-
termined world, nor does he quite know what to do with his freedom.
This problem forms the central and most difficult aspect of what we called
in the previous section the problem of evaluation₂, and Kant's attempt to
develop the metaphysics of morals is modernity's most ambitious and
systematic endeavor to deal with this problem.[7]

Kant's phrase "metaphysics of morals" is intentionally ambiguous. It
refers not only to morality but the entire practical realm, to all practical
experiences and concerns of man in which his free will is responsible for
his behavior. Moreover, Kant's phrase emphasizes that among the range
of such experiences and concerns, the moral ones are the most impor-
tant. The word 'metaphysics' reminds us that the issue at hand is not

with ordinary empirical matters, but with the foundation which makes such matters possible. The issue is at the very core of what it means to be a human being. According to Kant, our humanity is not something that is given to us (like a gift from God), but an endless task to the realization of which all other tasks, and even the entire physical world, must be subordinated.

It is essential to notice how deeply anti-Copernican is Kant in his metaphysics of morals. The real Copernican revolution, the one which occurred in astronomy, led us to reject the beliefs that the sun rotates around the earth, that the earth is in the center of the universe, and ultimately that there is any such thing as a center of the universe. The main trend of modernity, which finds one of its highest culminations in Kant's metaphysics of morals, is precisely to put man at the center, not of the physical infinity but of the more important practical universe.

This is modernity's and Kant's anthropocentrism: As a free being, man is the center of the universe, the measure of all things. This does not mean that Kant straightforwardly embraces Protagoras and rejects Plato's view; postmodernism may ultimately lead to that conclusion, but Kant's subtle and complex view steers between Protagoras and Plato. Although, for instance, in Kant's metaphysics of morals God does not nearly play as important a role as He does in the ancient and medieval *Weltanschauung*, God is by no means banished from Kant's universe. He is relegated to an unknown and mysterious noumenal dimension of reality, one toward which man aspires and, in his brightest moments, belongs. Man, as a rational free being, still compares himself with God, and in the Postulates of Practical Reason of the second *Critique* God is still needed for something man himself will never be able to accomplish: the reconciliation of virtue and happiness.[8]

If the position of God remains ambiguous in Kant's philosophy, the position of man is even more so. In the spirit of Luther and Calvin, Kant treats man, actual living man, as a pitiful and sinful creature. Guided by his selfish interest and irrational drives and inclinations, man does not possess any proper authority and his norms are whimsical, arbitrary, and fictitious. Such a man can be as blind, irresponsible, and irrational as an animal.

The man that Kant talks about and is interested in is not given but is a project, an ideal to be approximated. Man can be at the center of the universe and the measure of all things only insofar as he is rational, insofar as he is capable of subduing and controlling his selfish interest, beastly impulses, and arbitrary choices by the power of reason. Kant is well aware that reason and rationality can be put in the service of evil and destruction.[9] As if anticipating the course of events in the twentieth century, Kant argues that radical evil is not the result of blind inclinations and

drives but of an instrumental rationality; in its shortsightedness, such rationality misunderstands man's real interest and miscalculates the consequences of its own choices.

Kant thus attempts to construct a new conception of noninstrumental rationality and reason which, however, turns out to be too ambitious and unsatisfactory. According to Kant, reason searches for absolute principles and laws. Since they are not given, or built in reality, reason is not only a judge—someone who applies such universally binding and necessary laws, but also their author and legislator. This legislative ability and the absolute, unconditionally valid character of our moral norms is Kant's answer to Hume's challenge with respect to the possibility of a metaphysics of morals.

There is something deeply satisfying and profound in Kant's vision of man and the proposed frame of orientation. Kant offers us not just a cohesive frame of orientation but also a definite hierarchy of values and norms. The most important of these values and norms serve constantly to humble man and demand of him that he devote his energy and his life not to selfish and trivial pursuits but to direct himself toward the best and highest possibilities of his nature. Kant's vision assigns to man a goal far beyond his isolated ego and the prison of his egocentricity; he has to treat all other human beings as equal and worthy of absolute respect. Kant's metaphysics of morals does not allow man to rest in the phenomenal world of his everyday concerns but demands that his thoughts and actions be always directed toward a dimension of the ideal, noumenal transcendence.

And yet, although Kant's metaphysics of morals represents one of the finest achievements of human spirit and creativity, there is something deeply illusory about it. Kant paints the attributes of a rational superman over flawed human nature. This desire to be more than a human, to be like a god, seduces man onto a path of dangerous and unhealthy narcissistic self-absorption. As previous traditions always postulated something absolute, an Archimedean point which has to support an entire physical or moral universe, Kant also sets out to provide such a point. The problem is that—outside or inside—there is no such point. The absolute foundation that reason searches for is divine, not human. Just as there is nothing absolute about the categories and other cognitive norms, there is nothing absolute about our moral norms either. Neither is there anything absolute about human reason and free will.[10] Kant dogmatically regards reason itself as something given and final; he does not recognize it is a human capacity, one which emerges in the gradual, irregular, and unpredictable development of individuals, societies, and the species as a whole. Reason and rational will are subject to external political, economic, and cultural pressures, as well as to internal needs, desires, and passions.

While it may be understandable that Kant does not want to identify or reduce reason and rational will to such external and internal influences, it is hard to justify his complete separation of reason and rational will from them. This approach makes Kant's entire conception of man ambiguous and unsettled, for it is not clear who and what that man is. Man becomes unreal in being understood as an abstract wordless and rational ego ("transcendental unity of apperception"). This distorted, "other-worldly" narcissistic image of man forces Kant either systematically to ignore or suppress the irritating bodily and social aspects of man, or to divide man against himself, into a *noumenal* man and a *phenomenal* man.[11] Yet this unbearable separation creates problems not only for Kant's metaphysics of morals, but even more fundamentally for man's basic sense of orientation and identity.

8.3 POSTMODERNISM AS AN IDENTITY CRISIS

Two assumptions underlie Kant's attempt to provide objectively valid principles of orientation. The first is that we lack any direct insight into the ultimate nature of such principles and have to rely partially on rational faith (see 6.3). As we do not have a full grasp of the categorial concepts, we have perhaps even less insight into the true nature of human freedom.[12] Despite all rational efforts, there is always something incomprehensible about ultimate principles since with them we leave the territory of determinative knowledge and, at least to a certain extent, have to make a leap of faith. We do not have any immediate intuition that would verify that the universe is an intelligible whole. Nor do we have any direct insight into a single order that would underlie the chaotic multiplicity of perceptions. Since we cannot rely on God to provide any metaphysical guarantee for the existence of the underlying and all-encompassing order, the question arises as to the real nature of that faith: How much of an ideal, noumenal world do we have to accept on faith in order to find a satisfactory solution to the problems of orientation and identification?

Kant's second assumption is that in our search for the ultimate principles of orientation we are driven by a powerful self-interest. As we have seen in our discussion of the third antinomy (see 5.2–3), speculative reason can use the principle of causality both to show the necessity of an infinite regress and its impossibility. The crucial question then concerns the legitimacy of the various interests involved in these antinomies and, more generally, the most difficult questions concerning human orientation and identity. Kant speaks mainly about speculative and practical interest, and by the latter he does not imply a personal, selfish interest. Indeed, he be-

lieves in the *universality* of human interest, and one of the crucial questions for the proper assessment of Kant's philosophy deals with how to spell out the nature of such universal interest. The most tempting way would be to turn away from the ideal noumenal world and focus on its phenomenal counterpart, to direct our look not above but below.

If Kant's ambitious and ingenious attempt to provide an adequate frame of orientation turns out to be illusory, this may be because there is something unsatisfactory about his underlying assumptions. Perhaps we should retain only one of them and develop it in a more consistent, or more radical, way than Kant does. We shall consider two such attempts. One of them will focus on the first assumption and radicalize it; it neglects the phenomenal world and redirects us toward the ideal and noumenal aspects of reality. Although we find variations of this approach in many nineteenth and twentieth century writers and intellectuals, such as Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Schweitzer, Jung, Berdyaev, or Joseph Campbell, it will be more instructive to consider how Dostoevsky understands this assumption. The second and more common attempt will, by contrast, reject the first assumption and focus on the proper understanding of self-interest; it will focus on man as living in and belonging to the phenomenal aspect of reality. We shall see how this attempt leads the further development of modernity into the now prevailing attitude of postmodernism.

Dostoevsky's central point is that a significantly larger leap of faith is needed than the one allowed by and recommended by Kant. He is firmly convinced that humanism has as its inevitable goal a self-deification of man, and that, as such, it is powerless to find a genuine solution to the ensuing tragedy of humankind. He never presented his views in any systematic order, but they are most decisively expressed in his last novel, perhaps the greatest novel ever written, *The Brothers Karamazov*. The novel deals with the modern shift from theocentrism to anthropocentrism and the problems to which it leads. Father Karamazov symbolizes a nominal authority figure (father, Czar, God) whose authority is compromised. Dostoevsky thus responds to the growing doubt of modernity that God, the omnipotent, omniscient, and most benevolent God of Christian faith, may in truth be nothing but a malicious and deceptive demon. This demon is responsible for innumerable mischief: he sadistically and mercilessly tortures innocents like Job; he allows devastating earthquakes, plagues, diseases, and wars; he even seduces men to burn and torture pagans, agnostics, and alleged heretics, in the name of his holiness and goodness. This god has lost his authority and must be overthrown and killed.

The sons of Fyodor Karamazov find themselves in a position comparable to that of Job. They are greatly puzzled by their father's actions;

although embarrassed and infuriated by him, they find that it is impossible to simply walk away and detach themselves from their father. The middle brother, Ivan, represents most clearly the attitude of modern man. Besides having the same initials, the similarities between Ivan and Kant (superficial and not so superficial) extend much further: Like Immanuel Kant, Ivan Karamazov is very smart and well educated, immersed in modern science and idolizes the liberal-humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment.[13] Ivan does not deny the existence of God but rejects his authority in the name of morality or, more precisely, justice. To the modern sensibility and in Ivan's mind, just as there can be no full separation between the knower and the object of knowing, there can be no essential separation of the creator and the creation. This means that, if evil is indispensable for the divine creation, then both creation and creator must be found unacceptable. As Ivan expresses it: "If the suffering of children serves to complete the sum of suffering necessary for the acquisition of truth, I affirm from now onwards that truth is not worth such a price." Ivan does not hold that there is no truth. His problem is that, if truth exists, it is unacceptable when it is unjust. But if justice is the ultimate principle and the ultimate truth, is it just to kill an unjust father, or an unjust God?

When Ivan's older brother Dmitry is accused of patricide, at his brother's trial Ivan exclaims: "Who does not wish to kill his father?" This pronouncement can be understood in two quite different senses. In the positive, mythological, and psychological sense, the death of a father—a symbolic and not literal death—is necessary for the full growth of a child, for his transition from the stage of dependency to the stage of maturity. The symbolic death of the archetypal figure of father-god is needed for what Jung calls individuation and what Kant calls a shift from heteronomy to autonomy, from having someone else determine the basic principles of orientation for us to our being able to determine those principles for ourselves.

This, however, is not the meaning that Dostoevsky has in mind. The death of the father-god is, in his view, the real source of troubles for modern man. It symbolizes the rejection of faith, with its ideals of salvation and immortality, the rejection of transcendent grace and forgiveness, all in the name of human justice. This justice is for Dostoevsky a dangerous value, a damaging illusion. It elevates man into the measure of all things and puts him in a position of a judge; it deifies him beyond his real abilities. Only a completely free and neutral being can be an adequate and impartial judge. Man, according to Dostoevsky's knowledge of his fellow-creatures, is not up to this task. His freedom is not absolute or unconditional, but is limited in all kinds of ways: he does not choose to be born, he lives with people who constrain him mentally and physically, he

has drives, emotions and inclinations that he did not choose and can never fully control, and he is most susceptible to manipulation: he thinks what others around him think, and their values are his values as well.

By killing the father-god, man indeed becomes free in some sense; he becomes free of his father-god's authority and influence. But what does he become free for? Does he know what to do with his freedom? Does the modern man not realize that his freedom is his heaviest burden and perhaps his worst enemy? Indeed, Dostoevsky believes that the anthropocentrism of the modern man, his being the measure of all things, leads to the chaos of nihilism: "If God is dead, everything is permissible." If there is nothing sacred, how could any norm be valid? How could any duty be obligatory? If there is nothing sacred, then everything is arbitrary.[14]

What is our alternative to the despair and destructiveness of this nihilism? According to Dostoevsky the thinker, the solution is in returning to faith and in deepening that faith. At its best, the ideals of modern humanism are nothing else but the Christian ideals twisted into secular ends. But has modern man been able to create a higher and purer ideal of humanity than the Christian ideal formulated centuries ago? Dostoevsky's answer is negative, and he intended the chapter on the old monk Zosima to serve as the response to Ivan's celebrated "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." Zosima and his devoted pupil Ayosha, the youngest of the Karamazov brothers, should, according to Dostoevsky's own testimony, show that the pure Christian ideal is not an abstraction but something concrete and real, something for every man to accept and follow.[15]

Perhaps the way in which Dostoevsky presents the modern dilemma— either return to the faith in God, or everything will be permissible—may be how many others in the twentieth century viewed the contemporary predicament. Perhaps the appearance of the inevitability of this dilemma and the unacceptability of nihilism have made it, at least in the United States, somewhat fashionable to return to religion and the Church. But neither the formulation of this dilemma, nor its proposed solution, is of much appeal to the true followers of modernity and the Enlightenment. If Kant's metaphysics of morals represents an exaggeration of the power of reason, Dostoevsky's solution seems to demand the sacrifice of reason. Dostoevsky's call to return to the Christian ideal is based on the old separation of the creator from the creation. Only when we are willing to ignore the creation or, more precisely, only when we are willing to die for this world, can we expect to come in touch and to come to know the Creator.[16]

To our modern ears, such a cry to return to some form of Christian mysticism seems inappropriate, to say the least. If he exists, God is too tragically implicated in the course of human history for us to be able to preserve any

Job-like unshakable faith in him.[17] Like Heidegger's desperate cry: "Only a god can save us," Dostoevsky seems to call for a return to the clothes we have outgrown, a return to religion that demands too much of man and that has already displayed its inability to lead us toward the fulfillment of our genuine human potential. The appeal to return to religion demands that we give up our attempts to control our own destiny; it finds sinful our attempts to change this world into a fairer and less unhappy place.

Let us, then, consider the post-Kantian attempts to carry on the torch of modernity, the approach that rejects Kant's first assumption and seeks a solution of the problem of orientation through a proper understanding of human nature and its legitimate self-interest.

Despite Kant's and Dostoevsky's orientation toward the transcendent aspects of reality, modern man is for the most part squarely grounded in the empirical world. This does not make his attempts to find an adequate frame of orientation and develop a proper sense of identity any easier. Even when it is admitted, with Hume and against Kant and Dostoevsky, that all norms and values must be ultimately arbitrary, modern man is still not relieved from the problems of orientation and identity. There is still a high tension that he has difficulties resolving. On the one side, he thinks of himself as an isolated and autonomous individual, the center of creation and the author of his own—however arbitrary and selfish—values and norms. On the other side, modern man becomes increasingly aware of how insignificant he is in the larger scheme of things. He becomes aware that his existence, his thoughts, choices, and actions, are determined in multiple ways. They are conditioned by history, biology, psychology, sociology, and so on. Modern man realizes that he cannot simply identify with his reason or spirit alone, for he depends on his body, as well as on external economic, political, and cultural constraints. This tension creates a profound sense of insecurity with respect to man's orientation in reality and his own sense of identity. How is this tension to be resolved? How is man to understand himself as the center of the universe and the measure of all things if he is so fragile and dependent upon the forces he cannot control?

One important quality that Kant and Dostoevsky hold in common, despite their many differences, is idealism. They share a belief in something higher, more perfect than what exists now, and their respective ideals stand at the foundation of their attempts to resolve the problem of orientation. Although Kant's philosophy is followed by the magnificent constructions and speculations of German idealism, the further development of modernity is dominated by "down-to-earth" realistic approaches of positivism and pragmatism. Two common themes characterize such approaches. The first is an inherent suspicion toward all ideals and idealism; even the highest secular humanitarian aims of modernity are treated as

rooted in the Christian heritage and rejected as such. The second important trait shared by the various positivistic and pragmatic realisms is their tendency to turn the problems of orientation and identification upside down. While Kant and many other philosophers of modernity try first to solve the problem of general orientation that should lead to a clearer sense of who we are, realistically directed positivists and pragmatists start with the problem of identification, and are far less concerned, if at all, about the general principles of orientation. They want to understand man's identity directly, based on "facts," and are quick to assert that human history unfolds through the play of self-interest. If self-interest is the most real and powerful force in human life, we should try to see how that force is to be understood.

Self-interest usually crystallizes together with the pursuit of happiness, whether that happiness in understood in individualistic or collective terms. The individualistic pursuit of happiness is what is called egoism. Egoism may be one of man's most natural tendencies, and the age of modernity is never in short supply of egoism and ego inflation. Egoism does not have to be understood in a narrow sense, as a blind and inconsiderate pursuit of man's selfish interest, but in a broader sense of an individual's desire and ability to control his own personal destiny. Both versions of egoism, however, suffer from the same problem: If the effort to control my own destiny leads me to take too much for myself, there must be many out there who are left with little or nothing and who cannot control their own destiny. A consistent and total egoism inevitably leads to a Hobbesian *homo homini lupus*, a war of all against all. When pursued at the level of independent states, it leads to wars and threatens a global apocalypse.

Strong and narcissistic individuals arise just as inevitably as do powerful states with brutal and inconsiderate foreign policies. But in most cases even the strong must play by some rules, and at least pretend that their goals have something to do with overall progress and common goods. Since the strong determine the rules of political and economic games "in the best interest of all and in the name of general progress," the results— not surprisingly—turn out to be truly devastating for the entire civilization.[18] Modernity is haunted by the recognition that man can liberate himself from the power of irrational and external forces and renounce his slave-like submission to an unknown God, only to find himself no less enslaved by the products of his own civilization. Man does not have to fear an all-powerful God any more, but he must deal with the very real and monstrous realities that totalitarian states and the global market economy embody.

A totalitarian state uses man as a pawn in its political and economic games; he is but a worthless statistical unit. Though supposedly endowed

with rights and freedom, he is actually always at the mercy of insatiable and tyrannical power. The forces of the market enslave man in more insidious and subtle ways, without fear and threat, through a manipulated sense of freedom and prosperity.[19] These forces draw us into an endless whirlpool of always relative means and ends. In this vortex everything, even human life and human dignity, as well as justice and happiness, has a price and an exchange value. Arrested in the market economy, man himself becomes a commodity. Man thus finds himself in a tragi-comic situation. He thinks in terms of self-interest and believes that his self-interest consists in becoming as successful and marketable as possible; he thus invests his time, his energy, his dreams, his entire life, to accomplish the needed success. At the same time, he does not recognize that he lives in self-denial. Modern man gets involved in the wrong game, the game he should not be playing, for in that game neither he nor anyone or anything else can have any intrinsic value or stand beyond the endless mechanical chain of means and ends.

Postmodernism is the recognition that modernity failed to accomplish its central objectives.[20] The idea of civilization's unstoppable universal progress, the once piously held belief in the definite perfectibility of the state and other social institutions, and the hope that the development of science will lead to complete and rational comprehension of nature and ultimately to our full control of its forces, now appear as utopian fantasies. Man's faith in his own free will and his ability to constitute his own norms and values in the best interest of humanity can no longer be affirmed with a straight face. Postmodernism is the realization that modernity did not succeed in resolving the problems of orientation and identity. At the end of modernity's day we are less certain of who we are, why we are here, and where we are headed than we were at its dawn. Descartes's doubt has not been answered; if anything, it is intensified: We are totally disoriented with respect to our place and role in the larger scheme of things. The battle for the liberation of modern man, a struggle that was believed to be destined to end in the autonomous and rational construction of a more just and better world, culminates in a horrifying defeat.

What, then, is to be done? The postmodernists recommend a radical deconstruction: Let us start calling things by their real names and deflate the lofty ideals that have seduced Western civilization to search for an nonexisting and impossible Holy Grail. The most dangerous siren songs were those of Goodness and Truth. We have always taken for granted that the true morality should prevail, thus affirming the objectively correct way of ordering our lives. But what is the ground and justification of that 'should'? Indeed, why do we assume the existence of the one true morality in the first place? Even more radically, why should there be any such thing as morality? In the world that is governed by mechanical forces,

why should there be any values? We are similarly arrested in our search for the Truth. Yet why do we need to believe that there must be such a thing as the Truth? Like goodness, truth is something man-made, artificially fabricated. To the postmodernists, truth is just an artifact (*verum est factum*), as are all other alleged "intrinsic values"; its value and adequacy cannot be measured apart from the intentions of its maker, and without seeing how well it serves his purposes and needs.[21] Instead of searching for the center of the universe, where the Good and the Truth are hiding, we should realize that there is no such center. What exists is a plurality of perspectives, narratives, and truths. Such radical perspectivism thus rejects the idea of the center, as well as the idea of one unifying vision or frame of orientation for humanity.[22]

This does not mean that the problems of orientation and identity are fabricated and man-made; they may indeed be the deepest and most important problems that define and beset human existence. What is fabricated and wrong are certain expectations with respect to what counts as their satisfactory resolutions. These problems of orientation and identity are not about an all benevolent God, nor about Goodness and Truth. They concern the meaning of human life. Greater and deeper than even man's unwillingness to face death is his fear of meaninglessness. Man can bring himself freely to sacrifice his life for an ideal, however misguided and inappropriate his cause may appear from an objectivist point of view. But man cannot live without meaning. He needs a frame of orientation with an object of devotion, and, just as importantly, he needs a sense of identity.[23] The ultimate question about such frames of orientation and the sense of identity is not whether they are good and true, but whether they provide man with a sense of meaning. If they work, if they give man a sense of purpose and a sense of orientation, but do not happen to be Good and True from an objectivist point of view, then so much the worse for Goodness and Truth.

The human search for meaning has been continually misguided by inauthentic morals and impractical utopias. When we free ourselves from such expectations, we obtain a better sense of both the meaning of human life and the possible destiny of humanity. We may envision two extreme scenarios, before interposing a third, more probable, scenario between them. The most pessimistic possibility is that, with bad luck and insufficient concern for the general interest, humanity will destroy itself. It is, of course, far less relevant whether this apocalypse will be caused by nuclear war or environmental disaster, just to mention the two most likely candidates. The most optimistic possibility is that, with good luck and sufficient scientific progress, we can find a way to eliminate conflicts and suffering, thereby promoting the causes of peace and pleasure. Genetic engineering and the discovery of a magic pill that removes the feeling of

pain and suffering will make people for the most part satisfied with their lives; rosy-eyed, numb, and cozy, the species could continue to exist indefinitely.

In all probability, however, the future lies somewhere in between these two extreme possibilities; neither the immediate extinction of humanity nor the realization of heaven on earth is likely to happen. We will stay where we are now and where we have always been. This means that human life will continue to be waged on an eternal battlefield of pain and pleasure, struggle and satisfaction, destruction and construction, ignorance and knowledge. Yet, this also means that Hobbes's worst suspicions were essentially correct: The world has no ultimate meaning and no purpose. It has no order and no center. We live in a meaningless, chaotic, unjust, and absurd world. The ideals of truth, goodness, justice, peace, and perfect happiness for all are nothing but human inventions, the result of projecting our needs and wishful thinking onto meaningless, mechanically determined matter. We need some structure of meaning that will protect us from this devastating nihilism and make our further existence bearable. We need what is traditionally called the meaning of life and orientation in reality and what can more precisely be called life-supporting illusions. This, however, does not mean that we need to recall grand illusions of the past. We can no longer go back to a time when one absolute ideal replaced another.

Postmodernism brings more modesty, pragmatism, and realism to our approach to reality and human nature. There is really no such thing as the choice between Truth and Illusion; the task of our lives and our age consists in finding acceptable and practical ways of dealing with the problems we face. What with respect to these problems is accepted as good and true will indeed be as good and true as we are capable of making it. Those who hope for anything better would be guilty of illusory optimism and dangerous fanaticism. Ivan Karamazov puts it well: "All the knowledge of the world is not worth a child's tears." If evil, pain, and suffering belong to the inevitable fabric of life and cannot be eliminated, let us see how we can minimize their effects so that we could feel as good about ourselves as possible. If it is really the case that we cannot control the wild and unpredictable forces of nature, or even make others happy, then perhaps we could best find satisfaction through automata; they have no egos, they do not ever ask disturbing questions, and, best of all, they require minimal maintenance. Let us then retreat into their fascinating virtual reality, let us play our computer games and enjoy these soothing illusions. If the final score threatens to become unpleasant, or the game becomes annoying or depressing, we can always turn the machine off.

9

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A Moment of Truth

Does the rain have a father?
Who has begotten the dew?
Out of whose belly is the ice born?
Whose womb labors with the sleet?

<div align="right">—The Book of Job</div>

9.1 BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Postmodernism is best understood as the intellectual and cultural cramping of our age. It is a condition caused by our recognition that recent history has discredited the grand ideals of modernity. Their total collapse has left humanity unable to either understand the implications of this "fall" or determine a new course of action. Postmodernism is thus a cramp in a dual sense of that word: It is an intense feeling of pain, accompanied by the inability to resume our accustomed patterns of behavior. When the pain relents somewhat, although still inhibiting action, the cramp allows some time for reflection and, if we are lucky, perhaps provides the condition for a moment of truth.[1]

Reflection consists not so much in trying to answer questions and solve problems, but in thinking about these questions and problems. When, for instance, God asks Job about the parentage of rain, dew, ice, or sleet, there is something enigmatic about these questions. Either they cannot be understood literally or they prevent any meaningful—positive or negative—answer. While God's hyperbolic questions immediately evoke suspicion,

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the deceptive character of many other questions is not as apparent. We might wonder whether postmodernism was not caused by the failure of modernity to formulate its central questions in a right way. But what were these questions and how were they distorted?

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the central problem of modernity is one of orientation: With the death of God, man's role and place in reality become enigmatic to the highest degree. *Homo faber* replaces *homo religiosus* and attempts to establish himself as the center of the universe and the measure of all things, but his efforts misfire. This could lead us to suspect that the ideals of the man the maker and man the creator contain a common flaw; but what could it be?

Perhaps we may gain the needed insight by examining the method by which modern man tackles his questions and problems. Clearly, this is the method of analysis. In its classical, Cartesian version, this means that we must analyze and dissolve all complex problems into their most elementary parts, inspect each part separately and then, with the proper understanding of the elementary parts, attempt a composition or synthesis that should lead to a definite solution of every problem—no matter how complex and difficult. In problems dealing with inanimate nature, the task is to find the most elementary particles and the forces operating between them. In the case of social problems, we should analyze an isolated individual and understand the forces that separate and bring individuals together.

The method of analysis itself is not new. Even the pre-Socratics tried to find the ultimate *archai* out of which the whole cosmos is composed. Yet the modern approach to analysis had its own specificities. One is that for the Greeks the cosmos, the whole, is ontologically prior to its elements, while modernity reverses this view. Furthermore, the Greeks think of the elements as being united in qualitative and internal, rather than quantitative and external ways. The advantage of the modern way is that it allows for the application of mathematics and emphasizes the relevance of man-made standards and measuring instruments. Not less consequential is the difference in the respective goals of analysis. The Greeks were preoccupied with the past, and thought that the past held the key for the proper understanding of the present. To comprehend the present, we need to be able to relate it and understand it in terms of the past. Not accidentally, then, Plato thinks of knowledge in terms of recollection. By contrast, modern man thinks of the past as the source of all prejudices and dogmas. The past is something we should liberate ourselves from, so that we can build a brighter future. Characteristically, Bacon understands knowledge not as recollection but as power. The ultimate goal of knowledge and rational analysis is not to rediscover the old, mythical Atlantis, but to build a new one.

Postmodernity represents our disillusionment with the dream of the New Atlantis; this utopia of justice and happiness for all ends up either as

a Gulag, or, in its best possible scenario, as a Brave New World. A decisive focus of postmodernism is neither on the past nor on the future, but on the present, the now. In connection with the analytic method, this one-sided focus on the present moment leads to a complete fragmentation of reality, as well as to dissolution of individual identity. Not only is man detached from the world, but nothing in the world seems to be connected either. Indeed, we should not be even talking about the world or ourselves. As traditional thinking from its mythological beginnings to modern times has a tendency to "spatialize" time (so that a utopian paradise of the distant past or future is always imagined as a certain place), postmodernism reverses this tendency. With the help of technology, it "temporalizes" space, so that the world's order and continuity are replaced by a sheer quantity of events. Attending a concert, for instance, would traditionally be a unique experience that happened at a particular space and time; this unique experience individuates this concert and makes it unrepeatable. With the help of modern technology, however, this event can be reproduced everywhere, at any time, and as many times as one would like; the unique event becomes just one more possible variation in an endless mosaic of events that do not have any fixed or determined position in the larger scheme of things.

Modernity is based on a firm belief in the uniqueness and indivisibility of an individual person, but postmodernity challenges and rejects that conviction. If there is anything ultimately indivisible in the first place (which is what 'individual' means), the ultimate object of analysis is an event, not an indivisible individual human being. This alleged individuality is just one way of objectifying and rationalizing the world for the sake of analysis, but by no means the only one or the best one. 'Objects' are really fictions and fabrications, just as 'subjects' are illusions and constructions. All there is are unconnected events, happenings that can be experienced from an infinite number of possible perspectives. What we call an individual is just a swarm of such unconnected perspectives, an unruly bundle of perceptions.

Since postmodernism is a radical dissolution and deconstruction, it should come as no surprise that it also dissolves and deconstructs itself. Lyotard's definition of postmodernity as "incredulity of metanarratives" is itself, if meaningful at all, a metanarrative.[2] A rejection of all search after truth as reflecting but one more local and temporal perspective must itself be a local and temporal perspective. This self-destructive perspective causes the cramping that we referred to earlier. Fortunately, cramps do not last forever. After deconstruction should come construction, after negative analysis, positive synthesis. But does not the devastating plague of postmodernism destroy the very possibility of construction and synthesis?

Plato once described our human predicament by using a simile of the cave: We are all prisoners chained in the cave of shadows, and our liberation would consist in coming to the surface and seeing things as they really are. However insightful, some twenty-four centuries later Plato's diagnosis may not possess its original subversive bite and we may need another image of the human condition. Modernity's urge toward the Enlightenment has apparently brought us out of the darkness and liberated us from the oppressive constraints of collective identity as dictated by tradition, whether religious or tribal. We are not in the cave but dwell on the surface now. We thus face a different challenge. In furthering our search for true reality and an ideal social arrangement, the bulldozer of modernity has leveled the entire land. What was not killed in our zealous striving toward perfectly leveled and evenly divided land is imprisoned in the depths of the earth and the psyche. Postmodernists help us see this by calling our Atlantis by a more appropriate name: "Wasteland." Where we dwell now, every perspective and any evaluation is just as good as any other. In this infinite two-dimensional, depthless reality there is nothing by which man could measure himself.

Our predicament is hence the opposite of that described by Plato. If we are still devoted to truth, if we still search for who we are and our role and place in reality, we need to find our way back to the underworld. Occasional subterranean eruptions indicate that the gods and demons of the past have not disappeared at all; they have merely assumed new forms of appearance and gotten new names. What we need, then, is what Max Weber once called *"die Enzauberung der Welt"*; postmodern reality is presently deprived of all magic (*Zauber*), of all spirituality, and we need to find out how these spirits can be brought back to our world.

Before Dostoevsky or Freud, Kant already suspected that the chasm where these spiritual forces have found refuge is nothing other than our soul; the crucial question facing us is how we could get in touch with them.[3] If we knew the language of those forces, it has been forgotten by now, and we need a bridge between the wasteland and the dark womb of the cave. Kant suggested that a serviceable bridge may be provided by our experience of the beautiful and the sublime, and we suspect that his intuition was correct. We shall narrow Kant's choice to the experience of art; not so much contemporary art, which for the most part languishes in the same state of paralysis we described earlier, but great works of art, like Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Although the experience of such works is always subjective and "perspectival," at the same time they allow us to cross the borders of merely idiosyncratic concerns and perspectives. Great works of art are always capable of addressing the universal concerns of humanity and they display a synthetic interplay of real and ideal, of particular and universal, of saintly and daimonic, of good and evil, of true and illusory.

Kant is quite aware that it is not easy to convince our over-imposing and controlling egos to leave a territory over which they seemingly have full control and risk going into an abyss of the unknown. But there is something that Kant somewhat ambiguously called "disinterested interest." In the experience of art we catch our own egos off guard, since we are not interested in possessing or controlling anything; we do not have the same pragmatic and material interests that guide and control our ordinary thinking and actions. Yet we are still interested in a different sort of way. Just as entering into the darkness and silence of a cathedral requires a different level of consciousness from that appropriate for the bright bustle of a city street, entering into a concert hall or the imaginary world of a great novel requires that our ordinary interest and preoccupation be left behind. The over-imposing and controlling ego is suspended so that the soul may enter a hidden world of playfulness and self-conscious illusions, the domain of art.

9.2 PLAYFUL ILLUSIONS OF ART

Although he condemns other forms of illusions as harmful, Kant takes a surprisingly favorable view of what he calls the "playful illusions" of art.[4] They are not natural illusions, like transcendental illusions, which misguide us in our cognition of reality. Nor are they like religious illusions, which lead us to mistake symbols for the supersensible objects themselves. They are also unlike moral illusions, which mislead us to believe that we have more freedom and more control over our behavior than we actually do. Playful illusions are created by artists "to please and delight." They consist of "semblances with which the mind plays but by which it is not deceived. The artist does not want to bring about error in unsuspecting minds, but truth in the form of appearance. The form of this playful illusion does not obscure the inner being of truth but rather displays it decorated for view."[5]

Kant's view is provocative and puzzling. What kind of truth is "truth in the form of appearance"? How can playful illusions unveil truths to us? Finally, how can the playful illusions of art help us in the process of self-knowledge and liberation from self-imposed illusions?

Kant insists that art stands between cognition and morality, between metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of morals. In the experience of art we are aware that what we face is not a description of reality but a playful illusion. We are fully aware, for instance, that the characters of Dostoevsky's novel are all fictitious. For this reason, no cognitive interest is directly involved, and we are indifferent as to whether the events described by Dostoevsky really occurred. Put differently, there is no 'semantic

arrest' in our experience of the work of art; we open up to a different dimension of reality and become engaged in the "play of shapes in space" and the "play of sensations in time."[6] Being aware of the playful illusion, we allow the work of art to take us into its own space and time, into its own set of values.

There is similarly no 'normative arrest' either. The work of art sets our imagination free, but this freedom is different from the freedom relevant for morality. Freedom in the moral sense deals, according to Kant, with a rational self-submission to the moral norms, to norms that determine what ought to be. Artistic freedom finds its realm between the cognitive and the moral, between what is and what ought to be. It consists of a playful exploration of what could be, without following any explicit rules. A great work of art, Kant maintained, establishes its own rules. It creates rules that can be followed, but should not be imitated. A great work of art provides its own standards and serves as an exemplar.[7]

Although the ideas of play and playful illusions cropped up in Kant's texts, they played no central role in our understanding of the experience of art until they were later developed by Schiller; unlike Schiller, Kant was reluctant to define man as *homo ludens*.[8] He was equally reluctant to treat the experience of beauty and sublimity as being uniquely human.[9] We experience beauty and sublimity in terms of a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. This feeling is, in turn, connected with a feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*), a feeling of aliveness and vitality.[10] Although the feeling of life is clearly bound with the bodily experience and materiality of man, it cannot be reduced to them. The experience of beauty and sublimity in general, and that of art in particular, goes beyond the experience of nature as a source of blind impulses and instincts. By means of reflection, man elevates himself above his natural impulses and the immediate needs of his existence. Our reflective judgments thus point toward the world that is not bound by the here and now, the world that is not limited to the sensible and material. This is the connection that reflective judgments have with morality (and religion), and this is why Kant argues—rightly or not—that "beauty is the symbol of morality."[11]

Nevertheless, reflective judgments are not moral judgments. In Kant's opinion, the norms of morality are definite, a priori, and unchangeable. These norms show us what ought to be, how we ought to behave, regardless of our personal, social, and cultural differences. They point toward the supersensible world to which we do not belong, but toward which, as rational beings, we must strive. Playful illusions, by contrast, foreshadow for us not our duties but our aspirations. They do not command or demonstrate, but make visible for us models and examples after which we could pattern ourselves. The oldest of the Karamazov brothers,

for instance, is guided through life by a sense of beauty and an intense passion for life.[12] In contrast to Dmitry, Ivan is all intellect, or at least he consciously tries to be so. The youngest brother, Alyosha, approaches his life from a deep and unwavering faith. Through the novel, Dostoevsky plays with these different principles of orientation and develops them in his characters more consistently and further than living persons could. In this way abstract principles are transformed into intensified and magnified prototypes of living people. Dostoevsky's playful illusions thus bring us into a strange and mysterious world, and make it come alive for us. What in reality takes a lifetime to develop and grow the playful illusions of art show us in a matter of hours, or days. They lead us to the heights and boundaries of humanity, helping us thereby to see what we could, or should not, become.

In Kant's view, morality belongs to the world that is free of our impulses and inclinations, the supersensible world of rational beings. Fortunately or not, we are not such beings. We may aspire toward the world of what ought to be, but we do not live in that world. Kant separates these two worlds in order to make room for morality and religion, which were threatened by the development of science. Yet he is never able to accomplish their real synthesis and reintegration, since these worlds remain separated by two different kinds of determinative judgments (cognitive and moral) and two different kinds of causality (mechanical and noumenal). Although Kant never admits it, what makes the experience of art so distinctively human is that it displays for us the unity underlying these two seemingly separate worlds—one in which we are situated and with which we never fully identify, and the other toward which we aspire and to which we never fully belong. Dostoevsky's playful illusions show us that these worlds are not two but one. However different, and although guided by diverse orienting principles and value systems, all of the members of the Karamazov family live together in the same world. They show us the world full of antinomies, the solution to which is not to be found in either thesis or antithesis but in their continuous struggle. The world is the battlefield for these antinomical struggles, and that struggle is life itself.

In the playful experience of art we seemingly forget our cognitive and moral concerns and let go. We forget about our desire to know and our will to control, and play with images, shapes, sensations, words, colors, or notes. We surrender to playfulness and apparently lose ourselves in it. Precisely when we are convinced that in that game there is nothing but childlike play, nothing but the pure joy of being alive, something unsuspected and extraordinary happens. Like a boomerang that we release, in the experience of art something comes back to us, only magnified and intensified. What we played with and threw around were images; what

suddenly comes back to us and strikes us through those images are what Kant calls "aesthetic ideas."[13] Aesthetic ideas are not rational ideas which can be conceptualized and demonstrated. They are ideas for which the appropriate words and concepts are usually missing. Kant understands aesthetic ideas as archetypes or original images. This indicates that aesthetic ideas do not represent just any possibility, nor do they stand for just any "could be." They display and bring to our attention those possibilities that are relevant for us as human beings, regardless of our individual, social and cultural differences. These possibilities are relevant for us as human beings when they deal with fears and hopes, misery and happiness, vice and virtue, man and God, illusion and truth; they are relevant when they address our fundamental human needs and concerns. In our illusory and childish playfulness, in that "lawfulness without law" and "purposiveness without purpose," we are struck by the recognition of a serious human concern. The comic or tragic concern of the fictional characters is suddenly recognized as a human concern, as our own concern. The drama of the Karamazov family overwhelms us and we become adopted participants in their tragic and comic adventures. At a point of time we enter into a fictional world, into a playful illusion, and through this game we enter into all other dimensions of time. We are led by the imaginary concerns of fictional characters to the heart of those universally shared human needs and concerns.

Where do these concerns come from? Where do these aesthetic ideas come from? Significantly enough, and surprisingly enough, Kant does not claim that they come from reason; they unexpectedly emerge in front of us not from our intellect or our will but from some inexplicable depth of the soul.[14] They show themselves in the playfulness of art, through which they can be immediately experienced and intuitively understood. Aesthetic ideas emerge as something beautiful or ugly; their recognition makes us vital and alive. Kant is convinced that the significance of that vitality should not be underestimated: "an example of virtue and holiness [in the work of art] will always accomplish more than any universal precepts we have received from priests or philosophers, or for that matter found within ourselves."[15] A philosopher or a priest can warn us, for instance, about the dangers of relativism and nihilism and advise us to avoid their fleeting seductions. Dostoevsky's character Ivan Karamazov helps us to feel the horror of a world in which everything is permitted, in which there is no responsibility, consequence, or punishment. Through Ivan's experience, we can see and feel how accepting the "thesis" that everything is mechanically determined can lead not only to sensing the emptiness of existence, but to murder or suicide. We can see and feel that there must be freedom and responsibility, that the devil cannot be the only reality in the world, but is that sufficient to convince Ivan that God and

immortality must also exist? Ivan cannot resolve the Kantian antinomies, for he has neither love, like his older brother Dmitry, nor faith, like his younger brother Alyosha. Like Kant, Ivan wants to rely on his intellect and will, and his mind becomes the battlefield where a titanic struggle between freedom and determination, God and Satan takes place. Ivan's wavering between anthropocentric atheism and anthropomorphic theism thus reveals an emotional and intellectual torture which most of us would never approach or experience in our lives.[16] Dostoevsky the artist does not impose or command; he simply shows us what the world could be like. A philosopher or a priest can tell us that without freedom and responsibility on the one hand, and spiritual hopes and a sense of beauty on the other, life would be a wasteland. We can understand these words, but they can leave us untouched. An artist makes us see and feel what that wasteland would be like; he makes us shiver at the image of such a world.

We are now in a better position to understand how Kant can talk about truth in art. Although the primary and explicit goal of art is not to instruct us as to what is true and what is false, the experience of art can have such effects. It invites us into reflective and contemplative judgments. Although such judgments do not exclude conceptual connections, they are not grounded in them. Reflective judgments are grounded in the play of images, and conceptual connections are relegated to the background. Unlike their determinative counterparts, reflective judgments do not require evidence and demonstrations in order to convince us of their truth. Reflective judgments do not copy, nor do they explain or demonstrate as science does. Art simply displays by illustration or example. The truth displayed through the aesthetic ideas is immediately experienced and intuitively understood. The truth of art is measured not by its objectivity but by its vitality. Kant believes that the aesthetic ideas are true insofar as they animate our thoughts and quicken our cognitive powers.[17] But how could they do that?

Like all other kinds of truths, the truths of art are true insofar as they are in an *Übereinstimmung*, or harmony, with reality. Yet playful illusions are not like ordinary mirrors that simply reflect everything that stands in front of them. Works of art represent reality with its own internal forms and its own unique truth. They are like carnival mirrors in which, at first glance, the images that appear look unfamiliar and fictitious. They look more like caricatures and distorted images than ourselves. Nevertheless, through these distortions and playful images, through the great mirrors of art, the truest reflections of ourselves emerge and make themselves visible to us. These reflections are always merciless and never flattering; they always show us the deepest truth about ourselves, however pleasant or unpleasant it may be. This is how the playful illusions of art can trick our ego control and shatter our cherished illusions about ourselves and our

reality. They lure us into participating in seemingly innocent games by which we are—in rare moments of truth—exposed for who we really are.

9.3 ART, LIFE, AND NATURE

There are many reasons to be astonished by Kant's view on the playful illusions of art. The most obvious one is that the Western tradition has not taken art, much less play and playfulness, very seriously. While Plato and Aristotle occasionally associated play and playfulness with imitation and art,[18] the Christian tendency toward asceticism did not encourage play and playfulness; if anything, playfulness was associated with the Devil. Kant's modern predecessors, the continental rationalists as much as the British empiricists, did not hide their hostility toward playfulness and had very little interest in art. For them, the playfulness of art is associated more with childish irresponsibility than with the mature pursuit of positive knowledge and moral perfection. While Kant himself occasionally makes derogatory comments about play and playfulness,[19] in his conception of art he elevates its playful illusions to a very high pedestal.

Kant's view is also very suggestive because his account of the experience of art in terms of playful illusions and reflective judgments shows how his two underlying assumption of orientation concerning faith and interest can work together (see 8.3). In the previous chapter, we have already seen what happens when these assumptions are developed separately and as excluding each other. In the earlier parts of the book, we have also seen Kant's own less than successful attempts to accomplish their synthesis in theoretical and practical philosophy. His treatment of this subject in the *Critique of Judgment* may well be his most promising attempt, and this promise is partially based on an unorthodox understanding of both faith and interest. Although it has nothing to do with the usual religious or theological understanding of the term, there is clearly an element of faith in our embracing a work of art. By entering the sanctuary of a concert hall or a novel, we put ourselves in a position in which we have no control over the development of the course of events within a work of art; we are not in a position to determine the outcome of the drama, but have to *trust* in its internal development.

Kant is also quite right to emphasize that this lack of control and determination does not turn us into passive spectators. Just as in observing reality we do not stand outside of it, in experiencing a work of art we remove our egos but locate ourselves within the perimeters of that work. We are interested in the work of art, in its internal structure and development, yet in a way that has nothing to do with our usual pragmatic concerns. Perhaps Kant should not have said that our interest in this case is

"disinterested." A better way to describe what takes place in the experience of a work of art is in terms of our involvement and participation. As we open ourselves for a great work of art, it gets into us, under our skin and into our soul, and we become involved in its playfulness; we become participants in its unfolding game of notes and their modulations, or characters and their affairs. The street level interest is left behind, and the everyday concerns have been suspended, at least for the duration of a sonata, or one chapter of a novel.

We now approach a related but even more important reason for which we should be encouraged by Kant's understanding of art in terms of playful illusions and reflective judgments. We have followed Kant's understanding of various forms of human experience, and we have seen him frequently function as a spokesperson and representative of modernity in arguing that the most important cognitive and moral principles are provided by the subject, not discovered as already built into reality. In a significant way, Kant believes that both the known world, and even more the moral world, are the products of man's activity. We may thus expect that Kant would consistently follow the same line of thinking in his consideration of art, but he does not. There is no doubt that for Kant the creation of works of art cannot be reduced to any *techne,* that they are not invented and fabricated following human will, intentions, and learned techniques; they are not produced in the same way in which countless others tools and artifacts are.

On Kant's revolutionary view, works of art are far closer to living things, to living organisms of nature, than to the artificial world of human products.[20] There are many ways in which Kant expresses and develops this view. Perhaps the most famous instance is his declaration that a true artist, a genius, is more of an instrument or medium through which a work of art unfolds and finds its expression, than a fully conscious creator in control of the process of production and the final shape of his product.[21] Kant also states that aesthetic ideas are distinct from cognitive and moral ideas in the same way that symbols and archetypes are different from signs and other artificially-created concepts. Signs are invented by us and their meaning and reference can be explicitly determined and defined. Although shared by many (and some of them are shared universally, by all human beings), symbols and archetypes are not invented. They are not imposed from above, from God or by reason, but rather erupt from below, out of our basic needs and natural impulses.

We should also consider here yet another (already mentioned) position of Kant that relates art to life and nature. This connection is noteworthy, even though Kant himself partially distorted it and failed to develop its full implications. Kant rightly observes that the most valuable aspect of our experience of art is its capacity to invigorate us and make us pulsate

with energy and vitality. Such experiences animate our thoughts and stimulate both our enjoyment of life and our spirituality. That this is so should not be so surprising, for art is like life. Better yet, it is one of the most important manifestations of life. Man can design a mechanical and static world in which everything is firmly regulated and programmed, but this can never be done in art and life. The ruling principle of both art and life is dynamism and fluidity. Art and life are all in motion and development; to stop and freeze these processes would have deadly and destructive consequences.

The dynamism and fluidity of art and life does not imply that they are chaotic processes. This may look so only to someone who is observing them from a detached outside position, to someone who does not let himself become a willing participant. Far from being chaotic, art and life unfold through definite forms. Yet their forms are not predetermined and prescribed in advance. Their forms are internally unfolding, they adjust to the material that is to be in-formed. What is so different in the experience of art, in comparison to Kant's treatment of cognitive and moral experience, is that there is no hierarchical priority of form over matter; instead, they function in a reciprocal relationship of adjustment and mutuality, they interact and harmonize with each other.[22]

When Kant talks about free play and harmony in connection with our experience of art, he is discussing the free play and the harmony of our faculties of imagination and understanding. In other words, he is discussing something that happens within the subject, and not a worldly relation between subject and object.[23] This squares well with his modernistic preoccupation with the subject, but it does not fit the phenomena that should thereby be explained. It is precisely in the experience of art that the boundary between subject and object gets blurred, that the interplay and participation eliminate the need for, or even the possibility of, such a separation. The magic of our experience of art consists precisely in its allowing a synthetic and harmonious integration of the various elements and forces that always remain separated in an analytically and determinatively oriented mind. The real and the ideal, the emotional and the spiritual, the particular and the archetypal freely interact and create an integrated and inseparable whole. Just as a child is aware that the sand castle he builds is both real and unreal, we are fully aware that while the brothers Karamazov are nothing but fabricated and fictitious characters, they are yet in many ways more real and alive that the majority of people we find around ourselves.

To his credit, Kant realizes that both art and life should be understood as organisms, as living wholes, and not in terms of purely mechanical principles. Causal relations, as well as means-ends relations, do not capture well the specifically organic connections. The order characteristic of works of art and living organisms is different than that of mechanical

products and man-made artifacts. And yet, when Kant comes to a positive determination of the order shown by works of art and living organisms, he could not fully resist the temptation to represent it in teleological terms. Kant frequently uses a cautionary "as if" phrase when speaking of the teleology of subjective and objective purposiveness, and yet he nevertheless slips too many times into speaking about the purpose of nature and—far worse—about man as the ultimate purpose of creation.[24] He could not accept that the order displayed by art and living organisms is not purposive, that it does not have an author or a definite design. The creation model in both its religious and secular form (man as *homo faber*) simply impedes his ability to accept art and nature on their own terms, in terms of their self-regulating and self-correcting order. Works of art and living organisms do not have a definite meaning and purpose, nor do they have a sharply delineated beginning or end. They are based on the development of their inherent potentialities, and they belong to the eternally continuing processes of transformation.

Somewhat in the manner of Kant, Dostoevsky the thinker has a definite conception of how the challenge of the Grand Inquisitor should be answered. Fortunately, Dostoevsky the artist has the upper hand over Dostoevsky the thinker and does not allow any cheap moralizing to spoil the terrain of this magnificent novel. After "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" and the section on "A Russian Monk," which Dostoevsky the thinker intended as a resolution of the simultaneous deification and despair of humanity, the novel continues for another five hundred pages and unfolds a variety of answers and possibilities. Like life, it ends with no clear message, with no definite moral. Nevertheless, it leaves the most profound effect on us. Despite all the tragedies and imperfections of human life that the novel so vividly portrays, it deepens our desire to live and enhances our joy of being alive. The conclusion of the novel need not resolve the mystery of the murder, but it heightens our ability to appreciate the tragedies and comedies of life. This novel, like all other great works of art, does not delude us by promising a more perfect—past or future—world of flawless justice or immortal life; rather, it brings a moment of truth in which we are fully aware of the beautiful imperfection of life, of reality as it is. We are not thereby uprooted and disconnected from the world, but rather feel that we belong to it rationally, spiritually, and emotionally, that this is our only home.

9.4 NATURE, HARMONY, AND ILLUSION

Kant uses the word 'nature' in many, not always consistent ways, for what he understands by nature frequently depends on the wider context of his

discussion. Despite this disconcerting range of applications, there are two conceptions of nature which are the most important for him. We find the first in Kant's theoretical writings, where nature stands for that which provides the raw material for cognition. Understood in this sense, nature is close to inanimate matter: it is inert and virtually formless. By means of our sensible and intellectual forms its raw material is structured, and only then does it turn into a real object of cognition. Kant shares this conception with many of his modern predecessors and contemporaries. Nature in this sense is the object of scientific investigation, and Kant attempted to establish the fundamental a priori principles of such investigation in his metaphysics of nature.

Kant's second important conception of nature is visible not only in many of his discussions in the *Critique of Judgment* but also in his shorter historical and political essays. This conception stands in complete opposition to the previous one: nature (or Nature) is now understood not as an object but as a subject, not as passive but as active, not as formless but as imposing a definite form (meaning and purpose) on the seemingly chaotic movement of historical events. Nature is personified and described in almost the same anthropomorphic terms that Kant himself condemned.[25]

Both of these conceptions represent exaggerations and distortions; they both look more like caricatures than accurate portrayals of nature. Although Kant should be criticized for this distortion, it is important to realize that it does not occur accidentally. Kant is here not an exception to a rule but for the most part stands in a long line of Western thinkers who hold in common this uneasiness with nature. The beginnings of this uneasy relationship with nature reside in the distant past, and they coincide with the beginnings of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The personified and adored matriarchally oriented mythologies of the Middle East had been violently overturned in favor of a new partriarchally oriented model, and an integration of the mother- and nature-oriented mythology and father- and otherworldly-oriented religion has never been accomplished. There is, for instance, no sense of Nature in the Book of Genesis; the world is created for man. Although formed out of earth, man is ashamed of his natural, sinful, and animal element. His destiny is to develop spiritually and to strive toward the supernatural world of his Father-Creator. Although modernity does away with the supernatural world, it by no means turns to valorize nature. Instead, it is preoccupied with a social world, the world of social history, social institutions, and social utopias. Almost all contemporary philosophers, not only postmodernists but even existentialists and pragmatists, while rejecting the project of modernity and pronouncing the death of traditional metaphysics, also shy away from nature. Their problems are thereby magnified, for through this denial they are left with no true world to turn to.[26]

Seen against this background, Kant's many different, and frequently inconsistent, remarks on nature may even appear to open the possibility for breaking the spell on nature. He credits nature, or some of its humanly unfathomable forces, with a creative impulse responsible for all great art. What comes out of his treatment of it in the *Critique of Judgment* is that nature need not be feared as that irrational and chaotic movement that constantly needs to be subdued and controlled. Nature is like an organism, and some of its products appear more beautiful, sophisticated, and creative than anything man could possible make.

This is exactly the point of one of Kant's greatest temptations. Nature appears to have too many faces; it manifests itself in ways impossible to reconcile with our basic laws of logic.[27] In some of its manifestations, nature appears superbly purposive, so that its magnificence far surpasses the boundaries of human creativity and understanding. In many other of its manifestations nature appears counter-purposive, violent and destructive, contingent and irrational. Kant, and our entire tradition, has been perplexed by the following questions: Which of these is the real face of nature? What is the true nature of nature?

As we may have realized by recalling the troublesome path of development of our tradition, there is hardly a satisfying answer to these questions. As we may also suspect by now, the real reason for that may be in the questions themselves: Why do we take for granted that nature must have one "real face"? Why do we so firmly assume that everything must have one "true nature"?

There is really no issue with regard to *whether* we can perceive and understand reality from a divine point of view; we cannot but perceive it through our eyes and understand it with our minds. Yet there is an issue with respect to *how* restrictive and domineering we are in our approach to reality. With respect to nature, we may well be too violent and suspicious. Our general approach always seems to be based on the model of creation: the categories of beginning and end, of meaning and purpose, always seem to be on our mind. ("Does the rain have a father?") While it gives tacit support to our laws of logic, the model of creation, however, is particularly unsuitable for understanding nature and natural processes. Nature appears to be an eternal process of transformation, a neverending process of becoming. According to the old Parmenidean categories of 'Being' and 'Becoming', this would exclude nature from Being, or at least deny it from participating fully in reality. But perhaps these categories should be discarded, or at least modified so as to refer to a difference in degree, not necessarily a difference in kind.[28]

With many other philosophers of his age, Kant was firmly convinced that "nature does nothing in vain."[29] Both this "teleological principle" and

the related "universal physical principle" that "nothing happens by chance" are applications of the principle of sufficient reason, which Kant never questioned. I think that both of these principles, but especially the first one, are clearly false and should be rejected even as regulative principles. The language of purposes is the language of reason and rational will, not the language of nature. As Bergson correctly remarks, "While our motto is *Exactly what is necessary*, nature's motto is *More than is necessary*." We confuse these principles, continues Bergson, because "our intelligence loves simplicity. It seeks to reduce effort, and insists that nature is arranged in such a way as to demand of us, in order to be thought, the least possible labor. It therefore provides itself with the exact minimum of elements and principles with which to recognize the indefinite series of objects and events."[30]

Natural phenomena resist such oversimplifications and display for us a multiplicity of nature's orders and disorders. They are regulated not by a creator standing outside of nature, nor by the mind imposing its own laws on nature, but internally. Nature as a whole (if we can, indeed, justifiably speak of nature as a whole) is a system of self-regulations and self-corrections. Orders and disorders emerge from internal interactions, interdependences, and interplays of various heterogeneous elements and forces within the whole. Sometimes those interactions lead to order, other times to disorder. Whether we perceive them or not, and whether or not they could be conceptually categorized, these interactions result in harmony or disharmony. In the language of nature, harmony is the sign that the interacting elements and forces, however heterogeneous or homogeneous they may be, fit together and establish, however temporarily, a fruitful balance. In the language of nature, living and productive harmony stands for truth. Stagnation and disharmony, by contrast, are the signs of incompatibility and lack of balance. In nature, truth and falsity show themselves as harmony and disharmony.

Kant comes closest to the language of nature when he defines truth as an *Übereinstimmung*, harmony and agreement, between the subject and the object, or, more precisely, between the subject's cognitions and their objects. We have expressed this definition through the interactive function $\phi(x)$.[31] In contrast to truth, there are two kinds of falsity. They can be articulated by showing two reasons why the interactive function is not satisfied. With respect to one kind of falsity, the subjective function "ϕ" and the material of cognition "x" stand in the relation of interaction, but there is a mismatch between them. The mismatch can be due to a lack of attention, a miscalculation, or some such similar reason. Such cases produce what we call errors and mistakes, and they can be removed with more careful observation, precise calculation, or similar adjusting. In the second, far more troublesome and difficult to remove kind of falsehood

(which following Kant we call illusion), there is no proper interaction be-
tween the subjective function and the objective element. They remain sep-
arated, the objective element does not impose any constraint on "φ," and
this function becomes overblown. The subject then projects all kinds of
fictitious ideas on reality and mistakes them for truths.

If we apply this interactive conception of truth and falsehood on our
human predicament, we can see where the problems are. What character-
izes our Western tradition is its remoteness from nature and, in that sense,
remoteness from reality. We have displayed a disturbing lack of interest in
that reality in which we find ourselves. In the name of an objective and
neutral point of view, we are constantly trying to distance ourselves from
reality and preserve that imaginary distance. Instead of interacting with
reality as it is, in its harmonious and disharmonious aspects, we have cho-
sen to search for a distant, detached stand, and a vicious circle is created.
The more alienated and separated we are from reality, the more projec-
tions and illusions (be they of a transcendent heaven, a noumenal world,
or a social utopia) are needed to make our existence bearable. And it also
works the other way around: The more we live in illusory ideas and other
projections of our own minds, the more distant from reality we grow, and
the more difficult it becomes to establish any genuine interaction with it.[32]

Our blind devotion to the method of analysis does not put us in a bet-
ter situation to interact with nature. In flatfootedly searching of ultimate
and definite answers to our questions, we analyze and divide, separat-
ing matter from form, emotions from reason, the phenomenal from the
noumenal, subject from object, empirical from a priori, and so on. We
seek the ultimate elements of reality, we quest vainly after ultimate
causes or unconditioned conditions, we dissect every whole to find its
smallest and indivisible parts. But this may be the very source of our il-
lusions, the truest reason of our separation from the world. As Kant al-
ready realized, there need not be any parallelism between the basic prin-
ciples of our thinking and the basic principles of being.[33] Furthermore,
parts do not exist on their own, just as individuals do not exist without
society. Disintegrated parts and individuals do not contain a magic key
for all the secrets of reality, they give us no clue as to how things func-
tion together. I can take apart my car and place all of its parts in front of
me, and yet have no idea how to put them back together and how my car
really works. It is even worse with a living organism: dissecting it into
pieces means killing it, and no amount of knowledge and understanding
can help me turn it back into a living thing.[34] While our thinking and our
language tend to separate what is not separated and freeze what is dy-
namic and alive, nature shows us an opposite tendency. Where our
thinking and language demand the application of the principle of non-
contradiction, nature seems to be ruled by principles such as *contraria*

sunt complementa and *coincidencia oppositorum*. While our thinking and language are based on the principle of sufficient reason, nature makes inspired and prodigal leaps, it is full of accidents and contingencies.

One of the highest articles of faith in Western civilization is that reality itself is permeated by intellectuality. Yet the idea of a complete rational intelligibility of the world appears to be a failure. There seems to be no all-encompassing order in the world to which the human mind could legitimately lay claim. As postmodernists show us, persistently pursued rationality becomes the maddest and most destructive irrationality. A dream of progress for all turns into a collective paranoia. We are so obsessed with our power of dividing and projecting, we so stubbornly cling to our own logical principles, cognitive categories, and other fictions ("man the maker"), that we behave like drug addicts: We become convinced that without our life-supporting illusions the world would be unbearable for us. We are afraid that there is too much pain and suffering in it, we are apprehensive of its eternal potential for change and imperfection, and annoyed that the chaotic development of events in the world somehow always escapes our control.

Can our civilization continue to blind itself by its own illusions? It has done so in the past, and many see no reason why we could not continue along the same path in the future. But for how long and why? Is not there another way? Our discussion of the playfulness of art and nature should offer us a glimpse of hope. Before we conclude that the world is a wasteland in which there is no order to which we human beings could lay claim, we should ask ourselves the following questions: Why does it appear that the world is without order? Is it because there really is no order in the world, or is that so because we cannot liberate ourselves from self-imposed limitations and attitudes that prevent us from grasping any such order?

10

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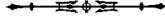
Back at the Crossroads

How can we admit that our knowledge is
a human—an all too human—affair,
without at the same time implying that
it is all individual whim and arbitrariness?

<div align="right">—K. Popper</div>

10.1 QUESTIONS AND NEEDS

The dialectic of questions and answers is not easily apprehended. More precisely, the dialectic of some questions is very difficult to grasp. For there are questions "plain and simple" that pose straightforward challenges and require similar answers. Did I visit you today, did we play a chess game, did we have a pleasant conversation—virtually all of us are capable of understanding and answering such questions directly and without much difficulty. But there are other questions, and philosophy is full of them, that resist such straightforward treatment.

At the beginning of this treatise I raised a number of questions concerning the nature and value of truth. That they are not "plain and simple" should have been clear right away. Now, at the end of our journey, some explicit answers to these questions are due. But before we turn to them and however satisfactory they turn out to be, the hope is that we have also come to a better understanding of these difficult questions.

We should have learned that the concept of truth is not an isolated concept but belongs to a cluster of related concepts. To this cluster also belong

concepts like error and illusion, reason and rationality, evidence and proof, subject and object, existence and nonexistence, truthfulness and lying, and many others. As a matter of fact, the cluster is so big that many philosophers are tempted to artificially isolate the concept of truth and consider it in connection with only a few other selected concepts. But, like questions, clusters of concepts and ideas have their meanings only within certain contexts and only with respect to their historical developments. For this reason, my method has been more historical than analytic. Following Kant, I have tried to protect the cluster from artificial oversimplifications and examine it in its natural complexity of relations, in various forms of human experience. Also following Kant's lead, my priority has been to relate the concept of truth to the concept of humanity. For Kant, "What is man?" is the ultimate philosophical question, and in these investigations I have always kept an eye on what and how the consideration of the concept of truth can help us understand what it means to be a human being.

Related to this is the recognition that these questions concerning the nature and value of truth are not arbitrary, but closely associated to our need to understand who we are and what our place and role in reality is. The word 'need' must be stressed, for these questions are nothing but an intellectual rendering of these needs. Our sometimes conscious and many times unconscious striving for a sense of orientation and identity are intellectually and verbally expressed in these questions. The questions do not thereby become "plain and simple," but they clearly retain an essential characteristic of needs: These questions-needs have to be answered not once and forever but over and over again. Just as physical thirst can be satisfied now and yet appear later again, our spiritual thirst is of the same kind. Although we do not have to confront and satisfy it every day, it does reappear after certain periods of time, whether because of certain traumatic experiences, or simply because we have outgrown a certain stage in life and are ready to move to the next one.

Not all of our needs are like thirst, in the sense that they cannot be satiated all at once. Needs for shelter and security, needs to love and be loved, cannot be satisfied with one action, gesture, or smile, but require a continuous type of attitudes and behavior on our side and the side of others before they could be satisfied. It is similar with some of our difficult questions. We cannot answer them right away, but have to gather such answers and observe how the proposed answers "work" over a prolonged period of time, in the various types of situations and under various kinds of pressures. No deduction, *experimentum crucis*, or judicial trial can resolve such issues once and forever, but the answers have to be tested over and over again.

While some of our needs can be satisfied by others, and while others can almost always help us fulfill our needs to a lesser or greater degree,

some needs demand personal satisfaction. They require a personal decision and commitment. Some difficult and central philosophical questions also appear to be of that nature: We need to answer them on our own. This does not mean that our answers must be original and uniquely different from anyone else's solutions. It only means that for our babies to be born, we need to go through the pangs of delivery ourselves. Moreover, not only is there something untransferable about certain truths, their effects are not informative but transformative. They do not teach us what is the case but change the way we look at and relate to reality; they turn us into different persons.[1]

In our tradition, this realization belongs to the legacy of Socrates, and it represents one of the greatest insights of the entire history of Western philosophy. As Socrates already realized, the questions concerning orientation and personal identity belong to that cluster of questions that we need to answer on our own. And he also knew that, because they change the way we relate to reality, these questions are not answered by our intellects alone. What they question is our entire being, our entire way of life. It need not be accidental, then, that Kant announces that he will examine what he considers the most important questions concerning our humanity in the Socratic fashion.[2]

One problem with Kant's rendering of the Socratic approach is that Kant does not grasp clearly that at different stages of our lives and at different stages of our civilization we are not equally "equipped" to address such questions-needs. As Popper puts it, our knowledge is a human, an all too human affair, and there need not be absolute and universally valid answers to our most difficult questions. Indeed, all of our affairs carry an irrevocable stamp of humanity, of human imperfection and finitude. But this does not mean that we must fall into the postmodernist trap of relativism and nihilism. Even if our answers are always arbitrary to a certain extent, they need not be equally arbitrary. We must thus find out where we are and who we are, as individuals and as a civilization, and what answers are appropriate for our lives and for our epoch.

When we approach our central questions from this perspective, we notice that there is an interesting and important parallelism between the main patterns of orientation at the global-cultural level, and at the level of an individual orientation and development. In both an individual and a civilization we can discern three primary patterns of relating to ourselves, other people, and the larger world; for the lack of definitive categories, they can be called 'dependency', 'self-preoccupation', and 'interaction'.

Dependency is normal and unavoidable in the early stages of the existence: A child depends on others for food, protection, shelter, and the satisfaction of all other basic needs indispensable for sustaining its existence and growth. An adolescent is less dependent on others, and becomes

self-preoccupied and seemingly even self-sufficient. Adolescent's self-absorption (with its ego-inflation) is so strong at this stage that others, even the close family members, are frequently overlooked and ignored. Fortunately, there is also a third stage necessary for full maturing and the complete growth and development of an individual. This is the stage of renewed bonding with the world and other people, not in order to turn back to the stage of dependency, but for the sake of establishing interactive and reciprocal relations with other individuals and the world as a whole. One typical aspect of the interactive stage is manifested in marriage, where individuals abandon their adolescent self-absorption in order to establish a genuine bond, one in which the whole is more important than its parts. This whole is symbolized by the ring; the ring is a circle that has no center, implying that in that relationship no partner should dominate, control, or exploit the other; where there is no center, there is no periphery. What exists is a willing and honest participation for the sake of the whole, for the sake of the marriage itself.

The interactive stage of individual development is the most difficult to accomplish, and when we arrive there once, it does not mean that we stay at that level forever. Indeed, what frequently happens in life is that, due to our complexes or inner insecurities, we regress back to the earlier stages in the development. In a marriage relation one partner can assume a complete authority, a central position, while the other becomes fully dependent and shifted to the periphery. These regressions show that we never fully outgrow the previous stages of the development, that we lack enough courage and faith to look for our own answers that are constantly demanded of us at the level of the interactive and balanced maturity.

There are, analogously, three discernible patterns in the development of our civilization. Although the ancient Greeks had displayed occasional magnificent flashes of maturity, together with the Christianity of the early and middle ages, their epoch can be marked as one of dependence. There is still an overwhelming focus on the Other, and that Other is perceived as the source of the cosmic order, moral norms, and a definite set of values. Modernity has reversed the focus from the Other to the Self. The Other is what is foreign, unfriendly, irrational, and fearful; the Other is treated not as a Thou but as an It, something to be overpowered and restructured. But we have gradually come to the point of recognition that, far from satisfying our need for orientation and identity, modernity could well lead us to complete nihilism and chaos. The glorious Titanic of modernity did not take us to the promised land but is quickly sinking and approaching the bottom of the deep sea.

As a civilization, we thus find ourselves at the point of decision, at the crossroads. Just as an individual can refuse to grow and go through the pain of uncertain delivery, our whole civilization may opt to regress to the pre-

vious stage of dependency; an all-merciful God may still be called upon to rescue us against ourselves. Alternatively, we may decide to cling to the ideals and principles of modernity; we may believe that it is still not too late to repair the sinking ship and bring it back to the surface. A third possibility is that we may learn how to swim and balance ourselves on the surface.

Kant certainly was not the only one, or even the first one, who realized that this third option is also available to us. Yet he saw more clearly than any other philosopher of modernity that besides the dominance of the object and the dominance of the subject, there is a possibility that none of them is imposed on the other and that they freely interact. The problem with Kant is that he did not go very far in exploring this option. At most critical junctures, he returned to the path chosen by modernity. Since we have an advantage over Kant in knowing that the path of modernity is based on exaggerated and illusory expectations, we may continue his pioneering work and devote ourselves to the path of interaction. Here are some preliminary results of that pursuit, dealing with the questions concerning the nature and value of truth.

10.2 TRUTH AS A HARMONIOUS INTERACTION

We may be far from any complete and comprehensive understanding of interactive relations, but several elementary points are clear. First, interactions can take place between quite heterogeneous elements; homogeneity is not a prerequisite for interaction. We can thus observe interactions between the inorganic and the organic, between the organic and the psychic, or between the psychic and the spiritual, as well as interactions within those different layers of reality. Second, interactions are dynamic, not static, relations. Their conditions, parameters, or even objectives can change with different circumstances and over a period of time, without thereby interrupting the interactive relations themselves. Third, interactive relations are always reciprocal; this is what distinguishes them from one-directional relations such as actions or reactions. This reciprocity can take many forms, depending on the elements involved. We can distinguish, for instance, between interdependence, interchange, intercourse, interlinking, interfusing, interplaying, and so on. Fourth, the positive value of interactive relations is expressed and measured not in "oppositional" but in "cooperative" terms. It is expressed and measured not through zero-sum hierarchies and power-relations, such as losing and winning, controlling and being controlled, manipulating and being manipulated, and similar. The positive value of interactions in shown in terms of proper functioning and fitting, balance and harmony, authenticity and growth.

We can also distinguish between various aspects of interactive rela-
tions, the most important of which for our purposes are ontological, logi-
cal, epistemological, and anthropological. The first three we shall briefly
clarify here, and the fourth one we shall tackle in the next section.

A. The Ontological Aspect of Interactions

Western thinking has been dominated by the ontology of objects: To be is
to be an object of a certain kind. Even when this "objecthood" is not un-
derstood in terms of essences, understanding reality in terms of relations
seems still too fluid and loose. If there are no internal real essences, or if
such essences are unknowable, we can at least create nominal essences
that define what something is. In this way not only our thinking but our
language if affected. Reality is understood and described by means of
noun-words. Even truth is usually and misleadingly understood as a
noun, with its own real and nominal definitions, although it is not an ob-
ject or thing of any ordinary kind.

Our understanding of the ontological reality is further clouded by the
model of creation. The model is at least partially dynamic, but its dy-
namism is quite different from the one that characterizes interactive rela-
tions. Moreover, with its own fixed categories of the creator and the cre-
ation, of the beginning and the end, this model is a serious obstacle for
any attempt to understand reality in terms of interactive relations. The
model usually postulates a hopeless separation of the creator from the cre-
ation, and forces us to search for the imaginary absolute and uncondi-
tioned condition, as well as the illusory ultimate preestablished purpose
of reality. Some of the best minds of the Western tradition have striven
vainly to fill out the imaginary Chain of Being by populating it with all
kinds of ghostly entities and their fabricated hierarchies.[3]

Reality displays enough variety and sufficient constancy to be classified,
but we must see that the truth of classification could be apprehended in dif-
ferent ways. We can distinguish between at least four different strata of re-
ality: the corporeal, the animate, the psychic, and the spiritual.[4] We can see
that there are relations of dependence and conditioning between these
strata, and recognize that each stratum has its own specific relationships.
While in the corporeal aspect of reality we always find, for instance, the cat-
egories of space and time, or substantiality and causality, more typical for
the organic layer of reality are assimilation and adaptation, metabolism and
self-regulation. While at the psychic stratum we find the categories of plea-
sure and displeasure, or consciousness and unconsciousness, the spiritual
aspect of reality is characterized by will and thought, trust and faith.

Any ontology based on interactive relations would not only have to es-
tablish the categories specific for each stratum, it must also show how

these strata are mutually connected and determine what categories run through all them. The best candidates would certainly be the categories of identity and difference, matter and form, unity and multiplicity, or dependence and independence. In an interactive ontology yet to be developed, such old and familiar categories would, however, be treated not as static but as dynamic, not as one-directional and hierarchical but as reciprocal and balancing.[5]

Kant could not accept the ontology of independently existing substances, as it was developed by Descartes and his successors. Whether ultimate reality is "substantial" or not, we can never know. What Kant thought we can know and what we need to focus on is the phenomenal aspect of reality, the aspect of reality that is an object of possible cognitive experience. This residue of the old ontology Kant calls "Transcendental Analytic." Together with his "Transcendental Aesthetics," it forms his new logic, a "Transcendental Logic," in which subject is prior to object and "the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise [the] conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience."[6]

Following Kant's turn, ontology gradually disappears as a genuine philosophical discipline; what remains of it is subordinated to logic, in the broad sense of that word. This, however, should change, if we are to reorient ourselves and look at reality in terms of interactive relations. Interactions are primarily ontological, not logical or mental relations. This shift of the paradigm does require a new ontology. It also requires that logic plays not a dominant but a complementary role.

B. The Logical Aspect of Interactions

There is hardly another word as elusive as *logos*. It could refer to reason and speech, statement and definition, but also to rationality and consciousness. The Greeks closely associated *logos* with order of any kind, and also with the cosmic order. Understood in this sense, *logos* was connected with *nomos*, the law and the underlying organizational principle of the universe. *Logos* was also understood as that proportion (*harmonia*) which pervades the entire universe.[7]

How did so vital and lively a concept become so hardened, as Western logic? How did something so closely associated with the cosmic order and proportion become so insensitive to anything cosmic and harmonious? How did Western logic became so linear and determinative, so arresting and remote from any dynamism of nature and its interactions?

The "fracturing of the forms," as Richard Campbell calls it, started long before Descartes, but with him and shortly after him the break becomes complete.[8] Descartes postulated the complete separation of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, and yet believed in the ultimate parallelism of

their basic principles. The separation put the mind (*ratio, logos*) into a difficult position. It did not have any direct contact with reality (including other minds), and could be in touch with it only through representations. Descartes and other rationalists found sensory representations to be untrustworthy, so the mind was left to rely on its own logical inferences and principles (such as the principle of noncontraction, the principle of sufficient reason, and the principle of excluded middle). The empiricists' criticism of the "representational mind" and especially Hume's devastating criticism of the causal principle crippled any aspiration of the isolated mind to build a comprehensive, "synthetic" picture of the world. Kant's critique of the ontological proof and his Transcendental Dialectic in general further ravaged any "analytic" ambition of the mind to derive any knowledge of the existing reality from the mere principle of reason.

Kant understood quite clearly the increasing degeneration of *logos*.[9] He was deeply disturbed by both the self-sufficiency of a completely arbitrary reason indulged in its own imaginary games, and equally troubled by the reduction of *logos* to a mere instrumental reason. Instrumental reason, which Kant calls understanding (*Verstand*), has certainly many useful functions to perform in our cognition of reality, but it neither exhausts nor captures the most important role of *logos*. Reason (*Vernunft*) as Kant names it, is again connected with law (*nomos, lex, legis*) and the proper measure (*harmonia*). Reason is elevated to the rank not only of a judge (which instrumental reason or understanding can do) but of a "legis-lator" and "law-maker." The mind is to regain its connection and harmony with reality by imposing on that reality its own synthetic a priori laws and principles.

This, as we have already seen, will not do. In Kant (and even more so in Hegel and other German idealists) the mind ends up building an arbitrary philosophical system and proclaims its own law as the ultimate constitutive principle of all reality. In reality, however, the mind simply plays with its own ideas, with its own constructions, as it does in various mathematical, logical, and other language games. The difference is that in the latter case there is usually a full awareness of the playful spirit in which this illusion is created, while in Kant (and other system builders) there is complete unawareness with respect to the delusory nature of his project.

Despite his so many brilliant insights, it looks as if Kant simply refuses to see where the difficulty really is. The problem is not in what exactly the mind imposes on the world: whether analytic, or empirical, or synthetic a priori principles, whether this or that formulation of the categorical imperative, whether a fully complete or less than a fully complete system of duties. All such impositions are one-directional and completely arbitrary,

as long as the mind isolates itself from reality and locks itself into its own artificial categories.

Only occasionally does Kant see that the mind is not and cannot be something isolated. The mind is not separated from the body, nor is it separated from other layers and aspects of reality. As a matter of fact, the mind is tied with reality in innumerable ways and functions interactively. Just as the senses are the capacities for interaction, so is the mind. The mind is the capacity to be open, to interact with the perceived differences and grasp their underlying similarities and connections. These differences may originate and be perceived anywhere: in our own thoughts, in our bodies, in other minds and bodies, in the immediate or mediate environment.[10]

It is only when this naturally interactive mind closes itself to the possibilities of reciprocal relation with reality that it starts imposing its own preconceived categories on the world, be they appropriate or inappropriate, or more or less appropriate. One particular aspect in which Western logic is inappropriate is the "all-or-nothing" character of its basic principles. Such exclusive principles do not apply well to natural processes, which allow almost infinite shadings and degrees. The principle of non-contradiction, for example, excludes the possibility of contradictions in reality. When we are open to the interactive processes taking place in reality, we recognize oppositions and even contradictions everywhere. Any living organism violates the principle of noncontradiction since it at the same time contains several stages of its development: any growing 'A' is also a 'not-A', both in terms of embodying a 'pre-A' and an 'after-A'. The principle of sufficient reason tends to turn the world into a closed static and rationally organized system. But this is not what the world is; the world is full of leaps, as well as accidental happenings, chance, and luck. The principle of excluded middle, together with the principle of bivalence ("Every statement is either true or false"), is already under attack, even by analytic philosophers.[11] The dynamic flow of many processes in reality makes it difficult, if not impossible, to establish whether many of our statements are either determinately true or false.

All of this does not show that the standard principles of logic are false and inappropriate. But it certainly means that we should be far more cautious about the range of their proper application. Nor does this criticism intend to imply that we do not need any logic and rationality. If anything, we need more logic and rationality. But we need logic and rationality that are not separated from the interactive processes taking place in reality. We need logic and rationality open for the dynamism of life and willing to participate in that dynamism.[12] This indeed may be the only way for logic and rationality to be of any value in our pursuit of truth.

C. The Epistemological Aspect of Interaction

Cognition is also a kind of interaction. It is a form of interacting with other forms of interaction. In cognitive experience we do not, strictly speaking, respond to objects; we respond to the relations they have with other objects and with us. And just as this way of looking at reality demands changes in our ontology and logic, it certainly demands a different understanding of epistemology and one of its central categories: truth.

The interactive conception of truth is based on a model significantly different from the two other models that dominated the previous history of Western philosophy. According to these previous models, truth consists either in a discovery of things as they already are, independently of the cognizing mind, or truth is taken to be the product of our own making (*verum est factum*). The first model served as the ground for virtually all ancient and mediaeval definitions, conceptions, and in some rare cases, theories of truth. It also served as a basis for what is called a correspondence theory of truth, as well as for Heidegger's attempt to reconstruct truth in terms of unconcealment.[13] The second model, that of truth as making, emerges with the modern insistence on the active role of the subject in cognition. It turned out to be a fruitful ground for the coherence and pragmatist theories of truth.

The interactive conception of truth combines some of the features of the previous models and rejects many others. It retains, for instance, the insistence on the active role of the subject in the cognitive process, but points out that this role is neither purely a matter of the subject's choice or intentions, nor of its concern for internal coherence and logical consistence in what it has posited. In its active approach to the world, the subject is constrained by the inherent limitations of its objects and their relations (see 2.4). The subject is not the world-maker, but someone who approaches the world with his own way of questioning to find out, through the unavoidable mixture of the subjective and objective constraints, what that world is like. When those constraints imposed by the objects are missed, our statements, however coherent and useful they may otherwise be, are simply false. When the constraints of the objects are (for conscious or subconscious reasons) systematically ignored, when we impose our own projections on reality, the resulting ideas are illusory.

The interactive model retains one important, although virtually forgotten, feature of the model of truth based on discovery. A discovery and unconcealment can be partial and incomplete, and this realization has an implication significant for the issue concerning the degrees of truth and falsehood. We tend to think that every statement must be either true or false, and thus that truth and falsity do not admit of degrees; but is this really so?

Several of our previous considerations speak against the prevailing view. One of them deals with the nature of interactions or, more precisely, with the ways in which we determine their value. We have defined truth as a harmonious interaction. This means that our statements (judgments, propositions, claims) are true when (i) we recognize the challenges which the situations in which we find ourselves pose to us [*the interaction element*], and (ii) we respond to the spirit of the challenges we face [*the harmony element*]. By contrast, our judgments can "go wrong" for two different reasons. They are false (mistaken, erroneous) when we respond violatively to the task at hand [*interaction but no harmony*]. They are illusory when, blinded by our own conceptions and ideals, we do not even recognize the challenges which the situations in which we find ourselves pose to us [*no interaction*]. Harmony and disharmony clearly allow of degrees. An interaction can be more or less harmonious. It can also be partially harmonious and partially not. If so, then truth and falsity are really only the extreme values or points on a scale that allows for many intermediate shades and possibilities.

Another reason for being suspicious toward an uncompromising either true or false evaluation deals with the problem of criteria. There are undoubtedly many simple statements the truth or falsity of which can be easily established. Things get more complicated when we deal with complex statements, and even more so when we try to evaluate integrated sets of statements, such as scientific theories. Since various statements have different functions within a theory, this theory cannot be taken apart, so that each individual statement is evaluated as true or false, and a general verdict on the theory be pronounced. As Popper argues, there is a significant asymmetry between falsifying and verifying scientific theories. A carefully and rigorously designed test can, according to Popper, refute or falsify a theory. But no such test can verify it. The most we can conclude is that the theory passes this particular test but may, to the best of our knowledge, be falsified by the very next one we perform. Even if we never find a test that would falsify the theory in question, it would still not prove that the theory is true.[14]

Things are even more complicated with respect to the issues of our orientation in reality. There is a long and dominant tendency in Western philosophy to find or establish the ultimate principle(s) of orientation. In Kant's language, just as there are laws of nature there must be laws of morality. And what Kant then tries to do is divide the issue into two questions, *quid facti* and *quid juris*: first determine the facts, that is, establish what the ultimate principles of orientation are, and then develop their deduction. In chapter 8, section 1, we saw that Kant correctly distinguishes between evaluation$_1$ and evaluation$_2$ (i.e., between evaluating statements which purport to identify the perceived objects and

evaluating the principles of orientation), but they are even more differ-
ent then he is willing to admit. This is because the principles of orien-
tation are very different than those statements by means of which we
identify various features of reality and then evaluate them, whether by
means of commonsense experience or scientific experiments and tests.
Such statements tell us what is the case and Kant thinks that, by anal-
ogy, the principles of orientation should tell us what we ought to do.

The interactive conception of truth leads us to suspect that the princi-
ples of orientation are quite different: They do not deal with *what* ques-
tions but with *how* questions. The issue is not about *what* we ought to do
but with *how* we could, and perhaps even ought to, approach reality to in-
teract with it in a harmonious way. It is thus misleading even to talk about
principles of orientation, since principles can be normally expressed in the
form of statements. But orientation is not about statements, it is about *at-
titudes* and *dispositions.*

This is why there cannot be a successful deduction of the principles of
orientation. Attitudes and dispositions cannot be deduced, one way or an-
other. They can be evaluated, however, and in their evaluation (evalua-
tion$_2$) there is something of an asymmetry that Popper emphasizes with
respect to the evaluation of scientific theories (evaluation$_1$). In some types
of situations a certain attitude shows itself as simply inappropriate; it, so
to say, disqualifies itself. But passing a test, helping us orient ourselves in
that particular situation or a type of situation by no means presents any
definite verification of the attitude in question. Such attitudes cannot be
tested positive once and forever, but have to be put to test over and over
again, ever anew.

The problem of finding a criterion is thus far more complicated than
modern philosophers following Bacon, Descartes, or Kant tend to believe.
Modern philosophers reject the idea of intellectual intuition which is ap-
propriate for the old model of truth as discovery (and revelation) and con-
centrate on demonstrations and trials, which go well with their model of
truth as making. With regard to many issues, however, and especially those
dealing with orientation in reality and the sense of identity, a criterion can-
not be limited, or reduced to, publicly available evidence, deduction, or
proof. No demonstration and no trial is sufficient to resolve the issues of
truth and falsity of some cases. Identification, evaluation$_1$, orientation, and
evaluation$_2$ should not be understood as completely separable aspects of
truth; nor should they be treated as the isolated and sharply defined edges
of a square, but as the different stages of a movement within the same cy-
cle. Most importantly, all of these stages are of interactive nature, so that if
anything should be inscribed in the center of that circle, it should be the
word interaction: identification, orientation, and different kinds of evalua-
tions are all the manifestations of our interactive relations with reality.

The interactive conception of truth should thus be represented as the following circle (figure 13):
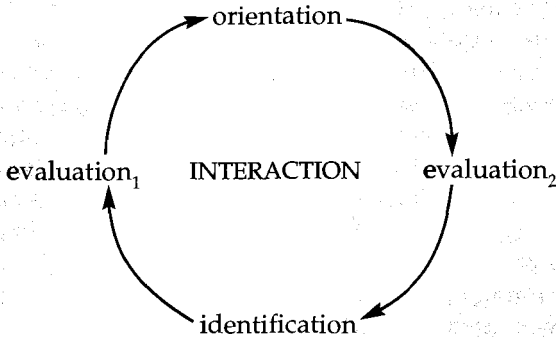
Figure 13

The dynamism of interactive processes does not allow our logic to freeze various important aspects of truth into immovable, separated corners. Nor does it allow us to reduce all truth bearers to statements (or similar linguistic entities), which is how truth has almost exclusively been understood since the seventeenth century. It is too narrow to limit truth bearers to linguistic entities, or even to speech-acts. The interactive conception points out that in one of its aspects knowledge consists not in collecting information about the world and evaluating such information, but in an ability to relate to the world; knowledge does not deal only with "what" but also with "how." Insofar as the problem of orientation is indeed one of the philosophically most important aspects of the problem of truth, adequate truth bearers must include not only our statements but also our attitudes. What matters in orientation is not so much what we say or believe, but how we live. And this is the topic that we must address at the end of our treatise: How then shall we live to live in accordance with truth?

10.3 TRUTH AS THE SYMBOL OF HUMANITY

Although Kant considers the nature of humanity to be the ultimate philosophical concern, he often makes it not easier but more difficult to understand who we are. He is frequently very pessimistic about human nature and complains, for example, that "of such crooked wood as man is made of nothing perfectly straight can be built."[15] At other times he goes to the opposite extreme and declares that man is the ultimate purpose of creation.[16] It is very difficult to reconcile these exaggerated views and see how they can bring us to a closer understanding of our humanity.

If we take seriously the interactive approach, one that in principle avoids such one-sided and extreme positions, we realize that one obstacle for understanding who we are is created by the very way in which Kant poses his ultimate philosophical question. It should not be posed as a "what" question but as a "how" question; not as "What is man?," but as "How should we live to allow our humanity to grow and blossom?"

Kant comes closer to this approach in his shorter historical and political essays than in the metaphysics of morals. In his essay "What is Enlightenment?," for instance, Kant contrasts enlightenment with immaturity.[17] Immaturity is usually associated with a tender age: A child is not capable of finding his own way through the world and needs the help and guidance of someone more mature. This, however, is not what Kant has in mind, for he ties immaturity to a lack of resolution and courage. Kant is not concerned with immature children but with immature adults. Although immaturity is man's unwillingness and inability to think for himself, it is not the fault of man's intellect but of his character. Kant has no "democratic" illusions that many of us can think for ourselves without the guidance of others. He is convinced that "a large proportion of men . . . gladly remain immature for life." He also realizes that "there will always be [only] a few who think for themselves, even among those appointed as guardians of the common mass."[18] The explanation for why so many of us never find enough resolution and courage to come of age and gladly remain immature for life is not that we are all trapped in Plato's cave but rather that it is so convenient to be immature.[19] It has been, and will always be, convenient to use ready-made "dogmas and formulas" instead of torturing ourselves with the complexities and hidden nuances of things. Kant furthermore argues that enlightenment should not be confused with possession of knowledge. Maturity is not accomplished by means of knowledge, by means of correct descriptions and a true theory of the world, for many knowledgeable persons are nevertheless immature.[20]

While these views reveal Kant's profound insights, they also clearly display some of his deepest limitations. If maturity is not a matter of possessing knowledge, if it deals with our character and our entire personality, to accomplish maturity it cannot be sufficient only critically to think for oneself. Thinking is just one of many abilities we have to employ and develop in order to accomplish maturity. We need to intensify and heighten not just our thinking but our overall awareness, the entire field of our consciousness. This involves all of our capacities, and covers all forms of human experience. Thinking has a tendency to isolate itself and build its own castles in the air. In contrast to thinking, experience (whether of ourselves, of other people, or of the world at large) is by its nature interactive; it does not isolate but connect. By heightening our

overall awareness, we become more sensitive to the flow of reality and the rich playfulness of life.

Heightened awareness and sensitivity are preconditions of truth and freedom. Interactive truth does not primarily concern possessing knowledge (temporary or permanent, of this or of that object), but deals with our ability to be responsive to whatever comes our way, to whatever we experience. Interactive truth is also closely related to freedom: like truth, freedom is not about "what" but about "how." Intensified awareness makes us free, closed consciousness arrests us. Closed and narrow awareness lead to inflexibility, to an inability to look at things from different perspectives, or to hear another side of the story. Tunnel vision leads to illusions and self-deceptions.

Standing at the crossroads as we are, suppose for the moment that we choose to pursue the path of interaction and heightened openness and awareness. What could we expect to accomplish on the path? Should we hope finally to obtain a complete and comprehensive grasp of reality? Would this path lead to virtue and happiness? Or would it take us on a road of salvation and immortality?

There is a child in all of us that would always dreams about such ideals. There is a child in us that would, like Dostoevsky's character Alyosha Karamazov, always dream about "a road . . . the road so wide, straight, full of light, crystal clear with the sun at the end of the road." Yet the child in us has to grow and realize that there is no such road, that such a road is an illusion. What there is, Kant aptly describes when he speaks about the fate of metaphysics: "In metaphysics we have to retrace our steps countless times, because we find that [our path] does not lead where we want to go."[21] The fate of metaphysics is our fate, human fate. Ours is the road of trying, failing, and trying again. Ours is the road of finite and limited beings.

We have always known that we are finite and limited beings. The inscription on the temple of Delphi: "Know Thyself!" served to remind man of that, and Christianity was even more insistent on man's shortcomings and insignificance in comparison to God. Modernity attempted to reverse this tendency by evoking new optimism and faith in human abilities, especially in human reason. At its twilight, however, modernity's over-inflated sense of what it means to be human only added a new and tragic dimension to the awareness of our imperfection; this allowed Nietzsche to attach the phrase "all too human" to our already recognized limitations. The truly tragic aspect of modernity consists in the realization that man can fully trust neither his reason nor that which he himself makes based on his reasoning. Once this is fully recognized, we can also see that there are but a few short steps from Kant to Nietzsche, from trying to establish the absolute value of a humanly legislated moral

law to challenging the legitimacy of all morality and calling for a reeval-
uation or, more precisely, devaluation of all values.

From Nietzsche on, only two options seem open: either not to trust any-
thing at all except one's own feelings, interests, and inclinations, or to find
a new way to regain the trust in oneself and the Other, other human be-
ings as well as the world at large. The first option leads to the paralysis of
postmodern relativism and nihilism, which promises little and arrives at
a point where it has nothing left to deconstruct. Even postmodernism will
have to return to a search for ideals that can help us orient in reality and
give us a genuine sense of identity. But in what fire can the broken sword
of idealism be forged anew? Where may we look for ideals that are nei-
ther too high nor too low? Where can we find such ideals that would help
us to turn the world into a better place and enhance our humanity, while
at the same time be true to that reality and our human limitations?

Together with Kant I have argued that we neither find nor create ideals;
they find and create us (see 6.3). Against Kant, I have argued that such
ideals, or archetypes, do not come from above, but from below. They are
not ideas of reason, nor do they fall from the clouds of speculation; they
emerge from our womb, whether we call it inborn needs, collective un-
consciousness, or our genes and DNAs.

Truth and truthfulness certainly belong in this cluster of ideals and ar-
chetypes. Not accidentally, Kant singles out Job as an exemplar of honesty,
trust, and truthfulness. In many ways, Kant's metaphysics of morals is
built precisely around such an exemplar; it is a modern rendering of the
ancient archetype. It is easy to recognize that when Kant affirms his cate-
gorical and uncompromising demand for truthfulness, he is not thinking
only about intentional deception of other persons. He usually discusses
truthfulness in the context of a person's attitude toward himself, and this
demand is first of all directed against deceiving and lying to oneself. Kant
knows that the ultimate deception is self-deception, and he is right to
claim that the Delphic imperative is "the first command of all duties to
oneself."[22]

Truthfulness is for Kant a reverence for truth, a passionate devotion to
truth and tireless pursuit of truth.[23] Yet despite his unlimited commitment
to truthfulness, Kant significantly obscures the relevance of his ideal by
speaking of truthfulness as a moral obligation, while it is a heroic attitude
more than a simply performed task. Truthfulness is primarily a freely cho-
sen quest for liberation and emancipation from our own cherished de-
ceptions and illusions. The modality of truthfulness is not that of an
"ought" but of a "could"; not something we must do, but something we
choose to do because we want to grow and enhance our entire being,
every aspect of our lives. Moreover, Kant neglects or overlooks the inter-
active aspect of truthfulness. In his relentless criticism of utilitarianism,

Kant entirely ignores the issue of what becomes of our actions, of how other people and the world are affected by them. He tends to forget that other people's lives and the world in which we are situated are more than an inconsequential backdrop before which I may or may not act according to duty, so that my actions may or may not have an absolute worth. The real issues concerning truthfulness are far from such fabricated considerations. An uncompromising devotion to truth is the central attitude that we could take in our interacting with the world; it is one of the most important measures of who we are as human beings not because we are beings of absolute worth but precisely because we are not. Only beings as limited, imperfect, and fallible as ourselves could have truth and truthfulness as ideals and archetypes, as the proper measure of our humanity.[24]

We now come to the heart of the problem dealing with the value of truth, the central motivating concern of this treatise on truth and illusion. As a civilization and as individuals, we have traditionally valued truth very highly; we have treated truth as having an intrinsic and not merely an instrumental value. The problem is to justify that faith in the value of truth, for it does not seem justifiable by any known authority. If that faith in the value of truth cannot be based on the authority of God, as the traditional forms of religion assume, it could even less be based on the authority of man the maker. He is capable of creating something that passes for truth and is also capable of convincing himself and others that something is true, whether or not this is indeed so. Is this distinction between what passes for truth and what is true a real one, or is it nothing but a residue of the old way of thinking that should be of no consequence for us? Man the maker has difficulties taking Plato's simile of the cave seriously, and he also has difficulties retaining this distinction: If he makes truths, he is the measure of all things, truths included, and there could be no other, ontologically independent way of assessing truths.[25]

One consequence of the denial of the distinction between what passes for truth and what is true has been to treat all values, truth included, according to their market price. While this may—for now—work practically, spiritually it has had devastating effects. Consistently pursued, this approach reduces everything, from human dignity to truth, to the relative values of the market: not God and not man, but the market seems to be the measure of all things. Just when man the maker manages to convince himself that he is in charge, his own makings escape his control and turn against him once more.

If the strategy of modernity is not working and we see that we should not eliminate the distinction between what passes for truth and what is true, the question for us is whether the interactive conception of truth can lead toward a different, healthier perspective on these matters. Notice that the question: "What is the value of truth?" is a "what" question, and

recall that we have argued that many of those "what" questions should be reformulated into the "how" questions. Our concern with the value of truth may thus be expressed as follows: How does striving toward truth and living in truth affect our lives? And also: How does living with lies, illusions, and self-deception affect our lives? Which of these two ways will lead to harmony with ourselves, other people, and the world at large, and which leads in the opposite direction?

The reformulation of these questions may already give us a glimpse of the way out of vicious circle of exchange values; we also see how it may be possible to solve the authority problem, for the reformulated questions are not concerned about exchange values and authorities at all. The issues of truth and truthfulness now turn out to be questions of authenticity, not of authority. According to the interactive approach, truths are neither discovered and revealed, nor made and invented; they emerge in our interactive relations, and these relations lead to something harmonious or disharmonious. Whether or not we know which is the case, whether or not we can prove which is the case, harmony and disharmony show themselves. We have become quite skillful in keeping up appearances and keeping the lid on truth; we can temporarily fool others and even ourselves. But if we live without harmony, our dysfunctional life will clearly show it, sooner or later, in one way or another. The disharmony will burst open in our individual lives, as it has been looming large for quite awhile in our discontented civilization.

Authenticity leads to harmony, and harmony does not depend on our opinions. In its original meaning, the Greek word *harmonia* referred to fitting or joining together; it referred to a blending of opposites. The old and wise Heraclitus had claimed that, "The unlike is joined together, and from differences results the most beautiful harmony, and all things take place by strife."[26] He also realized that, "Men do not understand how that which is torn in different directions comes into accord with itself—harmony in contrariety, as in the case of the bow and the lyre."[27] It is certainly difficult to understand the harmony in contrariety. But more important than understanding how such a harmony is possible is to accomplish it, to live in harmony.

Significantly, the word *harmonia* comes not from music or mathematics, but from medicine, where it was used to designate a healthy and balanced state of an organism, its soul together with its body. Plato even defined justice as the health of the soul. The health of our soul, the soul of our civilization, has been disturbed for a long time. Our civilization has become an exemplar of unbalance and disproportion, of extremes and disharmony. Rigorous moral codes, like that proposed by Kant, are really symptoms of disturbed health and self-deception rather than healing remedies. A healthy man with a healthy soul does not need so rigorous and precise

a moral code, nor does he need a draconian system of duties and categorical imperatives. A healthy soul would naturally strive toward goodness, beauty, and truth, the moral code and social customs notwithstanding.

In this treatise I have tried to show how truth is related to harmony and have even defined truth as a harmonious interaction. Understood in this sense, our reverence for truth is not the question of any instrumental value, nor is it based on any authority. It is rather based on our deep need and innate desire to live as well as possible, as harmoniously as possible. It is based on our need to develop and grow, and our desire to experience the joy of being alive to its fullest. So understood, truth is a proper and authentic symbol of humanity. Truth is the symbol that makes us humble before the realization of who we are and how limited we are, and it is also the symbol that guides us toward what we can become.

Notes

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

1. Many other examples could be mentioned as well. We talk, for instance, about a 'true' way of living versus a 'false' way of living. Or, to mention a quite different example, in the third book of the *Principia*, Newton distinguishes between 'true' and 'apparent' motion. Such variety should not be surprising considering that, among the meanings of the word 'true', any good dictionary would list: 1. truthful, loyal, constant; 2. reliable, certain; 3. in accordance with facts, not false; 4. conforming to an original, pattern, rule, standard, etc.; 5. exact, accurate, right, correct; 6. rightful, lawful, legitimate; 7. real, genuine, authentic; 8. honest, virtuous.

2. See, for instance, Aristotle's indecisiveness in the *Metaphysics* with respect to whether contingent truths of composite things are in thoughts (1027a) or in things themselves (1051b).

3. Quoted from R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, 420, who defends and clarifies this position.

4. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A58/B82. "A" and "B" are the standard paginations referring to the first and the second editions of the *Critique*. All references to Kant's other works will be given simultaneously with respect to a standard English translation and with respect to the "Akademie Ausgabe" of Kant's works.

5. D. Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth," 314.

6. M. Dummett, *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*, 157. Unfortunately, Dummett never fully clarified either what other notions belong to that cluster, or what the "closely related principles" are.

7. A list of the proponents of the view that truth admits degrees includes, among others: Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Hegel, and Dewey. Let us also remark that none of

the textbook theories of truth—correspondence, coherence, or pragmatism— excludes the possibility that truth admits degrees. Even in nonphilosophical contexts we frequently say that someone's statement is partially true and partially false.

8. See, for instance, R. Rorty, *Hope in Place of Knowledge*, 27.

9. Z. Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*, ix.

10. The questions of defining truth and a criterion of truth would be quite different depending on whether we discuss scientific truths or religions truths. For instance, in the latter case we first have to establish that there are legitimate religious truths; it may be that what we consider to be such are nothing but deeply-rooted illusions. And if there are no genuine religious and spiritual truths, some philosophers would be inclined to say that truth can only have instrumental value. Even stronger, what matters is what works and what passes for truth; any other concern about truth is just an illusion. A similar position is defended by B. Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, 5–6, and 177–82.

11. As R. Tarnas summarized it, "The Western man enacted an extraordinary dialectic in the course of the modern era—moving from a near boundless confidence in his own powers, his spiritual potential, his capacity for certain knowledge, his mastery over nature, and his progressive destiny, to what often appeared to be a sharply opposite condition: a debilitating sense of metaphysical insignificance and personal futility, spiritual loss of faith, uncertainty in knowledge, a mutually destructive relationship with nature, and an intense insecurity concerning the human future. In the four centuries of modern man's existence, Bacon and Descartes had become Kafka and Beckett"; *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 393–94.

12. As is well known, Habermas argues that we should make "a rough division of epochs in terms of 'being', 'consciousness', and 'language', and the corresponding modes of thought as ontology, the philosophy of consciousness, and linguistic analysis"; *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, 12. Habermas's first two epochs are correctly characterized, and many philosophers (as diverse as Wittgenstein, Gadamer, and Davidson) would also support his suggestion of language being a new paradigm. Against this view, I will argue that our fascination with language and linguistic analysis do not represent a new epoch, nor a new paradigm. On the contrary, our preoccupation with language leaves us firmly squared within the limits of subjectivity, within the confines of the second paradigm. Moreover, discursive language (which Habermas and other philosophers have in mind) itself is a phenomenon of ancillary importance for our understanding of truth and of our place and role in reality. My central thesis is that, if there is a third paradigm, it should be found neither in the dominance of the object, nor in the dominance of the subject, but in the principle of their interaction.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A58/B82.

2. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A240, A731/B759.

3. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A51–52/B75–76.

4. "Every truth is a path traced through reality: but among these paths there are some to which we could give an entirely different turn if our attention had been orientated in a different direction or if we had aimed at another kind of utility; there are some, on the contrary, whose direction is marked out by reality itself: there are some, one might say, which correspond to currents of reality. Doubtless these also depend upon us to a certain extent, for we are free to go against the current or to follow it, and even if we follow it, we can variously divert it, being at the same time associated with and submitted to the force manifest within it. Nevertheless, these currents are not created by us; they are part and parcel of reality"; Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 217.

5. These three points were singled out by H. Putnam; see his *Realism and Reason*, 30.

6. 'Agreement' could mean: 1. concord, harmony, conformity; 2. unity of opinion or sentiment; 3. resemblance, conformity, similitude; 4. an understanding or arrangement between two or more people, and so on. 'Correspondence', in turn, varies in meaning between the following: 1. relation, fitness, conformity, mutual adaptation of one thing to another; 2. similarity, analogy; or 3. communication by exchange of letters. Let us also remark here that, although in the literature about truth '*Übereinstimmung*' is automatically translated as 'agreement', and although 'agreement' is sometimes taken as synonymous with 'harmony', these two translations of '*Übereinstimmung*' actually point out in different directions. Together with 'correspondence' (and also 'coherence'), 'agreement' seems to demand something that is homogeneous. You and I can agree, because we are human beings, speak the same language, have matching interests, or for any such similar reason. But how could cognitions and objects agree, unless they have something in common, or unless they are (somehow, in some ways) of the same kind? In contrast to 'agreement', 'harmony' does not presuppose anything homogeneous. Indeed, it is precisely heterogeneous elements that can and need to be brought to a harmony.

7. See, for instance, S. Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*. For a criticism of Kripke's causal theory of reference, see E. Pivcevic, *What Is Truth?*, esp. 73–75. Although Kant never developed his own theory of reference, any attempt to reconstruct such a theory based on Kant's text would have to take into account his claim that "Thinking is the action of relating given intuitions to an object"; *Critique of Pure Reason*, A247/B304.

8. H. Dreyfus has correctly argued that a human situation, with all the contextual parameters involved, should not be confused with a physical state, or with a set of facts (*What Computers Still Can't Do*, 213–20). There is no type-type correlation between human situations on the one hand, and physical states or sets of facts on the other. What we are trying to describe in our commonsense judgments are human situations, not physical states of affairs, and those situations involve complicated social and institutional relations that cannot be overlooked. For further discussion of the epistemological significance of situation and context, see K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 21–22, 27, 44, and *passim*.

9. See Kant's first *Critique*, A373–75, and A264/B320.

10. For Kant's view on this problem, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A57–58/B82, A367–97, and various versions of Kant's logic lectures: e.g., Ak 9:50, Ak 16:251,

and Ak 24:386–87. For a sympathetic discussion of Kant's view, see Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 14–34. Kant was not the only one on whom this argument made a strong appeal; in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel maintained that this kind of objection refutes the correspondence theory of truth. For further discussion and opposing assessments of the strength of the diallele problem, see B. Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, 27, 35–36, and D. Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth," 302–5.

11. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A235/B295.

12. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A294/B350.

13. For further discussion, see *Critique of Judgment*, 18–20; Ak 5:179–81; "First Introduction," *Critique of Judgment*, 397–404; Ak 20:208–16; and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, sections 42–43.

14. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A132/B171.

15. Besides 'determinative' (*bestimmende*), Kant also recognized 'reflective' (*reflektirende*) judgments. In the case of determinative judgments, we subsume a given particular under an already given universal. In the case of reflective judgment an appropriate universal is not given once and forever, but is found always anew. Kant took it that reflective judgments deal with (subjective and objective) purposiveness, and the relevant examples can be found among aesthetic and teleological judgments. We shall discuss the nature of truth of such judgments in the third part of the book. Our immediate concern is with determinative judgments, which Kant again divided into two kinds. What we determine by means of determinative judgments is either 'what is' or 'what ought to be'. In the former case the determination is based on cognitive concepts and in the latter on moral ones. We shall postpone the question of the truth of moral judgments until the second part of the book, and in the remainder of the first part focus on the nature of determinative cognitive judgments.

16. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A20/B34.

17. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B137. '*Bestimmen*' means to 'determine', 'decide', even to 'define'; '*unbestimmt*' means 'indeterminate', 'indefinite', 'vague', and 'undecided'. This does not show, however, that an '*unbestimmte Gegenstand*' (undetermined object) is chaotic and without discernible differences. It only means than an object of empirical intuition is available to us as a potentiality of a certain kind, a potentiality to which a form has to be imposed in accordance with the internal potentialities and boundaries of that which is given. To determine an object of empirical intuition is to establish its limits and thereby differentiate it from other things.

18. I take this to be the proper Kantian rendering of Aristotle's famous dictum in *Metaphysics* that "To say that what-is (*to on*) is not, or that what-is-not (*to me on*) is, is false; but to say that what-is is, and that what-is-not is not, is true" (1011b26–27; see also 1017a31–35). This may also be what Leibniz has in mind when he argues that 'A=A' is "the first truth," and then attempts to see if all other truths directly or indirectly reduce to this one, or could be derived from the first truth. Let me also remark that I here side with E. Cassirer (and against Frege) in taking identification to be the first function of language and predication to be just one of several ways in which identification takes place; for Cassirer's view, see *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1, 282–84, and vol. 3, 293 ff.

19. E.g., N. Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, 36–37; N. Rescher, *The Coherence Theory of Truth*, 9; R. Walker, *The Coherence Theory of Truth: Realism, Antirealism, Idealism*, 61–82 and 102–23; and S. Neiman, *The Unity of Reason*, 75. One rare exception is T. Nenon, who by contrast argues that Kant accepted a correspondence theory of truth; see his "Limitations of a Coherence Theory of Truth in Kant's Philosophy," 33–50.

20. For instance, the role of the categories, as well as other concepts, is not to establish the truth of our judgments, but instead to impose the conditions that must be satisfied if our judgments are to be fitted for truth. They impose the conditions that must be satisfied if our judgments are to have a determinable truth value: "[T]he categories lead to truth, i.e., to the agreement of our concepts with their objects" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A642/B670), but they cannot guarantee truth. Whether a categorially determined and objectively valid judgment is true or false does not depend solely on our concepts but also on the actual empirical conditions. In this point Kant agrees with the 'realist' side of common sense that "It is possible experience alone that can give our concepts reality; without it, every concept is only an idea, without truth and reference to an object" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A489/B517).

21. *Critique of Judgment*, sections 76–77. See also *Critique of Pure Reason*, B68, B72, B138, B165, and B306–9; and Kant's letter to Herz from 1772; *Philosophical Correspondence, 1759–99*, 70–76; Ak 11:129–35.

22. Kant's formula of cognitive synthesis for commonsense judgments is thus as follows: form + material = cognitive content. This content brings something qualitatively new with respect to both material and form (considered separately), and cannot be either reduced to them or deduced from them.

23. That Kant believed this to be so is suggested, for instance, by his insistence that there can be no purely universal formal criterion of truth which would disregard the specific properties of the objects in question; see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A58–59/B83–84.

24. For an elaborate defense of this thesis on Kantian grounds, see M. Munitz, *The Question of Reality*, 23–79. For a further discussion of some of the previously mentioned constraints, although not in the context of Kant's philosophy, see N. R. Hanson, *The Patterns of Discovery*, esp. ch. 1. I used Hanson's view to reconstruct a Kantian theory of perception in my book *Anamorphosis: Kant on Knowledge and Ignorance*, ch. 2.

25. J. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, 204–5. It is not accidental that Dewey found an inspiration for his pragmatist account of knowledge not only in Hegel but in Kant as well.

26. W. James, *Pragmatism*, 80.

27. James, *Pragmatism*, 80. This effectively means that James is not willing to accept any sharp distinction between what is true and what passes for truth.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1. A. Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, 323. As J. Ziman puts it, "Physical science may be defined as the systematization of knowledge obtained by measurement"; *Reliable Knowledge*, 28n.

2. As contemporary physicist Lee Smolin reminds us, "Science is, above everything else, a search for an understanding of our relationship with the rest of the universe"; *The Life of the Cosmos*, 23.

3. F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, I, iii.

4. In the *Tractatus* (6.371–72) Wittgenstein put it as follows: "The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages."

5. Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, 324.

6. G. Bateson, *Mind and Nature*, 30. As he explained (27), "Science sometimes *improves* hypotheses and sometimes *disproves* them. But *proof* would be another matter and perhaps never occurs except in the realms of totally abstract tautology. We can sometimes say that *if* such and such abstract suppositions or postulates are given, *then* such and such must follow absolutely. But the truth about what can be *perceived* or arrived by induction from perception is something else again."

7. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A832–35/B860–63, and also *Lectures on Logic*, 575; Ak 9:72, where Kant makes a contrast between science, which is a system of cognitions that rests on an ideal of the whole that precedes its parts, and common-sense knowledge, which is a mere aggregate of cognitions where the parts precede the whole.

8. See the first *Critique*, A480/B508, and *Lectures on Logic*, 586; Ak 9:85–86.

9. K. Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, 44.

10. As Gadamer explains, "Method in the modern sense has a unified meaning even with all the variety it can have in the different sciences. The ideal of knowledge that is determined through the concept of method consists in pacing out a path of knowledge so consciously that it is always possible to retrace one's steps. *Methodos* means the path of repeated investigation. Always to be able once again to go over the ground one has traversed, that is the method that distinguishes the procedures of science"; "What Is Truth?," 37.

11. According to the prophetic words of Galileo, "[Natural] philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and the characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these one wanders about in a dark labyrinth"; quoted from Munitz, *The Question of Reality*, 46. If Galileo was right, if there is indeed a structural parallelism between the principles of reality and the principles of our thinking, then—despite appearances to the contrary—reality and thought could indeed be homogeneous and we could understand how their agreement is possible.

12. Bas van Fraassen defined scientific realism in a following manner: "Science aims to give us, in its theories, a literally true story of what the world is like; and acceptance of a scientific theory involves the belief that it is true"; *Scientific Image*, 8. Following his lead, we can say that the proponents of scientific realism would accept that: (i) science aims at truth; (ii) by means of science we learn many truths about reality; (iii) truth consists in a literal depiction of reality; and (iv) science is

capable of demonstrating whether proposed hypotheses and theories are true or false. In the context of our discussion, the last point is the most important one.

13. In Rorty's words, "It may seem strange to say that there is no connection between justification and truth. This is because we are inclined to say that truth is the aim of inquiry. But I think we pragmatists must grasp the nettle and say that this claim is either empty or false. Inquiry and justification have lots of retail aims, but they do not have an over-arching aim called truth. Inquiry and justification are activities we language-users cannot help engaging in; we do not need a goal called 'truth' to help us do so, any more than our digestive organs need a goal called health to set them to work"; *Hope in Place of Knowledge*, 27.

14. As G. Buchdahl nicely summarizes it, "In the history of modern science there is a shift from an interest in an underlying continuum or substance to an emphasis on relation, on function, on order of phenomena; something ultimately expressed through the concept of law"; *Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science*, 49. For more detailed discussion of this shift, see E. Cassirer, *Substance and Function*.

15. See the first *Critique*, A480/B508 and A734/B762.

16. In the inanimate layer of reality, interactions take place between various counteracting forces. In relatively stable physical structures (such as molecules, or the solar system), the counteracting forces are so related to each other as to establish a balance. Of course, interactions are not limited to the mere physical processes but exist in and dominate every layer of reality. Indeed, it may turn out that interactions are the ontological foundation of all cosmic order and consequently of all truths about reality.

17. This has been pointed out by R. Taylor; see his insightful discussion in "Causation" and in his Introduction to the English translation of Schopenhauer's *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. For further discussion of some historically relevant moments in connection with causality, see R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, 233–42.

18. As Ziman emphasizes, "Science is extra-logical," insofar as it depends fundamentally on human powers of perception, recognition, discrimination, and interpretation. Thus, "scientific knowledge cannot be justified or validated by logic alone"; *Reliable Knowledge*, 99. Van Fraassen also underlies the relevance of contextual and other "pragmatic" factors in science; *Scientific Image*, 89–92. This shows that in scientific knowledge we have similar constraints on the side of the subject as we do in commonsense cognition (see 2.4). For further discussion, see H. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do*, 213–34, 250, 257, and *passim*.

19. As Ziman articulates this insight (*Reliable Knowledge*, 26), "[Scientific] statements about the real world are always subject to uncertainty. They cannot be given precise status—'true' or 'false'—their logic is *three-valued*, falling into the categories 'true', 'false', and 'undecided'."

20. H. Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, x. Notice that the second part of the quote indicates that Putnam claims—just as would Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hume—that there is a close connection between rationality and a criterion of truth, rather than between rationality and truth per se.

21. H. Putnam, *Realism and Reason*, xvii. According to Peirce, "Let any human being have enough information and exert enough thought upon any question, and the result will be that he will arrive at a certain definite conclusion, which is

the same that any other would reach"; *Collected Papers*, vol. 7, 319. In vol. 5, 407, we similarly read that, "The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by truth."

22. The Pythagoreans, for instance, were convinced that the universe is a *kosmos* (the universe as an ordered whole, rather than a chaos) because it could be reduced to mathematical proportions (*harmonia*), since the *arche* of all things was number; *cf.* Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 885b.

23. Descartes's coordinate system introduces a very important model of rationality, which can be called the point-zero rationality. It creates an impression that all our demonstrations begin from an abstract zero point, which has nothing to do with the past, present, or future. All that seems to matter is that, starting with the point zero, an observer (scientist) can determine the positions and mutual relations of any *X* and any *Y* and express them in an entirely quantitative way. This model, so perfect for calculators and machines, seems to be completely value- and perspective-neutral. Yet we know that a human observer is never at the zero point; he can never be fully value- and perspective-neutral. As we have seen in the previous chapter, what is always codetermining his observation and reasoning are his background knowledge, interests, and other subjective constraints. Moreover, he does not deal with abstract *X*'s and *Y*'s but with complex real things and occurrences which bring their own constraints to every cognitive situation.

24. See *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Ak 4:505, 508, and 521. Leibniz had similar problems with the application of mathematics as Kant. He realized that we can always indicate the largest of a finite series of numbers, but that transferred to the infinite totality of numbers, the concept 'largest' contains a contradiction. The situation is analogous for related concepts, such as the 'smallest fraction' or the 'smallest velocity'. According to Cassirer (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, 359), Leibniz concluded on the basis of such examples that "every concept which attempts to designate and determine a mathematical object merely by naming a single one of its attributes stands on uncertain grounds."

25. For Kant's treatment of mathematics, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A47–48/B64–65, A713–38/B741–66.

26. As Kant stated it (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A575/B603, note), "The observations and calculations of astronomers have taught us much that is worthy of admiration, but most important, probably, is that they have exposed for us the abyss of our *ignorance*, which without this *information* human reason could have never imagined to be so great; reflection on this ignorance has to produce a great alteration in the determination of the final aims of the use of our reason."

27. E. Nagel, *The Structure of Science*, vii.

28. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A850/B878.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1. Perhaps every epoch has its own "Parmenides," a dogmatic philosopher who brings us the Truth from his encounters with a divinity. And every epoch seems to have its "Protagoras," who would laugh at this exalted truth and counterbalance the

dogmatism of his contemporaries by taking a radically relativist or skeptical stance. Postmodernists are our contemporary embodiment of Protagoras.

2. *Critique of Reason*, A125. See also A127–28, B 165, A158/B197, and A218–20/B265–67. As R. Campbell explains, "With the fracturing of the [medieval] forms, thought is driven back from that kind of theocentrism towards egocentricity—towards myself, sitting at the centre of my world, and seeking to spin out of my ideas the foundations of my understanding. . . .The reason for this is that, if the Platonic doctrine of recollection is rejected as the way in which one knows the eternal (as the Christians did), and if in turn revelation is rejected as unable to provide a foundation for science, there is little option but to fall back upon autonomous reason. But what reason can deliver must now be more tightly specified"; *Truth and Historicity*, 179.

3. In Kant's words, "the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B137). Yet the fate of the subject, as understood by modernity, is at least equally puzzling. After Hume's criticism of the thinking substance, Kant could not claim with Descartes that the subject itself is given. Instead he argued that the cognitive subject (in the form of "the unity of consciousness," "the transcendental self," etc.), as a counterpart to the cognitive object, becomes aware of itself (and in many ways constitutes itself) in acts of cognition.

4. The ancient philosophers thus made a modality mistake: They mistakenly identified being with what is, instead of identifying it with what could be, or—more precisely—with the presence of a field of potentialities. As opposed to being, nonbeing should then be understood as an absence of potentialities. As a result of this mistake, the ancient philosophers operated with a very narrow conception of being and reality.

5. *Timaeus*, 28c–31a. In Plato's words (29a), "The world has been fashioned on the model of that which is comprehensible by rational discourse and understanding." For further discussion see A. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, and M. Munitz, *The Question of Reality*. Munitz pointed out (24) that Plato's model of creation is one of the three basic cosmological models: besides the making of artifacts by skilled craftsmen, he mentioned the model of establishing social order and social institutions, and the model of biological birth and growth. It could be argued that Kant had the first model in mind in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, a version of the second model in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and something like the third model in the *Critique of Judgment*.

6. See *Physics*, 199a.

7. Munitz insisted that, while "both Plato and traditional theology agreed in regarding the existence of the world as an ordered structure as something that calls for an explanation" (*The Question of Reality*, 51), their fundamental questions were significantly different. Plato's primary question was about the origin of the order we discern in the flux of the existence. The central theological, and later philosophical, question was about the existence itself: Why does universe exist? Or, in Leibniz and Heidegger's terms, Why is there something rather than nothing? I emphasize this difference because, unlike Plato, we moderns have forgotten about the connection between truth and order (falsity and disorder), which I argue is indispensable for a proper understanding of truth. Instead of looking at truth in

terms of *how* something exists (in an orderly and harmonious way or not), we tie
the question of truth too closely with *whether* something is and *what* something is.

8. *Critique of Reason*, Bxiii. See also xvi-xviii. For the implications of maker-
knowledge for the further development of modernity, see H. Arendt, *The Human
Condition*, esp. 132–46, and 268–97.

9. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxiii.

10. It is not that the ancients did not relate the grasp of truth with a trial. The
essential difference was that for the ancients this was a trial that one individual
went through, a journey into the darkness, from which the individual may emerge
as a hero purified and possessed of an uncommon insight. For the moderns, by
contrast, this trial was a publicly conducted process, the process that could estab-
lish not something accessible to one individual, but something demonstrated and
established for the entire rational community. This difference can also explain a
different attitude with respect to the question of whether truth admits of degrees.
When truth is understood as a disclosure of an already established and formed re-
ality, it is always possible to grasp more or less, e.g., some aspects of reality, but
not all of them. By contrast, the modern model of trial is based on establishing the
factual truth of a claim (hypothesis); the trial has to establish whether an *X* is in-
nocent or guilty, true or false.

11. Kant's understanding of law owes a lot to Grotius's conception of "natural
law." According to Grotius (and Kant), law is not simply the sum total of that
which has been decreed and enacted ("ordered order") but rather that which orig-
inally arranges things ("ordering order"). See E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the En-
lightenment*, 239–45.

12. *Critique of Judgment*, 35; Ak 5:195. Vico sums up the central point of the mod-
ern conception of truth by claiming that *verum est factum*. Vico argued that in
Latin, *verum* [the true] and *factum* [what is made] are interchangeable. As R.
Campbell explained (*Truth and Historicity*, 257–58), his point is not that "a propo-
sition is true if and only if it corresponds to or is identical to a fact. Rather, Vico is
using *verum* substantively as well as adjectivally, to designate an entity and, tak-
ing Latin etymology seriously, concludes that the true is what is made." For fur-
ther discussion see K. Löwith, *Vicos Grundsatz: Verum et Factum Convertuntur*; see
esp. 25–27, for an account of Kant's theory of maker's knowledge.

13. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A13/B27.

14. The basic laws of logic are the ultimate rational principles of identification
and differentiation. Although they cannot tell us whether or not an *A* is *X*, they tell
us that whatever that *A* is, it cannot be not-*A*, and that it cannot both be and not
be *X*. It is also interesting to note a certain analogy between the basic laws of logic
and the basic legal principles; for instance, the legal version of the principle on
noncontradiction would be that one deed cannot be both right and wrong; the le-
gal version of the principle of sufficient reason would be that there is always
someone, or something, responsible for every deed, and the corresponding ver-
sion of the principle of the excluded middle would be that every deed is either
right or wrong. It is quite possible that Kant had such an analogy in mind when
he endorsed the model of the legal system for our cognition.

15. Kant concluded prematurely not only that he established a complete and
systematic list of all categories, but also that they do not reflect the principles of

being. On Kant's view, the transcendental analytic of pure understanding took over the role of ontology (see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A247/B303). The most important and systematic critic of these views, the critic who also wanted to revive the role of ontology, was Nicolai Hartmann; see his *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, *New Ways of Ontology*, and *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*.

16. See Kant's *Prolegomena*, 65; Ak 4:323. As Kant put it in a memorable passage from the *Lectures on Logic* (527; Ak 9:11), "The exercise of our powers . . . takes place according to certain rules that we follow, *unconscious* of them at first, until we gradually arrive at cognition of them through experiments and lengthy use of our powers, indeed, until we finally become so familiar with them that it costs us much effort to think them *in abstracto*. Thus universal grammar is the form of language in general, for example. One speaks even without being acquainted with grammar, however; and he who speaks without being acquainted with it does actually have a grammar and speaks according to the rules, but ones of which he is not himself conscious."

17. That is, for both Kant and Wittgenstein, concepts were not entities but functions. For Kant's understanding of concepts as functions, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A68/B93, A253, and B305–6. For Wittgenstein's account of this view, see *Philosophical Investigations*, part I, sect. 1–37, and 191–99. For further discussion, see my *Anamorphosis*, 81–156.

18. Another similar example is the German word for 'cause', *Ursache*. *Ur-sache* is first and prior to its consequent (*Ur-*), and it is also a thing (*Sache*), a primordial thing. But should 'cause' always be a *thing*? Could it not be a set of conditions working together? Our discursive language not only follows the ancient ontology, but sometimes channels our thinking in a certain preestablished way, even when the ontology that was once in its background is no longer consciously accepted.

19. In *On Certainty*, sec. 205, Wittgenstein pointed out that, "If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false."

20. In Kant and Wittgenstein we can see two different kind of subjects, characteristic of the modern treatment of the issue. On one extreme view, the subject is understood as a general, logical subject, which as such can establish objectively valid norms of cognition. On the other extreme, exploited even more skillfully by postmodernism than by Wittgenstein, is a particular and concrete subject, who is preoccupied with his own rules and interest, and who does not believe in the possibility of objective norms or objective knowledge.

21. Wittgenstein did not shy away from saying so: "The connection between 'language and reality' is made by definition of words, and these belong to grammar, so that language remains self-contained and autonomous"; *Philosophical Grammar*, sec. 55.

22. P. Horwich, *Truth*, xi. Horwich and other deflationists were deeply influenced by Tarski, who introduced a variation of the equivalence schema. It should be remarked, however, that Tarski did not believe either that the concept of truth is trivial and unambiguous, or that the schema itself can be treated as an account of truth. The concept of truth may lead to self-referential paradoxes, and to avoid them we need a distinction between object-languages and meta-languages. The equivalence schema was for Tarski nothing more than an illustration of a metalinguistic function of the truth-predicate.

23. M. Williams, "Do We (Epistemologists) Need a Theory of Truth?," 223. Inspired by Frege's program in the *Foundations of Arithmetic*, the deflationists treat the concept of truth in particular, and any other concept in general, in terms of its extension rather than its intension (and its functions). They want to get rid of what Cassirer so aptly called the "symbolic pregnance" of natural language; see Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1, 106–7, and vol. 3, 194–204.

24. In connection with our considerations in the previous chapter (especially 3.3), we may also present the following challenge to deflationism. Suppose that we accept the view that entire scientific theories, and not only individual propositions, can be true or false. What is far from obvious is whether the schema applies equally well to theories as it does to individual propositions. For theories do not consist of a set of individual propositions mechanically stapled together; they consist of wholes or unities, in which various parts (linguistic items) play diverse descriptive, explanatory, and normative roles. This raises a number of questions: Is the schema sensitive to the different roles that individual propositions have within a larger whole? Would it make sense to evaluate the truth of every individual proposition that belongs to a theory? Taking into account their multiple functions, can we claim that theories have identifiable referents, as individual propositions normally do? We shall return to some of these questions, and more generally to the question of the proper truth bearers, in the further course of our discussion.

25. For a criticism of these proposals, as well as for a systematic critique of deflationism, see my paper "Rethinking the Concept of Truth: A Critique of Deflationism."

26. See Quine, *Pursuit of Truth*, 79.

27. This point is emphasized by R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, 417–20. Quine, Horwich, and many other philosophers of language treat our natural languages as if they have only one function, i.e., to describe reality, and ignore all others. To objections that underscore the multiplicity of uses and the relevance of pragmatic and teleological factors, they reply that natural languages are imperfect and should be made more precise and formal.

28. In Quine's words: "The truth predicate is superfluous when ascribed to a given [proposition]; you could just utter the [proposition]"; *Pursuit of Truth*, 80.

29. The deflationists approach the sentence with the following question: "What does *it* say?," instead of looking at the speaker and the context of utterance and asking: "What does *he* say?," or—when possible—"What do *you* say?" This attitude is indicative of a flaw that runs deep through the history of modern philosophy, namely that of mistaking the principles of ideal/logical thinking for the principles of real (actual) thinking; while there is a partial identity between these principles, the belief in their complete overlap is an illusion.

30. One early stimulus in this direction was provided by Heraclitus in at least some of his fragments. He claimed, for instance: "The unlike is joined together, and from differences results the most beautiful harmony, and all things take place by strife" (fr. 46), and "Men do not understand how that which is torn in different directions comes into accord with itself—harmony in contrariety, as in the case of the bow and the lyre" (fr. 54). This is why Heraclitus insisted that *logos* does not deal only with form and structure in general, but also with proportion and harmony.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

1. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A75/B101; translation modified.

2. *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 132; Ak 29:776. Even in *Lectures on Logic*, 563; Ak 9:56, Kant claimed that "to avoid errors, one must seek their source, illusions."

3. Kant himself used several terms: e.g., *Illusion, Schein, Täuschung, Betrug*, and *Wahn*. For some of the distinctions between these terms, see Kant's *Anthropology*, sec. 13. The English word 'illusion' derives from Latin *'illusion'*: mocking, jeering, and *illusus*, pp. of *illudere*: to mock, to play with. To this playing and mocking aspect of illusions we shall return in the third part of the book, when we discuss Kant's concept of *Spielender Schein* in art.

4. *Prolegomena*, 70; Ak 4:328, and also *Critique of Pure Reason*, A792/B820. Notice how similar is Kant's "principle" defended in his essay "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?" (10n; 8:136n): "Thus to *orient* oneself in thinking in general means: when objective principles of reason are insufficient for holding something true, to determine the matter according to a subjective principle." The line between illusory and authentic orientation in reality seems to be, according to Kant's own admission, a thin line indeed!

5. This is by no means the only source of illusion. As Mannheim demonstrated in his book *Ideology and Utopia*, in our quest for reality, thought can deceive us either by concealing, which is the bases of all ideologies, or it can exceed reality, which is the ground for utopias. Closer to Kant's problematic was Schopenhauer, who combined Kant's understanding of illusion with the Indian conception of Maya. As a cosmological principle (and as feminine principle), Maya is said to possess three powers: (1) a veiling power that hides and conceals the 'real', inward and essential character of things; (2) a projecting power, which sends forth illusory impressions and ideas; and (3) the revealing power, which is the function of art and scripture, ritual and meditation, to make the hidden things visible and known. Kant clearly understood illusions in terms of the projective power, although his language of things in themselves sometimes suggest the veiling power of appearances. The revealing power we shall discuss in chapter 9, in connection with Kant's conception of "playful illusions" of art.

6. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A5/B8–9. Kant himself, in his early works, indulged in such unsubstantiated speculation, as when in the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (Ak 1:215–368), he formulated an alleged 'law', "of which the degree of probability falls little short of complete certainty," that "the excellence of thinking natures, their quickness of apprehension, the clarity and vividness of their concepts, which come to them from the impressions of the external world, their capacity to combine these concepts, and finally, their practical efficiency, in short the entire extent of their perfection, becomes higher and more complete in proportion to the remoteness of their dwelling-place from the sun." In this respect, concluded Kant, "Human nature occupies as it were the middle rung of the Scale of Being, . . . equally removed from the two extremes. If the contemplation of the most sublime classes of rational creatures, which inhabit Jupiter and Saturn, arouses his envy and humiliates him with a sense of his own inferiority, he may again find contentment and satisfaction by turning his gaze upon those lower grades which, in the planets Venus and Mercury, are

far below the perfection of human nature"; quoted from Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*, 193.

7. I speak of "Platonic" rather than Plato's ambitions because it is certainly possible to interpret Plato in a different, more "this-worldly" oriented way. Moreover, Plato frequently understood philosophy in a far more earth-rooted way than any modern philosopher did, especially when he had Socrates talk about Eros as the ultimate driving force of philosophical wonder. For modern philosophers that force was a pervasive doubt, which they attempted to eliminate by an almost blind quest for certainty, in forms of proofs, demonstrations, as well as laws and regulations. Although 'tree' is a mythological symbol of the Great Mother Earth, and thus indirectly of Eros as well, modern philosophers had followed a "patriarchal" path of complete subjugation of matter by pure form.

8. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B24.

9. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B23, translation modified; see also A763/B791. The Latin word for womb is *matrix*. From that word we have derived the words 'mother', 'matter', 'material', and similar. Yet 'matrix' does not necessarily have to be understood as a certain place (womb) or a thing/being (mother), but an original pattern of relations; it could be understood as a pattern of interactive relations.

10. See the first *Critique*, A84/B117. At A96, Kant made the following interesting remark: "Once I have pure concepts of the understanding, I can also think up objects that are perhaps impossible, or that are perhaps possible in themselves but cannot be given in any experience since in the connection of their concepts something may be omitted that yet necessarily belongs to the condition of a possible experience (the concept of a spirit), or perhaps pure concepts will be extended further than experience can grasp (the concept of God)." Interesting as these remarks are, it remained unexplained just how Kant drew the line between the concepts of spirit and God.

11. *Prolegomena*, 72; Ak 4:330.

12. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxx and A307–8/B364.

13. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A307–8/B364.

14. We think of the unconditioned in terms of something infinite, not dependent on any particular circumstances or any other thing or being, and as complete in itself. Kant's metaphor of the beginning of the chain also suggests that he clearly had in mind a model of creation: The world of appearances is a finite, incomplete, conditioned, and created world; if so, the problem is to determine who or what, and under what conditions, had created that world.

15. What are some possible ways of grasping the unconditioned? Direct cognitive experience is one, inference by reason is another, and Kant denied both of them. Rightly or not, he also had no interest and no patience for any mystical experience of the unconditioned. Further options, which we shall discuss in the next two chapters involve analogous and symbolic representations, as well as normative ideals and laws. For further discussion of these options, see, for example, Munitz, *The Question of Reality*, 130–34.

16. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A446/B474.

17. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, 492–507. For the discussion of the principle of sufficient reason and its philosophical implications,

see his *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. See also Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*.

18. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A451/B479. At various places the text of the first *Critique* reveals that Kant also had freedom in the morally relevant sense in mind. The *Prolegomena* version of the third antinomy and many other passages of the *Critique* reveal that Kant is directly concerned only with freedom and not so much with the prime mover. Kant's example of raising from the chair (A450/B478), by contrast, indicates that he may be interested in freedom in a loose and not strictly moral sense in the third antinomy.

19. See Kant's *Critique*, A466–76/B494–504 and A853/B881. See also "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?," 10; Ak 8:136.

20. As Kant clarified it in the *Critique*, "[I]t is reason's speculative interest and not its insight which justifies it in starting from a point lying so far beyond its sphere in order to consider its objects in one complete whole" (A676/B704). Metaphysics is oriented toward finding out what the whole is, yet identifying what it is creates an enormous problem. The 'metaphysical' words like 'whole', 'totality', 'absolute', 'unconditioned', 'being', and 'nothing' share the same lack of identifying and distinguishing characteristics. Kant realized that this lack is partially "remedied" by interests, and partially, as he understood even in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (see Ak 2:411–19), by inadequate analogies with sensory objects borrowed from experience, i.e., by "the contamination of intellectual knowledge by the sensitive." The ultimate blame for the transcendental illusions, however, cannot be put either on the speculative or practical interest or on the influence of sensibility (or imagination) on reason, but has to rest with the faculty of judging (*Urteilskraft*); see A293–94/B349–50.

21. For further discussion, see Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, chapters 4–9.

22. See, for instance, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A109, A249, A253, Bxxv–xxvi, and A288/B344.

23. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A250–51. See also *Critique of Judgment*, 293; Ak 5:409. This should not be taken to mean that a thing in itself is some kind of a transcendent cause of appearances, although Kant, unfortunately, sometimes expressed himself in that manner.

24. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A287–88/B344. Strictly speaking, noumenon is not an object (thing), but only a concept or idea of an (possibly nonexistent) object or thing. For comprehensive discussion of this critical concept, see G. Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*.

25. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A498/B526. Kant clarified his point by further distinguishing between the constitutive and regulative principles of reason (A509/B537 and A664/B692 ff.). The former would enable us to expand concepts that are valid in the sensible world beyond the boundaries of possible experience, but the antinomies revealed that any attempt to use this principle in that way leads reason into irresolvable self-contradictions. Thus the principle itself may be of great benefit to us, but only if used regulatively. As a regulative principle, it cannot tell us what an object is (as a thing in itself), but it forces us to search for an ever more complete concept of that object (insofar as it may be empirically given). For further discussion, see D. Emmet, *The Role of Unrealisable: A Study of Regulative Ideas*.

26. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A503/B531.

27. My discussion of the implications of Kant's thought in this and the next paragraph relies on R. Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, esp. 352–54.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

1. See *Kant on Education*, 113; Ak 20:106.

2. Notice that the initials of [I]mmanuel [K]ant and [I]van [K]aramazov are the same. Pure coincidence? Not so, according to Jakov E. Golosovker, the author of *Dostoevskii i Kant*. Golosovker argued that Dostoevsky knew Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* well enough to be unsatisfied by Kant's resolution of the antinomies of pure reason and offered his own treatment of the death of Father-God in his brilliant last novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

3. For Kant's claim that reason is the ultimate touchstone of truth, see his essay "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?," 17; Ak 8:146; for the claims regarding the truth of religion, see *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 122–23, 140, and 159–60 (Ak 6:84, 107, 131–33). See also "Toward Perpetual Peace," 336n; Ak 8: 367n.

4. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, sec. 8. Kant's contemporaries Hamann and Herder similarly argued that "reason is language, *logos*," and accused Kant of "blindness to the vital connection between reason and language." For the sources of the quoted sentences, the historical background, and a defense of Kant, see T. C. Williams, *Kant's Philosophy of Language*.

5. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 107n; Ak 6:65; see also 166–67; Ak 6:141–42. For further discussion of anthropomorphism, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A640/B668, A697–701/B725–29, *Prolegomena*, sec. 58, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 248–49; Ak 5:135–36. Kant's great predecessor on this point was F. Bacon, with his discussion of idols of the tribe, idols of the cave, idols of the marketplace, and idols of the theater; see his *Instauratio Magna*. For further discussion of religious idols, see E. Fromm, *You Shall Be as Gods*, esp. ch. 2.

6. *Critique of Judgment*, 227; Ak 5:352. For Kant's further discussion of symbols, besides section 59 of the third *Critique*, see also Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak 2:396, *Anthropology*, sec. 38, and "What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany Since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?," Ak 20:279–80. Kant's pioneer remarks on symbols were praised and further developed by E. Cassirer (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*), C. G. Jung (*Symbols of Transformation*), J. Campbell (*The Flight of the Wild Gender*), and H.-G. Gadamer (*Truth and Method*).

7. Kant had no doubts that neglect for the warning against sensuous images and representations of God (Exodus, xx, 4) is contrary to the true religion and has harmful consequences; see *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 213, Ak 6:199. In many ways religious experience brings us to the limits of language and we have to proceed with extreme caution. We seem to have only a few options left: either (i) to express ourselves in ordinary language but by means of analogies, allegories, and the like, or (ii) to invent quite new words specific for the religious domain (like 'tao', 'pneuma', 'mana', 'boundless existence', etc.), or (iii) as the biblical text (and other sacred sources) suggests, not to speak at all. Despite the fact that analo-

gies are imperfect and frequently misleading, Kant follows the first option. We must take with circumspection Kant's claim of the indispensability of anthropomorphism, however, for the very use of analogical language can in this case be the source of illusion.

8. See *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Book IV, and *Kant on Education*, 111; Ak 20:105. E. Fromm captured this insight in *The Art of Loving*, 64: "The truly religious person, if he follows the essence of the monotheistic idea, does not pray for anything, does not expect anything from God; he does not love God as a child loves his father or his mother; he has acquired the humility of sensing his limitations, to the degree of knowing that he knows nothing of God. God becomes to him a symbol in which man, at an earlier stage of his evolution, has expressed the totality of that which man is striving for, the realm of the spiritual world, of love, truth and justice."

9. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 64; Ak 6:13.

10. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A591/B619. For Kant's earlier classification of proofs of God's existence, see especially his early (1763) essay "The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God," Ak 2:63–163.

11. For further discussion of the ontological proof in Anselm and Descartes, see R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, 101–19, and 186–97. For a discussion of Kant's reconstruction and criticism of this proof, see J. Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, 228–37. For the relevance of this proof for contemporary discussions, see J. Hick and A. C. M. McGill (eds.), *The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies in the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God*.

12. As R. Campbell argued in *Truth and Historicity*, 201, "up until the seventeenth century language was taken as, so to speak, transparent of reality; the same forms which are in matter inform the mind." He took this parallelism to be at the foundation of the ontological argument and the old, "Platonic" conception of truth (201–2): "The whole point of the ontological argument is to provide a way in which it could be shown that reality is after all intelligible, for if it were sound it would present a way of proceeding from an intelligible definition to reality, a grasp of reality on which all *scientia* could be securely based." If it were sound, the ontological proof would have an indispensable role in vindicating the view that "truth consist in a simple disclosure of the unchanging and absolutely necessary features of timeless reality" (202). But Kant demonstrated that the argument is flawed, and "the consequences of this are profound. If it is impossible to prove the existence of anything—be it God, or the One, or matter, or atoms, or numbers, indeed any preferred ultimate—by appealing to logic and definitions alone, then a conception of truth which is understood in terms of deducing by these means the unchanging and absolutely necessary features of timeless reality must likewise be abandoned" (202).

13. The emphasis is on 'if'. There is no guarantee that creation does, as a matter of fact, have a purpose, nor that there is any necessity to think that creation must have a purpose. Moreover, there is no necessity to think of reality in terms of the creation model. An alternative, and more plausible way to think about our cosmic (ir)relevance is masterfully presented by A. Schweitzer (*The Philosophy of Civilization*, 273): "On one of the smaller among the millions of heavenly bodies there have lived for a short space of time human beings. For how long will they continue so to live? Any

lowering or raising of the temperature of the earth, any change in the inclination of the axis of their planet, a rise in the level of the ocean, or a change in the composition of the atmosphere, can put an end to their existence. Or the earth itself may fall, as so many other heavenly bodies have fallen, a victim to some cosmic catastrophe. We are entirely ignorant of what significance we have for the earth. How much less then may we presume to try to attribute to the infinite universe a meaning which has us for its object, or which can be explained in terms of our existence!"

14. In his essay "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?," 10; Ak 8:136–37, Kant made a slip in the argument from 'reason's need for the unconditioned' to 'reason's unconditioned need'. In this regard, I find Fromm's line of arguing far more persuasive: "The impressive fact is that we do not find any culture in which there does not exist such a frame of orientation. Or any individual either. . . . But a map is not enough as a guide for action; man also needs a goal that tells him where to go. The animal has no such problems. Its instincts provide it with a map as well as with goals. But man, lacking instinctive determination and having a brain that permits him to think of many directions in which he could go, needs an object of total devotion; he needs an object of devotion to be the focal point of his strivings and the basis for all his effective—and not only proclaimed—values. He needs such an object of devotion for a number of reasons. The object integrates his energies in one direction. It elevates him beyond his isolated existence, with all its doubts and insecurity, and gives meaning to life. In being devoted to a goal beyond his isolated ego, he transcends himself and leaves the prison of absolute egocentricity"; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 259–60.

15. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 103–6; Ak 6:60–64, and *passim*. See also Kant's letter to Lavater from April 28, 1775 (Ak 10:176–79), where Kant distinguished between "the *teaching* of Christ from the *report* we have about Christ's teaching." It must be remarked that Kant had an essentially naive (or should we say: uncritical) understanding of archetypes. He not only thought that "we are not the authors" of the personified idea of the good principle, but also that it is not even comprehensible "how human nature has been capable of receiving it." In a manner that does not quite resemble the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in his *Religion* book Kant concluded that it is "appropriate to say that this archetype has come down to us from heaven."

16. It is not easy to say exactly what it meant for Kant that something is a symbol and an archetype. Unlike Plato, Kant did not regard an archetype as the highest possible standard of what is real. Yet the archetype was not understood by Kant as a mere methodologically regulative principle either. In his seminal work *The Philosophy of Symbolic Form* (see vol. 3, 448 ff.), Cassirer distinguished between three different symbolic functions: expression (*Ausdruck*), (re)presentation (*Darstellung*), and pure significance (*reine Bedeutung*). The expressive symbolism is characteristic of the early mythical stage of the human development, and also of the early childhood. The second stage belongs to more developed forms of religious and ordinary experience; it is characterized by a more sophisticated use of language, and reliance on analogies. The third stage is the most advanced and its prime examples can be found in axiomatic systems, whose meaning and validity do not derive from any sensory quality. Kant's understanding of symbols and archetypes wavers, I think, between Cassirer's second and third symbolic function.

17. Kant had very little sensitivity for the truly spiritual dimension of religion. Nor did he show much interest in related attitudes, such as bonding and loving. Yet if religion is not a mere set of beliefs, if religion is to have any vital influence and lead toward a genuine orientation in reality, these two attitudes are of crucial significance. On these issues, see Buber's *I and Thou*, and *Eclipse of God*.

18. Jung's analysis of archetypes is presented in his numerous works, some of which include: *Symbols of Transformation*, *Psychological Types*, and *The Undiscovered Self*. Kant did not clearly see that, although the manifestations of the archetypes can be represented, compared, and analyzed by means of rational ideas and conceptions, the archetypes themselves are not of rational origin.

19. As Jung and J. Campbell have shown, the mother and father archetypes are among the most elementary ones, and they have both a positive and negative side. The "Universal Mother" is the life of everything that lives but also the death of everything that dies. She is the totality of what can be known, but also the source of all mystery. The archetypal father, the mother's counterpart, is the knower and the master; he is the one who punishes and rewards, the initiating priest and the highest judge. The archetypal figures of mother and father must seek to their "Shiva," the balance between opposites. See Jung, "The Mother Archetype," and J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, ch. 2. It should not be surprising that in religion the archetypes of mother and father play such an important role; after all, the word *'religio'* derives from 'to trace back'. 'To trace back' is to return to our origins, to our (ultimate) parents.

20. To many of us it seems that Christianity has failed that test. As E. Neumann put it, "the increasing 'lack of religion' of modern man is really no more than an unconscious process of *turning away* from the image of a God of righteousness which has lost all credibility and from the affect-laden, chauvinistic 'love' of this God and *towards* a humanity which has been called upon to suffer beyond measure"; *Creative Man*, 253.

21. "On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy," 32–33; Ak 8:265–67; see also Kant's already cited letter to Lavater.

22. "On the Miscarriage," 33; Ak 8:267.

23. As Heraclitus put it (fr. 36), "God is day and night, summer and winter, war and peace, surfeit and hunger."

24. "On the Miscarriage" 33; Ak 8:266. According to Cassirer (*Kant's Life and Thought*, 378–81), Kant was here thinking more about his own position in relation to the censor in Berlin than about Job from the biblical allegory; that may explain why he failed to comment on the central points of *The Book of Job*.

25. This point is emphasized by Stephen Mitchell in the introduction to his translation of *The Book of Job*; see esp. xxii–xxviii. It is important to remark that this is not an isolated point in the history of religion. As J. Campbell puts it (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 44): "[T]he figures worshipped in the temples of the world are no by no means always beautiful, always benign, or even necessarily virtuous. Like the deity of the Book of Job, they far transcend the scales of human value. And likewise, mythology does not hold as its greatest hero the merely virtuous man. Virtue is but the pedagogical prelude to the culminating insight, which goes beyond all pairs of opposites. Virtue quells the self-centered ego and makes the

transpersonal centeredness possible; but when that has been achieved, what then of the pain or pleasure, vice or virtue, either of our own ego or of any other? Through all, the transcendent force is then perceived which lives in all, and all is wonderful and is worthy, in all, of our profound obeisance."

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 7

1. Although using a different terminology, in a memorable passage in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 59; Ak 4:404, Kant summarized the difference between the two conceptions of truth: "Yet we cannot consider without admiration how great an advantage the practical faculty of appraising has over the theoretical in common human understanding. In the latter, if common reason ventures to depart from the laws of experience and perceptions of the senses, it falls into sheer incomprehensibilities and self-contradictions, at least into a chaos of uncertainty, obscurity, and instability. But in practical matters, it is just when common understanding excludes all sensible incentives from practical laws that its faculty of appraising first begins to show itself to advantage."

2. Recall Aristotle's famous statements from *Metaphysics*, 993b: "It is right also that philosophy should be called knowledge of truth. For the end of theoretical knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is action."

3. For (i), see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A831/B859, and *Groundwork*, 58–60; Ak 4: 404–5. For (ii), see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A480/B508, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 270; Ak 5:163. For (iii) see the first *Critique*, A313–18/B370–75.

4. Many have written of the dangers of social ethics and the growing preoccupation with organizations, at the expense of an individual, who is the only real actor in the moral drama. See, for instance, A. Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, C. G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, N. Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, E. Neumann, *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, and E. Fromm, *Man for Himself*.

5. *Groundwork*, 49; Ak 4:393.

6 *Groundwork*, 66; Ak 4:412. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A542/B570 ff.

7. On this point, see Fromm, *You Shall Be As Gods*, 55–56. A similar conception of morality is further developed by A. Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*. They both emphasized that morality is not a matter of binding norms and obligations but of an inner need, an inner necessity.

8. *Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 724. As Buber explains (720), "I may assure my critic that I have never doubted the absolute validity of the command, 'Honor thy father and thy mother', but he who says to me that one in fact knows always and under all circumstances what 'to honor' means and what it does not, of him I say that he does not know what he is talking about. Man must expound the eternal values, and, to be sure, with his own life." At the end of the second part of Spinoza's *Ethics* (125), we find similar recommendations of fundamental moral attitudes: hate no one, despise no one, mock no one, be angry with no one, and envy no one. Goethe thought that following Spinoza's recommendation is all we need to live a virtuous life.

9. "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy," 613; Ak 8:427. In his essay, "An Alleged Right to Lie: A Problem in Kantian Ethics," H. J. Paton pointed out Kant's old age as an excuse for the extreme claim that Paton admitted Kant should

not have made; Kant was mistakenly convinced that all exceptions to the quoted principle against lying must be based on mere convenience or expediency. But they could also be based conflicts of duties—the view that, according to Paton, Kant himself was willing to accept in his earlier writings on morality (218–19). In his late writings, however, Kant categorically denied the possibility of the conflict of duties; see *Metaphysics of Morals*, 378–79; 6:224.

10. This, however, is not to say that we should immediately jump to the opposite conclusion, namely that in the mentioned example I ought to lie. What we have been presented with so far is just too sketchy for a definite judgment. An appropriate moral judgment would in this, as in every other case, require a careful identification and evaluation of the situation in which we find ourselves.

11. An abundance of cases that fit the given description can be found, for instance, in Elie Wiesel's *Night*, where he describes his concentration camp experiences.

12. Yet Kant did not always keep this distinction in mind and tended to overlook it, especially when he had to emphasize the relevance of the categorical imperative, as for example when he claimed that "with this compass in hand," an ordinary man "knows very well how to distinguish in every case that comes up what is good and what is evil, what is in conformity with duty or contrary to duty"; *Groundwork*, 58; Ak 4:404. That the distinction between these levels is the essential one, was—following Rawls—argued by C. Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil," and S. Neiman, *The Unity of Reason*, 122–25.

13. For the source of this, and several other relevant quotes from Kant, see Paton, "An Alleged Right to Lie," and Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie." See also S. Bok's book *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, for a more general discussion of Kant's and other views on lying.

14. For the view that Kant's categorical imperative should be seen as regulative rather than constitutive, see Neiman, *The Unity of Reason*, 105 ff., and D. Emmet, *The Role of Unrealisable: A Study of Regulative Ideas*, 61–76. Although she may be on the right track with respect to making Kant more relevant for us today, Neiman does not seem to recognize that this must lead to some radical restructuring of Kant's view. As J. Bennett has remarked, every time Kant argues that reason has a merely regulative use, there is no difference in kind but only in degree between reason and understanding; see *Kant's Dialectic*, 263. If reason has a regulative rather than a constitutive role, Kant has to give up any hope of reaching the unconditioned that was the central aspiration of his moral philosophy.

15. As L. W. Beck formulated it, "Kant says of a rational being that it is one that can act according to a conception of a law. This may be accomplished by obedience to the law, by breaking the law, or by acting so as to exempt oneself from the application of the law"; *The Actor and the Spectator*, 129. On this point, see also N. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 3, 192–96. Hartmann distinguished what I call autonomy in the negative and positive sense in terms of "an autonomous moral principle" versus "an autonomous person." The key point is that personality should be understood not only in a universal way (a rational, free agent in general), but in a properly individual sense as well.

16. This point is beautifully made by G. Paris, in her *Pagan Meditations*, 62–63. As B. Reardon (*Kant as Philosophical Theologian*, 92–94) emphasized, it is surprising that Kant—who argued against other philosophers of the Enlightenment that human

nature is not essentially good but evil—forgets about this when he demands that we treat every person as a member of the kingdom of ends. Let us add that Kant stands in opposition not only to the tradition (that includes Rousseau and also Marx, Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas) that assumes that desire is naturally good and that evil comes from social institutions, but also stands against an older tradition (Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and in Kant's time Schiller and Goethe) that accepts that desire is not good by nature but can be cultivated.

17. This point was made by Berdyaev; see *The Destiny of Man*, 84–102.

18. As Jung put it, "For a moral man the ethical problem is a passionate question which has its roots in the deepest instinctual processes as well as in his most idealistic aspirations. The problem for him is devastatingly real. It is not surprising, therefore, that the answer likewise springs from the depths of his nature"; *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, 289.

19. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A813/B841.

20. See *Groundwork*, 62; Ak 4:407–8.

21. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A490/B518.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 8

1. I develop and defend this claim in my book *Anamorphosis*, chapter 6. For a closer discussion of Kant's relation to Hume, see chapters 3 and 4 of that book.

2. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A84/B116 ff.

3. See Plato's *Laws*, 716cd.

4. For Kant's view on coming of age, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A754/B782, "What Is Enlightenment?", Ak 8:35. See also S. Neiman's *The Unity of Reason*, 198–204.

5. For further discussion of this topic, see Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, chapter 4.

6. Part I of R. Sheldrake's *The Rebirth of Nature* gives a good summary account of that development.

7. Although he talks about modernity in general, Zygmunt Bauman's account of how the modern problem of freedom emerges also sheds some light on why Kant may have had such a strong urge to search for the unconditional foundation of morality: "This sort of freedom, if contemplated at all, was previously thought of as a Divine attribute. Now it was human. . . . Freedom was a chance pregnant with obligation. It was now up to man to 'be reborn to godlike experience'. This was a life-long task, brandishing no hope of respite. Nothing was to be satisfactory if short of the ultimate, and the ultimate was no less than perfection. . . . Human freedom of creation and self-creation meant that no imperfection, ugliness or suffering could now claim the right to exist, let alone claim legitimacy. It was the contingency of the imperfect that spurred the anxiety about reaching perfection. And perfection could be reached only through action: it was the outcome of laborious 'fitting together'. Once a matter of providence and revelation, life had turned into the object of *techne*. The urge to re-make the world was planted in the primary experience of liberation. It was forced into buoyant growth by the fear of the chaos that would overwhelm the world were the search for perfection to be abandoned or even slackened in a moment of inattention"; *Intimations of Postmodernity*, xii–xiii.

8. For Kant, God seems to be not an object but a project. God is an ideal toward which we have to strive, and, taken in that sense, Kant's real aim is not that of patricide but of a renewal of God. St. Augustine used to say: "Love God and do whatever you want!" Closer to Kant would be a reversal of that, something like: "Do what you ought to do, and you will be like God," or perhaps even stronger: "Do what you ought to do, and you will give birth to God."

9. For Kant's view on radical evil, see Book I of his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

10. Kant's metaphysics of morals is a conceptual construction, similar to the ontological proof of God's existence, and suffering from the same problem—its essence does not imply its existence. Kant wants to eliminate Hume's charge of arbitrariness by hiding behind the alleged necessity of the moral norms and laws he attempts to establish and proclaim as the highest. But the necessity of his norms is purely internal to the system which he builds; it is like the necessity of a logical system that we can build from arbitrarily chosen axioms, or like the necessity of the constitutive rules of an arbitrarily constructed game.

11. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A546/B574.

12. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, B145–46, *Groundwork*, Ak 4:463, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak 5:162.

13. These similarities have been pointed out by Golosovker, in his provocative book *Dostoevskii i Kant*. Another character in the novel who may represent Kant, or better yet a caricature of Kant, is Katarina Ivanovna, whose initials are the reversal of Kant's (presumably because she is a female); Katarina stubbornly follows an alleged "call of duty" toward Dmitry, even when it means not responding to her passionate love for Ivan.

14. A. Camus discusses this implication in a masterful manner in *The Rebel*. A relevant section of *The Rebel* dealing with Dostoevsky's novel is reprinted in *The Brothers Karamazov and the Critics*, ed. E. Wasiolek.

15. See Dostoevsky's letters to N. A. Liubimov, of May 10, 1879, and to K. P. Pobedonotsev, of August 13, 1879; quoted from *The Brothers Karamazov and the Critics*, 3 and 6–7. Dostoevsky's correspondence reveals that he was preoccupied with *The Book of Job* before and during his entire work on the novel.

16. Kant similarly writes that the greatness of Christ was that he "opened the portals of freedom to all who, like him, choose to become dead to everything that holds them fettered to life on earth"; *Religion*, Ak 6:85. See also *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Ak 7:58–59.

17. As R. Tarnas puts it: "In a world shattered by two world wars, totalitarianism, the holocaust, the atomic bomb, belief in a wise and omnipotent God ruling history for the good of all seemed to have lost any defensible basis. Given the unprecedentedly tragic dimensions of contemporary historical events, given the fall of Scripture as an unshakable foundation for belief, given the lack of any compelling philosophical argument for God's existence, and given above all the almost universal crisis of religious faith in a secular age, it was becoming impossible for many theologians to speak of God in any way meaningful to the modern sensibility: thus emerged the seemingly self-contradictory but singularly representative theology of the 'death of God'"; *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 389.

18. A crisis of our civilization is well described by A. Schweitzer in *The Philos-ophy of Civilization*. On a short list of the books to be mentioned in this context must also be K. Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*, H. Arendt's *The Human Condition*, and E. Fromm's *Man for Himself.*

19. As Bauman points out, the market economy reduces our freedom to free-dom to shop; it reduces freedom to consumerism; see *Intimations of Postmodernity*, 225.

20.   On this subject, see, for example, Vattimo's *The End of Modernity*, and Ly-otard's *The Postmodern Condition*.

21. Nietzsche opened the door for postmodernism with the radical claims that "Mankind's truths . . . are the irrefutable errors" (*Gay Science, #*265), and that "truth is error" (*Will to Power*, #454). Following Nietzsche, Rorty argues that noth-ing certain can be said of the alleged nature of truth, except that it is "what our peers will let us get away with saying"; *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 176. For Rorty's more elaborate discussion of truth, see *Hope in Place of Knowledge*. For a similar view that there is no distinction between truth and holding something to be true, see B. Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, esp. 5–6, and 177–82. Allan also offers a good account of the conception of truth of some main representatives of post-modernism, including Nietzsche, Derrida, and Foucault.

22. To quote Bauman again, "Postmodernity . . . does not seek to substitute one truth for another, one standard of beauty for another, one life ideal for another. In-stead, it splits the truth, the standards and the ideal into already deconstructed and about to be deconstructed. It denies in advance the right of all and any reve-lation to slip into the place vacant by the deconstructed/discredited rules. It braces itself for a life without truths, standards and ideals. . . . The postmodern mind seems to condemn everything, propose nothing. Demolition is the only job the postmodern mind seems to be good at. Destruction is the only construction it recognizes"; *Intimations of Postmodernity*, ix.

23. As Fromm argues, "The impressive fact is that we do not find any culture in which there does not exist such a frame of orientation. Or any individual ei-ther." Fromm adds that "The need for the formation of a frame of reference is par-ticularly clear in the case of children. They show, at a certain age, a deep need for a frame of orientation and often make it up themselves in an ingenious way, us-ing the few data available to them"; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 259–60.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 9

1. I borrow the phrase "a moment of truth" from Jean Shinoda Bolen. In her in-terpretation, a moment of truth "can be a revelation about the nature of reality, or the reality of divinity, which causes a radical shift in our philosophical, religious, or even scientific perspective, after which we can never again perceive the world and our place in it as we once did. Or the moment of truth may shatter an illusion about someone else upon which we have built a life or an identity"; *Ring of Power*, 186–87. Truth is traditionally connected not only with time (moments of truth) but also with space or, better yet, place. In this spirit Bolen calls our attention to the Greek word '*temenos*', a sanctuary, a place where the truth can be told without dis-

tortion (12–13). A *temenos* is a sacred ground, not only when it is a temple or a cathedral, i.e., a place where divinity could enter and be felt; it is any place where something authentic (like love) is experienced and where it shows its transforming influence.

2. Lyotard's definition of "postmodern" is from *The Postmodern Condition*, xxiv. The critical argument that follows is presented by Tarnas; *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 401–2.

3. See Kant's reflections on self-knowledge in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 562; Ak 6:441, and "What Is Enlightenment?"

4. The phrase "playful illusion" is from Kant's little-known *Dissertatio philologica-poetica de principiis fictionum generalioribus*, Ak 15:903–34. Kant frequently used *'Spiel'* and *'spielen'* in the *Critique of Judgment* (see, for instance, sections 17, 43, 53, and 54), yet the phrase 'playful illusions' was, to my knowledge, used only in the *Dissertatio*, which originated in 1777, during Kant's "silent decade." This interesting and unexplored phrase 'playful illusions' is not as arbitrary as it may seem, for the Latin root of the word illusion—*illudere*, to mock—contains *ludere*, which means 'to play'. This connection was nicely explored by Hermann Hesse in his masterpiece *Das Glassperlenspiel* (*The Glass Bead Game*); its central character, Joseph Knecht (*Magister Ludi*), is at the same time at the top of the order of the glass bead game (Joseph) and at the bottom as its greatest servant (*Knecht*).

5. Kant, *Dissertatio*, Ak 15:906–7. See also *Critique of Judgment*, 197, Ak 5:326–27, where Kant claims: "Poetry plays with illusion, which it produces at will, and yet without using illusion to deceive us, for poetry tells us itself that its pursuit is mere play, though this play can still be used purposively by the understanding for its business." For discussion of Kant's understand of 'play' and 'playfulness', see M. I. Spariousu, *Dionysus Reborn: Play and the Aesthetic Dimension in Modern Philosophical and Scientific Discourse*, 33–53.

6. *Critique of Judgment*, 72; Ak 5:225.

7. *Critique of Judgment*, 175; Ak 5:307–8.

8. See Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, especially the famous Fifteenth Letter in which he claims that man "is wholly Man only when he is playing"; 80. For further discussion, see Spariousu, *Dionysus Reborn*, 53–65.

9. J. Zammito argues that this indeed was Kant's view in the *Critique of Judgment*; see Zammito's book *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, 292.

10. *Critique of Judgment*, 44; Ak 5:204.

11. *Critique of Judgment*, section 59. In section 27, Kant similarly tried to "reduce" sublimity to moral experience.

12. In one of the most memorable passages of the novel, Dmitry describes the nature of beauty in the following way: "Beauty is a terrible and dreadful thing. Terrible because it cannot be and must not be defined, since God has set nothing but puzzles. Here the extremes meet, here all contradictions coexist. . . . There are terribly many secrets. Too many puzzles oppress man on earth. . . . What the mind considers shameful, the heart takes as outright beauty. Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me that for the overwhelming majority of people it lies just there. . . . Isn't it dreadful that beauty is not only a terrible but also a secret thing? Here the devil struggles with God and man's heart is the battlefield."

13. *Critique of Judgment*, sections 49–51.

14. In Kant's language, they come from spirit; spirit creates ideas. Poetry, for instance, is a product of spirit and taste. See *Anthropology*, Ak 7:246–47, and *Critique of Judgment*, sections 43, 46, 49, and 51. If we want to be less speculative and more precise, we can say that they are the response to and expressions of the basic needs that we as human beings share. In Fromm's view, "When we see primitive art, down to the cave paintings of thirty thousand years ago, or the art of radically different cultures like the African or Greek or that of the Middle Ages, we take it for granted that we understand them, in spite of the fact that these cultures were radically different from ours. We dream symbols and myths that are like those men thousands of years ago conceived when they were awake. Are they not a common language of all humanity, regardless of vast differences in conscious perception?"; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 257. The language that Fromm has in mind is not consciously invented, as the philosophers of the Enlightenment believed, but the language of symbols created spontaneously and unconsciously during the course of man's evolution. Great works of art are able to evoke and capture timeless truths in that symbolic language, in the form of music, poetry, drama, etc., without using the medium of consciously constructed discursive and determinative language.

15. *Critique of Judgment*, 146; Ak 5:283.

16. Ivan's constant rationalizing, separated from any sense of love and faith, makes him at the end very similar, if not identical, to his crazy half-brother Smerdiakov, who is Ivan's shadow throughout the novel. Dostoevsky seems to be saying that thinking detached from other vital functions not only cannot resolve the antinomies of life but leads to madness.

17. *Critique of Judgment*, 185; Ak 5:317.

18. See, for instance, Plato's *Republic*, 466e ff. and *Laws*, 667de, and Aristotle's *Poetics*, ch. 26, and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, ch. 6.

19. As Spariousu correctly emphasizes (*Dionysus Reborn*, 37), "Most of these Kantian uses of play [especially in the *Critique of Pure Reason*] have negative rational and moral implications; when it could be valued positively, for example in the description of the *as if* activity of the transcendental ideas, play is never identified as such, but is instead linked with a serious moral imperative demanded by Reason."

20. As Goethe wrote to Zelter (January 29, 1830), "It is an unbounded service of our old Kant to the world, and I may add to myself, that in his *Critique of Judgment* he effectively placed art and nature side by side, and granted both the right of acting in accordance with great principles without purpose. Spinoza had earlier inspired me with a hatred for absurd final causes. Nature and art are too great to aim at ends, and they don't need to either. There are relations everywhere, and relations are life"; quoted from Cassirer's book *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe*, 68. It should be remarked, however, that Kant at least occasionally makes an explicit distinction between art and nature; see, for instance, *Critique of Judgment*, 170; Ak 5:303.

21. For Kant's famous discussion of genius, see sections 46–50 of the *Critique of Judgment*.

22. A great work of art is exemplary in its ability to establish the desired harmony between matter and form. Let us also add that, in Greek mythology, *Harmonia* is a child of War (Ares) and Love (Aphrodite). Like art (and life), har-

mony is always the result of constant tensions, of heterogeneous elements and forces that pull in different directions. To establish harmony requires that we find a balance, a *Stimmung* and an *Übereinstimmung*, between these elements and forces.

23. See *Critique of Judgment*, especially section 35. In section 21, Kant discusses a related idea concerning the degrees of the "attunement" of the cognitive faculties, and differences of "proportion" derived from differences in the objects cognized.

24. See, for instance, Kant's discussion in section 86 of the *Critique of Judgment*.

25. Kant calls Nature "wise" (*Critique of Practical Reason*), or "a great artist," the one who "makes choices" (both in "Perpetual Peace"). In the "Universal History" he defends the idea of man's development, not as a product of his reason or will, but as the unwitting result of a *telos* of Nature that uses his passions. Nature is described as "having a will," as "driving man," as having "secret plans," as "having ends," etc. In the "Conjectural Beginnings," Nature is said to be giving man two different dispositions (animal and ethical), and culture is seen as Nature's own way of resolving man's conflicts.

26. Perhaps not accidentally, the brothers Karamazov grow up without a mother. It is also interesting that in the nine hundred page novel, Dostoevsky—a city dweller—virtually does not pause once to describe a natural landscape.

27. Life is not constrained by the rules of logic. Everything that grows violates the principle of noncontradiction since it at the same time contains several stages of its development—an imaginary growing 'A' is a 'not-A', both in terms of embodying a 'pre-A' and an 'after-A'. Hegel captures this idea in the following way: "The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity is the life of the whole"; *Phenomenology of Sprit*, section 2.

28. As Schweitzer argues, "The Essence of Being, the Absolute, the Spirit of the Universe, and still similar expressions denote nothing actual, but something conceived in abstractions which for that reason is also absolutely unimaginable. The only reality is the Being which manifests itself in phenomena. . . . There is no Essence of Being, but only infinite Being in infinite manifestations. It is only through the manifestations of Being, and only through those with which I enter into relationships, that my being has any intercourse with infinite Being"; *The Philosophy of Civilization*, 304–5.

29. *Critique of Judgment*, section 66.

30. Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 209–10. In some of its important aspects, nature shows that it is not a passive and totally undetermined object, "x," ready to receive any form that a subject is willing to impose on it, but that it brings with it significant constraints of its own. The division between form and matter is not parallel to that between subject and object, nor is it parallel to the activity-passivity distinction.

These relations are not unidirectional and straightforward; they are reciprocal and complex. Interaction is the hallmark of natural processes.

31. See 2.1, 2.4, 4.5, and 5.1.

32. As Hannah Arendt puts it beautifully, modern man "had removed himself from the earth to a much more distant point that any Christian otherworldliness had ever removed him. Whatever the word 'secular' is meant to signify in current usage, historically it cannot possibly be equated with worldliness; modern man at any rate did not gain this world when he lost the other world, and he did not gain life, strictly speaking, either; he was thrust back upon it, thrown into the closed inwardness of introspection, where the highest he could experience were the empty processes of reckoning of the mind, its play with itself"; *The Human Condition*, 320.

33. As Kant puts it in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A785/B813, "the simple in the abstraction is . . . entirely distinct from the simple in the object."

34. If there is a way of understanding things and organisms, or grasping how they "work," it must consist in understanding them in their complexity, in observing them in the way they naturally function and grow. Perhaps the most exemplary illustration of this method can be found in Goethe's *Theory of Color*.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 10

1. As Jung puts it, "The fundamental error persists in the public that there are definite answers, 'solutions', or views which need only be uttered in order to spread the necessary light. But the most beautiful truth—as history has shown a thousand times over—is of no use at all unless it has become the innermost experience and possession of the individual. Every unequivocal, so-called 'clear' answer always remains stuck in the head, but only very rarely does it penetrate to the heart. The needful thing is not to *know* the truth but to *experience* it"; Foreword to *Seelenprobleme der Gegenwart*.

2. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxxx–xxxi.

3. An excellent account of the historical development of the model of creation and its difficulties is offered by Arthur Lovejoy in his classics, *The Great Chain of Being*.

4. In this and the next passage I rely on the pioneering work of Nicolai Hartmann, especially his *New Ways of Ontology*. Hartmann does not use the word "interaction," but many of his insights point in the direction of developing an ontology of interactive relations.

5. Hartmann gives an example of such dynamic and reciprocal relations when he argues that "Independence exists only in dependence"; *New Ways*, 96. He defends similar views with respect to freedom and dependence, as well as other ontological categories.

6. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A158/B197. See also A247/B303.

7. Most of these uses are present already in Heraclitus; see, for instance, his fragments 1, 10, 50, 51, 54, 60, 111, and 114. In fragments 41 and 64 Heraclitus also identified *logos* with cosmic fire. In *Phaedo* 76b, Plato marks as an essential feature of true knowledge (*episteme*) the ability to give an account (*logos*) of what one knows, and in *Theaetetus* 201cd, he incorporates this aspect of *logos* into the defi-

nition of *episteme*. For the Pythagorean understanding of *logos* as mathematical proportion, see Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 991b.

8. See Campbell's *Truth and Historicity*, chs. 8–11. On his view (170), "the fracture . . . decisively occurred with the distinction between real and nominal essences, articulated by Locke. Given that separation, it could no longer be assumed that the intelligible *forms* which the mind can grasp and state in definitions are the same as those natures in things which determine what they do, including how they affect human understanding."

9. Recall, for instance, the last passage of Kant's essay, "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?", where he exclaims: "Friends of the human race and of what is holiest to it! Accept what appears to you most worthy of belief after careful and sincere examination, whether of facts or rational grounds; only do not dispute that prerogative of reason which makes it the highest good on earth, the prerogative of being the final touchstone of truth!"; 18; Ak 8:146.

10. For the view that the mind is by its nature interactive, see, for instance, G. Bateson's book *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*.

11. For Dummett's attack on the principle of excluded middle and the principle of bivalance, see his *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*, 9–10, 17, 74–75, and *passim*. Dummett argues that antirealism leads to the rejection of these two principles, but R. Walker insists that realists may also have good reasons to reject them; see *The Coherence Theory of Truth*, 32 ff.

12. As Lovejoy explains, "There are not many differences in mental habit more significant than that between the habit of thinking in discrete, well-defined class-concepts and that of thinking in terms of continuity, of infinitely delicate shadings-off of everything into something else, of the overlapping of essences, so that the whole notion of species comes to seem an artifice of thought not truly applicable to the fluency, the, so to say, universal overlappingness of the real world"; *The Great Chain of Being*, 57.

13. Heidegger first formulated his view in *Being and Time*, and then endlessly repeated and modified it in later works (e.g., *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*). For different interpretations of the meaning of *aletheia* in ancient Greece, see, for instance, C. H. Kahn, *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek*; R. Campbell, *Truth and Historicity*, esp. chs. 3, 4, 7, and 14; P. duBois, *Torture and Truth*. There are many signs showing that Heidegger's interpretation of *aletheia* is not historically accurate; nevertheless, through this distortion of the historical truth he was able to call our attention to some vital, although long-forgotten problems concerning the nature and value of truth.

14. For Popper's view, see *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, ch. IV.

15. "Idea for a Universal History From a Cosmopolitan Point of View," 419; Ak 8:23.

16. See *Critique of Judgment*, 323; Ak 5:435.

17. "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?", 54; Ak 8:35. For further discussion of the basic views and broader implications of the Enlightenment (in connection with Kant), see F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine*, esp. chs. 1–2, and F. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*. For Foucault and Habermas's interpretations and discussions of Kant's essay on enlightenment, see M. Kelly (ed.), *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, 139–54.

18. "What Is Enlightenment?," 55; Ak 8:36. Kant thought that the self-incurred immaturity is the most serious with respect to religion, and that "religious immaturity is the most pernicious and dishonorable variety of all." In discussing "that honest man Job" in "On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy," 34; Ak 8:267, Kant considered sincerity to be "the principal requirement in matters of faith, as contrasted with the propensity to falsehood and impurity which is the principal affliction of human nature."

19. "What Is Enlightenment?," 54; Ak 8:35. See also *Lectures on Logic*, 578; Ak 9:75, where Kant discusses imitation, custom, and inclination as the sources of prejudice. General immaturity creates a "wasteland" (as T. S. Eliot baptized it) where everyone is living an inauthentic life, doing what other people do or what they are told to do, with no courage to live their own lives.

20. "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?," 18n; Ak 8:146n. See *Critique of Judgment*, section 40.

21. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxiv.

22. See *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak 6:429–31, and "On the Miscarriage," 32–36; Ak 8:265–70. This point is also emphasized by Paton ("An Alleged Right to Lie: A Problem in Kantian Ethics," 217), who argued that "Kant has in mind above all the inner lie, the lie to oneself, which we may perhaps compare with Plato's 'lie in the soul'. What horrifies Kant is spiritual self-deception or hypocrisy." Kant is thus concerned not so much with lying to others, but with lying insofar as it poisons our own souls.

23. It may appear that Kant is thus modifying the biblical proverb (John 8:32), for he seems to think that, strictly speaking, it is truthfulness (rather than truth) that can make us free. But, as Kant's repeated references to Job clearly indicate, he is not thereby denouncing the significance of truth. Instead, it is more accurate to say that he is recovering a long-forgotten bond between truth and truthfulness and going far beyond our modern understanding which confines truth to judgments and theories about the world. I have offered a brief reconstruction of the history of separating truth and truthfulness in my "Truth and Truthfulness: A Critical Study of Richard Campbell's *'Truth and Historicity'*."

24. Kant was probably familiar with Lessing's famous view that, "Not the truth in whose possession some human being is or thinks he is, but the honest trouble he has taken to get behind the truth is what constitutes the worth of a human being. For it is not through the possession but through the search for truth that his powers expand, and in this alone consists his ever growing perfection. Possession makes tranquil, indolent, and proud.

"If God held in his closed right hand all truth and in his left hand only the ever living drive for truth, albeit with the addition that I should always and evermore err, and he said to me, Choose! I should humbly grab his left hand saying: 'Father give! Pure truth is after all for you alone!'"; quoted from W. Kaufmann, *Discovering the Mind*, vol. 1, 65.

Even Nietzsche, who made so many derogatory claims about the value of truth, argued that, "The strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the 'truth' one could still barely endure—or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would *require* it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified"; *Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 39. In *Ecce Homo*, Preface, sec. 3, Nietzsche sim-

ilarly claimed: "How much truth does a spirit endure, how much truth does it dare? More and more, that became for me the real measure of value."

25. For a defense of this view, see B. Allen's *Truth in Philosophy*.

26. Heraclitus, fragment 46.

27. Heraclitus, fragment 54.

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