

Kant's *Philosophy*  
and the  
*Momentum*  
of *Modernity*

*The Metaphysics of Fact  
Determination*

ROBERT J. ROECKLEIN



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## In Memory of My Father





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Erie, Pa.  
August 2018

# Introduction

In the post-modern movement of philosophy, one conspicuous claim that has been advanced is that there are no true foundations of knowledge. If we just consider the work of philosophers such as W. V. O. Quine, Richard Rorty, and Donald Davidson, we encounter this claim, made with some vehemence. It is not uncommon for scholars to despair of this attitude. When scholars do despair of this perspective, they frequently repair to the Age of Reason in the Enlightenment, and one of its most famous representatives, Immanuel Kant.

There are among Kant scholars, however, some who do not believe that his philosophy endorses foundationalism either. This claim, however, is not tenable. Kant is certainly a philosopher who believes in foundations. All of the major Early Modern philosophers, from Machiavelli and Bacon to Hume and Kant, espouse foundations. However, these foundations of Early Modernity are not amenable to something that can be possessed by all, or democratically. Those tenets which Kant espouses, in his philosophy of mind, coincide with arguments made by his predecessors: they indicate that the judgments which employ sensory faculties are not valid. They deny that the non-philosophers can know in other words what truly and officially constitutes a fact. I myself find this a troubling foundation, and I am concerned in this work to explore its justification.

The issue of perceptual judgment finally cannot be legitimately separated from the issue of what used to be called natural philosophy, or physics. When Bacon and Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza, Newton and Locke, and finally Hume and Kant wrote, natural philosophy was still very much alive. A separate department of science which denied philosophical foundations in any but an accidental sense, called physics, was just being born. Yet the philosophers, including Kant very prominently, who were building the new field of

physics, impregnated it with powerful philosophical foundations, but not in a way which invited scrutiny of the same.

The experimental method of scientific fact determination was born with Francis Bacon. I have written of this elsewhere, and will not weary the reader with a second elaboration of that teaching. Except to say, that for Bacon his experimental model is fused to a powerful natural philosophy, the keystone of which is that the most true and real bodies in nature are eternal. This is the central issue of my work. For those philosophies which espouse an eternal natural body as the truest bodies in nature likewise espouse a severe attitude toward sense perception, which foundation is pivotal for the fabric of a culture and civilization.

Concede the argument that the truest and most real bodies in nature are eternal, and one almost ineluctably concedes that perpetual judgment is not fit for any more than casual or instinctive behavior which has no business in the court of sciences' probative evidence. This, in my view, is a deep crisis in modern civilization, which has become the more apparent in proportion as science assumes an ever more prominent role in the formulation of public policy. This issue is especially fraught when we contemplate the domain of morality. Kant is a philosopher who develops a philosophical system as complete as any we have known. It is an important moment in the development of Western culture, and in my view it contains a foundation that is cracked. Kant fully espouses the doctrine of eternal body. In Kant's view, 'substances', which is Aristotle's term for the most real beings in nature, must *all* be eternal. This is the keystone of Kant's famous a priori categories of mind. It leads to a theory of reason which is not beholden to perceived facts, in any degree. I know that scholars struggle very bravely to try to reconcile Kant's doctrine to some accommodation with ordinary judgment, but it cannot be done. In this book we will explore why.

In antiquity, the issue over coming-into-being in nature, and whether it is a real and true thing, was debated with great intensity by the most powerful minds. Plato and Aristotle both argue that coming into being and passing out of being are real and true movements of actual bodies in nature. Parmenides, and the atomists whom he so fatefully influenced, argue to the contrary that coming into being is a mere phantasm. The moderns, beginning with Bacon, turned away from Aristotle, and towards Democritus, for the foundation of their views. They did not in so doing embrace the stronger arguments.

One of the most important aspects of Kant's philosophy is that he is trying to represent the modern philosophical point of view on natural metaphysics as a final view which is no longer open to challenge. Kant, in point of fact, seeks to represent the doctrine of eternal body as a necessary and irrevocable form of knowing which we are not at liberty to either challenge or even question. In this book we will challenge and we will question. That much is certain.

Just how powerful a force in a culture should science be? Should it be the highest court as to what exists and does not exist? Such a power is ultimately political no matter how one approaches it. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle insist that judgment that employs the sensory organs is the original form of evidence upon which all must rely; even if, in the case of Plato, a higher knowledge is to be striven for. In any event, it is from Plato and Aristotle that the most powerful criticisms of the doctrine of eternal body have emanated. Philosophy, in the name of science, is asserting forms of authority in Early Modern philosophy which have not been understood, which forms of authority persist until this very day.

As it turns out, the science of the twenty-first century is deeply implicated in the debates of Greek antiquity. I am aware that this is quite the claim. In Greek antiquity, the distinction between the names of ‘science’ and ‘philosophy’; which is common to us, did not exist. I would like at this point to make the assertion that it is we who need to learn. That which we refer to as science, in the twenty-first century, is in fact not distinctive from philosophy. Contemporary science is a philosophy. It has values, and imperatives, convictions and even ideology. Yet none of these claims compares to the one I am prepared to make now: that the peak learning of Greek antiquity was not, as the modern revolution has insisted, identical with the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus. The peak of Greek learning in natural philosophy was Plato and Aristotle in the Socratic line.

The debates of natural philosophy which took place in Greek antiquity are not difficult to learn. To the contrary: they are easy to learn. The issues are easy to learn. The distinct arguments are easy to learn. The line of powerful Early Modern philosophers who laid the foundations for the philosophy or science of our world, employed much art in attempting to render these debates mysterious, impenetrable, daunting. Writers such as Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume and now Kant never reveal those ancient debates. In fact, all of these philosophers stake out a claim as regards those disputes. Yet they do not tell the other half of the story. Plato and Aristotle, according to the Early Modern philosophers, were men of poor character, rather like charlatans or sophists. They allegedly betrayed a deeper and more valuable learning in their predecessors, particularly in the cases of Leucippus and Democritus, the atomists, and their great forbear Parmenides. In the story handed over to us by our specialists in Greek historiography, the Eleatic line of philosophy is the superior wing. Plato and Aristotle are represented as pretenders, dissemblers, and worse.

The Early Modern philosophers do not teach, or convey, the arguments of Plato and Aristotle in natural philosophy. The Early Modern philosophers simply assert the reality of certain convictions as regards nature, which they render in appearance unchallengeable and simply true. Those teachings are the common possession of most undergraduates in our colleges today. They

are: that nature is one great whole, an object unto itself, driven by uniform natural laws which effectively recognize no distinction of species and kinds in any serious and binding way; that all of the objects in nature are implicated in a universal web of causes and effects, a web of infinite scope, boundless, and impossible to trace; but these prior convictions as to the nature of nature, almost pale in comparison to the one I turn to now. And that issue is the distinction, if there is to be one conceded, between coming into being in nature, passing out of existence in nature, and alteration. For Plato and Aristotle, coming into being and passing out of being are real and true movements of objects. For Plato and Aristotle, the distinction between alteration and coming into being involves a major step forward for philosophy, coeval with the discovery of *forms*. Antecedent to the discovery of forms, ancient commentators had viewed nature as all of a piece—as uniform. For the philosophy of nature that traces back to Parmenides and the atomists, the most true and real bodies in nature are indestructible. They are referred to as a ‘substratum’, an underlying something, which does not come into being or pass out of being. For the Early Modern philosophers that we enumerated above, the language of birth and death, of coming into being and passing out of being, is improper and misleading. Nor is this all.

Plato was inspired by the work of Anaxagoras. Anaxagoras, though perhaps not the first philosopher to so think, opined that the world was guided by ‘mind’, intelligence. Anaxagoras believed that Mind ordered the objects in nature for their best interest. At this point in Western natural philosophy the thinkers really had only been asking a question: Where do the objects which pass out of being go to, when they disintegrate? Out of what do the new objects come into being? Could it be nothing? If it is not nothing (and all of the relevant thinkers insisted that ‘nothing’ could not be the answer), what is the material out of which things come, and into which they are dissolved? This is the vantage point from which many answers were formulated. Aristotle denominates this stage of learning as the concernment with the ‘material cause’. Thales, founder of the Ionian school of science, thought that it was water which underlay all coming into being. His student Anaximenes thought air was that thing. Anaximander, another one of Thales’ students, argued that it must be some infinite material that was not a natural body such as fire or air. He called this substance ‘apeiron’, the boundless. Yet this was the direction of all of these thinkers. It was only with Anaxagoras that the issue of immaterial cause came into view. In Aristotle’s words, when Anaxagoras made his argument, it was suddenly as if a very sober man had introduced his point of view into a delirious process of search. It struck natural philosophers of the day as an obvious thing that there is order in nature, and Anaxagoras had determined that element as Mind.

Plato was struck by Anaxagoras’ theory, but he was not satisfied with it. It made Plato think that each object in nature must be designed, not merely



by intelligence, but for its own best interest. Thus Plato discovered that natural objects have their own *individual* natures. The individual natures were shaped by the *form* that their being had. Plato learned from the human use of speech exactly how this is so. For natural languages are dominated by common names, names of *kinds*. Not only that: but it is so easy for human beings to learn the distinctions between the kinds, and to correctly apply name to object (kind of object), that they are not even aware that they possess this knowledge. Plato would try to make them aware of it. He called his teaching a mode of ‘recollection’, of remembering something that one already knew but did not pay attention to.

Plato’s discovery of form inspired Aristotle. It inspired Aristotle towards the discovery of the philosophy of substance, the *principal* concernment of the metaphysics that he founded. Instead of focusing on nature as a whole, Aristotle’s natural philosophy focused on the most real beings *in* nature. In Aristotle’s view, these most real beings in nature are the individual objects that acquire the part of being at a certain point, and which lose the part of being at some point. The distinction between alteration, the farthest horizon of the older learning about the material cause, and coming into being, the more advanced discovery of the philosophy of individual objects in nature, coincided with the high point of Greek natural philosophy. Nature, from Aristotle’s point of view, seeks to generate. Those objects that come into being in nature, are not ‘necessary’ objects. They are perishable. They are mortal. They have forms which are married to certain trajectories of excellence in development, i.e. *possible fulfillment*—but they are not fated to reach excellence or fulfillment. They have a chance, but it is not a foregone conclusion. From this foundation of natural philosophy, shared really between Plato and Aristotle, their political science arose: one which sought to bring forth fulfilment among the people, through just relationships, through the cultivation of the noble and the good.

The most powerful tradition that Plato defeated, among his opponents, is that of the philosophy of Parmenides. Parmenides’ philosophy resolutely denies that there is any such thing as true change in nature. There is no such thing as coming into being, Parmenides argues; there is no such thing as passing out of being. Nature has no direction, no goal. It simply is. The universe is constituted by ‘being’ merely. It is the same everywhere, and the common people are merely deluded when they invent names to distinguish between alleged kinds. Parmenides’ learning was effectively converted into a more marketable philosophy by the atomists, who were in turn directly inspired by Parmenides’ associate Zeno and his arguments about the infinite divisibility of nature. These arguments are wielded by Modern thinkers such as Locke and Hume, Leibniz and Kant, as riddles which we could never come to the end of. The truth of the matter is that Plato refuted Zeno’s arguments about infinite divisibility just as certainly as he refuted Parme-

nides' arguments about the one great being. Yet we do not possess this knowledge. Our modern philosophy or science has rolled back its account of the high mark of Greek philosophy to the atomist doctrine, where there is only alteration in nature, and where there is no such thing as form really.

I do not make these arguments to stun the reader. I make these arguments to point out the fact that it is not difficult to go back to those ancient debates and to dig out the core issues, and to examine for oneself which side, if any side, prevailed in those debates. Our scholarship is somewhat biased, as it takes its cue from the Early Modern teachers such as Locke and Hume and Kant, who did so much to create the culture of modern science. In the case of Immanuel Kant, and his new metaphysics, there is a powerful attempt to make it impossible for the human race to ever reopen the inquiry into the nature of nature. For Kant attempts to transfer the foundations of the Eleatic school of natural philosophy, to his representation of the human thinking process itself and its *a priori commitments*. From the vantage point of Kant's teaching, the 'categories' of his transcendental idealism, can neither be argued for, nor for a moment doubted. They are simply inherent in the human thought process and the way we must regard nature and ourselves. Kant does not reveal that his categories are the transplantation of an old cosmology, one which he has borrowed, as have the other early Modern thinkers; but Kant is embarked upon a new program of ideology, to effectively make it appear as if any challenge to this ideology is a mark of idiocy or incapacity to think properly at all.

Kant is guilty of hubris to say the least. Kant's attempts to represent the human thought process, human reason, as committed to the principles that coming into being is not a real thing in nature; that nature itself is one great 'whole' of which all are mere parts, and share the same laws; that causation can only be contemplated from the vantage point of the whole, and that the language of causation has effectively nothing to do with the individual objects that are the great concern of the human community. Kant's argument is the effect of a militant ideology in the Early Modern period, but this movement lacks humility. They omit the other side of the story, as we have said.

In my first book, I investigated Greek antiquity, principally Plato and Parmenides. My evaluation in that book of the two traditions in Greek natural philosophy give as full an account of those debates as I am capable of giving. In my second book, on the modern marriage between political philosophy and Epicurean atomism, I make a second attempt to execute the argument which reveals Plato's critique of Parmenides and the atomists in its strength. I found the secondary literature to be of quite a different mind on this score. In that book I take up a good deal of the secondary literature, and I make my case as to its defect, so far as I can discern it.

I again say to the reader, that the debates of natural philosophy are not hard to penetrate. It is a pretty simple issue, to contemplate whether the

objects in nature truly come into being, or do not do so. It is a pretty straightforward issue to evaluate whether that which Plato and Aristotle denominate forms in nature, are real things or mere chimeras. There are arguments set forth on both sides, and I will be satisfied if we simply reopen these debates and think them through anew. Once the importance of these debates is understood, and that also is not difficult to learn, I think that there will be no shortage of brain power expended upon the issues, and I have no doubt but that the stronger side will prevail because it has more truth.

In my subsequent books, I traced out the development of the natural philosophy in Early Modern thinkers such as Bacon and Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza, Locke and Hume. I found in all of them the shibboleth that bodies in nature, the truly real ones, are eternal and must be so; that only alteration is a movement in nature, and that alteration is really just a disguised form of locomotion. Nature is allegedly composed of eternal particles, which shift in their arrangements. These shifting arrangements are local movements by bodies that do not themselves undergo change, i.e. they are variants of the atomist philosophy.

Atoms are not eligible to undergo any change whatsoever. They are not eligible truly to become parts in wholes, or to cease to be parts in wholes. Yet more importantly for my research, all of the Early Modern philosophies bring the hammer down very harshly upon the veracity and validity of the judgment that human beings undertake through the use of their sensory organs. For the philosophers whom I have enumerated, judgment operative in perception for human beings is essentially invalid. I could not think of a more important or vital issue for modern political philosophy, which boasts of its pretensions to equality, and thinking for oneself. These indictments of the judgments made through the use of sensory organs are intimately bound to the philosophies of body of the Eleatic tradition of nature. Those philosophies which insist that true body is eternal in nature, employ that philosophy to discredit the capacity of judgment to use the sensory organ to know truth of fact.

In addition to the severe and indeed merciless critique of judgments through the sensory organs furnished by Early modern philosophy (as well as of the sciences that prevail today in 2018), there is the representation of Plato as a philosopher who himself has no use for sensory perception and the employment of judgment that uses the sensory organs. Plato regards judgment through sense perception as very important and as indeed capable of very significant partial knowledge, but above all as the *foundation* for knowledge, all knowledge. Early Modern philosophy has its foundation, as we will prove in its place, which attempts to stifle and suppress the reputation of judgment through sensory perception. We do not share the view that truth is irrelevant to this sort of investigation. We do not think that people who read

this work will either think that truth is irrelevant to the investigations set forth, or that they do not care one way or the other.

In view of the project in this book, I would like to ask the reader's forbearance in the following ways. These issues are simply not treated, in this way, in the secondary literature. It is therefore a bridge too far to attempt to keep my discussion constantly engaged with a secondary literature which effectively suppresses these kinds of issues. At the same time, I do not propose that my arguments cannot be brought into direct contact with the arguments made in the secondary literature. I therefore have tried to reach a compromise in my presentation.

In the first three chapters on Early Modern philosophy, Kant's *First Critique*, and Kant's *Logic*, I have concentrated on primary sources only. It is necessary for the reader to see exactly what the other Early Modern philosophers were up to in the issues marked out for investigation. In the fourth chapter, however, I devote it entirely to an examination of the most powerful competing interpretations of Kant in the secondary literature. I think the reader will agree, after reading it, that the fourth chapter does indeed reach the core arguments of the major available interpretations of Kant, and that my analysis of these arguments brings my concerns into direct contact with these views.

## KANT ON MORALS

In the books that I have written up to this point, it has always been my effort to reveal the manner in which the Early Modern versions of natural philosophy prefigure their moral doctrines. In fact, in the argument that I am making, Kant's natural philosophy effectively *is* a moral teaching. It is a moral teaching for the same reason that Francis Bacon's natural philosophy is a moral teaching; and for the same reason that Spinoza's natural philosophy is properly situated in his *Ethics*; and why the natural philosophies of Hobbes and Locke and Hume all prepare the foundations for the new moral culture that they seek to build. I intend to sustain that manner of presentation here in the book on Kant.

In order to do justice to Kant as a moral thinker, I have felt that it is necessary to include an examination of the doctrine of Rousseau, whose work I have not investigated elsewhere, and whose arguments do indeed reveal much about Kant's own ethics. The incorporation of the chapter on Rousseau has lengthened the book, but in my view makes it possible to approach Kant's moral writings with more thoroughness and depth. I examine Kant's *Groundwork*, the *Second Critique* as well as the *Metaphysics of Morals* and some of his writings on the morality of history. There is benefit to be had in unfolding the details of Kant's complex system, and revealing

the intricate structure which binds it all together. In these chapters, I attempt to address a reasonable portion of the secondary literature in the chapters themselves.



## Chapter One

# Kant in Context

Immanuel Kant released his most important publication, the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in 1787. Kant regarded himself as a trailblazer, not the first modern philosopher to lay claim to that designation. Kant is conspicuous for his desire to formulate a new ideology for the ancient discipline of Metaphysics, founded by Aristotle. Yet he also identifies himself quite clearly as cradled in the bosom of Early Modernity's most powerful theoreticians: John Locke and David Hume. In this introductory chapter I intend to explore this set of contexts. I will be making arguments about the nature of metaphysics, ancient and modern; I will be undertaking some comparisons of the relationship between Kant's philosophy and that of Plato and Aristotle, something that Kant suggests in the *First Critique*. I will also be making some observations about the relationship between the second metaphysical school of Greek antiquity, that founded by Parmenides; and the role that atomism plays in the unfolding of that tradition, both in the case of Leucippus and Democritus, and in the later case of Epicurus.

Names have consequences and implications. Modern philosophers tend to like to reinvent the wheel when it comes to doctrine, but they often prefer to borrow the ancient names. I think this is in no way justified. At the very least, if a philosopher wishes to transform a discipline, say the discipline of Metaphysics, there is a clear obligation to adequately present the original incarnation of that science. Metaphysics, which Aristotle founded, is not discussed in any significant detail by Kant. One would never know the intent and direction of Aristotle's science from Kant's work.

It is important, for one thing, to know the language in which the ancient metaphysics was developed. Ideas and the names of ideas are obviously very weighty. The language of ancient metaphysics bears no relationship to the language of modern metaphysics. In fact, Locke does not identify himself as

a metaphysician or even as a philosopher of original pretensions. Kant correctly amends the record on that score, casting Locke as both a significant philosopher and as a metaphysician, perhaps as the first metaphysician of Early Modernity. Kant claims that our experience consists of ‘two very heterogeneous elements, namely a matter of cognition from the senses and a certain form for ordering it’. The mind, as it were, or thinking ‘bring forth concepts’. Kant allows that the ‘famous Locke’ is to be thanked for having pointed the way.<sup>1</sup>

This no doubt goes too far. Bacon, Hobbes and Spinoza are all philosophers of towering *bona fides*, especially Hobbes. Locke is not as original as these earlier thinkers, but he is famously more successful and effective than his predecessors. Locke has struggled to make the new philosophy less confrontational. Locke had adjusted the new philosophy in such a way that it could make its case with less friction in the schools still dominated by Medieval Aristotelian doctrine.

The contents of ancient and modern metaphysics are both concerned with objects in nature, and with nature itself. Both are concerned with the reality or lack thereof, of immaterial things in nature. Both are concerned with what we may loosely call objects or bodies in nature. The great debate that raged in antiquity between the Eleatic and the Socratic schools over the issue of true coming into being in nature, is not revealed by Kant in the slightest. If Kant was the only light we had to go by, we would never know that both Plato and Aristotle mightily argue that coming into being is not to be confused with alteration among natural objects; and that in nature, coming into being is a true and essential thing. Aristotle describes the early history of metaphysics in the following way: ‘The first of those who studied philosophy were misled in their search for truth and the Nature of things by their inexperience, which as it were thrust them into another path. So they say that none of the things that are either come into being or passes out of existence, because what comes to be must do so either from what is or from what is not, both of which are impossible.’<sup>2</sup>

Kant clearly places himself on the Eleatic side of that debate. Which is to say, that Kant regards coming into being in nature as a charade, a farce, a delusion. In our appearances, Kant argues, there is a ‘persisting thing’ which is not eligible to undergo changes. The ‘substance (phaenomenon)’, in Kant’s view, is the underlying thing that does not alter. The phenomena only alters in its ‘modus of existence’, or accidents.<sup>3</sup>

Yet it makes a great deal of difference that Kant attempts to lay claim to the mantle of the Socratic line of philosophers, even as he appropriates the doctrines that they proved false. These are some of the general issues that we will be examining in this chapter. It is not commonly acknowledged that physics has a great role to play in the democratic pretensions of any philosophy. We will see, when we take up Kant’s practical philosophy, that Kant



places himself squarely in the modern social contact tradition. The accent is on 'autonomy', and the tilt of the theory is hostile to 'heteronomy'. In other words, in morals and politics, Kant sets himself up to be quite the voice for the individual of any and all classes. This is in line with Early modernity generally. Bacon espouses such a disposition. Hobbes does. Spinoza and Locke and Hume do too. Yet all of these thinkers, in the domain of metaphysics, epistemology, and *Prima Philosophia*, are hardly *with* the common person. Kant, like his predecessors, denies that the human being can so much as know what the real and perishable objects *are* in the world, or that they even exist at all.

This is surely a problem which the success of modern science has obscured. Science has been able to provide so many conveniences to the human race. In the name of material improvements, science has made its case for being neutral and indisputably of common service to the generality of human beings. Yet this is not the case in either morals or politics. If we allow that moral issues possess the power to make life not worth living; if we take the view that it is possible to be oppressed on moral grounds to the degree that life can be transformed into a terrible prison, not worth the making comfortable; if we make the case that human beings cannot live by bread alone, but that their very interest in life can be annihilated by the suppression of their moral voice and its significance in public life—then we are not at liberty to accept science's self-representation as the undisputed voice of the common *good*.

It is physics that hovers over the entirety of communal life in the modern age. It is natural philosophy, to use its more traditional name, which conceptually vacates the vitality and life out of the parts of existence that human beings hold most dear: the nature of their relationships, the signification of their speech and language; the true nature of their emotions and goals and the different levels of them that exist. All of this power traces back to the debate that the Socratic school had with the Eleatic school on the subject matter of bodies in nature. The tradition which denies that bodies have a nature, that denies that any bodies truly come into being or pass away; that is the philosophy that has fallen like a great boulder upon the reputation and effectual cultural status of human perception, and therefore on the capacity of the people to meaningfully and powerfully speak in their own voices on public issues. The debate as to the origin and nature of body has implications that reach all the way into the most intimate recesses of the human heart: into the most delicate and powerful distinctions between right and wrong, better and worse, free and enslaved, voluntary and involuntary.

Machiavelli was the first major political philosopher to harness the philosophy of atomism for political causes. Machiavelli's successors, with the exception of Bacon and to some degree Spinoza, have been loath even to utter his name. But they are even more fastidious in their suppressing the

name of atomism, that modern doctrine which traces back to the Eleatic philosophy, and which in antiquity was met by such powerful countervailing arguments. Modern philosophy espouses, relentlessly, the program of ancient atomism: yet it suppresses the conceptual language of that original theory, and in so doing it buries the roads which lead back to that which was originally learned about the atomist philosophy. This learning is not very much in circulation today. Thus we behold the first great foundation of knowledge in the supposedly foundationless age: that discussion of the origins of atomism is greatly discouraged, and that the substance of the arguments which were employed to refute those theories is hardly ever exposed to view.

Kant is the Enlightenment at high tide. He is bold because he can afford to be bold. With the successes of Locke and Hume, the substantively old teaching, dressed up in shiny new outfits, had ascended to power in the educational institutions of Europe. Kant, merely in reaching for the name of metaphysics, is displaying a radical streak which he is endlessly proud of. Kant loves to be the intransigent. In this he is one of the great Early Modern philosophers. In this he is also more than a little bit the fanatic. Fanaticism in defense of liberty, in the view of these thinkers, is evidently no vice. The conviction, though, that the most real bodies in nature are eternal ones, cannot help but subtract from the attention and respect that is paid to those opinions which regard the perishable bodies as the bodies of the first rank and truth.

By ‘foundations’, is meant some knowledge that is secure and unproved. This is perhaps the most significant development of the superficial transformation that the atomistic philosophy of body has undergone in the modern era. In the ancient era, i.e. when the atomistic theory was discovered, it operated in accordance with Parmenides’ foundational knowledge: whatever exists, must exist. ‘Come, I will tell you, and you must accept my word when you have heard it—the ways of inquiry which alone are to be thought: the one that IT IS, and it is not possible for it NOT TO BE, is the way of credibility, for it follows truth; the other, that IT IS NOT, and that it is bound Not-To-Be; this I tell you is a path that cannot be explained; for you could neither recognize that which is not nor express it.’<sup>4</sup> For whatever exists, ‘being’ is therefore foundational knowledge. For Parmenides, ‘being’ is all that exists. The atomist theory, attempting to account for the perception of change in nature, struggled with difficulty under the Eleatic doctrine. It sustained the part about the eternity of ‘being’, which Parmenides asserts. There is a logic to this philosophy. There must be some irreducible reality for the rest of nature to emerge out of. Otherwise, as Epicurus would later write, all would soon perish away into nothing.

And if all of that which disappears were destroyed into what is not, all things would have been destroyed, since that into which they were dissolved does not

exist. Further the totality of things has always been just like it is now, and always will be.<sup>5</sup>

Parmenides' foundation, then, is eternal being that never came into being, and which cannot undergo change of any kind. The atomist, the original atomist doctrine splinters the unity of Parmenides' reality. The atoms are infinite in number: but their individual constitution is still partless, irreducible being.

The philosopher, then, as we say, spoke of the principles in this way, and made them of this number. Leucippus and his associate Democritus say that the full and the empty are the elements, calling the one being and the other not-being—the full and solid being, the empty not-being (that is why they say that what is is more than what is not, because body is no more than the void) and they make these the material causes of all things.<sup>6</sup>

At least local motion is restored to nature in the atomic philosophy of Leucippus and Democritus. Plato and Aristotle both furnish devastating refutations of the Eleatic philosophy of being. Plato's critiques are more devastating, but Aristotle's are none too feeble. These critiques are not part of the philosophic discourse of modernity.

To return to the issue at hand, atomism. It is the theory of partless body, i.e. of eternal body. Bacon begins referring to the philosophies of Democritus and Aristotle. Bacon exalts Democritus against Aristotle's natural philosophy.

The human understanding is carried away to abstractions by its own nature, And pretends that things which are in flux are unchanging. But it is better to dissect nature than it is to abstract; as the school of Democritus did, which penetrated more deeply into nature than the others.<sup>7</sup>

There is no analysis of Aristotle's philosophy that is conducted. There is no refutation of Aristotle's natural philosophy. Nor is there a review of Aristotle's comprehensive critique of Democritus' philosophy. Aristotle regarded Democritus with respect, and as a sincere scientist. Aristotle learned much from Democritus. Yet Bacon dismisses Aristotle's criticism of Democritus with a wave of the hand and hyperbole, nothing more. Descartes would follow the exact same method. Descartes too ends up with the same indivisible particles as the atomist theory, as Bacon's theory, as Hobbes's theory for that matter.

The first is that each individual part of matter continues always to be the same state so long as the collision with others does not force it to change that state. That is to say, if the part has some size, it will never become smaller unless others divide it; if it is round or square, it will never change its shape unless

others force it to; if it is brought to rest in some place, it will never leave that place unless others drive it out.<sup>8</sup>

Descartes speaks in the above passage of change that the true bodies are eligible to undergo. Yet note that these changes are only initiated by collisions with still other objects. The object does not undergo change of itself. In other words, it does not have the natural parts of time (past, present and future) of itself. Left to itself, it would never change.

Yet the modern theorists, who maintain both that body is partless and eternal, do not admit that their doctrine of body is *foundational*. Not only that, but they do not prove it. They do not prove the theory, they do not accept the implications of the theory (that this is a philosophical foundation of mighty stature), and the entire subsequent philosophical history of neo-atomistic doctrine has persisted on the fiction that the modern worldview has no foundations.

To break away from the language of being is the major accomplishment of neo-atomism. How does it break away from this definition of the atom, which it inherited from antiquity? Epicurus did not alter the fundamentals of the older atomic doctrine. He adopted Democritus' natural philosophy. He introduced the semblance of parts, but not substantively. In other words, Epicurus' addition of parts to the atom did not upset its claim to be an eternal object. Real qualitative parts, i.e. true heterogeneity in the object, is something that no atomist theory could sustain. Epicurus does not undertake this sort of revision. Plato's critique of atomism, as Aristotle's, explodes the alleged homogeneity of the Eleatic doctrine of being, and in that way reveals and proves that coming into being is a true and relentless event in nature. Yet in any event, atomism that traces back to Epicurus remains foundational.

It is common for scholars to cite Galileo as the source of the modern particle doctrine. Galileo undertakes no proof of any such body. Like Newton, he uncritically accepts the extant versions of the corpuscular theory or particle theory; yet to make the break with the perceived perishable objects requires philosophy, natural philosophy, and the fact remains that the Eleatic and neo-Eleatic schools are the only ones who ever accomplished this. Kant, in his commentary (shallow as it is) on ancient philosophy, lauds Democritus as the first philosopher. 'Democritus deserves to be called the first philosopher. He was the instructor of the great and famous Epicurus, who is among the ancients what Cartesius represents among the moderns, and who improved the previous method of philosophy.'<sup>9</sup> Kant slanders Aristotle as a positive bumbler, as a reactionary thinker who turned back the clock on progress in natural philosophy. 'Aristotle developed a blind trust in himself, he harmed philosophy more than he helped it.'<sup>10</sup> Kant offers not a word of proof.

The doctrine of eternal body comes with a deep-seated critique of human perception. The deepest foundation of this critique is that the actual objects in nature are not perceptible at all. Thus the perceptual apparatus is indicted as useless for the purposes of knowing true reality. Democritus regarded the perceptual faculties as entirely useless for this purpose. Epicurus, it is true, asserts that sense perception is the cradle of the human being's knowledge, as it were. Yet this perceptual knowledge is not regarded by Epicurus as at all capable of communicating true knowledge about what the objects are in the world. Sense perception is only operative to indicate to the individual what pleasure or pain are caused by objects, and thus furnish no evidence to discourse as to what the real and true external objects are.

Epicurus, as several scholars have noted, has his own interests for the atomistic theory. He does not add anything new to the philosophical account of why the atoms must exist, and be true. It remains a deductive theory. Yet it remains, in Epicurus' formulation, vulnerable to the critiques developed by the Socratics. This is the reason why this justification ceased to be explicated in Early Modernity. Bacon does not communicate this reasoning about eternal body (and every account of body as eternal is obliged to the Eleatic heritage, as well as its problems). To destroy the road back to the older knowledge in the Socratic critiques, the nomenclature of the atomist theory was gradually suppressed. Bacon does not define body in terms of 'being'. Descartes does not define the corpuscles in terms of 'being'. Hobbes does not define his theory of body, which is capable only of local motion, as 'being'. For Hobbes, body is eternal, and coming-into-being is a misuse of speech.

The material in which consist the nature of bodies does not perish, however (63). . . ." Again, the premise 'what can perish is mortal' is not a correct use of terms, for the death of any substance is not perishing but a certain prescribed change of percipient bodies into non-percipient. Nor is perishing, which we recall reduction to nothingness, death." (63)<sup>11</sup>

Spinoza does employ the name of being in his view of nature 'sub specie aeternitatis'. For Spinoza, however, true discussions of being are fused with the concept of necessity: whatever exists must exist, and must forever exist. There is no coming-into-being or passing away for Spinoza.

Rather, only 'necessary' existence, things the indestructible essence of which is existence, can properly be objects of knowledge and even true judgment. The perishable and the contingent are only the defect of our intellect. If anyone wishes to deny this, his error can be demonstrated to him with no trouble. For if he attends to nature or the way it depends upon God, he will find nothing contingent in things, that is, nothing that can either exist or not exist on the part of the thing, as it is commonly called.<sup>12</sup>

Locke, influenced by Boyle, employs the name of atomism, but he does not discuss any of the theoretical history of the doctrine, nor provide any justification for his own usage of the terminology. Hume, who gave the anti-foundationalist gospel perhaps its greatest push, anchors his entire natural philosophy in 'indivisible points'. These points are foundations, whether they are physical or not. Hume originally argues, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, that the points are in between body and mathematical points. As indivisible, however, they must be eternal. Initially, Hume expressly denies that they are 'physical' points.

It has often been maintained in the schools that extension must be divisible, ad infinitum, because the system of mathematical points is absurd, because a mathematical point is a non-entity, and consequently can never by its conjunction with others form a real existence. This would be perfectly decisive, were there no medium between the infinite divisibility of matter and the non-entity of mathematical points. But there is evidently a medium, viz. the bestowing of color and solidity on these points, and the absurdity of those extremes is a demonstration of the truth and reality of this medium.<sup>13</sup>

Yet in his *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume reverses himself. He asserts that his points are indeed physical, and enters into the formally atomist ranks.

Whatever dispute there has been in the schools about mathematical points, we must allow that there are physical points, that is, parts of extension which cannot be divided or lessened, either by the eye or imagination. These images, then, which are present to the fancy or the senses, are absolutely indivisible, And consequently must be allowed by mathematicians to be infinitely less than any real part of extension, and yet nothing appears more certain to reason, than that an infinite number of them comprise an infinite extension.<sup>14</sup>

Yet Hume enjoys the reputation of a skeptic, which is ill-considered. Kant's natural philosophy comes through Locke and Hume, and the philosophies of perception which they were able to innovate based upon their *dependence on* an atomist philosophy of body.

Bacon brutally indicts ordinary perception, the ordinary concomitant use of names, and indirectly all of the forms of authority that are dependent on these foundations.

The senses are defective in two ways: they may fail us altogether or they may deceive. First, there are many things which escape the senses, even when they are healthy and quite unimpeded, i.e. because of the rarity of the whole body or by the extremely small size of its parts. . . . And even when the senses do grasp an object, their apprehensions of it are not always reliable. For the evidence and information given by the senses is always based on the analogy of man,

not of the universe. . . . So to meet these defects, we have sought . . . assistants to the senses. . . . Not so much instruments as with experiments.<sup>15</sup>

Hobbes radically attacks the veracity of perception with a crude and merely asserted theory towards the same end. Spinoza meticulously strikes out against the authority of perception in his *Ethics*. This is the cradle of modern foundationalism, and what a foundation it is. In proportion as the Early modern philosophers subtracted the natures of ‘being’ and ‘unity’ from discussion of external objects, (these the traditional nomenclature employed by the Eleatic school), these philosophers have undertaken to shift the locale of these natures to the human brain itself. ‘Being’, for Locke, is not a ‘primary quality’ of any body. It is an idea ‘suggested’ to the mind, along with that of ‘unity’. ‘These I will call the original and primary qualities of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple ideas in us, viz. solidity, extension, figure, motion, or rest, and number.’<sup>16</sup> Kant simply takes things the next step of the way. Kant insists that atomic postulates are a priori ideas in the mind, without which it cannot so much as think.

Moreover, the wave of early modern philosophy buries and disavows the concept of ‘being’ as the cradle of philosophy and natural philosophy themselves. ‘Being’ recognizes the original authority as ‘what is’: i.e. on recognition of objects, not as the assertion of one’s claim on any object. ‘Being’, in other words, calls to mind and before the soul what exists independently of one’s will. Will must bend to fact. Fact and perception accordingly come first. This modern struggle against the philosophy of being is waging war upon the most elementary obligation of knowledge in society: to truth.

Parmenides was hardly a lover of the common person. Protagoras was no lover of the common individual. Gorgias was no lover of the commoners. They were lovers of independence, independence from the values of the generality of the human race. Since they could never refute those common values directly, without igniting popular opposition, they sought for more philosophical ways of combat. By attacking the authority of ordinary opinion to know any truth, to know fact, they indirectly silence the moral values of the people as well. Yet Parmenides had to appeal to that which the people recognized merely in order to attempt this revolution: therefore ‘being’ is the centerpiece of his philosophy, the concept which the people all recognize as real. Parmenides never could have emancipated his personal will from the community if he did not first appeal to that which they trusted.

When Kant comes out nakedly and denies that ‘being’ is even a predicate, even a legitimate word to use to characterize some object that exists independently of us, he again reveals just how far the modern revolution has gone. All of the variations on atomism that have emerged in the last hundred and fifty years share the ancient foundation, but they have repudiated the core foundation of atomism: for atom, as Aristotle conveys to us, represents ‘be-

ing', indivisible being. The fact remains: if those sciences today which indict sense perception wish to do so in some legitimate manner, they will have to prove what the original atomism took it upon itself to prove: that the objects known to ordinary opinion are not the real ones, that they have no title to be the centerpiece of language or even recognized as the origin of language. Modern science is free to disavow atomism of any kind: but that will leave it with the task of establishing its own legitimacy in terms of the *prima philosophia* of that which is conceded to exist and exist with the greatest urgency and prominence.

### THE PROLEGOMENA

The *Prolegomena* (1783) is a slim volume that Kant composed in response to the harsh criticisms leveled at the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). In this volume, Kant makes it clear that he is a founder. Though he employs the name of metaphysics, which he did not invent; and though he does not present the core teaching of Aristotle who did found the discipline, Kant insists that his version of metaphysics takes precedence over all others. Anyone who professes to compose metaphysical arguments, Kant argues, must first either disprove his own teaching, or submit to it. Kant argues that readers of his *Prolegomena* will not only doubt all previous metaphysics, but will be 'fully persuaded that it cannot exist unless the demands here stated . . . be satisfied' . . . Kant allows that his philosophy will cause some upheaval, but he insists that it will ultimately prevail nevertheless. There must, Kant argues, be a 'rebirth' of the science according to a 'new plan'.<sup>17</sup>

Thus Kant is a reformer, or a revolutionary. Against what established view, in the history of philosophy, does he contend? As we have indicated, this can be none other than Aristotle. Aristotle after all formulated the philosophy of metaphysics. What, then, did Aristotle mean by the term? For what purpose did Aristotle bring the term of metaphysics into existence? Aristotle thought that there needed to be a philosophy of being 'qua' being. In other words, Aristotle needed to formulate a science, which evaluated the claims to reality and being of those objects that philosophers speak about. Aristotle was well aware that when philosophers go around speaking about items and names as if they existed certainly, that this will invariably become the popular belief. Yet, in Aristotle's view, not only do some of the things philosophers speak about lack being altogether; but that among things that do exist, really exist, there is a hierarchy of *most to least real*. Lest philosophers be walking around in vapors of total delusion, thus polluting the culture, Aristotle decided, such a philosophy as metaphysics is necessary. It is the job of metaphysics to furnish the criteria of existence, that the objects with true being may be identified, and those without excluded.



Aristotle regarded himself as a ‘friend of the forms’ invented by Plato. He did indeed regard both Socrates and Plato as decisive figures in the history of philosophical thought. For they had discovered the forms in nature, i.e. the patterns or kinds of objects which are *given* to us, and no part of myth. These forms are *in* nature, Plato argues. Both ordinary opinion and philosophers therefore originally know the forms through *perception*. What is a form? A ‘bed’ is a form. It is a kind of object. One name, ‘bed’, applies to an infinite number of objects. Those objects will not all be of the same size, or color, or ornament, or structure; but they will all be *beds*. ‘Tree’ is a form. Though modern scientists profess to know of the existence of literally an infinite number of kinds of this single kind, of trees; yet ‘tree’ to Plato is a kind, which encompasses them all, and which the people do not confuse with beds, not even if the beds are made of wood from trees.

‘Human being’ is a form. So too is ‘courage’ a form. Justice is a form. These forms inhere, as patterns to their respective material, in innumerable actions and speeches and intentions. Plato’s philosopher comes before the gathered interlocutors with his profession of ignorance, and asks ‘what is justice?’ Those gathered appeal to their own *experience*. They give examples of what they have experienced to be just in their perishable lives. Perception is still the medium of transmission. The philosopher is no better able to discern forms than the people are, for Plato. For it is forms which characterize the natures of the objects out in the world which exist *to be named*.

Wilfred Sellars, a famous twentieth-century philosopher, speaks with scorn and contempt of the ‘myth of the given’, as if this entire portrait is a ruse. As if the ordinary human being could not be sent into any building, with instructions to retrieve a certain kind of object, and do just that. “The idea that ‘observation’ strictly and properly so-called is constituted by certain self-authenticating nonverbal episodes, the authority of which is transmitted to verbal and quasi-verbal performances when these performances are made ‘in conformity with the semantical rules of the language’, is, of course, the heart of the Myth of the Given.”<sup>18</sup> The modern philosophers are desperate to deny to ordinary awareness a certain intelligence which it effortlessly possesses, which is precisely familiarity with the various forms. As Plato argues in his treatise on perception, the *Theaetetus*, once a human being has a direct experience of a kind of object, he will not be at a loss the next time he encounters a different number of the same kind of object. He will not be *eligible* to make a mistake.

Socrates: It seems, then, that when a person thinks of one thing as another, he is affirming to himself that the one is the other.

Theaetetus: Of course.

Socrates: Now search your memory and see if you have ever said to yourself, ‘certainly, what is beautiful is ugly’, or ‘what is unjust is just’. To put it generally consider if you have ever set about convincing yourself, that any one thing is certainly another thing, or whether, on the contrary, you have never, even in a dream, gone so far as to say to yourself that odd numbers must be even, or anything of the sort.

Theaetetus: This is true.<sup>19</sup>

He will not be eligible to confuse a cow for a horse, unity for duality, justice for injustice, where the soul employs the senses in the course of making a judgment. Of course expert speakers will come around, and make arguments about how names are to be used; and in the hands of these speakers, Plato reasoned, the people (limited to their perceptual awareness of the forms) will be vulnerable to be talked into anything. Thus Plato’s whole science of definition rivets the inquiry into any forms, into a beginning that is *given* by the objects that exist to be named and judged.

Yet Plato, in his science of definition, wants to hypothesize the separate existence of the forms. As if ‘beauty itself’ existed. As if ‘justice itself’ existed. As if ‘the absolute form of courage’ existed, to be spoken of. Aristotle invented metaphysics in part to attack Plato’s theory. The forms, Aristotle reasons, do not exist of themselves. Not really. *Not on the first rank of being.* Not as that which Aristotle calls ‘substances’, or the most real objects in nature. A form by itself, Aristotle argues, does not possess the attribute of existence, in actuality. For Aristotle, the form by itself exists only potentially; only, that is, until nature has married it to matter, and carried it into a mortal existence, which for Aristotle is the primary purpose of nature.

For Aristotle, we may also not speak of anything such as ‘matter’ as if it existed by itself. There is *nothing* in the human world that is mere matter. ‘By matter I mean that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any of the other categories by which being is determined.’<sup>20</sup> Matter is an abstract concept, as well; its sole characteristic is a *desire* for a form. Thus both matter and form for Aristotle by themselves do not exist, ought not to be said to exist properly speaking. Only the heterogeneous combination of matter and form truly exists, are substances, and they are all perishable. They are all *perceptible*. The part of them which is *knowable*, is indeed their forms. The form, though present in every perishable object, is nevertheless more than revelatory about just that object. The universal is both in the perishable individual, *and* in all the members of that kind of object. Thus the form is a universal, and is a proper object of knowledge insofar as this is a cause of perishable substances, the most real beings in nature.

This then is Aristotle's metaphysics. The key principle of thought in Aristotle's metaphysical philosophy is the principle of non-contradiction. Aristotle applies the principle of non-contradiction to perceptible perishable objects first of all. *This* use of the principle of non-contradiction, for Kant, is dismissed as mere sophistry. Kant never once proves his accusation. He will also incorporate the principle of non-contradiction into his entirely different set of foundations of metaphysics, where it has an entirely different function, and where he exempts it from this accusation. Yet the fact remains, that he utterly expels Aristotle's teaching, without ever presenting or addressing it.

What is the 'purpose' of metaphysics to Kant? Is it to establish the categories of objects that have real and true being in nature? No, it cannot be that. Kant denies that 'being' is even a predicate; that it is even something that can be searched for in the way of knowledge. Where does Kant himself come out on the score of the issues that Aristotle made the cornerstone of his founding metaphysics? Does Kant believe that there are patterns or forms 'out there' in nature, 'given' to us as it were in perception? The answer is *no*. Is Kant willing to begin with the common people at the gateway to his metaphysics, as mutual knowers of common objects? No. Is perception, in Kant's view, capable of so much as allowing us to know of a perishable object, what it is of itself? The answer is no. Are the objects out there in the world, characterized by forms? Kant insists, that we do not know. Kant belongs to the Eleatic tradition. He belongs, in other words, to the philosophical tradition that denies the reality of all objects that the senses are eligible to traffic in. Human beings do not have sense perceptions properly speaking, for Kant. They have 'intuitions'. They do not have experiences of specific kinds of objects, which kinds Kant ultimately insists are merely a human invention (and in this he simply follows Locke). Kant belongs to the atomist tradition. That which human beings experience, Kant argues, are 'phenomena'. Phenomena, which are built not out of perceptions of the way objects actually are, but out of 'appearances' and 'representations', do not come into being or pass away for Kant. No true and real objects in nature come into being, for Kant. How does he know this? Kant insists that this knowledge is simply buried in the human mind itself. It cannot be proved, it can only be asserted. They are not inferred inductively from any perceptible knowledge of particulars. They are rather 'a priori' knowledge, knowledge that the mind mysteriously has without experience putting it there.

This is quite a change in the philosophy of metaphysics. In the case of Aristotle, the whole point is to determine what the most real objects in nature are. For Aristotle those most real objects, compounds of matter and form, are fully available to the perceptions of the people. In Kant, perception furnishes no knowledge, zero knowledge. It is denied that human 'representations' and 'appearances' and 'intuitions' can so much as reveal anything about whatever objects do exist out there. Kant does not undertake to prove any of this. He

is parasitic upon the atomism of Bacon and Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke and Hume. Yet his ‘science’ of metaphysics is absolutely a weapon of war against public opinion, the status of which in Kant’s philosophy is reduced to utter nothingness. The sources of metaphysics, Kant argues, ‘cannot be empirical’. They can ‘never be derived from experience’. The basis of metaphysics must be a priori concepts, Kant argues, ‘coming from pure understanding and pure reason’.<sup>21</sup>

The very purpose of philosophy is to evaluate *how* one comes to know what one thinks one knows. In Kant, the philosopher has built a casino. People, Kant argues, cannot know what actually exists in the way of objects. We shall call these unknowable things ‘noumena’. The only thing people can know, is ‘phenomena’. What are these? ‘Appearances.’ Appearance of what? Certainly not of the objects that people take themselves to have perceptions of. Because for Kant, all ‘phenomena’ must be *eternal* objects. Those objects that we are allegedly limited to, but which can only give us ‘appearances’, end up being defined by Kant as atomic verities: as those atoms that were proved to be mere illusion in antiquity.

For Aristotle, metaphysics is about the *most real* things that can be known: “We must not only raise these questions about the first principles, but also ask whether they are universal or what we call individuals. If they are universal, they will not be substances; for everything that is common indicates not a ‘this’ but a ‘such’; but a substance is a ‘this’.” ‘It is clear that it is the work of one science also to study all things that are, qua being—but everything science deals chiefly with that which is primary, and on which the other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names. If, then, this is substance, it is of substances that philosophers must grasp the principles and the causes.’<sup>22</sup>

For Aristotle, those real things, those most real things, are perishable compounds of matter and form. For Kant, the perishable compounds of matter and form are wholly excluded from the very domain of metaphysics. Compound bodies of matter and form can be perceived. Sensible knowledge is therefore a key aspect of Aristotle’s metaphysics. The fact that philosophy can provide deeper categories for understanding perishable objects does not invalidate perception. However for Kant metaphysics seeks for much more authority. It seeks to classify, the power of classification. For Kant metaphysics involves more abstract questions about God, and about the soul of human beings.<sup>23</sup>

The doctrine of Anamnesis from the *Phaedo*, which argues that all souls originally possessed knowledge of all forms prior to birth, also claims that souls lose this knowledge at the very moment of birth; and that only perception can revive this knowledge in the soul.<sup>24</sup> *The Republic* teaches that the forms are wrought in natural objects themselves, and that this is the basis of common language. ‘And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and

the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects.<sup>25</sup> Names indicate the forms. And the forms are almost infinite in variety. The link between philosophy and common speech is decisive in Plato and Aristotle, but it is one that Kant attempts to snap.

In Aristotle's point of view, 'This then is one account of nature, namely, that it is the primary underlying matter of things which have in themselves a principle of motion or change.'<sup>26</sup> 'Another account is that nature is the shape or form which is specified in the definition of the things . . . the form indeed is nature rather than the matter, for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it exists in actuality than when it exists potentially.' Fulfillment. But Kant excludes this category of being from his metaphysics. Kant won't allow the perishable objects to be so much as recognized in his model of mental functions.

Knowledge concerns itself with universals, with *kinds*, with immaterial kinds that can be defined. These immaterial kinds apply to infinite numbers of individuals, but the kind is always the same as itself. In order to define justice Plato climbs the ladder of abstraction, but always with a pinpoint focus on the narrow form. Justice is not courage, and justice is not wisdom, and justice is not moderation. Each of these must be defined by itself. But the effort to husband the truest definition, to drive all contradiction out of the definition, forces the abstraction. It is not that Plato values lifeless things more than human things. Justice itself is a thing that only exists for humans and would not be of any importance at all if it did not matter a very great deal to humans. The very purpose of the study of the eternal forms is to enable the perishable philosopher to better lead his perishable city to happy living. The knowledge of the eternal forms is undertaken by perishable men and women; and this knowledge is for the sake of perishable men and women. Abstraction of the form enables the pursuit of exact truth as regards the meaning of a form; but that does not mean that the definition is of greater value than the imperfect justice that human beings are capable of achieving once the knowledge of the form is acquired.

### LOCKE AS THE NEW POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR METAPHYSICS

When Kant tells the story about the history of metaphysical thought, he regards Locke and Leibniz as 'traditional' metaphysics. The nomenclature is highly misleading. Locke is neither reflective of the Socratic tradition in philosophy, nor is he the true trailblazer among the moderns. Perhaps though where we should start is with the proposition that Locke embodies an 'empir-

ical' approach to philosophy. Names matter. When people hear about the 'empirical', they are led to think that they are being referred to sense perception. In other words, the utterance of the name 'empirical' suggests to the reader that the thinker in question, in this case Locke, *begins* with experience or sense perception as the original authority for thought. This is not a true characterization of Locke.

Locke does not begin, as Aristotle does in his theories of causation, with what people commonly say about cause. Nor does Locke begin with sense experience as ordinarily understood. This is of great significance to us, since we are interested in *foundations* of modern thought, and the foundations that it *espouses*. Locke does not begin his investigation with what everybody regards as the content of their sense perception. To the contrary. Locke begins, at least officially, with a philosophical definition of what sense perception is *eligible to be*. In the crucial evaluation of the relationship between philosophy and fact, we are embarked upon an examination of the relationship between will and truth. Only one thing can come first: that which we experience, and perceive, or a philosophical challenge thereto. Locke clearly falls into the latter camp. Locke argues that 'bodies produce ideas in us' by 'impulse'. This strongly suggests that touch is the mode of perception for Locke, since the objects are alleged to supply 'some motion' to our nerves, which continues on to our brains allegedly and produces ideas.<sup>27</sup>

Locke's representation of sense perception is not only deeply philosophical, in a way which excludes the content and awareness of the 'plain person's' sense perception. Locke also employs a highly metaphysical conception of sensory experience. This we will explain by the by. To resume, then, with that which Locke characterizes as the 'empirical', as the content of 'sense experience', he introduces us to the nomenclature of 'simple ideas'. The 'simple ideas' limit sense perception to that which an individual sense organ is capable of undergoing. In other words, a simple idea can be a sound; it can be an image; it can be a color; it can be a shape; it can be *a smell; it can be a texture. These, for Locke, are the domain* of possible sensory objects. Yet these are not objects for the human being.

The world, for the human being, is not constituted by isolated sounds, smells, shapes, colors, textures. The world, as the human being experiences it, is constituted by objects such as man and tree, cow and justice, house and boat. No one of these objects can be broken down into a bundle of parts, such that the whole is equal to the sum of the parts. A tree is just one object. It has a unity. It *has* color, shape, size, smell, texture, and sound. Yet 'tree' is the object that people perceive. In *Locke's* account, what people perceive is brown, round, wide, tall, smoothness and so forth.

We are not quibbling here. In Locke's account of the human mind and its sensory organs, the only objects that we are eligible to perceive are colors, sounds, shapes, smells, as *separate objects unto themselves*. Thus Locke *does*

not begin with what the ordinary person begins with. The world of what Aristotle calls ‘substances’, i.e. the combinations of matter and form, are not possible to perceive, for Locke. Locke lashes out at Aristotle’s theory of substance, and endlessly ridicules it. Nor is this all that Locke does. For the purposes of our discussion, I am going to remain focused on the perception of a tree, a single tree.

What of the colors, sounds, shapes, sizes, and textures that Locke allows that the human being can experience as ‘simple ideas’? What are they simple ideas of? Locke introduces the distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ qualities. Color, and shape, and sound, and smell, all of the things that the human being depends upon the sensory organs to come to know of directly, belong for Locke to the ‘secondary ideas’. These secondary ideas, in Locke’s estimation, do not, and cannot belong to the external object out there in the world.

From whence I think it is easy to draw this observation, that the idea of primary qualities of bodies are resembling of them . . . but the ideas produced in us by these secondary qualities, have no resemblance of them at all . . . and what is sweet, blue, or warm in idea, is but the certain bulk, figure and motion of the invisible parts of the bodies themselves.<sup>28</sup>

Rather, they are limited to sensations which occur within the human being, which teach us *nothing* about the external objects. Therefore, not only does Locke *exclude* the objects that the plain people perceive from his category of the perceptible. The bits and pieces which Locke’s ‘simple ideas’ will allow to qualify as sensible objects, as simple ideas, are not in any degree conceded to reveal any truth whatsoever about actual external objects.

We must apologize to the reader for the tediousness of the discussion. Readers of Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* will not blame us. That seven hundred plus page work aspires to a tedium of Biblical proportions. Yet we will not allow this to interfere with our task. We are talking about *metaphysics*. As Aristotle originated the term, that means that we are concerned with the objects that *exist* in the world, in truth. The issue therefore is *reality*. In order to appraise Locke’s account of reality, we have had to discourse on that which he defines sensory perception to be. Sensory perception, for Locke, does not and cannot acquaint us with the real objects that exist in our world, our natural world: The objects around us, and with which we have to do every moment of every day. This is a highly significant fact about Locke’s so-called empirical philosophy, which term is misleading in the extreme for the reasons we have now enumerated.

The secondary qualities *exhaust* the category of that which can come to us through the sensory organs for Locke. For his second category of qualities, ‘primary qualities’, Locke is no longer talking about those ‘ideas’ which are

eligible to come to us through our sensory organs. They must be known some other way. Among the 'primary qualities', Locke enumerates number, shape, size, bulk, and weight. Yet we have seen, for Locke, how sensation is said to operate. Bodily contact is the explanation, 'impulses' conveyed through bodily contact, the external object with the sensory organ. This holds for sight, this holds for sound. The sensations are therefore a kind of inference or observation in Lockean epistemology, and consequently those primary qualities of bodies cannot be originally learned through direct experience of those patterns as they exist in external objects. Locke does insist that there is resemblance, but this is an argument of theory. It only took Hume and Kant to push Locke's theory to a more radical conclusion.

There are some terms (shape, size, weight) which pass into both categories for Locke. Weight, for example, is something we can perceive with a sense organ when we hold an object. The power of touch and holding an object, will tell us about its weight. Yet this is not the weight that can ever be part of Locke's primary qualities. No 'primary quality' can ever be learned about through sensory organs or 'simple ideas'. No shape can ever be learned about through sensory organs for Locke, and be a 'primary quality'. Anything that does rely upon a sensory organ is a secondary quality. And therefore the number, the size, the weight that Locke ascribes to real and true objects out there in the world, cannot be learned by sense organs at all. This is not surprising, for Locke is an avowed atomist. For the atomist, as we have indicated, the true and real objects are *eternal*. None of the qualities that our sense organs perceive therefore, for Locke, can be actual qualities of true and real objects in the world. The 'primary qualities' enumerate the qualities of the atoms themselves. The objects that the people experience are *all* perishable. Locke's ontology, or account of that which truly exists, excludes the perishable objects as we know them; it allows us only an account of perishable bodies which are alleged to be made up out of eternal bodies which are truer bodies and *imperceptible* ones. The individual human being, subjected to Locke's 'empirical' analysis of objects in the world, actually loses everything that she knows to exist. Her awareness of the real and true objects is excluded from Locke's scientific account of what actually exists. The human being's testimony, as to true facts about real objects in the world, is therefore suppressed in Locke's city of science. The human beings are disenfranchised in the most radical way, in the most ultimate way: not only are the objects which the sensory organs are deemed by Locke eligible to be sensed, unrelated to his account of the real and true objects out there in the world; but Locke thereupon proclaims a radical new freedom: everybody has an absolute liberty to use names, to employ language, any way he pleases, with perfect propriety. Which therefore means that names will cease to have any referential function in Locke's philosophy at all, that is accountable to what the common individuals experience and believe and know.



In Locke's philosophy the 'empirical' does not come first at all. In fact, the 'empirical' is obliterated. In Locke's philosophy, what comes first is the atoms. They are the true substances. They are the real bodies in nature. They are the things that really exist. They are the cause of sensory experience. The reader will object, that John Locke makes the argument that human sensory faculties nevertheless make it possible for human beings to 'get along' in the world, i.e. to meet their needs. Philosophy will not interfere with human beings when they use language after the common fashion, using definite names for definite kinds of objects; and regarding sense perception as the only real and legitimate authority for determining what is real and true. It is just that, in Locke's society, truth is surrendered to the authority of *science*. That which passes in what Locke calls 'civil speech', is not eligible to testify before the court of science itself. Science has its own rules for ascertaining truth, which exclude the community in its entirety.

Thus Locke establishes the foundation for authority in society, authority over what shall pass for absolute truth and reality, in such a way that it disenfranchises everything that the common person knows. 'First, by their civil use, I mean such a communication of thoughts and ideas by words, as may serve for the upholding of common conversation and commerce, about the ordinary affairs and conveniences of civil life, in the society of man, one amongst another.'<sup>29</sup> Philosophers are not generally interested in just amusing themselves, unfortunately. Modern philosophy is more than any preceding philosophy that we know of, obsessed with power. As we have indicated it is not obsessed with the reputation of power. Following Hobbes's maxims, it professes to observe *equality*. Yet that which Hobbesian and Lockean scientific authority profess, is not that which they are either obligated to believe, or formally do believe. If from the scientific point of view, only the scientist-philosopher knows what the real and true bodies are in nature, and sense perception as ordinarily experienced is bereft, utterly bereft of probative value in a tribunal of truth, then the groundwork for an absolute authority is established no matter what language of voluntarism and contractualism it may ultimately be couched in.

Let us return to the larger issues of metaphysics lest we lose the wood for the trees, as it were. Metaphysics, as it was founded, sought to establish and determine the real and true objects that *have existence* in the world. 'Being' is not listed by Locke, as either a primary or a secondary quality. It is not allowed to be something that is perceived, or a property of that which is perceived; nor is existence or being allowed by Locke or conceded to be a true and real part of the actual bodies he believes to exist in nature.

In the original atomic theory, as we have established, the very definition of the atoms is 'being'. It is their *only* quality. Here, Locke has exiled 'being' from the atoms. Upon what grounds then does he obtain the theory? For the atoms are originally established as the most true and real beings, the *only*

grounds it possessed for any purchase on the human race at all. Now we have Locke, talking like Bacon and Hobbes about eternal and indivisible objects in nature, which no longer have this property of *being* at all. That which the original atomist did and had to do, i.e. appeal to the people for the bona fides of their theory, the modern philosophers refuse to do. With their talk of *political* rights, they engage in misdirection: the robust name of 'equality' is chanted over and over, but the truth is that the common people have been disenfranchised, rather than enfranchised, insofar as the testimony as to truth is concerned.

What about 'substance'? What about Aristotle's account of substance as the real and true, as the most real and true objects in nature? Indeed, what about *form*? What about the kinds and patterns of objects, which Plato points out are 'given' to us by nature? In Locke this all vanishes. If we want to simply talk about some particular object, like a tree, what will the Lockean philosopher *do* with us? He will say that we can experiment on an object, and count up its predicates: shape and size and color, and what it does when you kick it, and how it tastes if you eat it, and the list is infinite. But at the end of the day all you will have is a list of predicates. What about the single 'this', as Aristotle refers to substance? There is no such thing as a 'this' for Locke. There is no underlying object, which possesses all the predicates. *That* idea, Locke maintains, is a pure delusion.

Philosophers of the last hundred years in America din in our ears that there is no such thing as foundations of knowledge, that there are not foundations to be had in philosophy at all. They do not find foundations in the Early Moderns, and they profess that they do not have any foundations themselves. Yet the atoms are a foundation. They are not *nothing*. They are the ultimate constituent of the universe in the modern view, only now they are defined in such a way that their *being* is suppressed from their birth certificates; yet the atoms do not exist without the part of being. They are nothing without the part of being. They are not even a name. The modern philosopher can only suppress the part of being from his account of the atoms due to ignorance on the part of those who imbibe the teaching. Locke's teacher, Boyle, recognized Epicurus and Lucretius as his forebears in the philosophy. Kant, in his youth, was a bold believer in Epicurean atoms. Only now they have silenced the content of what the atoms are and always were and were theorized to be: they have snapped the link between the atoms and the obligation to truth. Today they will refuse to speak with us if we pose such questions. Yet pose them we must, to restore to the account of atomism a full rendering of its genealogy as a theory, and its utter dependence on the concept of being and existence; and then we can make it accountable to our own pursuit of truth, to say nothing of reviving the criticisms of atomism that Plato and Aristotle developed.

## KANT ON LOCKE'S CONTRIBUTION TO METAPHYSICS

Students of philosophy, confronted with Kant's regimen of 'pure' mental materials, will hungrily look backwards for thinkers who refer to good old common-sense experience and familiar moorings. Kant is quick to point to Locke as the very founder of the new metaphysics. When Kant discusses the origins of metaphysics, he refers to Locke and Leibniz as that origin 'so far as we know its history'.<sup>30</sup> Kant is sternly against any model of induction from sensory objects in the Aristotelian mode, but when he writes about Locke he suggests that Locke is an inductivist and that he too is one. 'Such a tracing of the first endeavors of our power of cognition to ascend from individual perception to general concepts is without doubt of great utility'. Kant argues, and Locke again is to be thanked for leading in this particular.<sup>31</sup> 'Leibniz and Locke are to be reckoned among the greatest and most meritorious reformers of philosophy in our times.'<sup>32</sup> In fact, Kant points to Locke as the origin of metaphysics itself. Given the poor historian of ideas that Leibniz was, Kant is following in his footsteps. In any event, it is a great confusion to regard Locke as the representative of the authority of that common experience which all philosophers at some point look for. Locke is an atomist philosopher, one who gives new articulation to an ancient doctrine which is wholly absorbed in the business of depreciating the dignity of perceptual knowledge.<sup>33</sup>

Kant fully understands what Locke has done. Kant is fully on board with what Locke has done. Locke has expelled from the domain of truth, not merely colors and sounds and shapes that are actually perceived; but he has done away with all the other qualities of perception as well. Not only has Locke done so, but he has been praised for so doing. Philosophy in its modern movement encounters no opposition that is able to withstand it. The ancient teaching had not survived into the modern age. Suppression of the ancient teaching has been the major disposition of modern philosophy since Machiavelli. Kant baldly acknowledges as much, and he knows, *from tried and proven experience*, from the success of the early modern philosophers, that what people do not understand, they will ignore. No matter how much to their detriment this turning away may be.

Long before Locke's time, but assuredly since him, it has been generally assumed and granted without detriment to the actual existence of external things that many of their predicates may be said to belong, not to the things themselves, but to their appearances, and to have no proper existence outside our representations. Heat, color, taste, for instance, are of this kind. Now, if I go further and for weighty reasons, rank as mere appearances also the remaining qualities of bodies, which are called primary—such as extension, place, and in general, space, with all that which belongs to it (impenetrability, or

materiality, shape, etc.)—no one in the least can adduce the reason of its being inadmissible.<sup>34</sup>

Kant is like a fly buzzing around honey. Locke's foundations will become Kant's foundations. All of these foundations, in the foundationless age. And surely we must regard it as a foundation, if one can stand upon it, lean one's mind upon it, and with a slight pull and tug, use this leverage to tumble over all of that which is commonly believed, *in argument*. Yes the people will have no ability to make any sense of such chatter; and they will close their ears to it because that is what we do with things that we do not understand at all or find in the least comprehensible. Yet that is not the issue before us. The issue is the fate of these people, and the condition of life to which they are destined, underneath the yoke of such a science. These foundations are fully as operative in the academic learning of the twenty-first century as they were in the much less powerful universities in the days of the early Enlightenment. Now these principles have expelled every last nook and cranny of resistance.

Kant writes as if Locke is the beginning of wisdom. This is both saying too much and not enough. The *Prolegomena* is a slim volume. Kant does not discuss Francis Bacon or Descartes in any kind of detail in this volume. Yet there is nothing that Locke did, in the way of epistemology, and theories of human understanding, that Bacon and Hobbes and Spinoza did not precede him in, and usually with greater power. What is clear is that this density of philosophers in this relatively small window of time, exploding upon the learned world with their rhetorically artful ambitions, are embarked upon projects of what Machiavelli calls 'acquisition'. Science, for these philosophers, is first of all about the self, about the will, about desire and power. Machiavelli was the philosopher who came to the conclusion that one did not need the dignity of actual victory over one's opponents to enjoy glory. Glory will be whatever the victor says it is, for all practical purposes, and all practical purposes is the only thing that Machiavelli ever cared about. One does not need one's opponents' respect, if one has his terror. If one has superior arms, superior weapons, one will have them both.

In our learning, one almost never ever hears Machiavelli's name mentioned in Kant scholarship. It would be regarded as anathema. Yet who else does Kant sound like, when he preens himself on his new science of metaphysics, except for Machiavelli in his introduction to the *Discourses on Livy*?

Kant states:

I feel obliged to the learned public even for the silence with which it for a long time honored my Critique, for this proves at least a postponement of judgment and some supposition that, in a work leaving all beaten tracks and striking out on a new path, in which one cannot at once perhaps so easily find one's way,

something may perchance lie from which an important but at present dead branch of human knowledge may derive new life and productiveness.<sup>35</sup>

Machiavelli had previously written the following:

Although the envious nature of men has always made it no less dangerous to find new modes and orders than to seek unknown waters and lands, because men are more ready to blame than to praise the actions of others, nonetheless . . . I have decided to take a path yet untrodden by anyone, and if it brings trouble and difficulty, it could also bring me reward through those who consider humanely these labors of mine.<sup>36</sup>

## HUME

In order to understand David Hume and his impact, it is not enough to understand John Locke. One must understand Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza. Thomas Hobbes was emboldened by the success of Francis Bacon. All were emboldened by the success of Machiavelli. Philosophers who had been saying the unsayable in public, had proved through their example that impunity would follow. It is not that there was any lack of opposition. It is that there was a lack of *any capable* (read: philosophic) opposition. Hobbes and Spinoza are positive bomb throwers. Hobbes persecuted every cherished institution in England: the Church, the Common Law, the Universities, the Government. Spinoza was driven out of his religious community because of his radical teaching. In their doctrines, they pulled no punches. In a twist of irony, Spinoza wore a ring with the name 'caution' imprinted on it. He was the least cautious man, unless he knew that no one existed who could combat his arguments. Hobbes and Spinoza have the same atomist ideology that Bacon does. They denounce perception.

But to proceed to the rest of the senses, it is apparent enough that the smell and taste of the same thing are not the same to every man, and therefore are not in the thing smelt or tasted by in the men. . . . That is in conception by vision, so also in the conception that arises from other senses, the subject of their inherence is not the object but the sentient.<sup>37</sup>

They insist that the universe of nature is one big object; that it is operated according to general universal laws. Spinoza famously argued that man could not claim any 'private kingdom': he could not, therefore, claim for himself any moral law that could not be seen to be operative in every other species in nature. That all of these thinkers rallied in the name of 'liberty', that all of these philosophers rallied in the name of individual 'rights', is instructive.

Hobbes and Spinoza are barely ever mentioned by commentators on modernity. They prefer to name culturally neutered figures such as Galileo and

Newton. The fact remains that Hobbes and Spinoza make more sophisticated metaphysical arguments about the doctrine of body than either of these two other thinkers, by far. Galileo uncritically accepts the atomist thesis. He evidently has no idea of its origins, of its theoretical constitution. The same goes for Newton.

Hobbes and Spinoza overturned the apple cart. They were also the most controversial of philosophers. They were founders. With the advent of the prudent Locke, this movement of philosophy sought to tone down its rhetoric, to speak in a way that could be accommodated in the salons of Europe. Hume was greatly influenced by Locke, and it is evident in Hume's polished writing style. Yet Hume is just as pugnacious, just as aggressive, just as theoretically transgressive as his predecessors. It is Hume whom Kant settles on as his most important predecessor.

Hume has the reputation of being a skeptic. Hume did much to cultivate this posture, and Kant well seeks to imitate him. Skepticism is a far easier doctrine to market to common-sense communities. It is simply very easy for a philosopher to wrap his arms around a community when he is whispering the name of 'skepticism' to it. For the people is wary, by nature. In a mortal world of consequences, this is a part of adulthood. But the philosophic skepticism is not in the least ways related to the common-sense skepticism of any community. Let's begin with the beginning: Hume's original thesis is that nature is composed of *indivisible points*. There is no skeptical philosopher in history who would defend that proposition as true. Not Pyrrho, not Sextus Empiricus, not anyone. It is what Pyrrho regards as 'dogmatism'.

Hume does a dance in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, that miraculous product of his youth, which was bitterly received and curtly dismissed. In the *Treatise*, Hume insists that these natural points are 'not physical', 'not material'. They are not mathematical points either, Hume indicates, but something in between. Yet a body cannot be a little bit body if it is indivisible. Hume's points are indivisible. In his later work, the one he wished to be known for, the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, he has amended his testimony. Now the points are indeed physical, material. What did it matter? He was not going to be called to account either way. Hume's doctrine of indivisible points is the *foundation* for his natural philosophy. 'Skeptics' don't have foundations. Hume has foundations. All of the modern philosophers do. Hume's doctrine of perception, which he calls 'impressions', are virtually identical to those of Locke's simple ideas. The people have no experience of 'impressions'. Hume's doctrine of indivisible body is necessary to establish the theory of 'impressions'.

The human mind, for Locke, when it beholds its 'simple ideas', is at liberty to combine them in the way that it prefers. It is up to each human being to decide which simple ideas should be gathered under which names. Locke treats this as a 'liberty' of the most fundamental order. He is effectual-

ly outlawing that which the human race absolutely depends upon, a common language, such that in said language, they know what they are saying and shall be thought by others to have said. Locke's attitude is one of bemusement.

Hume however has ratcheted up the intensity. Hume chooses to stress a point that can equally be made about Locke's doctrine: that any two simple ideas can go together, or not. Locke markets the phenomena as liberty; Hume decides to formulate the equation as a complete arrest of human thought and its possibility. That human being who dares to engage in philosophic discourses, Hume argues, is fated to be driven into utter despair, utter desperation, utter helplessness by Hume's teaching. To attempt to think will become synonymous with the experience of utter paralysis. Hume's famous and sarcastic lament at the conclusion of *Treatise* book I is on point.

There is no reason to worry, Hume stresses. Just because the attempt to know is thwarted, utterly, and what an educational model this has proved to be—does not mean that the human race must do without. Just as Locke insists that the human race is provided for by 'nature' well enough' through its sense capacities, and even though both Locke and Hume have indicted those capacities in the way we have indicated, Hume nevertheless insists that there is a miraculous logic in it all. Desperation is the natural condition of the human mind, in Hume's analysis. Desperation begets the suspension of thought, and the urgent impulse to 'act'. Thus civilization is saved from paralysis, and receives its 'natural' principles of motion.

It might not be regarded by the individual members of the commonweal that being reduced to desperation by philosophic authority is progress in the domain of liberty. What is liberty after all but a name? In the lexicon of Locke, of Hume, of Hobbes, it means what the philosopher indicates it to mean, not anything different. These philosophers absolutely repudiate the proposition that they have to use names as they are employed in common circulation.

Kant celebrates Hume seven ways to Sunday. For Kant, it is Hume who has given him the decisive impulse. It is Hume who embodies the new issues of metaphysics. What precisely would those issues be? We started out with the origin of metaphysics, which sought to establish the real beings in nature. We have Aristotle arguing that it is the perishable bodies known to the rank and file of human beings which are the most real beings, and the true substances. Now, according to Kant, we have arrived at Hume, for whom allegedly there are no foundations. We should just ignore the indivisible points. The issues of metaphysics now are what philosophy shall decide to construe by the term. Nothing more and nothing less. They do not choose to sustain, or even to report, Aristotle's conception of this philosophy.

## KANT'S METAPHYSICS

Like all of the other Early Modern philosophers, Kant has his own foundations. He has foundations in a philosophy of body. Kant's conception of body, as we will prove in its place, is none other than that of the eternally existing. Kant calls it 'phenomena'. That is the name that Kant employs to designate the 'appearances' and 'representations' which human beings are eligible to have. We will address that matter more substantively in the following chapter, which treats more directly of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet it needs to be pointed out here, that Kant's allegedly 'a priori' philosophy, Kant's philosophy that claims that the mind must begin with knowledge internal to itself, subject to no proof, and immune to the demand of proof, nevertheless rests upon foundations as firm and of ancient pedigree as those of his predecessors.

In Kant's view, metaphysics involves an entirely new science. According to Kant, his metaphysics establishes new rules not merely for what it is correct to think, but for which it is even possible for human beings to think. Kant draws the foundations (aside from his own independent ones noted above) from Locke and Hume. Kant treats the amputated simple ideas and impressions of Locke and Hume as essentially correct. Kant very much likes the situation that Hume attempted to place philosophy in, the desperate quality of its quarters. When Hume leads the history of philosophy into helplessness, or into a most dominant and commanding power (depending on your point of view). Kant regards it as the ideal stepping off place for his metaphysics.

The simple ideas or impressions, as we have indicated, provide a person with a blot of color, a shape, a sound, a texture, a smell. We have evaluated the bona fides of this position. We have indicated that this very account of perception is dependent on the atomist ideology. That the foundation of the atomist ideology is the necessary precursor for this theory of perception. That the entire foundation is false. That this is not the way human beings perceive objects; that the Early Moderns have never proved that this is the way that they perceive objects; and that Kant never, anywhere proves that this is the way human beings perceive objects.

Kant, then, takes up the orientation of Locke and Hume. In that radically partisan, unsubstantiated posture, the human mind would have to struggle in vain, merely in order to be able to utter the name 'peach', in such a way that it included enough simple ideas or impressions to even be conceivable as a substitute for what ordinary human beings discern and say. Locke follows Bacon, as Kant will follow Locke, in making experiment the institution for determining what predicates an object may have. Yet this ideology does not allow the theorizer to speculate on the 'object itself' which possesses the predicates; nor does this method allow for one comprehensive roster of predi-



cates, but it will vary for each experimenter as the experiments are varied. The result is rival definitions, as many as there are experimenters, or experiments. Hume argues that there is absolutely no way to bring together the impressions in a persuasive way; that human beings themselves are only pretending to know the said objects that they claim to perceive; and that they really have no basis in reality for doing this. Kant's metaphysics, then, without upsetting in the slightest the conditions established by Locke and Hume, vows that his metaphysics will prove that the mind possesses powers of its own, and knowledge of its own, to combine the supposed 'appearances; and 'representations' said to be floating around the brain.

Kant has specific nomenclature for this power that he ascribes to the mind. 'Synthesis' is one of the names. Synthesis means to combine, to bring together. The other term is 'a priori'. This means, in Kant's vernacular, the ability to do something without any instruction from experience, and the objects of experience themselves. Thus Kant claims that the new metaphysics must rest upon the conviction that there are 'synthetic a priori propositions'. In other words, the mind must possess a power of its own, to combine these simple ideas and impressions said to be floating around the brain, and to furnish the mind with knowledge. Kant insists that the very existence of metaphysics 'stands or falls' with this issue: any metaphysics that fails to meet Kant's criteria is to be regarded as 'vain, baseless philosophy'.<sup>38</sup> Metaphysicians, Kant argues, must suspend what they are doing, and give all of their attention to the question he has formulated: 'how are synthetic cognitions a priori possible?'<sup>39</sup>

Kant speaks about his conception of metaphysics a little bit in the *Prolegomena*. Kant in fact enumerates the vision of nature that science has been trafficking in since Bacon revived Democritus. It is the vision of a nature that is one great big object, everything in nature a mere part of the whole; everything in nature the same stuff, indeed the same *nature*. There are no opposites in nature, according to this vision. There are no kinds of objects that have their own respective possibilities of development; there is no natural potential for any kind of object, such that it could be interfered with or arrested, or destroyed.

It is a vision of nature in which, mysteriously, every single object is enfolded in one infinite chain of causes and effects; no object a cause unto itself; therefore any object can be measured by any other object; one can't investigate one single object in nature without obliging oneself to give an account of the actual whole infinite thing. Not only this. But that substance hereafter means to exist eternally. That which Aristotle's philosophy would have lashed out at as the merest poltroonery, in Kant is presented with majesty and dignity. A whole history of philosophy, which in antiquity was argued for, and subjected to proofs, and compelled to address its opponents—now it emerges in Kant as the mind's own mysterious possession. It did not have to

think about any external objects, because it has been asserted at the outset that mind cannot *know* any external objects.

That which Locke did so much to initiate, when he subtracted the nature of ‘being’ itself from his account of objects in nature; that which Locke did so much to accelerate, when he denied ‘unity’ as a character that is part of the objects in nature: Kant now takes this argument over the goal line. The gradual suppression of the postulates of atomism are now in Kant ascribed to the human mind itself, as *its* laws. Thus the ‘Copernican revolution’: instead of the mind seeking to conform itself to the objects that exist, and the way that they are, the mind shall hereafter assert what objects must be, and conform its account of every object in nature to these desiderata.

We actually possess a pure natural science in which are propounded, a priori and with all the necessity requisite to apodictic propositions, laws to which nature is subject. . . . But among the principles of this universal physics there are a few which actually have the required universality; for instance, the proposition that ‘substance is permanent’, and that ‘every event is determined by a cause according to constant laws’, etc. These are actually, universal laws of nature, which subsist completely a priori. There is then in fact a pure (transcendental) natural science, and the question arises, how is this possible?’<sup>40</sup>

‘The word nature assumes another meaning which determines the object, whereas in the former sense it only denotes the conformity to law of the determinations of existence of things generally. Nature considered materialiter is the totality of all objects of experience.’ Kant maintains that ‘we are not concerned with the nature of things in themselves’, since these objects allegedly exist ‘independent of the conditions of both our sensibility and our understanding’.<sup>41</sup>

That ancient issue which was the subject of the great debates, as to whether there is indeed any real coming into being in nature; or whether, as first Parmenides and then the atomists theorized, coming into being is the merest illusion, and the true bodies are indestructible (and therefore why worry about the objects that are made up out of them?): This issue, Kant now opines, is the very fulcrum of the modern philosophical movement. Not one of these philosophers has undertaken to prove such a thing; not one of these modern philosophers has taken us back to the ancient debates, not even to examine the logic of those philosophers who *did* believe in the eternity of all real things. One gets the sense that it is merely the cutting prestige of the new sciences, their taste for the jugular and the spectacular indictment and demolition of any opponent, which carries Kant like a wave to his boasts. Anyone who does not believe in this principle, of eternal body, of the most real things as eternal, and even of the unreality of anything not eternal—is painted as a complete knave, and again not one iota of reasoning does Kant

offer. 'Let the concepts of substance and accident be ever so well analyzed and determined; all this is very well as a preparation for some future use. But if we cannot prove that in all which exists the substance endures, and only the accidents may vary, our science is not the least advanced by our analyses.'<sup>42</sup>

## EPICURUS

Epicurus does not appear in the pages of the *Prolegomena*. He does appear significantly in the *First Critique*. Epicurus and his place in the history of philosophy is also well documented in Kant's lectures on logic. Given Epicurus' role as midwife of the modern atomic theory, it is appropriate to address his natural philosophy at this juncture.

Leucippus and Democritus hardly had a theory of perception. Leucippus and Democritus did not believe that perception was capable of presenting any true facts about the world, because the atoms underlay that world in their view. For Leucippus and Democritus, the truth of human experience consists in the atoms and the void. There is no moral philosophy tracing the boundary line between pleasure and pain for the original atomists. These were not moral philosophers, but natural philosophers. Democritus, for his part, was a traditionalist in moral matters.

Epicurus is different. One may say that for Epicurus, the moral philosophy precedes the natural philosophy. For Epicurus, the deepest and vital principle of truths precisely concerns emotional experience, drawn very sharply along the lines of pleasure and pain. Epicurus tolerates no alliance with traditional mores. Communities not designed by philosophy are always governed by moral codes which place obligations on their members, compulsory moral norms which sternly subordinate the good of the individual to the good of the community in various areas. Epicurus is a philosophical radical in this respect: in his moral code, Epicurus is unwilling to endure any surrender of pleasure, or embrace any suffering, for the sake of others. Epicurus insists that he must always be the arbiter of his own morals: he must never submit himself to observe any requirement for the sake of some exterior imperative. It must always be processed first in the terms of a personal imperative.

One can say that Epicurus is a conservative of sorts. For Epicurus above all seeks to approach a godlike state of existence by absolutely becoming the master of the pain that is allowed to enter into his life. Epicurus is suspicious of excessive pleasures, including riches and sex. He is not persuaded that these are bad things, and indeed he has needs for these things which he intends to gratify. Yet only on very specific terms. Epicurus will not allow desires to overthrow his control over his own calculus of pleasures and pains. Greater independence, moral independence, is possible to the degree that the

philosopher minimizes his interaction with the community. Thus Epicurus famously eschewed politics and commerce equally.

Epicurus is the philosopher who brings a robust theory of perception to the natural philosophy of atomism. It is Epicurus who details the isolation of the sensory organs in collision with the atoms. For sight, for hearing, for smelling, these are all effectively species of ‘touch’ for Epicurus. Atoms are alleged to fly off from the unknown external objects, and to collide with the individual sensory organs of each separate person.

Epicurus’ doctrine of images has not received sufficiently critical scrutiny in the secondary literature, as I have elsewhere addressed. The atoms are not eligible to shed ‘images’ as it were, or to have any matter separated from themselves whatsoever. This is what indivisible means. Nor can the ‘images’ be immaterial; for Epicurus denies that there is anything immaterial in the universe except for the void. The theory of the ‘images’ was designed to allow the philosopher to claim sufficient knowledge of external objects to conduct his affairs, without exposing him to common facts and the obligation contained therein.

Epicurus insists that this allows him sufficient common knowledge of objects to conduct his interactions with the community. Yet Epicurean science, on any matter whatsoever, trains itself upon *fact determination*. It is not possible for sense perception, in Epicurus’ account, to convey knowledge about what the external objects are in any common way. Because sensory experience is allegedly a collision of bodies, taking place in the sensory organs of the individuals, the philosopher (if he is Epicurean) can maintain that each individual has a separate experience of the facts. For Epicurus this serves a *moral* purpose. Where absolutely certain common facts are not in evidence, moral compulsion cannot arise from those accounts of reality.

Epicurean science is nothing else but the application of this felicific calculus to any and all matters of natural investigation. It is not doubted by Epicurus, in fact it is certain for him, that pleasure and pain are the true and real things. These are personal, they are bodily, they are *not common*. Therefore, each and every time the Epicurean is confronted with a situation that may involve moral compulsion of some sort, exerted by the community over and against the individual will, the Epicurean science has recourse to hypotheses.

This may give us an important insight into the foundation of sense perception as it is developed by early modern philosophers. Hume presents his famous apology for Epicurus in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Pleasure and pain are finally characteristic of Locke’s moral epistemology, and Locke’s theory of ‘uneasiness’ lends itself quite neatly to an Epicurean interpretation. Kant himself has only nice things to say about Epicurus as a moralist. The fusion of atomistic natural philosophy and the moral ideology of pleasure and pain is a significant study for modern scholars.

Epicurus brings an emphatic assertion of the rights of sense perception to independent judgment in the community. Epicurus' point of view harks back to Protagoras. Protagoras' famous dictum is 'every man is the measure, of that which is, that it is; and of that which is not, that it is not.' Yet Protagoras' dictum need not make us feel so dated. Wilfred Sellars more recently coined the following dictum: 'But speaking as a philosopher I am quite prepared to say, that the common-sense world of physical objects in space and time is unreal—that is, that there are no such things. Or, to put it less paradoxically, that in the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not.'<sup>43</sup>

If we revive for a moment our discussions of Plato and Aristotle, we will be reminded of the reality of *forms*. According to Plato, the patterns and forms are themselves natural. They are wrought into the very fabric of nature. They are many and diverse, by no means 'parts' of any larger 'whole', as the Straussian sect has tried to represent it. For Plato, the patterns are the knowable character of the objects in nature, including those made by human beings themselves. This is why for Plato, perception is necessary to remind the soul of what the forms are. Absent perception, the human being could not learn the forms. In Plato's analysis, this would mean that there would be no possibility of language. It is certain that the common people recognize the forms and kinds, as do the philosophers of all kinds in their non-working hours. For Aristotle, the form remains the knowable thing, the part of perishable substances that is applicable to a great many objects of that *kind* of thing. Plato's wax block model of perception in the *Theaetetus* is all that the individual needs to study in order to get a very detailed enumeration of the role that perception plays in Plato in acquainting the mind with the forms; and this is something that the philosopher in Plato *shares* with the people. It is not the case that the Epicurean philosopher is willing to countenance such forms. The forms are prohibited from Epicurus' account of sense perception. Nothing intelligible (i.e. nothing immaterial), no patterns can be conveyed by sense perception in the Epicurean model. Diogenes Laertius reports of Epicurus that 'every sensation, he says, is devoid of reason and incapable of memory; for neither is it self-caused, nor regarded as having an external cause, can it add anything to or take anything therefrom'.<sup>44</sup> Thus sense perception on the Epicurean model does not represent that which the generality of the human race experiences in perception: it does not represent that which they experience and depend on for their daily commerce with the *reality of the world*.

Epicurus was a philosopher who did not seek to govern. He simply wanted to be left alone. He was content to deflect the moral pressures of the community when they threatened his own vital self-governance along the lines of pleasure and pain. Internally, he would never surrender that calculus. He would never obey a community norm for the sake of that community

norm. He may very well go along with a community norm in order to avoid punishment, but he would never recognize the moral authority of a community norm, *in and of itself*. Sense perception, in Epicurean philosophy, therefore has nothing whatsoever to do with what the generality of the human race *and the truths it depends upon*. Epicurus, in order to attain to complete moral independence, employs the theory of atoms with no limits.

Lucretius the Roman poet conveyed the Epicurean creed to Roman civilization. Lucretius is the writer who had the great influence on Machiavelli. Yet Machiavelli is a man of politics. Machiavelli is a man who *desires to govern*. Epicurus elected to live quietly on his garden estate, bankrolled by wealthy alumni, peopled with initiates and students who cultivated their own distinct moral code. Machiavelli, by contrast, writes for a new prince, for one who wishes to seize a state for himself. Machiavelli inaugurates the new version of Epicureanism: one that seeks to actually enact institutions and constitutions that *enforce* Epicurean morality, as the norm for everyone.

The atomist ideology is nevertheless still the cradle of Epicurean theory. It is that which he depends upon. Epicurus still preserves some of the teaching of the more ancient original atomists, in terms of the logic which drove the theory. Whether Epicurus had actually studied Aristotle's refutations of atomist doctrine, and attempted to respond to them in his modifications of the atomic story, is not something that I can address in these pages.

## KANTIAN INTUITION

I realize that there are many contexts in which Kant may be placed, that I am not either addressing or incorporating. This is to bring to the fore a point of view which I do not find anywhere extant in the secondary literature. In the following chapter on the *First Critique* I will attempt to address these issues in more depth.

The *Prolegomena* is a nice and compact book. In the small space of little more than a hundred pages, Kant comments on the whole range of his system. It enables me to illustrate connections within his argument that become a vastly more complex enterprise when one is dealing with the works of towering difficulty. We will nevertheless address the *First Critique* and the *Lectures on Logic* in the chapters to follow.

'Intuition' is Kant's account of sense perception. Kant has definitely chosen to make Hume the pivot for his theory. Locke's 'simple ideas' at least make a gesture in the direction of ordinary understanding. Hume gets more abstract, and Kant's use of the term intuition is indicative of that direction.

Kant is very famous for having called attention to the role that sensory experience must play in human cognition. Kant asserts that there would be no sensory cognition if not for the existence of actual external objects; and that

without this triggering of the process of cognition from without, there would not be anything for the laws of the understanding to apply to.

Yet for Kant, it is clear that philosophy comes first. Kant does not share with the common people any account of what human experience is. For ordinary people have direct awareness of the actual objects that exist external to them. Kant, working from the foundations of the equation that Locke and Hume established, emphatically denies this. Whatever objects there are, Kant argues, we do not perceive *them*. They (the objects, whatever they are) collide physically with our sensory organs. This is in line with the atomic model of touch.

The human sensory organs in Kant, like those of Epicurus, are not capable of recognizing intelligible patterns in external objects. Thus, the whole legacy of Greek philosophy on the Socratic side is repudiated. Nature is denied any intelligence in the way its objects are formed. The immaterial dimension, the knowable dimension of nature, is denied. Instead, Kant argues that when the mystical external object collides with our sense faculties, that a series of *effects* is generated. These are not testimonies as to the ‘things in themselves’, and what they are. These intuitions are only ways in which we are affected by external objects. Thus, there is no truly empirical moment in Kant, not in the way that an ordinary person or the Socratic philosophers would agree is empirical.

It is true that there are a priori faculties in the human being which are properties, for Kant, of the human mind, and not of external objects themselves. Time and space, or as would be more commonly said, time and location, are not things that we learn about external objects themselves for Kant. They are simply aspects of our peculiar mental constitution, which we superimpose over the bits and pieces of sensory datums which are conceded to enter into the brain. The point is that on the sensory end, there is no concession made to ordinary experience whatsoever. Therefore, it is baseless to claim that Kant’s philosophy of mind ever truly has a rendezvous with the objects of ordinary consciousness. Kant refuses to allow those objects testified to by the generality of the human race to be at all intuitable. Kant claims that it is absurd to think or believe that our mind can know what objects are in themselves through our sense perceptual faculties, ‘as its properties cannot migrate into my faculty of representation’.<sup>45</sup>

This ends the discussion of the ‘empirical’ Kant. He breaks with the ordinary experience at the root. Kant, in the fashion of the neo-atomists, imposes the burden upon the ordinary human being to prove that she perceives objects. For Plato, perception is that with which we all begin. It is indeed what is given to us. Those theories which would make the break from the ordinary experience *must prove that*. It is only the legacy of the atomist philosophy which enables modern philosophers to make the assertions that they do. Unlike the original atomists, they do not undertake to prove their

atomist theory, but instead profess it as established fact. Kant does not have one leg, or any leg, in the common experience. He gives it no quarter.

Instead, what Kant argues is that our minds have their own properties for understanding things, things not related to the objects without us. The mind, presented with the materials of perception in the neo-atomist mode, is then said by Kant to possess inbuilt faculties which manufacture as it were, for the purposes of human beings, some preliminary order of said materials. There is no link to the world of objects that the people perceive.

For Plato, the senses do not judge. But for Plato, the senses do not operate independently of the soul. The soul employs the senses, in Plato's argument. The sensory organs are subject to a unified consciousness that coordinates and oversees all sense data, and especially perception, thus defined, is capable of recognizing the immaterial forms and kinds which make the world of ordinary objects intelligible to us in the first place. 'And if it is true that we acquired our knowledge before our birth, and lost it at the time of birth, but afterward by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects, receive the knowledge that we had once before, I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of our knowledge, and surely we should be right in calling this recollection.'<sup>46</sup> Aristotle is no different in this area. For Aristotle perception does indeed know the kind of things: that is one of the causes, the real causations, which make objects what they are for Aristotle, and which are fully operative in ordinary opinion.

In Kant's model, the link between the external objects and the mind is snapped in the definition of intuition itself. Thus, there is no basis for the claim that Kant incorporates experience, as that word is commonly understood (and if it is not the term as ordinarily signified, why use it?), into the process of 'cognition'. Indeed, except for philosophers, in the Kantian model, the people may not even *have* what are denominated cognitions. The philosophers emerge, as indeed Locke characterizes them, as being as far above the ordinary human being, as the ordinary human being takes himself to be above a pig. This we will prove by the by.

On the 'intuitive' side of the equation of mind, for Kant, on the side of the equation where external object meets sensory organ, it is not possible for those sensory organs to communicate anything other than how they are affected by said objects. 'The capacity to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility'<sup>47</sup> If someone hits us a blow on the head from behind, we do not know what the blow is. We may see stars, hear noises, have shapes pass before our mind's eye. This is effectively Kant's account of what intuition is, to the degree that it involves contact between sensory organ and external world. The door is closed. 'And we indeed, rightly considering objects of sense as mere appearances, confess thereby that they are based upon a thing in itself, though we know not this



thing as it is in itself but only know its appearance, viz. the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something.’<sup>48</sup>

## KANT'S A PRIORI INTUITION

Above, we have sketched out Kant's account of sense perception (intuition) in the *Prolegomena*. That discussion of intuition extends to the relationship between external objects and the sensory organs. We have noted this. We have asserted that in this sense of perception as intuition, Kant fully repudiates the capacity of the sensory organs to know true facts about external objects. However, this does not exhaust the category of 'intuition' for Kant. There is an additional category of 'intuition', which is not produced by the contract between sensory organs and external objects. The faculties of intuition themselves, in Kant's argument, are capable of producing and generating, *out of their own powers*, intuitions as well.

One is reminded of David Hume's account of perception by this wrinkle. Hume insists that all we know, is that there are certain 'impressions' and 'ideas' floating around in our minds. The mind knows that these ideas are in itself. Of this it is sure, certain. Yet it does not know where the ideas in the mind have come from. 'It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects resembling them: how shall this question be determined? By experience surely, as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is and must be entirely silent.'<sup>49</sup> They may have been produced by impressions, i.e. the collision between the indivisible points out there in nature with the sensory organs. Or, Hume argues, the mind may have produced these ideas out of its own resources. How shall one tell the difference? Does it make a difference that one cannot tell the difference? Since the kind of intuitions that are produced by the contact of external bodies and sensory organs, is not allowed by Kant to yield any actual knowledge about said external body; does it matter now that Kant has created another category, in which the mind itself is author of the intuitions? I don't really think it is finally a distinction with a difference. It just goes to demonstrate, however, that even in the domain of what Kant wishes to represent as sense-perception, the mind, on the level of its intuitive faculties, is capable of generating the 'appearances' and 'representations' out of itself as well.

This distinction between intuition, and a priori intuition, is discussed more at length in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I think it is useful to consider the juxtaposition of the names 'intuition' and 'a priori'. 'Intuition' for Kant signifies sense perception; 'a priori' signifies for Kant, that which the mind possesses of itself, *without the slightest role* for external objects and sensory perception. Kant's nomenclature is infamous for its complex design, an ever-unfolding vista of new concepts and ideas. I do not propose in this chapter to

get into depth about these things. I do not wish to get any deeper here into the presentation of Kant insofar as his theory of intuition is concerned. At this point though, I would like to take us back to the issue of *foundations*. For Kant denies that the mind has foundations, or foundational knowledge. Sense perception, for the ancients of the Socratic line, as well as for the communities of all times and places, regard perception itself as the foundation, the certain starting point for knowledge, *whereby definite facts are obtained*. Kant, in his theory of perception as intuition, revokes that foundation. Kant ridicules, as we have seen, as a ‘myth’, that which is given to us by our experience as the facts to be known.

It is necessary at this point to lead the reader back once again to the issue of atomism. For atomism is a foundational knowledge. In its origins, it claims to know things about *reality*, about the objects that make up reality. The original atomists insist that the true and real bodies in nature must be eternal and indivisible, that they must be composed of being. Kant’s entire model of perception is structured on the atomist model. However, Kant, like Locke and Hume, but not like the original atomists, denies ‘being’ to the objects which are said to be ‘out there’. In Kant, finally, the alleged knowledge of atomism is transferred to the human mind as the only way that *it is able* to think. Kant won’t take up the issue as to whether the objects external to us are perishable or not. Not, that is, in terms of what those objects are. Yet Kant claims that insofar as we think about objects external to us, we must depend upon the rules of our understanding; and those rules of our understanding enforce that we regard the objects of our perception, indeed the ‘phenomena’, as eternal substances.

Unlike the original atomists, as we have indicated, Kant does not arrive at his theories of substance and the other categories traditionally associated with atomism by reasoning *about* nature. Kant instead has chosen to define the human mind, the understanding and its reason, as compelled to these conclusions absolutely and without fail, for *every object* that comes before the understanding to judge of. Thus, the atomist ontology is inverted in Kant, in this special instance. Our minds require us to believe that the ‘possible objects or experience’ must be eternal. For Kant, the concepts or forms or ideas of our experience are not in the objects themselves that we perceive, but must rather be ‘a priori concepts’, which exist in the mind already. Kant brandishes this theory of the a priori concepts and proclaims that ‘through them alone is experience possible’.<sup>50</sup>

The ‘laws of the mind’ require us, Kant argues, to regard the objects that appear to us as bound to one another by universal laws of infinite chains of cause and effect. To regard nature as a unity, as one great big whole. Kant does not undertake to prove any of these propositions as a matter of reasoning about external objects. We have seen that he denies to us the very foundation of external objects, the ‘things themselves’, to reason *about*. When Kant

argues that he is making a Copernican revolution, whereby the mind assigns to nature what it shall be, instead of the mind learning *from* nature what nature is, this is what he means. The laws of atomism and eternal body have been converted here into a representation of that which the human thought process is *eligible* to know. In Kant's model, therefore, to argue that objects in nature are perishable, is to be automatically incorrect, and to be in effect incapable of what now stands to be regarded as the very limits of *reason*. For the understanding which alone is capable of yielding judgments, and which itself is not privy directly to whatever objects do exist out there in the world; and from intuition, as we have seen, one cannot obtain information about what objects out there in the world are like—this understanding, asserts, that the mind can only render the verdict that the category of substance, i.e. of real and true things, must be eternal. The history of philosophy therefore collapses in upon itself. There is no road back from Kant. He has not left a door open. He has not left a window open. The student and scholar will not then encounter theories of substance, in the Kantian view, on any terms other than those which Kant's philosophy has established as the *only possible objects* of experience.

### PHENOMENA AND NOUMENA

The relationship between these two categories is complicated. We should begin first of all with 'phenomena'. Now, there is no judgment that is possible in the area of intuition (a priori or otherwise) alone. The senses, for Kant, cannot judge. We have demonstrated that for Plato, the soul uses the senses to judge in the least educated individual and that therefore, for Plato, not only is judgment that employs the senses possible, but it is effortless, and relentless, and unerring. People do not confuse brooms with canoes, trees with dogs. Once they have experience of a kind of object, they know that kind. This is Plato's point of view, but Kant is not Plato. Kant does attempt to ingratiate himself to Plato's theory of ideas, but it is a false aspiration.

For Kant, in any event, the relationship between external object and sensory organs is as we have portrayed it, in depth. The account of sensory experience is not that which the common person knows and has. Kant's philosophy, unlike the Socratic tradition of philosophy, refuses to begin with what is commonly regarded as known. The Epicurean temper of the modern ideology of atomism, which is resolved to seize for itself independence from the 'authority' of the common perception of objects, is fully operative in Kant. Thus, we have his category of intuition. We have discussed this category of intuition to some degree. We have not discussed the complicated transcendental aesthetic, which will be left to the next chapter.

In Kant's model of mind, 'judgment' can only occur in the understanding. The understanding cannot reach external objects by itself, because the sensory organs are not eligible in Kant's philosophy to present the external objects *for* judgment. When we consider 'intuition' by itself, we have *no object*. The understanding does not refer its judgments to what intuition brings. In other words, it does not adjust its judgments to intuitions. The understanding has its categories ready-made: and we have seen what they are. Substance, that name invented by Aristotle to indicate the most real beings, is in Kant pledged, all the time, to eternal objects. From the vantage point of Kant's science, since it refuses to take the objects known to ordinary experience for its own objects; since Kant's understanding has its categories of judgment implanted in the mind without the benefit of, or any dependence on, that which really exists 'out there'—therefore in Kant's philosophy, true judgment is not eligible ever to account any object (whoever is speaking) as other than an eternal one.

This is what Kant regards as 'phenomena'. Given the liberties of language that the modern philosophers engage in, it is hard for commentators not to be seduced by terms like 'appearances' and 'representations'. The confusion could not be more egregious. Kant, as someone who builds upon the models of Locke and Hume, benefits from this windfall. When Kant employs the name of 'appearances' and 'representations', it is very easy for the reader to confuse these names, with what is *ordinarily signified* by these terms. I hope we have established by now that there is absolutely no basis for such an inference on the reader's part.

'Phenomena', in Kantian language, concerns the judgments that the understanding is capable of producing out of its own resources. Kant calls the phenomena a matter of 'appearances', something to be distinguished from that which 'really and truly is'.

Yet let us stay focused on phenomena. Phenomena for Kant is that which the mind produces, with its laws of understanding. Yet in so doing, it produces only objects that the people have *never* had any experience of, *ever*. Why should we allow Kant to call his 'phenomena' mere appearances? This suggests to the public that Kant's phenomena squares with what is ordinarily regarded as an appearance; but we have seen that this is the reverse of the truth. The phenomena yielded by Kantian principles of the understanding are atomist through and through. From the vantage point of the people, such phenomena have never appeared to them in any way whatsoever, nor could they. Once again, Kant seeks to deny that he operates with any *foundations*: by characterizing his mentalized atomist ideology as 'appearances', he masks it. He conceals its radical pretentiousness. Atomism never claimed to be anything less than knowledge of the real and true beings; and Kant is establishing exactly the same outcome, while *representing* it as the effect of a philosophical disposition of humility.

The truth of the matter is, that from any point of view that is anchored in the perspective of common opinion, these ‘objects’ of Kant’s are extra-terrestrial. They are appearances for nobody. This is why Kant is so adamant that nobody is allowed to investigate his ‘transcendental idealism’ by beginning with perishable objects of experience. One cannot reach it from those! Kant wants his readers never to behold some object in the public domain and seek to learn transcendental idealism from that starting point. We have demonstrated the why and wherefore of this reasoning.

This brings us to Kant’s theory of ‘noumena’, which he has a terrific difficulty defining. How can ‘noumena’ represent objects ‘as they truly are’, but this cannot be known; when ‘phenomena’ already supplant everything that is commonly known, and replace it with objects that *nobody* knows of. Kant’s ‘phenomena’, as the transplanted account of the atomist theory of nature, is a metaphysical foundation, an absolute claim to know things as they truly and really are, no matter how Kant dresses it up. And that is why Kant has little use for the concept of ‘noumena’, because the phenomena already accomplished the knowing of objects as they are alleged to truly be, the eternal ones that are imperceptible, and which give the lie to all sensory perceptions. Kant argues that ‘if the pure concepts of the understanding try to go beyond objects of experience,’ and to be referred to ‘things in themselves’, then they are utterly without meaning.<sup>51</sup>

The reader needs to be informed about Kantian terminology to cope with this artful exposition. In his lectures on Logic, which we will examine in a later chapter, Kant gives explicit instructions on the ‘aesthetic’ presentation of arguments based upon the nature of the audience. The *Prolegomena* certainly effects this aesthetic, and this passage just quoted is a perfect example.

In rigorous Kantian ideology, ‘possible objects of experience’ mean phenomena. They mean objects as determined solely by the principles of the understanding. No commonly perceptible object of experience is allowed to qualify as a ‘possible object of experience’, from the Kantian point of view. And thus it is as we have said. Phenomena, for Kant, also known as ‘possible objects of experience’, represent in truth, that atomic ideology which in its foundations absolutely insists that it knows the actual truth about the universe. Kant’s philosophy of mind allows for no other possible philosophy. Kant’s definition of what a substance is, a real and true object in the history of philosophy, is allowed only to eternal objects, to none other. There is everything noumenal about these ‘phenomena’

## KANTIAN ‘IDEALISM’

Names and labels can be a very murky thing in the modern world. Since people do not agree on how names are to be used, (and this is the very liberty

that Locke boastfully proclaims to be first of all liberties in his *Essay*), it is therefore not profitable to rely upon labels to convey one's arguments. The case of the name of 'idealism' is a dramatic illustration of the problem. In my younger years, I simply assumed that by 'idealist' the German philosophers aspired to be morally ambitious about the world. Whatever else is the case about modern philosophy, this is not the case. It is not morally ambitious anywhere.

Kant's discussion of the name of 'idealism' is not even really related to morals. It is a term that Kant employs to talk about whatever it is he will allow to finally pass for an 'object' in our knowledge. For all of us who are concerned with what it means to possess a modest knowledge of any fact, Kant's term of idealism is a major issue.

The vapors of the discussion of idealism in the Early modern period, especially in the context of Berkeley's writing, and Hume's writing, is whether we can know if there is any such thing *as* a body. What, for the modern philosophers, does body even mean? Descartes obviously has had a great impact on how modern philosophers think of this name of 'bodies'. Descartes, in his philosophy, professes to be certain only of the fact that his *mind* exists. Descartes, famously, denies that we can trust our sense perception to know that there are bodies in the world that are real. The Archimedean point of Descartes' philosophy is his denial that he knows any such thing as whether body exists or not. He will attempt to deduce this piece of knowledge, but that means that it is not something that he concedes at all to be 'given'.

Locke refuses to assign the property of 'being' to the objects that he talks about in their 'primary qualities'. It is not an accident. Yet we have argued that as an atomist, who even avows atomism, Locke is not eligible to really hold that view. For the atoms are nothing but the conviction that real units of being are all that truly exists. In the original atomist philosophy, atoms profess to be the truth of the perishable bodies that people perceive. In other words, it is argued that atoms underlay the perishable bodies, and make them up, constitute them. Epicurus holds this very view. As we have argued, atomist theory is a theory of *genesis*: which concludes, that in reality, there is no true coming into being. There is only, in reality, the eternal atoms, which shift in their relative position to one another, and create changes in our perception of appearances.

Kant has absolutely insisted on addressing this issue of eternity and coming into being. Kant has denied that there is any coming into being. His category of substance pointedly refutes this. In the *First Critique*, when Kant introduces the names of 'phenomena', his footnotes are all references to Parmenides and the atomists of old. Is it possible to speak of the issues of change, and coming into being, or the impossibility of coming into being, if one has first of all denied that there is any such thing as a body? I do not see

how. The categories of Kant's understanding are all borrowed from the old natural philosophy, i.e. they are a philosophy of *nature*. We know this. It is useful to remind ourselves of this, as we step into the nomenclature that Kant chooses to use, and which swirls around his employment of the name of 'idealism'.

Kant, as we all know, refers to his work as a 'Copernican turn' in philosophy. What is that turn? Instead of the mind attempting to conform itself to the objects that exist out there in nature, Kant argues, the mind must now undertake to force whatever is out there, to conform to the principles that he, Kant, has in his mind. The atomist ideology, the whole kit and caboodle, comprises Kant's principles of understanding. What does this transition do and mean? Kant does not say that there are no bodies out there, and that our understanding simply amuses itself with stories about imaginary bodies. Kant does not say this, and he does not believe this. Yet, as we have seen, Kant absolutely refuses to bow before that which is 'given'. That is to say, Kant in his pride refuses to concede that which the community could not even begin to doubt: that there are bodies.

We have, therefore, to consider the relationship between two things when we consider Kant. First, we must consider the issues of genesis, alteration, change in objects. Second, we must contemplate the language of 'idealism', which insists that we are only talking about principles that have their very origin in the mind, as features of the mind. Kant denies, he refuses to allow, that the principles of his understanding in any way depend on, or reflect, the reality of externally existing natural bodies. He simply proposes to control the way we talk about anything that passes, anywhere and by anybody, *for* an object or a body.

We say to the reader, what Kant knows full well: the human audience certainly must speak all the time about common objects that exist out there in the given world. Kant seeks to balance his 'Copernican revolution' on the neck of that 'assumption'. Anybody who first looks to external objects, in the effort to explain them (and original atomism certainly does this), is for Kant not able to think correctly. Such a person, Kant argues, is in violation of the 'laws of the understanding'. This much the atomists of old never claimed: they never claimed that it was impossible to formulate different arguments about the external objects. Yet since Kant refuses to grant the existence or being of the external objects as a matter of conceded fact, and since Kant insists that the understanding can function in only one way, absolutely anybody who disagrees with the atomist ideology in Kant's theory of understanding is going to be expelled from school.

The fact of the matter is that Kant's heroes number Bacon among them. Bacon never remotely argues along the lines of any such thing as this new 'idealism' of Kant, this 'transcendental' ideology. Yet I think we are justified in inferring several things about Kant's whole philosophy. First, he does

believe in the actual existence of external bodies. Otherwise there would be nothing to apply his principles of understanding *to*. Secondly, Kant denies that he is in any way obliged to depend upon referring to how external objects actually are, as a means to *proving* his principles of understanding. That is what Kant's 'idealism' amounts to. He establishes a framework, which as we will see he fully intends to impose upon the *entire regimen* of natural sciences—that refuses to countenance any objection, *any opposition*, to his account of that natural world.

This is what Kant's Copernican turn allows him to do: deny to the human race the *common objects* that it can reason upon. To concede openly the reality and existence of the external objects is ipso facto to concede the legitimacy of different ways of attempting to *account* for those bodies. Yet to hold, as Kant does, that we cannot know of the existence of any external bodies 'as things in themselves', while on the other hand maintaining that the mind is not eligible to think about any body whatsoever except in the terms of his *highly partisan* philosophy, is to seek to checkmate discourse, to arrest it utterly. Kant states that 'I grant by all means that there are bodies without us', yet he is adamant that we cannot know these objects for 'what they are in themselves'.<sup>52</sup>

Kant denies that this is 'idealism'. 'Can this be termed idealism? It is the very contrary.' Kant denies that in this moment. Yet Kant does lay claim to the very name which he professes to renounce, as nobody can deny. He is a 'transcendental idealist', or a 'critical idealist'. Kant does not even wait more than a page or two in his *Prolegomena* before owning the name of idealism. All of which makes the name quite worthless and better set to the side. 'My idealism concerns not the existence of things, (the doubting of which, however, constitutes the idealism in the ordinary sense), since it never came into my head to doubt it; but it concerns the sensuous representation of things, to which space and time belong.'<sup>53</sup>

We have not yet begun to measure any of Kant's heavy timber, such as are unfolded in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The transcendental aesthetic' is the part of the *First Critique* that deals with the issues of time and space. To those issues we now turn.

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## Chapter Two

# Kant's Philosophy of Mind

A philosopher may choose an order of presentation for his argument, which muddies up a necessary sequence. If this is so, we are entitled to challenge that presentation, in our investigation into the work. The transcendental aesthetic, which is situated in the early part of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, rests upon presuppositions. Kant's transcendental aesthetic seeks to make arguments about the human sensory faculties which are activated by some external object. We have indeed said that Kant's transcendental aesthetic of sensory faculties, cannot be operative unless and until it has been in contact, evidently in direct contact, with some mysterious external body. A cognition may relate to an object, Kant argues, in an immediate sense, as 'intuition'. The mind is passive in this relation. In intuition, Kant argues, the object is 'given' to us, but this only means that the object 'affects the mind in a certain way'. This is what Kant calls 'sensibility'.<sup>1</sup>

Kant argues that this way that the mind is affected proves the existence of external objects. The transcendental aesthetic can only be ignited by some object external to itself. Thus we are aware of ourselves in this sense because our minds are affected, and hence our self-awareness is indirect testimony as to the reality of external objects. 'Thus the perception of the persistent thing is possible only through a thing outside me and not through the mere representation of a thing outside me', Kant writes.<sup>2</sup>

The nature of this body, therefore, which sets the sensory faculties into movement precedes the operation of said faculties. The issues of time and place that Kant wishes to make the prerogative of his transcendental aesthetic, therefore, is a rush to judgment. For we have to evaluate the nature of the body that comes into contact with the sensory organs. It is understood that Kant has claimed that we cannot know anything about these external objects,

save for what our a priori categories of understanding instruct us that we can know. Yet we do not accept this argument.

At various places in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* as well, Kant has whittled away the conception of a body to mere motion itself.

Matter is the movable in space. That space which is itself movable is called material, or also relative, space; that in which all motion must ultimately be thought . . . is called pure or also absolute space. Nothing but motion is to be discussed in phronomy; therefore no other property than movability is here attributed to the subject of motion, namely matter. Matter thus endowed can itself be taken, then, as a point.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, motion, local motion, is the only property of body that Kant will permit us to take into account. Kant calls this study phronomy. Yet we are not obliged to sit around like bumps on a log as Kant unfolds his system. It is a great advantage in Plato's dialogue model of philosophy that one can always choose the place to interject with an objection or counterargument. Kant, in his characteristic torrent of words, does not provide us with such opportunities. That does not mean that we cannot impose a stoppage of the discussion as readers, in order to bring up a relevant point. Kant claims that we cannot possibly know the nature of the bodies that affect our sensory organs; Kant proposes to pronounce upon the human knowledge having to do with time and location, based upon this premise of the anonymous external body. 'Appearances, to the extent that as objects they are thought in accordance with the unity of the categories, are called phenomena. If, however, I suppose there to be things that are merely objects of the understanding, and that nevertheless can be given in intuition, although not sensible to intuition, then such things would be called noumena.'<sup>4</sup> We cannot accept this formulation.

Kant insists that we make a distinction between objects that are experienced through sensibility and objects that the mind might reach by virtue of its own powers, or 'pure understanding'. This is the concept of 'noumena', which in Kant's view is necessary in order to avoid a theory of sensibility which itself reaches directly to objects in themselves.<sup>5</sup>

We have discussed above Kant's distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. Phenomenon, Kant argues, are bodies as they appear to us. 'Noumena', Kant instructs us, are bodies as they are in themselves, something beyond our faculties. We have proved that this nomenclature is unsatisfactory. For by the lights of Kant's philosophy of mind, 'phenomena' must be eternal substances. We do not have any such objects appear to us. Thus Kant's claim that phenomena, even in the view of the common people in every or any age, believe and assume the external existence of substance. Kant goes so far as to claim that the belief in eternal substance is a universal

conviction, among the common people as well as among philosophers. 'In fact the proposition that substance persists is tautological', Kant writes.<sup>6</sup>

Not only is it false that the common people believe that the objects of their experience are eternal. The people do not ascribe such eternal characteristics to any body, not even to bodies with which they have no commerce of knowledge. Kant's nomenclature of appearance and 'thing in itself' is therefore of little use, or no use at all. Phenomenon as Kant insists on defining it cannot be the object that affects our sensory organs. Kant would like to argue that we cannot know anything directly about the external objects called phenomena, from our experience or from inferences based on those experiences. We must, Kant insists, rely upon the a priori knowledge of the categories of the understanding to make judgments about those objects which affect our sensory organs. Kant insists that we may not begin with any individual object that collides with our sensory organs, and from that vantage point, make inferences about the bodies that do this contacting with our sensory organs. I say that this claim is false.

Kant has clarified, in discussion, that he is not an idealist of the Berkeleyan variety. He is not an idealist of the Cartesian variety either. The whole machinery of mind that Kant unfolds for us must be set into operation. It does not have the power to make itself function. It needs to be ignited as it were. To this degree, and only to this degree, Kant's discussion of the discursive nature of knowledge in his model is defensible. There does really have to be some object, some body, capable of contacting our body, to make most intuition occur. If all of intuition for Kant ended up being a priori intuition, then all of Kant's representations to the effect that he takes into account the sensible sphere of experience would be radically false. We do not think he can possibly afford to make that claim. If he does, it would discredit his theory to the nines. It would disprove the value that so many scholars seek to find in the Kantian philosophy of mind, for they are hopeful that they can find in this model a respect sufficient to dignify in some modest way, that which the common people perceive and experience. I have made it clear that I do not think that this is a valid hope. Yet for the moment I am addressing the hopes of others. Thus there must be body, external body, to impact the sensory faculties, and all of this must take place before we can appraise Kant's discussion of his transcendental aesthetic, his enumeration and description of the forms of human intuition, as they pertain to time and place.

Thus we have made the claim that there must be body, external body, to initiate the processes of Kant's machinery of mind, and even to set the transcendental aesthetic into operation. We have, above, investigated the language of noumena and phenomena that Kant provides to us, to refer to such bodies as may be the agents of such contact with our sensory organs. Here, we say, it is time to set aside the language of phenomena and noumena. Labels are not helpful in this case, and provide too many grounds for confu-

sion. On the other hand, we do approve of the denomination of the ‘object as it is in itself’. We do claim to be speaking about the object, the external object, as it is in itself. We assert that we can indeed know things directly about this object as it is in itself, and that we can do so before the activation of the transcendental aesthetic.

The object, as it is itself, which collides with our sensory organs in Kant’s model, *must* have the part of being. If it did not have the part of being, it would be nothing at all. This ‘being’ that the object in itself must possess cannot be an appearance of any kind, which misleads the thinker. Really and truly, any object capable of coming into contact with our sensory faculties must possess the part of being or existence, and if it does not it is but a chimera, a non-existent thing. The reader will object, that Kant has denied that ‘being’ is a predicate at all. ‘Being’, in the Kantian model, is simply the sign of the copula. This sign of the copula is employed by the ‘I’ as pure transcendental apperception. We are aware of this argument, and we will deal with it in its place. But for the present moment, it must suffice to say that we reject it. We do not accept the proposition that the human mind must create an object out of its own resources, or ‘put into’ nature this being which any external object, capable of igniting the Kantian mental machinery, must possess. No, the external object must possess this part of being on its own merits, by itself: not as a gift from the human mind, not as a supposition of the human mind, but as a direct knowledge that the human mind can and must have about any such object. Kant’s very ‘category’ of phenomena itself trades on a much more powerful conception of being than the one accounted for by the operation of the pure or transcendental apperception anyway. Kant’s category of phenomena employs, surreptitiously, the old Eleatic conception of being, of eternal being. In any event, we are saying that we can know the object in itself, insofar as it is a body of any kind which could impact the sensory organs detailed by Kant as preliminary for the operation of his transcendental aesthetic. If the reader would like to contest this argument, this is the place to do it.

We know that the object as it is itself possesses the part of being or existence. We can be absolutely certain of that if it is to be anything at all, aside from a mere fable or story or vapor of the imagination. Any object capable of transmitting impulses to the sensory organs of the human being, as Locke sets forth in his model, and Hobbes in his, and which is implicit even in Hume’s theory of impressions, must have this actual part of being. Yet it cannot have only this part of being. In order for this object as it is itself to exist at all, it must have the part of unity. It must be some *one* object that possesses the part of being. If it is not some *one* object that possesses the part of being, then it is no thing at all, it *is nothing*. We cannot speak about mere being by itself, and consider that an object. If it is not a being which belongs to some particular unity, then it is being which is a not-one. Plato developed

this argument in his famous critique of Parmenides in the dialogue by that name:

Shall we then, go back to our hypothesis and remember it from the beginning, in the hope of bringing to light some different result? 'If a one is', we say, we have to agree what sort of consequences follow concerning it. Start afresh, then, and consider. If a one *is*, it cannot be yet not *have* being. So there will also be the being that the one has, and this is not the same thing as the one: otherwise that being would not be *its being*, nor would it, the one, *have* that being, but to say 'a one is' would be tantamount to saying 'a one is one'. But in fact the supposition whose consequences we are to consider is not 'if a one is *one*,' but 'if a one *is*'. This implies that 'is' and 'one' stand for different things. Thus the short statement 'a one is' simply means that the one has being.<sup>7</sup>

Thus being is distributed throughout all the members of a plurality of beings, and is lacking to none of these beings from the smallest to the greatest; indeed it is nonsense to suggest that anything that *is* should lack being. This being is parceled out among beings of every possible order from smallest to greatest; it is subdivided to the furthest possible point and has an illimitable number of parts. So its parts form the greatest of multitudes. Again, among all these parts there cannot be any which *is* part of being and yet not a *one* part. If it *is*, so long as it is, it must always be some *one* part, it cannot be *no* (not one) part.<sup>8</sup>

The reader will have followed us this far. We have enumerated the natures of being and unity, as two parts that the object as it is in itself absolutely must possess. Not only must this object as it is itself possess these two parts; but these two parts are unlike, they are *heterogeneous*. Unity is not being, and being is not unity. Unity, strictly speaking, indicates that which has no divisions whatsoever. If we were evaluating the nature of unity taken by itself, and unfolded its divisionlessness, we would find that there would be no room left for the part of 'being' to exist *in*. What is a perfect unity could not have the part of existence, and consequently it would be a one that does not have the part of existence or a one that did not exist. Thus we have a unity that possesses the part of being which is different from it; and we have the part of being, which belongs to a unity that is different from it. This is no small knowledge, we may say; and it is knowledge of the object as it is in itself, which Kant evidently wishes to call noumena at some points. We do not care really what he calls it. We ourselves will speak about it in clearer language and with clearer referring terms.

We have, then, two natures which are parts of one whole. Since each is a part, they must belong to a whole of parts. Since neither part can exist except as coupled with its complement, being with unity and unity with being—since this is true, therefore the whole that they constitute when together, is a whole by *nature*. Any object that we wish to speak of, in nature, must have

these heterogenous parts; and it must therefore, said object as it is in itself, be a whole of parts. We resume with Plato's discussion in the *Parmenides*:

Let us, then, once more state what will follow, if a one is. Consider whether this supposition does not necessarily imply that the one is such as to have parts. That follows in this way. Since 'is' is asserted to belong to this *one* which is, and the *one* is asserted to belong to this *being* which is one, and since '*being*' and '*one*' are not the same thing, but both belong to the same thing, namely that 'one which is', that we are supposing, it follows that it is 'one being' as a whole, and 'one' and 'being' will be its parts. So we must speak of each of these parts, not merely as a part, but as parts of a whole.<sup>9</sup>

We claim to possess this as firm, indeed unshakable knowledge. We know of the reality of being; we know of the reality of unity; and we know of the reality of the whole which exists when these two heterogeneous parts are attached to one another. The whole is therefore real, and by nature. There is no object in nature therefore which is not also a whole of parts. The whole itself is therefore a whole by nature, not by human imagination, or conjecture, or hypothesis. We can know for an absolute fact that the object as it is in itself is a whole of parts, by nature.

## THE WHOLE OF PARTS IN NATURE

We have gotten this far. We have gotten, in fact, a good distance which Kant denied that it is possible for us to travel. We have learned this about the objects as they are in themselves without relying upon Kant's categories or a priori knowledge of any sort. Now we are talking about the whole, and what it means to be a whole. It is true, that the whole must be the sum of its parts in one respect. 'Unity' and 'being' are the natures which make up this whole. Now there is a part of unity that exists in the whole. If we take this part of unity by itself, logically, and examine it, we can see that it must have its own part of being. This particular mental operation did not used to be possible until we had established the reality of the whole of parts as a natural object. Once we have identified the nature of the 'part' of a whole, it becomes possible to train our investigation upon that part *as a part*. The part of 'unity' by itself, therefore, contemplated as a part, must have the part of being annexed to it. That newly discovered part of being that belongs to the part of unity, is also a part. And it must have its compliment. In this way, our natural whole of parts will be revealed to possess an infinite number of parts. Indeed, we cannot come to an end of them. Therefore, if we consider the whole as composed of the sum of its parts, we will find that the whole has as many parts as we have time to look for.



However, the whole by nature is not merely the sum of its parts. It is also a *container* for those parts. It is also one, a unity, which contains all of the parts. As a container, as a whole which is a container, this whole must have its extremities in order to be complete, *in order to be a whole*. It must have, therefore, a beginning, a middle, and an end. The whole must possess these extremities in its various sorts. It must possess a definite shape. It must possess definite size. And it must possess the parts of *time*. In other words, this is to say, that at some point in time this whole must have come into existence, or acquired the part of being, and this constitutes its beginning; and it must at some point in time be fated to lose the part of being, to cease to exist.<sup>10</sup>

If it lacked either one of these parts, it would not be a whole. It would be *incomplete*. Time, therefore, belongs to the object, as parts of its *extremities*. Time is a property of the object as it is a thing in itself. This time cannot be a faculty, an a priori faculty, which belongs merely to human sensibility and not to objects as they are in themselves. This time cannot be some kind of time which is correct merely for human observers, and not for all other sentient species in the universe. This time, this three-part reality of time (past, present and future) belongs to every object as it is in itself, and we may know this with perfect certainty. Readers who disagree, may here instruct us as to the error of our thinking. We are all ears.

Thus in our examination of the objects that set into motion Kant's transcendental aesthetic, by examining what we can certainly know about these objects as they are in themselves—we have learned that these objects have parts of time that belong to them as objects, which are in them and of them as objects. Time in these objects as they are in themselves is part of no transcendental aesthetic such as Kant argues for. Time, and our knowledge of time, pertains to actual objects as they are in themselves and our knowledge of *them*. We have set forth the argument that we can indeed know a great deal about the objects as they are in themselves, whatever Kant wishes to name such. We have proved that time is a part of the extremities of the object as it is itself, that this does not involve in the slightest any obscurity for the human mind. It is absolutely incorrect to speak of time, then, as being essentially a form of sensibility of the human being, which does not actually belong to the objects which are being sensed or perceived in some way. Kant's transcendental aesthetic is wrecked.

We have not exactly finished yet with the object as it is itself. We have shown that we can know quite a bit about each and every object as it is itself, and that this knowledge is not somehow segregated apart merely for human beings. We do not believe that there are any species of sentient creatures for whom 'being' is not a real and true nature. We do not believe that there is any species of creature for whom the nature of 'being' is different from what it is for us, nor do we see how such a proposition can be in any way intelli-

gible. Yet the extremities of the whole, we have not finished enumerating them. For as we have said, in its extremities, the whole must be of a certain shape; it must be of a certain size; it must be of a certain texture and weight. The extremities of this whole also must be of a certain color. If all this is true, it seems unavoidable, but that we must admit that this whole-of-parts is perceptible, i.e. that it is knowable for what it is through the judgments that human beings can make when our minds employ our sense organs, to know about those objects that exist out there in the world.

If this object exists, as we have proved that it does, insofar as it puts our sensory faculties into operation—then it is also true that this whole-of-parts, this whole by nature, must exist in some *place*. This place cannot either be a mere aspect of human a priori intuition, as Kant indicates. Rather, the true whole-of-parts that exists in nature, and this must include every body that exists in nature, cannot help but exist in some certain place or location. This location must be real and authentic and no figment of human sensory aesthetic either. This place for the container, must exist of itself; otherwise the body would be nowhere, and be no body whatsoever.

### KANT'S PREFACE TO THE B EDITION OF THE FIRST CRITIQUE

Kant speaks with great passion and determination in the preface to his *Critique of Pure Reason* about what metaphysics should aspire to be, and where it has learned these new insights, which Kant proposes to institute. Kant looks at natural science for a model, for one thing. Kant looks to the natural science of Francis Bacon. Bacon, in Kant's view, and in every person's view properly speaking instituted a great transformation of thought in the domain of science. Science, for the Socratic Greeks, was a search for truth, for reality, for the way things exist and what exists.

Francis Bacon, as Kant observes, adopts an entirely different tack: he wishes to make of science a productive enterprise, one which consists not in knowing what objects *are*, or what objects exist, or how they exist. To the contrary, what the new science will measure is something that the new science itself controls and *does*. The new science of Bacon undertakes to argue, that the only thing that science can know is that which it imposes upon the objects in nature; and that therefore what science can do is measure, and only measure, that degree of power which it is able to effect in its efforts to subdue and constrain and dissect nature. Kant would like to claim this radical transformation of thought for the field of metaphysics. Yet neither Bacon, nor Kant, really gives an account of what the old science, or metaphysics, *is*.

Now, if one chooses to pretend that one does not know what the objects in nature are, and if one chooses to pretend that one cannot know what the

objects in nature are, then this pretending would open up a new kind of freedom: for where man cannot know, he is free to 'experiment'. He becomes free, in other words, in his condition of babylike innocence, to treat objects in nature in any fashion that he pleases, in order to wrest from them what advantage he can. Such a proposition, of course, would be disastrous. For if the human being could not know what any object in nature is, this would include *himself*. If the human being cannot know him or herself, properly speaking, then it would not be possible either for the human being to know what he or she *needs*. The enterprise of natural science as conducted upon this basis would be a non-starter. It would be to strive for futility, which is a very strange notion of progress.

Furthermore, we should ask this question. Why would it be desirable to hypothesize that we human beings do not have direct access to objects as they are—for Kant *does speak* in these terms—if our goal is ultimately to derive a maximum advantage from those objects that exist in nature, for our own benefit? It is necessary for Kant to hypothesize this ignorance of the human beings, because their experience has not taught them that they suffer from this defect. If we for a moment grant Kant his hypothesis, we could ask again what we possibly stand to gain from it. To forswear knowledge of the objects in nature, is to forswear knowledge of ourselves; and thus to disorient any power that we may acquire in our playful experimentation with the various objects in nature. It really does not add up.

Science is only useful insofar as we already know what our own needs are. Science is only useful insofar as it can be put at the service of meeting the needs that we know ourselves to have based upon the knowledge that we already do have. Furthermore, I do not see in the least, why it would be necessary to stipulate our ignorance of objects in nature, in order to conduce to some scientific power. We are just as able to subject natural objects to experiments, while knowing what these objects are, as we would be if we feigned ignorance of them and what they are. In any event, this is the model of science that Kant seeks for his metaphysics. Yet again, we say, that Kant has abandoned the meaning of the very name of metaphysics, as it was when it was instituted by Aristotle, its founder. It does not conduce to the learning of the human race to forget its past, in order to have a new future. Human beings need to know the origins of a philosophy, and metaphysics is a philosophy rather than a productive science or art—in order for any progress to be made.

There is a science of nature, and evidently it must be different from both practical and from productive science. For in the case of productive science the principle of production is in the producer and not in the product, and is either an art or some other capacity.<sup>11</sup>

Yet Kant's profession of commitment to the productive aspects of metaphysics, a goal which he wishes to claim for his metaphysics, leads everyone to the question of what possible goals a metaphysics might aspire to, which Kant or anyone else could realize, that do not involve knowledge of the truth. Kant claims that his proposed science of metaphysics will school the human race in trimming the sails of its beliefs, to chastise it when it has dared to exceed the bounds of thought that Kant's science of metaphysics has sought to lay down for us.

It is surely not a proper road to recognize the limits of human knowledge, by pretending that human beings do not know what they actually *do* know. It is also not a feasible plan for a metaphysics, to establish proper bounds for what human beings are eligible to know, if those supposed boundaries and limits themselves consist in things which are impossible of existence, and which can *neither exist nor be known*. Yet Kant's categories of the understanding, those things which he would like to identify as knowledge that we can securely possess without the benefit of experience, are just that sort of bogus knowledge which could never be true, and hence cannot be knowable properly speaking. What we refer to here is Kant's model of a phenomena, of a 'possible object of experience', which as we have seen details that we must suppose the eternal existence of substances. In fact, when Kant reveals his categories, and when Kant reveals his theory of phenomena, and his theory of substance, Kant is revealing that aspect of his metaphysics which is not productive in the least. For the philosophy of eternal body, even though Kant has sought to deprive his version of the very property of being (the height of absurdity, for what other predicate could it be that enables an object to be eternal except the sustenance of its *being*) traces back to the philosophic line of Parmenides, whose original thesis it was. It does not take much work at all to read Kant's 'Analogies of Experience,' the First Analogy, and to read Parmenides' poem, and to trace the near identity of the points of view set forth. Parmenides certainly was not embarked upon any effort to make metaphysics 'productive'. Parmenides' claims about eternal body were and are claims as to the truth of what exists. And so is Kant. Thus Kant's metaphysics will not fit inside of the prototype established by Bacon's experimental mode of knowledge. For it would only serve to deflect our attention from what Kant is actually doing: trying to institute as knowledge that claim that the real and true bodies must be eternal, without having to answer any of the competing arguments which have been adduced as challenges to that teaching.

In the consideration of Kant's preface to the B edition of the *First Critique*, there is one more issue that it would be useful for us to address. Kant makes the claim, and he is not the first one to have made it in modern philosophy, that the goal of metaphysics is to establish that which it is possible for the human mind to think. In other words, Kant seeks to make

arguments which would impose strict limits on that kind of 'possible object' which the mind would be eligible to regard itself as having before its faculties. 'Possible experience', for Kant, indicates categories of the mind which impose order on sensible intuitions. Perceptions of themselves would be a mere 'rhapsody', Kant argues, if the mind did not impose order of its own on them. 'Experience therefore has principles of its form which ground it a priori.'<sup>12</sup>

Descartes may have been the most important thinker in this tradition, but Locke and Hume also seek to instruct the human mind as to the objects which it is eligible to evaluate. Needless to say, all of the familiar objects are gone, once the Moderns have instituted their policies, as to which sorts of objects will be regarded as having proper papers to be recognized as objects before the mind. The 'simple ideas' from Locke; the 'impressions' from Hume; and now the appearances and representations, the intuitions from Kant. This supposes an almost godlike power in the philosopher, to actually be able to behold the human mind, as if the human mind could be a person's true object of thought. As if a person could separate herself from her thinking being, and regard her mind as something distinct from her, apart from her, rather than the mind she is using all the while in her thinking, which is certainly hers, and in this context no *object* at all.

Descartes began this line of inquiry, and even Spinoza was able to make much use of it. But this particular teaching leaves out too much. Descartes, in order to approach his theory of the 'clear and distinct ideas', had to do something which he could never do with the assent of the generality of the human race: namely, turn against the evidence of his own sense perceptions, as the propaedeutic for this thought. In the cases of Locke and Hume, as we have addressed above, the claims as to what sorts of objects are eligible to come before the human mind is predetermined by a theory of eternal body, or atoms, which those thinkers happen to hold. They do not advance the proofs for their philosophy of eternal bodies, but that does not mean that these theories are either lacking in premises that can be examined, or that they do lack such foundations.

In truth the philosophy of Locke's 'atoms', or Hume's 'indivisible points', will not bear scrutiny. The account of the possible objects that may come before the human mind that this train of thinkers enacts, therefore, is loaded with fictions: it is loaded, in truth, with an account of imaginary objects, which are the fruit of the loins of a false theory. Remove the atoms, remove the indivisible points, and you have done away with the 'simple ideas' and the 'impressions' as well as with Kant's 'appearances and representations'. Neither Locke nor Bacon nor Hume nor Kant arrived at the theory of eternal substance by taking the human mind for their object. It is not possible unless they are very feeble students of the human mind. For these arguments are all fatally refutable, and it is nonsense to suggest that the

human mind is limited to believe in objects which in fact it can know do not exist.

## THE TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETIC

It would be very difficult, although certainly not impossible, to obtain a fair appraisal of Kant's transcendental aesthetic without the benefit of having studied Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. As we have assured the reader, Aristotle is not a difficult read. What is especially instructive for the reader is the direction of the progress that natural philosophy and metaphysics took in Greek antiquity. The interest of the human mind in genesis, in where things come from, in ultimate causes, is indeed as natural to thought as can be. And though a far from generous contemporary scholarship has scored Aristotle repeatedly for allegedly presenting a biased view of the history of Ionian science, the criticisms are forced into the domain of personal attack precisely because there does not appear to be any other leg to stand on. The natural philosophies of Thales, Anaximenes, and Anaximander are far from Aristotle's theory. They consider, as Aristotle has argued, the 'material cause'. What is of interest to us is the vantage point. For the Ionians, as must be the case of any science in its time of emergence, theorized very broadly and crudely, one may say. It was forced, by the weakness of its position, to contemplate nature as if it *were* a whole. Natural philosophy in the case of the Ionians was not making any distinctions on the level of the different kinds of objects in the natural, and even in the man-made world. Theorists of the 'matter' of things, might well not yet reach that level. We have commented on the role that Anaxagoras played in the development of natural philosophy, and which had such a huge impact on Plato's Socrates. The role played by mind, intelligence, is something that Anaxagoras theorized. But Anaxagoras did not theorize this very far.

Plato's Socrates was highly interested in Anaxagoras' claim that nature is intelligent, and that Mind oversees that ordering of the objects in nature. This is what led Plato's Socrates to this theory of causation, of natural philosophy if you like. Plato's Socrates took the point of view that argument must begin somewhere, and that this somewhere is the knowledge that people have of the different 'forms' or 'ideas'. This is hardly a complicated concept. People know many different kinds of objects. We have spent some time enumerating them above, and we will recur to other passages from Plato that extend the discussion in the pages which follow. Yet for the present moment it suffices to say that people conduct themselves through the course of their daily business (on which their livelihoods depend) by effortlessly distinguishing between a wide variety of objects with unerring precision. People know these different kinds of objects for some reason. They know these different kinds

of objects, Plato's Socrates reasons, because the form is the cause of said objects: it is the 'kind' or 'form' which makes of an object that which it is known to be. Form is implicit in the identity of an object, and the form is wrought directly into the objects in nature for Plato's Socrates.

This discovery of form was the great revolution in Greek philosophy, the thunderous achievement. For it made possible the individualization of the scientific knowledge of objects. The forms are radically different from one another, and they are far from being eligible to mix with one another randomly or haphazardly, and some cannot possibly mix with one another at all. The movement of natural philosophy towards the recognition of what has always been obvious, that all natural objects have their own distinct *mortal careers*, coalesced in the theory of Plato's Socrates; and it is for this reason why Plato's Socrates joined the fight on the level of the sophistic educational system. For knowledge of the truth is bound up with the fate and destiny of the perishable objects among which human beings number. Truth coincides with ethics, or rather the scientific recognition of the forms enables science to comprehend in speech the reality of the perishable objects and that in them which is *not* common to all of nature. The coming-into-being of one object is not the coming-into-being of another object. The development of one object is not the development of the other object. There is nothing remotely necessary or inevitable about the development of any natural object towards the realization of its form, towards its *fulfillment*.

The development of the awareness of this individualization of natural objects in Greek science facilitated the formal recognition of the struggles and uncertain fates of every one of these objects, not the least among which is the human being. We say all of this in the way of pointing out to the reader, that Francis Bacon launched the modern revolution of science by *turning the clock* back in the area of scientific knowledge. Bacon retreats to the earlier philosophy of Democritus, which views nature as all of one homogeneous form: being. As if nature was all one thing. Bacon dismisses the forms with contempt, in his *Novum Organon*, *for the most part*, but not entirely. Bacon has withdrawn scientific recognition from those forms which the human race effortlessly and relentlessly knows about the objects in our common world. Bacon attacks and ridicules the capacities of human sensory organs, and of the powers of judgments in human minds which rely upon the sensory organs to discern the forms that are actually present *in* the natural objects.

The senses are defective in two ways: they may fail us altogether or they may deceive. First there are many things that escape the senses, even when they are healthy and quite unimpeded. . . . And even when the senses do grasp an object, their apprehensions of it are not always reliable. For the evidence and information given by the senses is always based on the analogy of man, not of the universe; it is a very great error to assert that the senses are the measure of things.<sup>13</sup>

In Bacon's caustic nomenclature, such recognition of forms as are practiced by the human community are the myths of the marketplace, the myths of the cave, and yet—Bacon rolls out the red carpet for the artificial forms which the new science seeks to unfold and impress upon those external bodies, which it *claims* that it cannot know for themselves. 'The task and purpose of human power is to generate and superinduce on a given body a new nature or new natures', Bacon writes.<sup>14</sup> The radical diversity in the object of the natural and human-made world collapses in the science of Bacon, and now of Kant, in order to submit to the indivisible imperative which the new science seeks to impress upon the world: that truth will be equivalent to what the scientist-philosopher *puts into* the world, or tries to force it to be.

Kant discusses the nature of truth. He concedes, in a vague way, that truth consists in 'the agreement of a cognition with its object'. However, given Kant's definition of a possible experience, it is impossible for us to know the objects in themselves. For our minds are alleged to impose order on sensible perceptions, without which intuitions would have no order. Therefore truth does not consist in any direct relationship between cognition and external object, for Kant. It must consist solely in the truth of the 'rules' of the mind itself, which themselves impart and enforce order to experience. But concerning the mere form of cognition (setting aside all content) it is equally clear that a logic, as far as it expounds the general and necessary rules of understanding, must present criteria of truth in those very rules. For that which contradicts them is false.<sup>15</sup>

Kant's logic, as we will investigate in the next chapter, imposes the rules of eternal being on all appearances. It imposes the interrelationships of all objects in an infinite web of causes and effects. It imposes, in other words, the atomist ideology. This paves the way for Kant's own allegiance to the principles of Bacon's science, which is well stated in the B edition introduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: that the human being can only know, that which it has put into nature, or that which it in effect *makes*.

## SPACE

We have presented above, our case concerning the things we may certainly know about external objects as they are in themselves. We have argued that these objects must, as individuals, possess the part or nature of *being*. We have argued that these objects must possess, as individuals, the part of *unity*. We have argued that 'being' and 'unity' are distinct characters or natures, that they cannot be confused with one another. We have pointed out that unity, strictly speaking, indicates divisionlessness, and that the signification of 'being' would find no room inside of the nature or concept of 'unity'



properly speaking. Therefore we have advanced the argument that the external object, the objects external to us, in nature, must be irreducibly wholes of heterogeneous parts, of heterogeneous characters.

These individual wholes-of-parts, we have argued, must possess the full complement of extremities in order to *be* wholes. A whole, in order to be complete, must have all of its extremities. It must have a beginning, and it must have an end to be complete, a whole. Thus it must at one point in time acquire the part of being and at another point in time it must lose the part of being. This time, therefore, is part of the object in its mortal career. The time implicated in the career of one object is not going to be identical to the time implicated in the career of a *different* perishable object. Kant, in his attempt to level the objects in nature into what he calls 'a priori' knowledge, is simply instituting the convictions of superseded cosmologies into an alleged theory of mind which claims to 'transcend' our objects of experience and our thoughts about them. Kant ridicules the notion that time is actually a part of the empirical objects, but that is because Kant does not want to acknowledge the reality of the empirical object on the level of official knowledge. Such acknowledgment would make it difficult, more difficult for the new sciences, to engage in the process of superinducing alien forms upon existing natural objects, which already happen to have their own *natural* forms.

Time, in Kant's analysis, has nothing to do with the external objects at all. At least that is what he argues in his transcendental aesthetic.

If we abstract from our way of internally intuiting ourselves and by means of this intuition also dealing with all outer intuitions in the power of representation, and thus take objects as they are in themselves, then time is nothing.<sup>16</sup>

When Kant gets around to enumerating the categories of the understanding, which alone has the authority to exercise judgments about the 'appearances', we will see that Kant suddenly is rather adamant about arguing that the true and real objects in nature do not disappear ever; that they are always 'conserved', or as Epicurus argues that the world remains the exact same from one age to the next. 'Further, the totality of things has always been just as it is now and always will be. For there is nothing for it to change into.'<sup>17</sup> If we were to submit the imperatives of knowledge to the imperatives of Epicurus' eccentric moral goals, of espousing the attitudes that will enable him best to shield himself from the possibility of pain in his mortal life as the first imperative, we might have some inclination to be illuminated by the treatment of time that Kant now brings forth. This, however, must be argued for. It is also, so far as I can tell, entirely within the province of the people to have a vested interest in the debate of such questions.

Kant insists that time is merely the measure of our 'inner experience'. 'Time is nothing other than the form of inner sense, i.e. of the intuition of

ourself and our inner state.’<sup>18</sup> Kant argues that time is one great thing, which cannot possibly be appraised as belonging, in different contexts and in different measures, to radically diverse objects and therefore signifying radically distinct things and *truths*. Kant’s whole theory of time, as we have said, is predicated upon his philosophy of appearances and representations. It is predicated upon his conviction, not his proof, that our judgments cannot effectively extend to know the natures of the objects with which we have daily commerce, in defiance of common experience, to say nothing of the philosophies that Kant refuses to attempt to engage and refute. Courage is not part of the Baconian science. Dissembling, cunning, rhetoric: this is the mark of the Baconian sciences. They have proved their reputation by attempting to entirely suppress from the field of learning the highest achievements of Greek antiquity.

Space for Kant is likewise predicated upon the metaphysics of appearances and representations, i.e. upon the models of mind bequeathed to Kant by Locke and Hume. By Kant’s definition, and not by proof, the ‘human standpoint’ in experience is merely one whereby we and our minds are altered by external objects. It is something that goes without saying for Kant that our sensory organs are useless to actually help our minds to know the objects for what they are in truth. He does not address Anaxagoras’ argument; he does not address Plato’s argument about the forms, and he does not begin to even reveal what Aristotle’s metaphysics is about.

Yet if the argument that we have been presenting is correct, about the wholes-of-parts in nature, and what they are composed of in the way of elements—then we can continue with that argument. For the whole itself, in addition to being the sum of its parts, must also exist as a container for the parts. And we have discussed this. The whole, in order to be a container for the parts, must be a unity. It must be *one* whole. We have said that this whole must possess all of its extremities in order to *be* a whole. We have furthermore engaged in a list of the extremities which the whole of parts must possess: its full complement of extremities in time, a shape, a size, a weight, and even *color*. If there is a fire alight in this whole of parts in question, the heat of that fire will be in the fire that belongs to that whole of parts, and not to the way we are affected merely. It is not our susceptibility to extreme heat that is recorded by heat, but the property of the object to be hot. Yet we have not finished. For this container, in order to contain the parts of the whole, must itself be contained in some *place*. For otherwise, the whole would be *nowhere*, and therefore it would not exist at all.

For Kant, in keeping with his theory of ‘a priori’ knowledge, i.e. knowledge said to be valid for the external objects in the world, without the benefit of our having any direct experience of them, i.e. knowledge that ‘pure reason’ is alleged to possess of itself, through itself, without any commerce with the objects of the world—for Kant location is merely ‘space’, and space (like

time) is all one great huge thing. Kant alleges that space is an infinite thing. As if any particular object could be in an infinite space. For Kant, space is merely a part of pure human sensibility: a specter, into which we may project our 'outer impressions'. Kant writes that 'we therefore assert the empirical reality of space', but only in the sense of 'transcendental ideality'. Time is 'nothing', Kant assures us, if we presume to 'take it as something that grounds the things in themselves'.<sup>19</sup>

Time and space, for Kant, are 'pure', a priori intuitions. This means that they are not permitted to have any iota of empirical experience implicated in them. Kant arrogates to himself the right to segregate mental contents apart this way: to one side, any and all mental contents which are infected by some degree of empirical content; and on the other side, allegedly, the 'pure forms' which exist, again allegedly, a priori in the pure reason of the human being. That the categories which Kant enumerates for his a priori treasure, were themselves originally developed by cosmologists thinking precisely about the reality of those empirical external objects that Kant has now sought to banish from the domain of pure knowledge, is something that we ask the reader to bear in mind.

## ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC PROPOSITIONS

For the Socratic Greeks, there is a difference between metaphysics and logic. Metaphysics is a study of causation. It is investigative. Logic, on the other hand, depends upon pre-existing knowledge. It involves *inference*: something that Kant forbids, as we will examine in the chapter on logic. We return to the point which we have supplied the proofs for thus far: that every object in nature is a compound of heterogeneous elements; that these heterogeneous elements are parts of objects which have acquired the element of being or existence, and which must indeed lose the part of existence or being in a time which is limited. These natures, while they can only actually exist in fullness in combination, nevertheless exist separately as a matter of *potential*. In Aristotle's analysis of a perishable body, matter and form are the components. Both matter and form, in order to exist really (from the metaphysical point of view), must *combine*. This however never annihilates the difference between the natures. Matter itself is not form. Form itself is not matter nor will it ever be matter. Both are causes of the perishable object; and in Aristotle's metaphysics, this generation is what nature indeed *strives* for. 'The truth is that what desires the form is matter', Aristotle writes.<sup>20</sup> 'Again that for the sake of which, in the end, belongs to the same department of knowledge as the means. But the nature is the end in that for the sake of which. For a thing undergoes a continuous change toward some end, that last stage is actually that for the sake of which.'<sup>21</sup> The only thing that matter has for a characteris-

tic, in its state of potential being, for Aristotle, is a desire for a form. It does not exist because it lacks a form. To matter by itself, Aristotle denies recognition as 'being'; it is not *actual*. 'Potential' being is a state of possibility. Aristotle's metaphysics draws the line of substance at the perishables: matter or form which is not combined with its other does not qualify as substance, does not exist in the most real sense of the term. It is the business of metaphysics to ascertain what exists and what does not exist; and we have now seen where Aristotle draws the line.

For Plato the case is more easily illustrated. For Plato it is possible for the forms to exist, as it were, by themselves. Although these independently existing forms can only be known through hypothesis, and could never be known to the human being except originally through the judgment of the mind as it employs the senses in its evaluation of perishable objects, for Plato each form is stipulated to exist as an absolute of itself. Thus Plato's definition of beauty in the *Phaedo*. The perishable objects 'share' or 'participate' in the form. A beautiful perishable object is beautiful because it participates or has a share in the form of absolute beauty. This is Plato's philosophy of causation.

In the case of the metaphysical portrait of body that Plato presents in his *Parmenides*, the place where he defeats the claim that there is any such 'being' as Parmenides speaks of, which exists as it were of itself and by itself, and eternally—we learn that unity and being are coequal forms. Unity cannot be said to exist unless it has the part of being; and being cannot exist unless it is the being of some 'one'. Thus Aristotle's metaphysics is prefigured in Plato's analysis of the metaphysics of body in the *Parmenides*. We return to our point. For Plato, unity acquires the part of being when the object comes into being; but it loses the part of being when the object passes out of being, as it must in order to qualify as a complete whole. Yet Plato's entire argument is predicated upon the fact that unity is *not* being. Being and unity are different and distinct natures, and this is the evidence that Plato employs to defeat Parmenides' argument about being which is alleged to exist all by itself.

Kant, first of all, has imposed his definitions of perception upon us in the Early Modern manner. He has denied that our minds can employ our senses to know the true perishable bodies that are external to us. Though the human race has never suffered for a lack of this knowledge, or felt itself to; and while Aristotle borrows his own philosophy of causation directly from that which people commonly say about the 'why' and 'what' of objects—Kant relies upon the heritage of Baconian philosophy, which insists that it can only know that which the investigator *makes*—to elevate experiment to the fundamental means of knowledge, a knowledge which expressly excludes the possibility of knowing or recognizing anything like a substance. Kant predetermines that which the human mind is eligible to have pass before it: with his definitions of representations, appearances, intuitions, and a priori appear-

ances, Kant has excluded the objects of common experience from his roster of possibilities.

Kant's theory of an 'analytic' proposition, then, concerns names that automatically go together, in such a way that one concept 'conceals' the other, and merely needs to be thought about in order to be drawn out. In all judgments which relate a subject to a predicate, Kant argues, these two can be related to each other in one of two ways. Either the predicate is always a part of the subject, in which case it is said to be 'analytic'; or else the predicate is sometimes not part of the subject, in which case the judgment is called 'synthetic'. 'Analytic' judgments (affirmative ones) are thus those in which the connection with the predicate is through identity.<sup>22</sup>

For his example, Kant uses the names of body and extension. We must ask the reader: how can Kant possibly use the name of 'body' in order to illustrate his theory of analytic propositions? 'Body' is not something that the human mind is eligible to experience in the sensible part of its organs for Kant. Kant has said that the warp and woof of our sensibility is the manner in which our minds are *affected* by external objects, which remain an entire mystery to us. In fact, it is only the understanding that can supply the definition of a body, through its definition of a substance, in Kant's philosophy. This rule is necessary, for Kant, and involves no recognition whatever. It is a priori. In line with the Kantian philosophy of appearances and representations, they are a blizzard of unrecognizable bits and pieces until the pure apperception undertakes to organize them, and submit them for a judgment of the understanding. The understanding imposes its definitions on those objects that the human mind is alleged to 'make' (all of them).

Intelligible natures like unity and being are not possible intuitions for Kant. The proposition that a body has extremities must depend first of all upon what one's definition of a body is. 'Being' is the thing that the body must have, in order to be a body. Unity is the nature that a body must possess, in order to be one *anything*. The extremities of a body can only be inferred from the reality of the whole-of-parts; but Kant has suppressed the very possibility of our ever arriving at this whole of parts, by his denial that 'being' should even be considered as a predicate. 'Being', for Kant, is merely the copula sign, i.e. being is that which the faculty of pure apperception *puts together*, or brings into being of its own powers. Kant's discussion of an analytic proposition will do its service in his theory, its true work, in his definition of substance, where Kant will deny that there is any other possibility, but that it is necessary for any substance to be eternal, and for all change to be merely alteration of the eternally existing. Kant's attempt to make it appear as if one nature, is inside of another nature, or really identical with it, is an obfuscation, the attempt to create an impression which is not true. Body is not identical with its extremities. Body cannot exist without its extremities, but body cannot exist without the part of being either. In fact the extremities

cannot exist without the part of being, and Kant has banished the part of being from his account of what body is. The overall function of the analytic proposition, then, is to intimidate thought, to stifle thought, to reassert the definition of body that Descartes and then Spinoza have used. The true elements in any body are heterogeneous, and as such are distinct from one another; the imagery that Kant strives for in his theory of the analytic proposition seeks to suppress this awareness.

We have indicated the manner in which Kant's subscription to the mental models of Locke and Hume have called into existence the constructive function of mind. When Locke reduces sensible experience to 'simple ideas', none of which can exist of themselves and by themselves in nature, it becomes an enterprise of the mind to construct some facsimile of an object. Experiment is the model that is employed. When it has been predetermined what may come before the human mind, by these philosophers who alleged that they have converted human reason itself into their object of analysis, then the definitions of the 'simple ideas' and the 'impressions' and the 'appearances and representations' follow. This model therefore is predisposed to require of the mind, that which Kant has already resolved that the mind must insist on doing: i.e. 'making' the objects that it will thereafter acknowledge to exist in the world. Kant goes so far as to insist that all projects in metaphysics must be judged as successes or failures based upon their resolution of the problem of making a priori synthetic propositions. Kant does not leave the foundations of his model of mind open for inspection, but rather asserts them as indisputable preconditions for thought.

There is no more important battleground than the one we are currently considering. The mind must either begin with objects that have independent existence from its own purview, and which to understand, it must inquire into. Or else the mind begins with that which it itself makes and ordains out of its own resources. Only in the former path is truth possible. In the latter path, the ascendancy of science's *will* to a position of huge authority in human culture is unavoidable. Humility, true humility, consists in Socrates' profession of ignorance, which in forswearing any special philosophic knowledge about the objects that exist, summons forth the opinions of the community to establish what all already know effortlessly. From that vantage point Plato's Socrates investigates. He does not undertake to supply those starting points himself, much less ones at variance with the community's opinions. On the other hand, in the Baconian tradition which Kant is seeking to bring to metaphysics, the philosophers are filled with scorn towards the ordinary opinions, holding them bereft of every degree of intelligence. Bacon writes:

There are also illusions which seem to arise by agreement and from men's association with each other, which we call idols of the market place; we take

the name from human exchange and community. Men associate through talk, and words are chosen to suit the understanding of the common people. And thus a poor and unskillful code of words incredibly obstructs the understanding.<sup>23</sup>

Baconian science, as Lockean science excludes the ordinary opinions from the court of scientific truth: that which people are eligible to know through their own judgments which employ sensory organs, have no status whatsoever before the new court of scientific speech. Locke puts the matter this way:

Secondly, by the philosophical use of words, I mean such an use of them as may serve to convey the precise natures of things, and to express, in general propositions, certain and undeniable truths, which the mind may rest upon and be satisfied with in its search after true knowledge. These two uses are very distinct; and a great deal less exactness will serve in the one, than in the other. . . . Common use regulates the meaning of words pretty well for common conversation, but no body having an authority to determine to what idea any one shall annex them, common use is not sufficient to adjust them to philosophical discourses.<sup>24</sup>

This is a political disaster for the human race, to say nothing of a philosophic disease of no small implications.

### MATTER AND FORM IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETIC

The abuse of language in modern philosophy is egregious, but Kant is a special case. The origin of the language of matter and form is of course Aristotle. For Aristotle, as we have enumerated, it is external objects that are combinations of matter and form. These are the substances, the most real objects in nature, all of which are perishable, and all of which are perceptible for *what they are*. With Kant, in his discussion of the transcendental aesthetic, we are presented with only one tradition of philosophy, namely the one hostile to sensory perception and the one committed to the eternity of substances. Kant does not so much as call our attention to any other tradition. For that matter, Kant actually casts Plato as hostile to sensory perception, a grossly misleading pattern of argument. What is highly objectionable is that Kant feels himself exempt from having to argue for the claims that his Early Modern brethren have instituted. They did not argue for their claims either, resting ultimately on mere assertion. There is a conscious attempt on the part of the Early Modern philosophers to make it appear as if their account of objects in nature, and their account of perception in the judgment of human beings, is the only account, the only viable account, and they never do get

around to presenting, or addressing, the arguments of Plato and Aristotle which are hardly trifling objections.

When Kant employs the terminology of matter and form, he observes no obligation to the traditional usages of the terms. In this he is a faithful Lockean, altering the signification of names in ways likely to mislead his readers into opinions which do not fit the case. 'Matter', for Aristotle, belongs to objects. It is the material part of objects. If we are talking about a gold goblet, the material reality of the goblet, its matter, is gold. Yet the object is not merely material. It is also immaterial, i.e. it has an immaterial part, which is the knowable part, its *form*. The people are acquainted with both of these aspects of an object, which Aristotle calls their *causes*. Thus in the discussion of causation, Greek philosophy in its most advanced form shares the opinions of the ordinary people as regards the nature of the cause of objects; and this philosophy furthermore shares the view of the ordinary opinion that the human powers of judgment are able to know these objects for what they are, through the aid of their sensory powers.

In Kant, this language is utterly transformed. 'Matter' for Kant has nothing to do with any body external to us. Far from it. 'Matter', for Kant is the name that he chooses to employ to describe the sensations that the mind obtains when it is 'affected' by external objects. 'I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its matter, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuited as ordered in certain relations, I call the form of appearance.'<sup>25</sup>

In Kant, human powers of judgment and perception cannot reach to objects as they are in themselves. As we have said, he provides no proof. There are the arguments from atomism which we have begun to unfold, and which lay mutely in the background of Kant's work (and more overtly in the pages of Locke and Hume). In any event, 'matter' for Kant is purely a psychological experience, a sort of 'intuition' or representation of appearances. The meaning of these terms will be sorted out more exactly in our chapter on Kant's logic.

'Form', for Kant, has no reference to any external object at all *either*. The 'form' for the allegedly formless sensations that Kant theorizes enter into the human mind (and it is just not the experience of people that their perceptions are disordered or formless), for Kant, lay in the principles of the 'understanding'. In the principles of the 'understanding', for Kant, lay the categories which are irreversible and automatic and necessary for every single judgment that the understanding makes. Those categories include the definition of form as eternal substance, as necessary existence, as part of nature as one infinite whole, as part of a mechanistic system of infinite links of cause and effect.

This language of matter and form has led not a few Kant commentators to suspect that Kant is a good Aristotelian. Nothing could be further from reality. This sketch that we have now provided, is what Kant means by the



term 'possible object of experience'. The only object of experience which it is possible for a human being to have, in Kantian language, is one which has been subjected to judgment on Kantian terms: and that means it must be an object that has been adjudged to be eternal, necessary, and with all the other attributes of the worldview of nature developed by the ancient atomists.

To return to the pure intuitions, allegedly, of time and space, Kant insists that these are strictly aspects of our unique intuition: that neither time nor space exist at all if we are not alive to intuit them, for our intuitions tell us nothing real about the world, but only allegedly about the way we feel when affected by unknowable external objects. Reality is far different from this. The human being herself exists in a place, and cannot not exist in a place, an objective place, one place in one moment. The human being may become unable to sense or feel the location that she is in, for a variety of reasons. Her faculties may be disabled. But if she is in a house that has caught on fire, that fire is going to do more than affect her intuitions if she deigns to regard her intuitions as mere subjective desiderata of her subjective feelings. Descartes would have told her that much. So would Hume, and Hobbes. The latter liked to brag that he was the first to flee England when the civil war broke out, and of course his awareness of the civil war was more than merely an intuition to him, even though Hobbes too formally asserts that the senses can tell us nothing but that which is being felt by the sentient.

### PERCEPTION AND 'AESTHETICS'

Language has an impact on people depending on the customary usages in force in a culture. Names, in other words, are easily capable of containing suggestions and insinuations which, in view of the Early Modern philosophic denial of the necessity of a common vocabulary, is worth looking into. From the vantage point of the people, perception is a sober exercise. For the people, there is nothing that they trust so much as their eyes and ears. That which the people experience directly in other words, is the evidence that they trust the most and this is of course irreversible for good reasons. Perception is the best evidence for many things, and to be capable of judging an object first hand is therefore to be capable of having evidence that one regards as irrefutable. Kant's reduction of judgment through sensory organs to the status of mere reflections of the ways in which the mental organs are affected, wholly eschews that which the people (again, with good reason, and that reason being experience and what has proved tried and true) regard as unchallengeable.

In common parlance, the language of 'aesthetics' suggests taste, style, almost frankly a reference to one's reactions to art and one's preference for certain types of creative arts. Nobody confuses the way they are led to feel in

an art museum with the sober perception that they depend on to conduct all of their daily business down to their most minute tasks. Kant, however, by saddling perception with the name of ‘aesthetics’, is actually beginning to work a rhetorical angle of influence on culture. As will become clearer in Kant’s lectures on logic, and moreover in Kant’s *third Critique*, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (which focuses more on nature than any other work by Kant, including the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*), Kant means to depreciate the status of perception. Kant means, really, to gently ridicule the status of judgment through perception; and finally, Kant wishes to humiliate people who must rely upon their judgments of objects through the employment of sensory perception, for their sole mode of proof and evidence. When we get around to Kant’s lecture on logic, Kant makes it clear to the people for whom he is writing, that aesthetics concerns nothing but the feelings, the emotions, as if untethered to any objective factual reality at all. Kant will also add other denominations into the mix, including the name of ‘entertainments’, to characterize the judgments of the people through sensory organs.

All agree that philosophy of some sort is practiced in every society. Plato was the first to imagine a society in which philosophers would rule. Yet not even Plato sought to conceive of a society in which the faculties of the people would be conditioned by a culture drilled in a science which absolutely repudiates the judgmental powers and faculties for ascertaining reality that the Early Modern philosophers do. Locke, that ingenious man, makes the distinction between civil and scientific speech. Civil speech, as we have noted, is for Locke a kind of atmosphere in which trucking and bartering takes place among the human race, almost as if it were merely a folk idiom. Locke does not propose to interfere with those undertakings in language. Yet Locke does segregate the language of his science apart radically from the domain of civil speech, to the degree that the evidence which counts among those people in the civil domain will have no status whatsoever in the scientific domain. Locke’s reasoning is rather direct. People in the civil domain recognize and use words in a certain agreed upon way. Science, on the other hand, asserts its liberty against those norms. This transcendence of the common language by Lockean science has left a great impression on Kant, and has indeed led Kant to be confident in the fact that he too will be tolerated in the arguments that he makes; mostly for the very simple reason that people do not know how to either engage this language much less to begin to rebut it.

The reader can well say, that anybody is free to challenge Locke or Kant in the arguments that they make about perception or science or knowledge in general. Neither Locke nor Kant argue that formal laws should be enacted which require the people to obey the new science. Yet what we are trying to call the reader’s attention to is that it is possible for philosophy, when it has a

political disposition, to run roughshod over the dignities and freedoms of the people due to its superior powers of argument. To wit, it is not generally recognized to this very day in our academe how radically modern philosophy expropriates the authority of the people, in terms of the canons of evidence that it establishes and enforces. In accordance with Kant's strictures on what human 'sensibility' entails, indeed, one would not be able to argue more than that one's mind has been 'affected' in some way to feel as if the dominant philosophy and scientific expertise of the times is pushing them around or pulling the carpet out from underneath their feet. By the lights of Kant's doctrine of the transcendental aesthetic, it goes without saying that whatever feeling a person has regarding external objects, including the institutions of science and their doctrines, is radically subjective, so subjective that it may not even extend to a concession that any such external objects exist at all.

What we are saying, is that it is conspicuous that the Early Modern movement imbedded itself in the language of natural rights, and spoke to the passions of the people in the political domain, while at the very same moment, in the scientific domain, these same philosophers were busy expropriating from the people all of their status as finders of fact with probative value, for the purposes of the new society. In order to appraise this problem, readers will have to study the issue of judgment through sensory organs in a thorough manner, and that means that they will have to examine the teaching of Plato and Aristotle, those dreaded 'elitists', on the issue of natural philosophy. Let us not forget that the reputation of Plato and Aristotle has also come down to us from the handiwork and liberty of language run rampant in the circles of Early Modern philosophy. Plato and Aristotle are not that hard to read on the issues of natural philosophy and perception. As we have said, the Early Modern movement in philosophy has done everything in its power to make these subject areas seem impenetrable to all but geniuses. Kant prefers this very presentation. We owe it to ourselves to investigate.

## KANT ON TRUTH

The ancients offer us simplicity in some aspects, and sometimes the truth is simple. We do things, Aristotle says, any and all things, to achieve some good. The human being is purposeful. Thus if we want to lose weight we will run on the treadmill or diet. If we want to become educated in philosophy we will obtain books of philosophy and instructors and set to work. If we want to feel useful we attempt to contribute something of value to our communities in the work that we do. When we think, we usually have some inquiry under way. We may be engaged in a deliberation, examining a situation to see if there is indeed something that we ought to do. Or we may think merely (not to say insignificantly) to understand it, to become more familiar with our

world and our place in it. It is useful to keep these sorts of benchmarks in mind as we embark upon an examination of Kant's theory of what 'truth' 'signifies'. It is a murky water indeed.

For Plato, judgment has a purpose. When we assign names to objects, individual perishable objects, we either name correctly or incorrectly. In order to judge correctly, we must first have had an experience of that *kind* of object. If we are to be capable of judging that an object is a cow, we must already have had experience of what a cow *is*. In Plato's language, 'cow' is a kind, a 'form' a 'pattern'. There are many cows. Some will be larger than others. Some will be different colors than others. Some may have injuries. Some may have brands of their owners on their flanks. Yet cow is a kind and none of these distinctions interferes with the form. This is the way it actually works in practical life. Philosophy, modern philosophy, likes to interject that we are not entitled to regard objects as being of one kind if, say, one cow is blind in one eye, and the other not. And yet it is possible to be a cow that is blind in one eye, as it is possible for a human being to be blind in one eye, but still a human being. No more, no less.

Plato refers to the role that memory plays in our knowledge. Knowledge is 'recollection' in the metaphor Plato employs. Once we have experience of a cow, or a human being, the form of that being is impressed upon our souls, as an image. The forms, for Plato, happen to be wrought into natural objects; and thus nature is intelligent, composed both of the *immaterial* (the forms) and the *material* (the matter). Hobbes and Spinoza unleashed radical attacks on these observations, and really they are observations; for Plato did not undertake to make it so that the objects in the world are compounds of matter and form; nor did Plato undertake to make it so that the people recognize these forms, effortlessly, and communicate with one another with an extraordinary degree of precision based on this foundation of knowledge. This is simply how things *are*. Locke, in his *Essay*, does not deny that the people recognize natural kinds. What Locke denies is that this common awareness and judgment should ever be qualified to pass for truth of fact before a court of science. Thus the modern natural philosophy is a political philosophy *in its science*. When Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume and now Kant presume to set up rules and regulations, for what shall constitute a possible object of the mind, those forms and patterns and objects known to common opinion are *barred at the gate*. This is a form of radical silencing, brutal and utterly devastating in effect; but it is so sophisticated an oppression, that it takes a great deal of study even to become aware that it exists. People suffer and know that they are suffering; but if they live under a philosophical regime, it may well be the case that they cannot name or label the mode of oppression that they are suffering under. This lack of awareness, however, does not interfere with the reality of such oppression, in the least. Whether it

is recognized or not, where it is practiced, it is vicious, and the cause of endless misery.

To return then to the issue of Truth, Kant acknowledges a common definition of truth. It is the agreement of a judgment with its object. The judgment, in other words, but Kant does not say this—must say what *exists*. We have already established in our discussion some facts about Kant's model of mind. In the first place, it is simply a misnomer to say that in Kant's system of mind, there is anything truly *receptive*. To receive is to take something in from without. Plato's wax block model of the soul is a perfect illustration. The form of a cow is impressed upon the wax block of the soul, when we encounter a cow and it is within the comfortable range of our senses. We do not judge with our senses, but our minds employ our senses to judge what the object is. Upon encountering that first cow, we cannot judge it, because we have no basis for recognizing it. The second time around, however, we will recognize the cowness of a cow, though that second cow be of a different size or color or even if the cow is wearing a hat. Kant, however, in his model of mind, allows for no such receptivity. Memory plays virtually no role in Kant's mental household. It is silenced, suppressed. Sensible experience for Kant, involves our being 'affected' or *changed* in some way. This tells us nothing about the external objects, and that is why Kant's model of judgment cannot employ the sensory organs to reach its judgment.

That which is truly empirical in our experience, for Kant, qualifies as mere 'matter'. It is unintelligible by itself. Kant does not concede any immaterial parts of nature, or any intelligence in nature. To the contrary. Kant's nature is a mechanistic system. Kant never proves this, but it is the model of nature that his system of understanding imposes. 'Appearances' do not give us information about what the real and true objects are external to us. 'Representations' do not give us accurate or real accounts of the objects that are external to us. Indeed, Kant has laid it down as a rule that we simply cannot know the objects as they are in themselves. Phenomena, which Kant claims we do know, is limited to the rank of appearance; and the reality of external objects is consigned to the category of noumena, which is something we are alleged not to have access to. How then, is Kant himself ever to provide some facsimile of truth, i.e. of providing judgments which say what their object *is*? The riddle is not that difficult to solve. Since we cannot know what the objects are, Kant simply excuses himself from that version of truth. However, this would be letting Kant off very easy. For he has yet to prove to us that there is any reality in his story about appearance and representations. Kant has not done anything more than assert them. He does not begin with what is commonly said by human beings about our experience, as both Plato and Aristotle do. No, Kant claims to know better than the people what the truth value of their judgments involving the employment of sensory organs actually amounts to. Yet he does not, like his predecessors in antiquity at least had

the decency to do, provide his critique of the ordinary opinions. He simply rests upon the budding prestige of Early Modern science, and imposes these views as rules.

Kant starts off by saying that all of the truth dimensions of his philosophy concern logic. We have a chapter on logic below. We will investigate Kant's logic carefully there. But here we can observe that logic as Aristotle founded it to be, depends upon pre-existent knowledge. That pre-existent knowledge for Aristotle is obtained by perception, of individuals, particulars, what Kant refers to as the *empirical*. Aristotle's entire logic begins with analysis of particulars.

It is evident too that if some perception is wanting, it is necessary for some understanding to be wanting too—which it is impossible to get if we learn by induction or by demonstration, and demonstration depends upon universals and induction on particulars, and it is impossible to consider universals except through induction. . . . And it is impossible to get an induction without perception—for of particulars there is perception, for it is not possible to get understanding of them; For it can be got neither from universals without induction nor through induction without perception.<sup>26</sup>

That movement of mind which for Aristotle constitutes induction, involves insight: it involves penetrating the nature of a kind, by observing a succession of individuals of that kind. This movement of intelligence, which is the only way to obtain a universal or major proposition for Aristotle, is tossed on the scrapheap by Kant. Kant absolutely denies that we can approach universals through induction. Kant himself lashes out at induction, at those who think that 'experience constantly offers examples of regularity in appearances' and that this in turn can lead us to knowledge of causes. Kant insists that causes can only be discovered in the brain a priori, and that thoughts to the contrary are a mere 'fantasy of the brain'.<sup>27</sup> And this squares with the effective blockage of 'receptivity' in Kant's model of mind.

Kant's logical operations begin with what he refers to as the *transcendental analytic*. Like a surgeon, Kant presides over the contents of the human mind. That which has any degree or iota of empirical information in it or related to it, is stricken from the domain of thought, understanding, and judgment *altogether*. Those aspects of intuition which are not affected by the empirical, in Kant's view, but which are themselves a priori, i.e. time and space, are preferred materials for Kant's model of judgment. Yet this time and this space (location) are separated by Kant from all reference to objects as they actually exist and are situated. Hence, Kant's transcendental analytic segregates the understanding, and its capacity for judgment, from all empirical materials.

What we are left with, in the transcendental analytic, is something that Kant does not want to directly associate with truth. Kant prefers to call it the

'negative relationship to truth'. In other words, Kant's transcendental analytic proposes to tell us what is unrelated to truth, namely anything empirical, i.e. Aristotle's substances (for him the most real objects in nature and the absolute object of metaphysics). When Kant has distilled away all of the parts of human mentality which are contained under the denomination of the 'empirical' (and this includes, Plato and Aristotle would argue, the *immaterial* elements which are *parts* of the empirical), we are left with what Kant calls the foundation of 'pure reason', the categories of 'judgment' which nevertheless do not exactly judge anything, or at least this is what Kant says. The table of judgments is pristine, allegedly; it is supposed to reflect merely the form of 'thought', just as the Early Modern philosophers claim that they take human reason for their object, as if this is possible. They have never demonstrated that this is possible, for a person to think about what thought is, as if it were something separate from his inquiring *self*. As if the human being could become an object to himself, in this radical way. Yet this is not really the direction that Kant takes his argument. For in his highly abstract categories, especially in the category of 'relations', Kant buries objects and names for objects such a substance and 'community' and 'accident,' which have absolutely no reference, no meaning whatsoever, except when they are referring to the empirical and are statements about the empirical.

Kant does not want to say that the understanding, in his model of mind, engages in the pursuit of truth. Yet he insists that the understanding is the faculty of judgment, and that judgment *reflects* the truth. How indeed could Kant really not be trafficking in truth claims here, when he provides, in the hazy category of 'relations' in his table of judgments, the categories of substance and accident; community of objects and 'necessity'? Thought itself has nothing to do with substance, *per se*; as thought is not itself a substance. The human being is a substance. The form of the human being's thought is to pursue some good, to pursue some purpose, to engage in the effective pursuit of some limited task that the human being actually has a chance of executing. Yet Kant's model of the understanding is inexplicable as a model of the 'form' of thought. What Kant's model of the understanding presumes to be, is what Francis Bacon refers to as form, the kind of form that the human will can superinduce upon the object that it encounters, i.e. that form that it seeks to impose upon those objects. This is precisely the manner of Kant's definition of the 'possible object of the understanding'. In the possible object of the understanding the 'form' of the object is supplied by the understanding and its 'rules'. Those rules enforce the theory of eternal substance, of mechanistic nature, of 'necessity'.

The reader needs to pay careful attention to the totalizing aspect of Kant's logic. For Plato, the human mind judges what is a cow, what a tree, what an act of justice. The forms are distinctive, and it is the forms that for Plato are the organizing causes of nature. Kant, by suppressing the empirical from the

domain of what is judged, by reducing the empirical to these mystical appearances and representations collapses all distinctions between the myriad forms that both Plato and Aristotle recognize as real, along with the rest of the human race. In Kant, the rules of the understanding single out no forms per se, for that would be ‘subreption’, improper inclusion of empirical content. From the vantage point of Kant’s model of nature, the cosmology which he is transcribing into the rules of his faculties of understanding, there is no difference between the objects in nature. They are all ‘one’ effectively, all the same thing: the eternally existing, atoms if you like. Other words will work as well. The definition is the important thing, and for Kant, nature is a homogeneous *whole*.

## THE TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

In the course of the Transcendental deduction, where Kant attempts to make a case, or to prove the reality of the ‘a priori’ categories of the understanding, he mentions the decisive roles that Locke and Hume have played in the development of his own thought. This becomes all too clear when Kant begins to talk about ‘cause’, or causation. There is no more fundamental concept in the human mind than cause. When the human being contemplates cause, she is asking one of two questions: ‘Why?’ Or “what?” Aristotle argues that in pursuit of truth, we must begin with what is *easiest* for us. We must begin with what is most clearly known, and what is beyond all dispute. I fear that we have made the point several times already, but it is not the less necessary to make it again here: Kant has *taken away* that which is clearest to us, easiest for us to know. At least, with his presuppositions and assumptions, Kant seeks to negate, and render useless those faculties which give us the most unproblematic and direct knowledge.

The simplest and clearest thing for human beings to know is particulars. Particular objects happen to be kinds of objects, and the human race has great facility for learning these forms and patterns. They are however no longer available to us in the story Kant sets out to tell about our ‘intuitions’. In common speech, intuition is a mysterious thing. A man may be walking along a road, under a clear sky, and say that he has an intuition that it is going to rain. We would call it an intuition because it is not at all obvious or evident. In fact it is unlikely based upon the clear sky. Thus intuition in common usage indicates the inexplicable impulse which suggests some eventuality to us that is not comprehensible to us by any of the powers of judgment and employment of the sensory organs that we have. It is fitting therefore that Kant has conscripted the name of intuition to represent what he calls the domain of ‘sensibility’. For Kant renders this domain the farthest of all things from our minds. That which is simple, and effortlessly clear to us,



Kant subjects to a siege with his concepts and philosophical arguments. In Kant, his will, as instrument of philosophy, moves experience as it is commonly known completely out of the way and renders it formless, unintelligible, into mere 'matter'.

Philosophy has always been a difficult enterprise. It has been interwoven, throughout its history, with politics, precisely because it involves the power of argument, or the possibility of influence, or winning or seizing influence in cultural affairs. Philosophy poses this dilemma for us, that those who do not practice philosophy do not possess the means to investigate the philosophers who call into question their common experience and ordinary knowledge. Yet this is the reason or cause of Socrates' profession of ignorance. Plato's Socrates sets himself up on the side of common experience and ordinary opinion with what is commonly said and thought to be known, and lays down the gauntlet to philosophy: if you presume to know better than we do, or to dismiss what is commonly said and believed, then you must prove it to us. You must demonstrate your knowledge to us and persuade us. And really, this does not take a tremendous amount of philosophy. Because if the other philosopher cannot begin with the common opinions, as they are, and as they regard themselves to be, and from that vantage point lead us to the next step up the ladder, then he does not possess knowledge to do so.

The moderns are mostly (not all) children of Machiavelli. They do not seek to win the approval of the people, they do not seek to explain their arguments or the way that they proceed. To the contrary. They seek with all their might to discourage discourse, to exalt prestige and authority in its place. Readers may consult John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* for an illustration. Locke's model of education consists essentially in psychological modes of shaping pupils. It involves playing upon human impulses and habits of psychology. Locke as an educator seeks to work upon sensitive aspects of the human personality, but nothing more than the human vulnerability to shame and blame.<sup>28</sup> Plato, when he is trying to figure out whom it is most important to educate, seeks out the natures among the children which reveal themselves to revere truth above all else. Those who are able to resist seduction, and to resist intimidation as well—these are the natures that Plato seeks to educate. But these are precisely the natures that Locke marks out for unremitting punishment. Locke's educational treatise is a manual of indoctrination. It unfolds a combat of wills, and the teacher is going to prevail at any cost for Locke, even if it means coming to blows. This is the warp and woof of modern education, a focus on the fragility of human self-esteem, and the employment of praise and blame to shape, to determine, to predetermine what is learned.

Kant is very much in this mold. The *Critique of Purer Reason* imitates Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, in its byzantine and oppressive structure and endlessly tedi-

ous length and mass of verbiage. Nevertheless, Kant is unable to do the simplest things, just as Locke and Hume are unable to do the simplest things. They are unable, or rather unwilling, to begin with ordinary opinion as it is, and as their own opinions were in an earlier part of their education. They do not begin with what is commonly said and known and seek to disprove it. They rather bend the mind in rhetoric, as they melt down the meanings of the words into amorphous instruments, inevitably yielding coercion and pressure for the reader, as he grasps for some thread of coherence in the argument. When Kant maintains that the domain of the sensible involves, and is really limited to, the 'alteration of the mind', the effecting of changes within the mind, he is indicting and discrediting all that is believed and all that the people have found to be true in their experience. Kant's definitions of representations follow Hume: these 'representations', Kant argues, may be caused by external objects, or they may be caused by the mind itself. Kant creates, by force of will, a set of circumstances that would call forth his a priori concepts. If the mind was indeed fated to be assaulted by a deluge of unintelligible flotsam and jetsam, such that no experience was conceivable or possible unless or until the mind superimposed its own order over the chaos, then Kant indeed has his transcendental deduction. Yet he has not proved any of this, and it is not anyone's experience that this is how sense perception *is*.

Let us go back to the discussion of cause. If Kant were to argue that he simply cannot be bothered with ordinary opinions, and that he prefers merely to deal with arguments which are consonant with his dignity as a person of philosophy, he could always begin with the arguments of Plato and Aristotle, who after all happen to be very accomplished thinkers and hardly crude or ill-educated. Kant does not do so. Kant resists a direct engagement with Plato and Aristotle as he does with the common people themselves. He cannot withstand a direct discussion with either one of them. Kant is only comfortable in the role of the critic, the blazing intransigent, pouring forth a torrent of words like Protagoras of old, forestalling forever the discussion that people would like to begin with him. Yet it is not for us therefore to stand idly by bowing our heads. Hence we return to the issue of cause. What is justice? This is the issue opened up for investigation in the *Republic*. Plato's Socrates summons forth the common opinions of the gathered interlocutors. Justice is something that they have had experience with. They have been able to distinguish just from unjust acts in their lives, and even if they are not skilled in the science of definition, they have opinions as to what it is, of what causes an action or intention to be just or unjust; and this is what Plato begins with. Plato does not annihilate the evidence from the assembled speakers. Some commentators hold that he does, but he does not—not in the *Republic*. What Plato illustrates in his examination of the various opinions that are presented in response to his question, is why these experiences of particular actions of justice or injustice do not therefore qualify as scientific definitions. For these

perceptions of justice are not formulated in speech but are rather perceived as images, which in fact the forms do present since they order the human experience of objects in the world.

To resume with Plato, the issue is justice. What is it? Plato will ask the speakers to examine the various examples that have been provided of the form, and to try to ascertain what it is that all of the examples have in common. The form remains narrowly focused: 'justice' is specific. It exists in the domain of sensible particulars more than it exists anywhere else, because ultimately justice is about deeds and intentions. On the ladder of learning that Plato presents in book six of the *Republic*, the name of the image on the lowest part of the line, remains the name that is contemplated on the highest region of the upper division. The soul can judge more powerfully when it has set aside the form of justice, separated it from the objects and events that it has been perceived in, and there sets about defining it: driving out the contradictory elements, an operation which Kant regards as mere sophistry. Yet there is a relationship between the common experience of just deeds and intentions, on the one hand, and the intellect's distinct contemplation of the form of justice on the other. The intellect has not suppressed that which it has learned about justice from the domain of experience. Quite the contrary: The Kantian discussion of cause, the buildup to the cause of the a priori knowledge that is alleged to be possessed by the mind as 'pure reason', wholly disavows that which is known in common experience, and refuses even to share a language with the common speakers.

What does Kant offer to us when it comes time to discuss causation? There cannot be any single object, such as justice, or courage, or human being, as the focus. Rather, it must be the relationship between two or more objects. What are these objects that are to be related as cause and effect? What are the 'objects' that the pure or transcendental apperception is finally called into existence by Kant to bring together into a unity (since the objects allegedly have no unity of their own)? They are the simple ideas of Locke, and the impressions of Hume—the bits and pieces of sensation which have been dismembered by the ideology of perception that Kant imposes on them, without any proof.

When Aristotle investigates causation, with what does he begin? With what is commonly said in this regard. People speak about the matter of an object as its cause. Or they speak about the form of an object as its cause. Or they speak about the efficient cause of the object, that which brings the matter to the form. Or they speak of the purpose or specific excellence of fulfillment of this sort of object, which Aristotle calls 'for the sake of which'. There is no juggling or comparison of unlike objects by Aristotle in any of his investigations into cause. Yet for Kant's empirical apperception, as we will later examine, the 'I' is barely conscious, besieged by random and seemingly unrelated appearances and representations, which, because it is alleged-

ly forced into this predicament, must take it upon itself to impose order and ‘unity’ on these ‘representations’, which for all we know (Kant says) may be the mind’s own conjurations. If we begin in the dark, we end up in the dark.

### SPONTANEITY OF THE UNDERSTANDING IN KANT

Spontaneity surely has to be one of the more bizarre word choices in Kant’s philosophy of mind. This word, along with the word ‘nature’, emerges in the context of the portrait that Kant has provided to us, of the mind in its functioning in the transcendental deduction. We have probably spent enough time on the side of ‘sensibility’. Kant, in his enforcement of the definition of appearances and representations, is in fact engaging in acts of spontaneous thought already in this area. For Kant cannot get his starting point from the common experience of mind. The titans of the Early Modern theory of understanding—Locke, Hume, and Kant—all impose a philosophical interpretation upon the human mind insofar as it employs sensory organs and makes judgments. The mind for Kant cannot become familiar with any object as it is in itself, and since this is the reverse of the experience of the community, Kant has no leg to stand on in staking out this territory, except for the precedent that has been set by the earlier philosophers in this movement. Beginning with Bacon they have been hostile to ordinary opinion, denying the veracity of its perceptions, and denying even the appropriateness of its use of speech. We are therefore not surprised to find Kant lauding spontaneity as the mind’s great power when it comes to the area of understanding. For insofar as Kant is merely human, alongside the rest of the human race, his portrait of the mind is not given to us *at all*. Therefore authority is involved in the setting forth of this model; and this is the context in which the alleged spontaneity of the mind finds its place.

It is appropriate and necessary once again to recur to ordinary usage of speech and awareness to evaluate the employment of this name of spontaneity. What does it mean to the common person to invoke the name of spontaneity? To be spontaneous, is to engage in some behavior that is not predetermined in any way; it is to engage in some behavior which emerges as it were, on a lark, or out of purely individual energy and absolutely arbitrary choice. That which is spontaneous has itself for a cause, and it emerges seemingly out of nothing and obliged to nothing. A friend may suddenly start to sing a song in front of her peers, for which they were not in the least prepared, and which surprised them to no end and perhaps delighted them. A person who is ill and suffering may decide to adopt an attitude toward his pain which calls forth from him hidden reserves of strength and endurance. Again, it was not inevitable in any way that this disposition should emerge, and its spontane-

ous display therefore reveals something about the character of the individual as being the sole source of that unlikely power. All of which leaves us asking, what in the world does spontaneity have to do with the human understanding, the business of which is to properly judge objects?

If a man should spontaneously judge that a bear is a dog, what would that make us say about his judgment and understanding? If the fellow complained that he was only being spontaneous, that he was only displaying his unfettered discretionary liberty to act and name after his own fashion, how would this lead us to evaluate his competence as a judge or reasoner? It would frankly appall us, because, we would say, it is not left up to the individual's spontaneity to decide what name it is proper to utter in the face of an object which is of some particular kind. The proper name to utter in the context of judging what the object is that is being judged, is not spontaneous in any degree. The object has whatever form it has. The observer is bound to properly name the object based upon what it is, not upon whatever whim he may have. We could not find a context less appropriate for spontaneity.

Kant, in fact, is relying upon spontaneous freedom in his entire construction of this portrait of the human mind. From the definition of the objects as phenomena and noumena, effectively casting their identity far from our capacities, contrary to our experience of every moment of every day; to representing the sensations of human beings as a rhapsody of overtly unrelated bits and pieces; to insisting, that the foundations of the human sensible experience so construed, leave the mind no choice, but to do that which Kant claimed from the very outset that he has the right to do, and wishes to do: to determine not what objects in nature are, by being receptive to what they are; but rather to determine what the objects in nature are, based upon one's preference, upon one's will, upon one's *decisions*. And therefore Kant's definition of pure apperception as the effective creator of objects, is merely his justification of the principle that he announced in the preface to the B edition of the *First Critique*: why should Kant be forced to follow nature's 'leading strings' in ascertaining what nature is, and what the objects therein are? Reason, Kant argues, 'has insight only into what it itself produces'. Reason approaches nature therefore from a position of independence and strength, prepared to 'compel nature to answer its questions'.<sup>29</sup> Why should Kant have to come before nature hat in hand, humbly acknowledging what the objects are, when he could be taking charge, redefining knowledge as that which a human being makes or 'legislates' into existence?

Kant's discussion of the principle of apperception is slippery. Kant alternately calls it 'original apperception' and 'pure apperception'—but we must not confuse this variety of apperception with the so-called 'empirical apperception', which is not conscious. Only the pure apperception is truly conscious, truly the 'I think'. In the model of mind that Kant has developed for us, he has established the premises in such a way that the human mind in this

model is absolutely obliged to do, and fated to do, that which Kant set out in his enterprise utterly desperate himself to be *free* to do: to determine what an object is. The emergence of the 'I think' in Kant is absolutely decisive, in this metabolism of mind. For this 'I' is not truly thinking at all. It is *willing*. It can only remember the different appearances and representations that it works with, if it first lays claim to them as 'mine'. Nothing could be further from the way that human beings think when the mental task before them is to understand some object out there in the world, which is not by nature under our thumb. Yet Kant's principle of pure or original apperception is veritably territorial: its working materials *belong* to it, such that the human mind in Kant's model literally originates the objects which it deigns to piece together.

Hitherto, Kant argues, it has been expected that our thoughts shall conform to external objects and what they are. Kant does not explain the defect of this approach, but he does insist that we may get 'farther' in metaphysics if we force the objects of cognition to conform to the principles of our thought instead. 'Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition', Kant argues.<sup>30</sup> The mind will determine in advance what the external objects must conform to in the way of ideas and truth.

This is what Kant means by the Copernican revolution, but it is no different at all from what Bacon argues in his *Novum Organon*. The experimenter is determined and resolved to make an object the recipient of some new form to be superinduced over and against it. One could literally read *Prince VI* in Machiavelli for the roots of the theory of what form is in Kant's philosophy, on what it means to be a 'possible object of experience'. Kant insists in this section of the *First Critique* that he is illustrating how the human mind 'creates nature', i.e. 'legislates' natural laws. This is an abuse of speech. The power of science to overpower, to alter, to harass and disturb the nature of an object, towards its own enterprise of making that object into something other than it is and was, has nothing to do with nature. It has to do with control, with the lust for dominion, with that ancient lure of human beings: unaccountable power. For who could follow the new philosophy, who could follow the new sciences for which Kant seeks to serve as legislator, when they undertake such operations in their priestly and mysterious rituals of language.

Not only this. But this meta-discourse initiated by Kant, on how the human 'I' or 'apperception' seizes the mantle of authority to add together the appearances and representations that it wishes to add together, as the authority of nature itself—this will make it virtually impossible for any human being to testify to a truth of fact, and not be thereupon laughed out of court by the experts trained in Kant's philosophy of mind. For if the objects that we are cognizant of are merely our own creations, and if the birth certificate of these

creations is the 'spontaneity' of our thought, rather than any correct reflection of the external objects which the people presume that they judge and name, then on what basis will it be possible to discriminate between fact and fiction? All of which is to say, that Kant's science of mind, in order to obtain and win its own right to spontaneity, has to all but disable the bona fides of the ordinary use of speech and naming. When we get around to discussing empirical concepts, which is the domain Kant sets aside for 'cow' and 'human being' and 'justice', we will see exactly how this logic plays itself out. By virtue of Kant's definition of what the human mind is eligible to do merely in order not to be overcome by a 'swarm' of appearances inside the consciousness, the human being is forced, as it were, to assert sovereignty over those mental contents, and to authorize a new naming process consonant with his will.

In Kant, alleged helplessness and chaos brings forth what Hobbes refers to in his state of nature theory as 'the right of nature' within the domain of the mind proper. In Hobbes's formulation, the scenario has the human being dropped by nature into hostile and dangerous circumstances. This alleged fate, for Hobbes, imbues the human being with a radical degree of liberty and right, to do whatever it is he shall decide is necessary for him to do, in order to protect himself, even if that means in his estimation that he must subdue and conquer all of the other human beings in existence. Kant's spontaneity of mind works on very much the same principle. The alleged randomness and lack of relation between the appearances and representations, the alleged unknowability of the objects as they 'are in themselves'—these for Kant are the birth parents of the principle of apperception, the new mother of nature as Kant will set it forth. For the principle of the 'I think' must lay claim to the contents of the philosopher's own mind and name them as he sees fit, merely in order to supply some order to the nature that is proclaimed (but never remotely proven) to lack any order of its own.

## UNITY AND TRANSCENDENTAL APPERCEPTION

The length and repetition of Kant's *First Critique* is bound to have an independent impact on the reader. Hundreds of pages are spilled by Kant in the relentless implementation of his program; and the reader is likely to find it difficult to remember, or bear in mind against this onslaught, that Kant has never been able to prove what must come *first* in his system. Kant, in other words, is obliged to begin with the common opinions. He is obliged to begin with the ordinary understanding, obviously borne out by our experience (in the ordinary, not in the Kantian sense of that term), that the objects in our world are indeed external to us, and that these are the objects that we perceive with our minds through our sensory faculties. One thinks of Locke's

definition of liberty, as the right of every person to use names howsoever that individual pleases, without any regard for their common usage. This definition of liberty is a special, a privileged definition which sets the table for philosophers who wish to bend the minds of the non-philosophers by tearing asunder the names and the objects that those names are commonly employed to designate.

Kant does not supply a proof of his claim, that our perceptions, that our sensory organs, are merely affected by we know not what external objects, leaving us with feelings and images which we cannot relate to any external object. It brings us back to our earlier demonstration, that we insist that we do indeed know things about the objects as they are in themselves, external to us.

We know that that external object must have the character or nature of existence as a part of it. We know, furthermore, that this being or existence must be the being or existence of some one thing; because if it is not the being or existence of some one thing, it would be the existence or being of no-thing. From this foundation, as we have indicated, we prove the reality of a whole of parts in nature, and from that proof of the reality of the whole of parts, we make the deduction that the whole must be a container for the parts. We can then begin to examine the container for the parts, and infer that it must be a single unity of its own. This whole, if it is to be a whole, we reason, must possess the extremities of a whole. It must possess all of the extremities of a whole if it is to be a whole at all. Among these extremities, it must possess the parts of coming into being and passing out of being. In other words, the whole must possess the extremities of time; and time is therefore not homogeneous; it is not one identical thing; because the time past is not the same as the time future, or even as time present. One has freedom to act in the time present, and perhaps room to plan for the time future. One may not reason about the past in such a way as to exercise freedom in that time which is already past. We submit this reasoning to the reader, and we invite response. We do not seek to dodge any critic, but nor do we insist that the validity of this reasoning depends upon the mere concurrence of any reader. Truths depend upon what really is, not upon what a given individual may choose to say is. Argument and reason is the way to advance towards an understanding of what is real and true. And therefore we invite reasoning and argument about this metaphysical definition of what it is to be an object, a body in nature.

Kant's theory of time is predicated upon the denial of what we have argued. From Kant's point of view, the objects external to us, while we must concede their reality, are entirely unknown to us. Kant gets himself into trouble here as is obvious. For Kant, in order to justify his account of our mental operations, insists that some intuition is needed to ignite the process; and this makes him concede that there are indeed external objects. Kant,



therefore, concedes that there 'are' external objects; yet he withholds the name of 'being' from these objects, and we say that this is jugglery. It is not possible for there to be external bodies that do not themselves have the nature of existence as parts of themselves. Kant is free to change his argument; to argue that he entirely abdicates commentary on external bodies as the good Berkeley does; but if he does so, his entire regime of sensibility goes down the tube with it. If the scheme of sensibility goes down the tube, then Kant does not even have the ability to reach his own theory of what time is (the measure of internal sense). Thus Kant must either ante up, and confess that the external objects really and truly possess the part of being or existence, or else that he denies this property of being or existence to them. We maintain that his argument will be broken if he chooses the second course, and we argue that if he chooses the first course, that our proof is set into motion. Once we have established that there are external objects that really and truly possess the actual part of being or existence, then we proceed to assert that this object must be a unity: that it must be some one object that has the part of being. Kant is not at liberty to acquiesce in this argument, but he will not be able to resist it either.

Kant wishes to arrogate the founding of 'unity', that essential nature, to the 'self-determining' powers of the principle of apperception, of pure apperception. This is to say, that Kant wants to convert his own mind, his 'I think', into the power that actually generates, that actually creates that which will qualify as an object in nature; and not only this, but that his 'I think' is characterized by spontaneity, by a general liberty or whimsy to construct objects. If it is conceded that perception brings us nothing but a 'rhapsody', then these perceptions must be a scattered 'manifold' without combination as is. The combinations of this 'manifold', Kant insists, 'represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves'.<sup>31</sup>

We behold here once again Kant's alleged Copernican revolution, whereby his mind, his 'I think', constitutes and originates the unity of the true objects in nature, and supplies furthermore the laws to them, that he is unable to argue for, unable to make the case for, if and when we are talking about actual objects independent of our will and control.

In this discussion of the nature of unity, we behold Kant at his most intense and willful, at his point of almost fanatical resolve. Yet we have indicated why Kant has no choice but to give way. Kant argues that it is impossible to say that the natures that we think about are actually combined in the objects external to us; and we hold that that is exactly and precisely where they must be combined, or be impossible to combine. It is here where we come up against Kant's utmost determination to make good on his claim that the human mind can only know that which it can make; which is just another way of arguing that there are no objects in the world which are any different from that which our wills would have so. This is why Kant insists

on using his most peculiar and presumptuous language, to the effect that his mind literally gives form to what nature is, and that nature is impotent to give form to what his mind ever thinks. On this point his argument stands or falls, and it falls.

The reader may say that Kant has outlined the theory of noumena as a representative of the real and true objects in nature, and that Kant has therefore accounted for a nature that is beyond his control and construction. Yet this definition of the noumena, as we have argued, is precisely that which cannot stand. For we *do* know that which the external objects are, in the ways we have sketched out for the reader. We do know what those external objects are, and we have even proved that we are able to know them in their extremities, i.e. in their *perceptible* parts. Thus Kant's philosophy of appearances, with his peculiar definition of that term, and Kant's theory of representations, with his peculiar definition of *that* term, go by the boards. The transcendental unity of apperception, which is revealed to be the willful innovator of Early Modern philosophy, that force which Kant expressly calls the 'self-determining' or liberty loving principle of the human soul, is revealed to be something else. We will see more exactly what this something else is when we come to Kant's moral writings below.

## THE FIRST ANALOGY OF EXPERIENCE

Kant has buried his cosmology in the intricate concepts of the 'physiology of sensation' which dominate the first three hundred pages of *the Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet in the 'First Analogy of Experience', Kant is unavoidably dipping into specific cosmological arguments. He takes us back to the early pages of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in terms of the subject matter. 'Nothing comes from nothing' is a principle that Kant has written into the notes of his copy of the *First Critique*, and this is included in the Cambridge edition. Kant also erupts into disquisitions on what the people at large think of his principle of the 'conservation of matter'. Kant strives to make it appear as if the people vouchsafe his principle that there is no such thing as passing out of existence in nature. This would be very easy to measure with a public opinion poll. For Kant to claim the people as steady believers in the principle that substance, the most true and real beings in *nature*, are eternal, is a measure of Kant the man.

It is equally interesting to observe here Kant's discussion of ancient philosophers. According to Kant's locution, there is only one school, and they all believe with him that substance is eternal. The concept of substance did not even exist yet at the time of Ionian science, nor did it exist yet in the time of Eleatic science. Aristotle founded the concept, and Aristotle founded the concept of substance based upon the principle of individuation of objects in

accordance with the combination of matter and form. Form, whether it be 'cow' or 'house' or 'plate', indicates a universal kind which applies to more than one perishable object; but in Aristotle's definition of a substance, the most true and real beings consist in the heterogeneous compound of matter and form. Matter individualizes the true and real object. It gives the lie to the conception of 'nature' as a 'whole'. Aristotle writes:

Now cause, in the sense of matter, for the things which are such as to come-to-be, is that which can be and not-be; and this is identical to that which can come-to-be and pass away, since the latter, while it *is* at one time, at another time *is not*.<sup>32</sup>

Yet Kant, following Bacon, is determined to expel the conception of form as developed by the Socratics out of the very memory banks of modern civilization. Matter, for Aristotle, by itself, does not have the part of being. It does not possess the part of actuality, of actual being. Yet Aristotle developed the theory of potential being. Matter cannot enter into the state of actual being as eternal; it can only enter into the state of actual being as impressed by a form, a specific form, which has a formula for development all its own. With this language, Aristotle has a far more advanced conception of nature. He has developed the concepts to better take into account our experience of what is real and true. The advance of Socratic philosophy into the study of the forms as principles of causation made this advance possible. Yet Kant is following Early Modern philosophy generally in making war upon the Socratic conception of form, while making way for the artificial theory of man-made form developed by Machiavelli.

The difference between these two concepts of form is noteworthy. In Aristotle's conception of substance, form is part of nature itself. Thus, nature has *immaterial* elements. *This* is indeed something that the common people of all nations and times have testified to indirectly, in their recognition of kinds in their natural languages. For the kinds are based upon form, upon the immaterial. Matter, for Aristotle, also undergoes a transformation in his theory of substance. For nature, in Aristotle's philosophy, *intends to generate*. In Kant's philosophy, this is impossible; because for Kant, substance or the most real things in nature exist already eternally. Thus, they cannot be intended, and they cannot have the different parts of time, *including a future with potential*. The raw political power of Kant's formulation indicates the tendency of modern science to pulverize souls. It does away with coming into being, and thus it does away with intended generation in nature; it does away with the immaterial reality and intelligence in nature, and therefore it suppresses, it edits away, it blots out, the very purpose of not merely the various kinds of natural objects in the world, but of human beings themselves. The human aspiration to self-determination, as distinct from a slug-

gish and stupid felicific calculus of pleasures and pains, is annihilated by Kant's terminology. This insight does not itself prove that Kant's categorical imperative is just a sham, but it certainly eliminates any resistance we would have to discovering that it *is* a sham, if it *proves* to be so.

Aristotle's theory of a substance therefore does justice to the anxiety that people feel for perishable objects, including the most intense feelings that they have for justice and injustice. Thus, there is a natural linkage between Aristotle's theory of a substance and his practical philosophy of morals. In Aristotle's philosophy of virtue, *it cannot be taught*. The only way the individual can become brave, or just, or wise, or moderate, is by acting bravely, justly, wisely and moderately. Habituation is the key to morality but the way to virtue in Aristotle's system has to be freely undertaken by deliberate choice. Kant's moral system, by contrast, is famously compatible with a constituency of 'devils'. Since Kant has done away with the purpose of the form of a human being, and the purpose of human beings (happiness and fulfillment) it is no matter for Kant to simply design institutions which anticipate perversity and make the most out of it. In this he is no different from Hobbes.

Substance, in Aristotle's natural philosophy, is bound by no necessity to anything. Its very existence is precarious, and absolutely unnecessary, as every murder and fatal accident teaches us. The marriage of matter and form conceptualizes the vulnerability of that which is alive in nature, and colors an indescribable number of our cultural expectations and *needs*. Human beings accordingly need a world which is indeed a home, precisely so that they may have the wherewithal to both choose freedom, and to be capable of leaving their home when their allotted time in life has come to an end. Yet this is not the vista of the conception of matter that Machiavelli consecrated, when he developed the new theory of man-made form.

Machiavelli silently does away with Aristotle's conception of substance. He revives Lucretius' version of Epicurean atomism, which serenely views the world as eternal, in order to alleviate the anxiety of the sort of philosopher who wishes to live for his own pleasures merely. From the vantage point of Machiavelli, the old Greek conception of matter as eternal being serves quite well. Machiavelli's philosopher-politician beholds only one reality: and he ascribes it to nature. This imperative is his desire to possess all things, as we have noted above. Machiavelli insists that *this* is necessity. The human being cannot help himself, he is by nature lawless. The academically popular fable that Machiavelli is a realist of some sort, is belied by the facts. For Machiavelli by no means seeks to curtail or subdue this conception of boundless lust in human beings. To the contrary: it is the principle which Machiavelli seeks to consecrate for his own fulfillment or whatever measure of abbreviated misery he is to be capable of once he has seized his entitlement to live for himself, utterly and without limit. This is what founding is all

about for Machiavelli, in either the *Prince* or *Discourses*. For Machiavelli, it is therefore infinitely convenient to dissolve his conception of the human race into that of eternal 'matter', such as is capable of suffering nothing that will show up in the measurements of the new political science in any inconvenient way for the new prince. To conceive of the human race as eternal substance, as mere stuff for the gristmill of the new theory of artificial form, is very much Kant's track.

## THE SECOND ANALOGY OF EXPERIENCE

It is here in the Analogies of Experience where Kant unfolds the cosmology we have been speaking about. In the First Analogy, Kant has insisted on the Pre-Socratic definition of matter and body, as part of his argument to deny the reality of generation. Here in the Second Analogy, Kant is settled more neatly into discussing his theory of causation. In this theory of causation, it is impossible for any 'object'—and we call attention to the way Kant proposes to define this word in this Analogy—to be considered in isolation from other 'objects'. Anything which is perceptible as some sort of change, must be a change to some pre-existing object; and Kant here reveals the language of cause and effect that Hume did so much to institute.

By taking possession of the signification of the name of 'object', as Kant insists that his theory of representations qualifies as an object—it is impossible for one representation to be contemplated for itself. That representation must trace back to some other representation. Now Kant has stated that he refuses to define exactly what a representation is—except to say that it is caused by some prior representation itself, and that is defined by a still prior representation; and the cosmos of 'objects' is thus an infinite chain of causes and effects, bound up for Kant in a 'system', a mechanistic system. Yet we may say that it is odd indeed that a philosopher can employ the name of object, but refuse to give a definition for what that object is. Kant's representation, of course, is submitted to the sensible portion of the domain of the human mind. It is encased within the deeper definition of sensibility, as that object to which 'effects' happen. In other words Kant has denied to sensibility the power and dignity of being able to know any objects that exist external to it, in contravention of everything that is ordinarily thought and said. Kant furthermore employs this language of cause and effect to revive the issue of generation, which he again dismisses as a mere alteration in the domain of representations.

Kant moves to argue that time is the object, and that time is a homogeneous unity. We have demonstrated, however, that time is a part of objects, a predication, or as Aristotle would argue, a predicament of being. There is a qualitative difference between the present and the past. Present time contains

the dimension of potential being, of striving for potential being, of filling out one's destiny. Past time does not possess this power anymore. Whether past time actually witnessed the pursuit of potential being, or was a record of the failure to reach into the domain of potential being, obviously varies from case to case, from person to person. But the nature of past time is that in which choices are impossible. To focus on the past and mistakes made in the past is to that degree a futile enterprise. All of this that we are saying only makes sense for the substance that Aristotle details: the object nature has intended to generate; the singular object which while partaking of a universal (knowable) form, is nevertheless wed to perishable matter. Thus *this* house, and *this* ship, are not eternal beings by any stretch of the imagination. The changes to which the combination of matter and form is liable, ultimately includes the sundering of the form itself from the matter, at the time of the dissolution of the substance. This is the line of reality that Kant's ideology of causation seeks to suppress. Kant would have us believe that the coming into being and passing out of existence of the objects known to us as external, is really only information supplied by the imagination and which therefore lacks the power of judgment which is necessary to ascertain any real thing. When the power of judgment is submitting the house and the ship or the imagination's conceptions of these things to the laws of the understanding, both objects become frozen in eternal sequences of cause and effects, sequences which do not recognize or acknowledge the existence of the compounds of matter and form which occur in time, and which are themselves a distinct *unity*.

The specter of the atoms as an infinite system of cause and effect is very hard to avoid thinking about when Kant makes his presentation in the Second Analogy of Experience. Hobbes has it. Spinoza has it. We are reminded that in his arguments for the Copernican Revolution Kant has consecrated his own mind as the legislator for nature, as the very source of nature; and it is the form of nature which Kant's analogies of experience are seeking to enshrine and impose on the culture. To do this, Kant is willing to forcibly suppress the intelligence in nature that was discovered by the philosophy of form uncovered by the Socratics. Kant has rolled out the model of artificial, man-made form in the Machiavellian line, and juxtaposed the man-made form against the human race which is in this context, insofar as it has experience, conscripted into the status of matter.

### THE THIRD ANALOGY OF EXPERIENCE

The third Analogy of Experience is that all substances live in a community. By community, Kant wishes to indicate that all substances in nature are involved in relationships with one another, to the effect that nature is a

system, that is all-embracing. This obliquely cuts at the root of what substances finally are: objects that can, and do exist *apart*. It is the individual career of natural objects that Kant's metaphysics wants to suppress with such urgency. Toward this end, Kant has denied the combination of matter and form as elements that exist in bodies *of themselves*. Kant employs the language of matter and form, and he has confused not a few commentators by his employment of that language. But 'matter' in the Kantian system has abdicated the possibility of knowing any objects as they are in themselves. 'Matter' for Kant indicates something in the consciousness of the percipient, not something in the objects that are perceived or thought to exist.

For Kant, 'matter' indicates something entirely within our minds, namely the empirical element, which has been subjected to Kant's battery of classifications denying that we can know anything directly about the objects as they are in themselves. The empirical in our experience is reduced to a mere amorphous stuff, and it is the pre-existing a priori principles of the understanding which for Kant constitute the form, the truth of the objects that the empirical element indirectly indicates. This a priori form is where Kant situates his theory of the community of substances, of substances that neither can nor do exist except as parts of an infinite and eternal chain of causes and effects.

We have examined how Kant seeks to imbue the objects in nature with 'necessity', and we have examined Aristotle's correct argument that this approach to nature seeks to obliterate the potential development of real objects in nature from our consciousness. That which is necessary cannot be potential. Substances as they really exist do not exist of necessity. As substances, they belong to the category of things that can either exist or not-exist. The substances are for Aristotle the most real being in nature, and the effort to generate them is nature's most singular ambition. Yet the whole reality of substances is that they are individual, independently existing objects, and that they can become better or worse. This is especially so for beings which are capable of choice such as human beings are. It makes truth pivotal for the human chances to choose well, and character absolutely essential for the goal of making a happy life possible. Kant closes the door on all of these realities, not the least of which is the possibility that the human race can achieve some excellence and happiness.

Kant's theory of the community of substances is directly fused to his theory of causation. It is not possible, in Kant's system, to localize the causation in the single perishable object itself. In order for us to be eligible to think about the individual object within Kant's system, we are dragged into this theory of the existence of nature as some generic, eternal whole, such that the principles of the understanding that Kant sets forth constitute the form of every object regardless of *what* they are. Kant's argument that substances do not come into being or pass out of existence in truth suborns this mythology

of the system of infinite causes, in which each object is alleged to be bound up. It is impossible to separate this metaphysics from Kant's conception of the human being, because the moral law is also known in the a priori for Kant. This is one of the subtler aspects of Kant's entire system of argument.

The portrayal of nature as an unfree domain, conceals the fact that this portrait is comforting and highly desirable from the point of view of a human moral type. This human moral type dreads judgment, abhors being held accountable for his actions, and generally flees from the prospect of responsibility with all of his might. This is Kant. We will examine this more closely in the chapters on Kant's *Second Critique* and the other moral writings. Suffice to say at this point that the depiction of nature as a mechanistic whole is a moral ideal of most of the tribe of Early Modern philosophers, who share the conviction that nature must be represented as necessity, and that the very reality of human potential and free choice be conceptually eroded away. The fearsome attacks on the prospect of 'free will' in the Early Modern philosophers speaks for itself in this regard. My point again is that the portrayal of nature as a 'system', to the degree that causation cannot be localized in any respect, is itself a moral argument, though an indirect one. It seeks to craft a vision of nature in which this type of philosopher is exempt from any standards that might encroach upon his 'spontaneity'.

#### EMPIRICAL AND PURE APPERCEPTION: IDENTITY IN KANT

*The Critique of Pure Reason* is an infamously large, complex, and sometimes obscure book. It is not widely regarded as a political treatise. Yet it is a political treatise. The politics that this work manifests, is rather like the politics that Locke manifests in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; Hume, in book I of the *Treatise of Human Nature*; Spinoza, in the *Ethics*; and Bacon, in the *Novum Organon*. In this kind of politics, the human race is subjected to a division that cuts very sharply into the new proposed cultural institutions. The operative distinction is that between knowers on the one hand, and those who are not, in the new regimen of thinking, capable of being knowers. This is the radical new species of politics in modernity. It takes place cloaked in silence, because the issues are far too obscure for public discourse. I prefer to refer to this sort of discourse as the *metaphysics of fact determination*.

Of course every civilization has a distinction between experts and the people who depend upon them. This pivotal class may be priestly, as it often was in antiquity; or it could be based upon the hegemony of certain powerful families; it could be the distinction between individuals of great wealth, and the rest. Yet modernity brought to the fore an unprecedented new class of



authority figures: the principle conviction of whom has been, and remains, that sense perception does not convey truthful information about the world. Since sense perception is the foundation of what the generality of the human race must rely upon to make all of its important judgments, this is a very radical cultural change indeed.

The political creed of the Enlightenment really conceals this distinction and even engages in misdirection. Hobbes with his talk of equality and natural rights; Locke with his talk of liberty and natural rights; Spinoza with his talk of equal natural right; on to Hume with his alleged democratic skepticism. Finally we arrive at Kant. All of these thinkers deny that sense faculties are capable of knowing objects in the world for what they actually are. The mantras of the Enlightenment, such as 'think for yourself', or 'freedom of speech' (especially political speech) can be seen, in this context, to be radically deceptive. One does not have free speech if, in the eyes of the scientific authority of the land, one does not possess the faculties, or access to the faculties, that make observation of facts possible. It is a hollow freedom to be able to speak anytime one wants, if it has been decided in advance before the competent councils that one could not conceivably know what one is talking about.

This is a problem in modernity and its liberal democratic project. There is a radical inequality that opens up on the level of the new definition of knowledge. The unsparing expropriation of sense perception as a recognized form of actual knowledge of truth of fact, quietly removes the 'foundation' from underneath the feet of most people who feel an urgent need to talk. To be sure, they are free to utter names for so long as they want, as loudly as they want, and even over vast electronic apparatuses. Yet the philosophies which have bred the fact finding social sciences conveyed their contempt for the authority of sense-perception. The supposed objectivity of science conceals a most radical partisanship, as befits the philosophy which it is.

Readers have been trained to look for Kant's politics in his 'practical' reason and the works dedicated to morals. Kant famously advertises morals as the sole arc of free human speech, as the sole domain of freedom. Yet this is simply not being completely forthright. Kant knows full well that he is establishing a new institutional authority with his transcendental idealism. The description of the faculties requisite to actual thinking, judging and knowing which are developed in Kant's system trace this ever-widening gap. Not surprisingly, this quiet administrative withdrawal of respect from the generality of the human race insofar as it aspires to be a knower of true facts about the world, shows itself in Kant's discussion of what it is to have an *identity*. Kant spends a great deal of time talking about what it is to be an 'I'. Not all 'I's' are the same, for sure. Everybody is said by Kant to have a self of empirical apperception; but they can be few indeed who have a self of pure transcendental apperception and are aware of it.

It is not possible for many human beings to fit into Kant's account of an 'I' as it is developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The self in which the common-sense individual is located by Kant is not a self in which she could recognize her thoughts and life. In the two classes of mind that Kant's system entails—that of the 'empirical apperception' and the world of 'appearances' on the one hand; and on the other hand, the self of pure transcendental apperception, which is beyond time, do neither of them furnish a representation of identity that many human beings could adjust to. Yet Kant, as self-appointed legislator of what nature, and hence human nature are, undertakes to make these the only categories capable of harboring any self at all. The empirical apperception, which exists solely on the sensibility side of the ledger, is characterized by Kant as hardly conscious.

The status of the self as empirical apperception for Kant is almost null. The empirical apperception lacks consciousness, and moreover it lacks the power of judgment. It is on the sensible side of the ledger. According to Kant, empirical apperception is 'forever variable; it can provide no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances'.<sup>33</sup> Empirical apperception is aloof from the categories, which means that it cannot participate in judgment.

The 'I' of empirical apperception is awash in a blizzard of appearances and representations, none of which have any order. 'Unity of synthesis in accordance with empirical concepts would be entirely contingent, and were it not grounded on a transcendental ground of unity it would be possible for a swarm of appearances to fill up our soul without experience ever being able to arise from it.'<sup>34</sup> This self, allocated to those who do not possess the ability to comprehend the new philosophy, reduces the self to an order staked on mere imagination, bereft of any judgment at all. The other self, the pure apperception, the transcendental apperception, manifests itself entirely *above* the swarm of appearances. This self of pure apperception, Kant insists, is not even in time of any kind. Both of these classes of human beings are consecrated by Kant's philosophy. To wit: he is engaged in creating these classifications. He is not the first Early Modern to so labor. We have indicated this. Yet Kant might be the most powerful such architect.

We should begin at the beginning. It has been established above that in Kant's account of human 'sensibility', it is not possible for the sensory organs to have access to the 'things themselves'. In fact, if the atomist portrait of Kant's characterization of sense perception is correct (and I believe that we have demonstrated as much), we can say that the sensible materials that Kant is willing to concede to enter into the human mind through the transcendental aesthetic amounts to no more than 'appearances' and 'representations'. The 'intuitions' which are eligible to be experienced in the sensible domain *represent nothing*. These representations instead reflect the manner in which the human mind is affected by external objects.

Not only do intuitions in Kant fail to convey information about the actual external objects; but that which finally emerges in the mind, Kant argues, could just as easily be caused by the mind as by an external object. 'Wherever our representations may arise, whether through the influence of external things or as the effect of inner causes, whether they have originated a priori or empirically as appearances, as modifications of the mind they nevertheless belong to inner sense.'<sup>35</sup> This is classic Hume. Kant does not allow that the individual who is restricted to sense perception and reflection upon that which is perceived engages in actual thinking. Judgment is not possible on the 'intuitive' side of the ledger; if and when judgment comes, real thinking in Kant's view, it must embody those principles of understanding that the generality of the human race has no familiarity with whatsoever. Kant does not allow that the individual dependent on sensory perception can even *engage* in judgment. We have seen that for Plato, this is not the case. Kant seeks to position himself as a kind of heir to Plato, so this is worth noting.

When readers hear the name of 'rock', 'boat', or 'house', they may think of these names as indicating 'representations'. It is true that Kant does employ these names in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to unfold some of his examples. But it is impossible for 'intuition' to enable any human being to know a house as a 'thing in itself' in Kant's system. It is impossible for any human being to know a 'boat' as a thing in itself in Kant's system. The Kantian philosopher is not going to walk up to people and indict them for thinking that they know what a boat is, or a house. Yet the fact remains, that in Kant's philosophical account of what constitutes knowing of any sort, 'representation' of these objects is not even directly possible.

Let us resume the story. What external objects may be, Kant argues, we can never know. Intuition, the Kantian name for sensory perception, originates in part by the way the human mind is affected by external objects. It is not conceded by Kant, in fact it is denied, that it is even possible for these 'effects' to represent directly any external object. We may say that the train of 'appearances' and 'representations' in Kantian intuition resemble the 'simple ideas' of Locke, and the 'impressions' of David Hume. An 'appearance', therefore, may be a smell, a shape, a blot of color, a noise. Kant fully characterizes these 'appearances' and 'representations' as unknowable in themselves. In this Kant also follows Locke and Hume.

There is a second kind of intuition in Kant's theory. That would be the 'a priori' intuition. The a priori intuition of the Kantian model of mind concerns time and space. Time and space for Kant are not eligible to tell us anything about external objects themselves. Time and space for Kant, as we have seen, are characteristic of human sensibility: they are simply *contributed* by the mind to the sensible materials. Time as a priori intuition does not reflect anything about the external bodies themselves. Nor for that matter does

‘space’, or location. Therefore, in between the two kinds of ‘sensibility’, we behold exactly nothing that can inform any individual about any external object. The vaunted discursive process of Kantian mentality has to be evaluated severely on the sensible end: for the sensible end makes no allowance whatsoever for the capacities of human sense perception to know anything about the external world or any object in it.

The ‘sensible material’ of Kantian mentality, therefore, is what Epicurus would call ‘alogos’. It has been stripped of form. For Plato, ‘house’ is a form. ‘Boat’ is a form. ‘Stone’ is a form. These can all be known unproblematically by the judgment of a mind employing the sense organs for Plato. Kant, however, following Locke and Hume, has decimated this authority of perception, and ‘authority’ is the word that they like to use. ‘Every man is free to use whatever name he chooses to characterize whatever object he chooses’ is Locke’s rallying cry for ‘liberty’ in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Such ‘liberty’ can only cast the populace into helpless paralysis. Locke writes:

Words, in their primary or immediate signification, stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them, how imperfectly so ever, or carelessly those ideas are collected from the things, which they are supposed to represent.<sup>36</sup>

‘And every man has so inviolable a liberty to make words stand for what ideas he pleases, that no one hath the power to make others have the same idea in their minds, that he has, when they use the same words, that he does.’<sup>37</sup> The self begins to emerge for Kant in between the ‘sensible’ and the ‘principles of the understanding’. Kant refers to the principles of the understanding as ‘logic’, as ‘rules’. Yet, at this point, there is no object to be submitted to the principles of the understanding. The mind, out of its own powers, must invent an object. This is the process of apperception. It is the process whereby the human mind organizes and combines the blizzard of unrelated and chaotic appearances and representations. This originally happens by what Kant refers to as ‘empirical apperception’. It is clear that the person engaging in and limited to empirical apperception is aware of virtually nothing in Kant’s system of judgment. ‘Namely, this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of the representations and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis. For the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject.’<sup>38</sup>

Empirical apperception takes place on the sensible side of the ledger. Reason is not involved. The principles of the understanding are *not involved*. Instead, ‘imagination’ is the organizing force. Imagination, for Kant, is the

faculty for 'representing an object' even though it is not involved directly in intuition. The imagination is limited to the 'subjective'.<sup>39</sup> Kant may not even mention memory, but imagination plays a large role in the mental household of the people insofar as Kant gives an account of that. Kant describes this process as 'almost blind'. It is virtually instinctual, as it does not take place on a conscious level. 'Then we must also concede that through inner sense we intuit ourselves only. As we are internally affected by ourselves, i.e. as far as inner intuition is concerned we cognize our own subject only as appearance but not in accordance with what it is in itself.'<sup>40</sup> It does not involve judgment. It involves combining the appearances and representations into some kind of unity, which for Kant is not yet a *real* unity. Only the principles of the understanding can allocate a real unity to an object. Empirical apperception does not partake of that authority. It does not have the capacity to judge. No wonder. How could the imagination possibly judge?

The large part of the human race that does not possess philosophical sophistication is therefore limited to the empirical apperception. Even if said individuals work in the sciences, which are ordered by Kant's philosophy, the most they will be doing is following rules and procedures the philosophical birth certificate of which they will not know of. The generality of the human race therefore appears to be limited to the form of apperception which does not even involve judgment or the *possibility* of judgment in Kant's philosophy of mind. Empirical apperception must take place in all animals in Kant's theory. Except for the fact that Kant's philosophy will not interfere with the way other animals communicate with one another, nor with the schemes of authority that are implicit in their modes of communication. The other animals are capable of being dominated by human beings, but they are not capable of dominating one another in this fashion. Human beings are different on this score.

The 'self' of the human being is going to have to fit into the categories of empirical apperception for Kant, unless and until a person has access to the principles of the understanding. We see that the empirical apperception is taking place in a process of constant motion, and that the sort of combination that it is possible to undertake in the domain of empirical apperception does not traffic in any ordered knowing with any degree of dignity whatsoever. Thus in the paralogisms, as we will investigate shortly, Kant reveals an almost absent self. It does not even concede the reality of 'being', which Descartes conceded to all selves. The true 'I think', for Kant, lays claim to the materials of empirical apperception.

Empirical apperception is confined to imagination and is not capable of being the object of judgment. Pure apperception, wielded by the Kantian philosopher, takes up the empirical apperception into its categories, as it were, and transforms it. 'Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all

data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representations of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name transcendental apperception.<sup>41</sup> Pure apperception, as contrasted with empirical apperception, is a conscious ‘I think’. “The ‘I think’ must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representations would either be impossible or else at least it would be nothing for me.”<sup>42</sup> It is the mysterious basis of Kantian identity, to the extent that Kant will admit it is an identity. The Pure apperception, for Kant, makes or renders the empirical apperception anew. In pure apperception, there is the thought of ownership: ‘these representations given in intuition all together belong to me’. The ordering of these representations is the mind’s own creation, that very principle for which Kant proudly fights in the B edition introduction. The mind in Kantian philosophy refuses to acknowledge that it can know anything except for that which it makes. Kant suggests here in this passage that if our minds did not impose order on the representations, that we would lack identity altogether; for otherwise I would have as multi-colored and diverse a self’ as the representations themselves, allegedly a veritable rhapsody.<sup>43</sup>

That which in empirical apperception is confined to the level of time and place, in the pure apperception is lifted entirely above such unreal things for Kant. Kant’s pure apperception does not exist in any time. Or the only time that the Kantian pure apperception exists in is the permanent now. Pure apperception for Kant is the *creator*: it puts together the objects; it judges; it imposes the categories of *substantiae phaenomena*, the eternal substance that the people can never know of.

Kant insists that his pure apperception is a strict unity, divisionless. ‘For that which we call the soul, everything is in continual flux, and it has nothing abiding, except perhaps (if one insists) the I, who is simple only because this representation has no content, and hence no manifold, on account of which it seems to represent a simple object or better put, it seems to designate one.’<sup>44</sup> It is therefore ‘simple’, as we will see in the Paralogisms. It accompanies absolutely every scrap of consciousness for Kant. One cannot be conscious of anything, without being conscious of one’s pure apperception, in Kant’s model; for the pure apperception is the author of everything, it is the creator of objects, and the laws to which they are subject. Combination, Kant argues, ‘does not lie in the objects’, and we are therefore forced by Kant’s logic to identify our own understandings as the source of the order that the objects are finally thought to have.<sup>45</sup>

Yet this pure apperception remains a mystery: for how can an indivisible simple unity, which allows for no personality to speak of, which insists that it is not in time at all—how can it also be distributed to every thought, in such a way that one cannot distinguish between the thought and the self? By

contrast, the impoverished empirical apperception is not even conceded the competence to know simple quantities, for this too *requires judgment*. Judgment is not possible in the domain of empirical apperception, Kant argues. Here the generality of the human race languishes in a stupor of appearances and imagination, combining things at random, using names each one after his own fashion. 'The 'I think' must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me.'<sup>46</sup>

It is really not possible to understand Kant's distinction between empirical apperception, and 'pure', 'transcendental', 'synthetic' apperception, if one does not first become more familiar with the Epicurean tradition of philosophy. Kant is no slouch when it comes to knowing Epicurean philosophy. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant celebrates Epicurus as the foremost natural philosopher of antiquity.<sup>47</sup> Kant recognizes Epicurus as the major alternative to the Platonic tradition; but Kant never gets around to accurately representing the Platonic tradition, and may not even know it. We recall from our discussion above that for Epicurus, science *is in service* to the emotional needs of the philosopher. Epicurean hypotheses are calibrated to reduce anxiety, or to procure pleasure. Truth is not the issue.

The 'empirical apperception' does not constitute thinking of *any kind* for Kant. Those who are left to cope with the world through dependence on their own senses, are assigned by Kant to the category of the 'subjective'. They are as Locke gives them liberty to be: everybody free to assign any name he pleases to any object. It doesn't matter what name the people assign to objects, even though it is quite rare among human beings generally to deviate from the common language and its anchor in the very forms which Plato testifies to.

'Pure' apperception, for Kant, is not only independent of empirical apperception. Empirical apperception is on the intuitive side of the mental model. It is not conceded the power to make any judgment at all. The subjective mental operations of the people have no probative value whatsoever in Kant's philosophy of mind. The people experiences the natures of objects, as we all know they do. Yet the new science repudiates this 'bondage' to the 'leading strings' of nature. 'They' (Galileo, Torricelli) 'comprehended that reason has insight only into that which what it itself produces according to its own design; that it must take the lead with principles for its judgments according to constant laws and compel nature to answer its questions, rather than letting nature guide its movements by keeping reason, as it were, on leading-strings.'<sup>48</sup> Kant's 'pure' apperception does not obtain the slightest *guidance* from empirical apperception, which is confined to mere imagination. That which intuition represents, as we have discussed, and as Kant freely admits, is nothing more than how their minds are affected by unknown

external objects. Yet when the pure apperception, the foundation of the principles of the understanding and the categories that we have discussed, asserts itself, it becomes the foundation, the *very condition*, for ‘possible experience’ of any valid kind.

There is a ferocious possessiveness in Kant’s allegedly ‘objective’ and ‘pure’ apperception. The dynamic of the ‘I think’ for Kant is Epicurean through and through: it is ‘My’ thought, ‘I’ think. There is no ‘we think’. The deepest philosophy of the thinker is hard-wired to his own emotional and psychological experience. He will not brook dissent from anyone. He does not concede any common grounds for debate whatsoever. The mind, the ‘I think’, is ‘legislator’ for nature, Kant argues. ‘Thus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity that we call nature, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, in the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there.’<sup>49</sup> Not only does it denounce, obscure, and indict all reports as to what nature is by the generality of the human race; but it professes to actually be godlike, the very author of nature, through the ‘a priori’ ‘laws’ that it articulates. The character of Kantian philosophy of mind is driven by *will*. ‘The understanding is thus not merely a faculty for making rules through the comparison of appearances; it is itself the legislation for nature, i.e. without understanding there would not be any nature at all.’<sup>50</sup>

Kant, as a thinker who has denied to nature any order; as a thinker who has denied to nature and its objects any order of its own, in any of its kinds; Kant insists that in order to think at all, he himself must have a worldview where *every single object* is in place in one coherent system. “The ‘I think’ expresses the act of determining my existence. The existence is already given, but the way in which I am going to determine it i.e. the manifold that I am to posit in myself as belonging to it, is not yet thereby given.”<sup>51</sup> There must be no two hairs in the universe, no two pebbles, no two soda cans, and the mixing and matching of same, that are not coordinated by the ‘laws’ which Kant’s mind projects out there into nature as its author. There is no evidence that it is possible to gather from any empirical experience in the world, which Kant concedes has the right to in any way count as evidence against the ‘pure apperception’ and its ‘transcendental laws’. This is the philosophy which scholars regard as ‘humble’.

One can see why Kant has departed to some degree from Descartes. Descartes wafts about with professions of uncertainty as the basis for his science. Kant prefers Locke and especially Hume for their ingenious disenfranchisement of the generality of the human race in the domain of knowing *of all sorts*. The modern philosophers are obsessed with sense perception. They feel absolutely compelled to indict its probative value, although they always create some new subordinate nomenclature that enables philosophy to tolerate the community’s reliance upon such that averts a direct confrontation. It is not to the people’s advantage that no confrontation takes place. For



ad infinitum, the scientific methods, tiered upon modern metaphysical convictions, sew up their mouths on decisive cultural issues. What does 'prejudice' finally *mean* for Kant? The nomenclature of prejudice as employed by Kant falls upon every single human being who thinks that her sense perception gives her accurate information about the humblest object in the world. 'The understanding therefore does not find some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but produces it, by affecting inner sense.'<sup>52</sup>

The information, if that is what it can be called, on display in Kantian 'intuition' and 'imagination' has no order, no form, no *logos*. It has no order that Kant will concede any authority to. It has merely what Hume describes as the laws of association, the truth of which cannot be known. When the 'objective' or transcendental apperception beholds empirical apperception, it asserts sovereignty over it. Since Kant has already defined the intuition as bereft of any validity whatsoever in terms of revealing anything at all about the objects in nature, for what they really are, what Kant means is that the pure or transcendental apperception *projects* patterns, or 'laws' or 'rules' as he calls them. It is as if a new tribe of gods is to preside over the human race, from the airy citadels of philosophy. This is a philosophy which overrules the opinion of the world, with the mantra that there are no foundations to be known.

The difference between the pure apperception and the empirical apperception traces the distance between the philosopher and the community. In my view it is a political issue. Kant does not propose merely to create a philosophy for himself. Kant, unlike Epicurus of old, presumes to give orders and instructions to all of the sciences, to constitute his a priori foundations as the new and invariable starting point for any thought that has the eligibility to be considered as competent to know a true fact about anything. I am aware that Kant, in his logical essays, does talk about 'empirical concepts'. We will address the logical essays in the next chapter. We will demonstrate that the logical essays, which guide the scientists in interaction with the community, sustain and uphold this chasm in original authority that we are so concerned about. Negating the facts known by sense perception from the original starting point of philosophy and science (even if it is just as a competing alternative!) sinks the public into paralysis in its own efforts at speech and attempts to deal with reality. There is nothing more fundamental for a human being than the attempt to deal with reality in life. If the accounts of the facts that the community is finally left to deal with are decisively filtered through philosophies and sciences which gut and expropriate the content of what the ordinary sense perception and localized judgment are capable of beginning with, then it is a science, a purported science, looming as authority over the generality of the human race. It is not a science which attempts to make it clear to the human race that their sense perception is invalid. The philosophers do not introduce bills into congress explaining that the sense perceptions of the

people will not be valid for the purposes of ascertaining truth. Yet the whole society turns to science as *the* authority, as Hobbes knew it would have to.

Want of reason, that is, ignorance of causes, disposeth, or rather constraineth a man to rely on the advice and authority of others. for all men whom the truth concerns, if they rely not on their own, must rely upon the opinion of some other, whom they think wiser than themselves, and see not why he should deceive them.<sup>53</sup>

Ignorance of the signification of words, which is want of understanding, disposeth men to take on trust, not only the truth they know not, but also the errors; and which is more, the non-sense of them they trust; for neither error, nor non-sense, can without a perfect understanding of words, be detected.<sup>54</sup>

The people trust the learned, Hobbes reasons, because they do not have any choice. They trust the learned because they do not take it that they themselves have any reason to mistrust those who would do their thinking for them. Those who cannot ascertain truth by themselves, in view of the problems raised for truth by modern philosophy, are dependent on those who claim to be able to know the truth, and whose good intentions they must therefore trust in.

Pure apperception and empirical apperception are as different as night and day. One is said to traffic in mere appearances and representations, galvanized not by knowledge, but by the imagination. No thinking, no cognition, Kant argues, is possible on this level. This is the level beyond which the people's representatives cannot even reach. It is 'the subjective,' almost less than a dream. Pure apperception, however, is identity related to the principles of the understanding, the categories. In the domain of the understanding, a preliminary 'I think' (Kant's autonomy, Kant's spontaneity, as if these had *anything* to do with knowing nature for what it is), insists on authority for bringing together all of the contents of the mind, all of the contents of the thinking mind, to create the transcendental foundation for all experience which shall qualify as valid experience. 'Objects of possible experience' for Kant are subsumed under the authority of the *principles of the understanding*. Only concepts guided by the principles of the understanding are even conceded the slightest bit of objectivity for Kant. That which the people are eligible to know of itself, is invalid in the a priori.

## THE PARALOGISMS OF PURE REASON

We should briefly recapitulate the conclusions of our study this far. We have seen that the apparatus that Kant assigns to the domain of sensibility allow for no contact between the sensory organs, the representations and appearances to which they are subject, and the external objects in the world. What

enters the mind, for Kant, through sensibility, is 'alogos': it has no order or pattern of its own. If it had one our faculties could not discern such. 'Intuitions' are the name that Kant employs to organize the representations and appearances; but there is no real organization, not on the side of sensibility. For the sensory information cannot refer to the external world, and it certainly cannot give any kind of instruction whatsoever to the principles of the understanding.

In fact, Kant is relying upon the models of Hume and Locke for his characterization of the sensible experience. We have seen above that in both of those cases, in that of Locke and Hume the alleged empiricists, the ordinary perception of matters of fact is very much suppressed and discredited by the new philosophy. Locke opened the door to the theory of the mind inventing concepts: picking and choosing among its simple ideas', based on its 'liberty' (Kant's autonomy or spontaneity). Kant's conception of the self, of the 'I', is not to be inferred from the Cartesian proposition 'I think'. Kant alleges that the two are analytic. Yet this 'I', which Kant promises must accompany absolutely 'every thought', is nevertheless in Kant's view 'simple' or without parts or division of any kind. Kant refers to this alleged unity as 'logical unity'.<sup>55</sup>

Or, still better, David Hume: for whom sensory impressions are nothing but a 'heap'. For both Hume and Kant, the appearances and representations may as easily be productions of the human mind as 'effects' occasioned by external objects. There is no way to know. Rather, Kant already knows for sure that intuition is not a meaningful representation of the external world. Thus what else could intuition concern but 'matter', bereft of form, neutered scraps of sensation. 'Empirical apperception,' is the consciousness that Kant allocates to the domain of sensibility. This is what Kant calls the 'subjective. Here Kant means exactly what Hume means when he characterizes sense perception as no more meaningful than custom, or associations, operating on a physiological level beneath consciousness. Thus, there is no thinking conceded to the common person whatsoever.

Kant, who professes to follow Plato, has eliminated Plato's emphasis on memory. How could he not? What is there to remember of value, if one has ruled out of court that one's sense perceptions can provide one with any accurate information about the world in its truth? Instead, as *its* organizing principle, the denizens of the domain of intuition or sense experience have 'imagination' to bundle up their thoughts. Kant has not chosen the name carelessly. The people, by the name 'imagination', indicate that which is make-believe, the unreal. That is exactly what Kant means by the term. The imagination and its role in the intuitive consciousness has no probative value whatsoever concerning what the world is. The ordinary mind is consigned to a state of near delirium. Empirical apperception is the 'I of the identity of the

common person. Kant denies this common person or this subjective 'I' any self-awareness at all. The human race might as well be manikins.

Pure apperception, or transcendental apperception, involves a different 'I'. This 'I' is self-aware. In fact, it is the accompaniment of every single thought that the mind has. Every thought is 'I think', i.e. 'my thought' for Kant, on the transcendental side. For the consciousness, Kant argues, must be a unity. Thus the imagination is assigned to organize the intuitions of the people, but it does not propose to do anything with them. Why would it? They are only appearances and representations. What could one do with them if one is Kant? There is no self, properly speaking, no 'I' that is self-aware at all, for Kant, except it has its foundation in the transcendental, a priori self. Only those who are acquainted with the a priori teachings may properly *have* a self in the context of this philosophy. This 'I', consequently, is the philosopher himself. He is both everywhere, and nowhere. His 'I' accompanies every single thought, of any kind whatsoever, that has any degree of 'thinking' in it for Kant. There is no thinking to speak of on the level of intuition, *whatsoever*. Thus the philosopher cannot exactly afford to reveal himself in his 'I', too conspicuously. For Kant, this is why the Cartesian project must be left behind. For Descartes starts out with something that the ordinary person could at least identify with. Descartes' model is a loaded philosophical model on its own terms that suppresses the validity of the testimony provided by the senses as well; but Descartes' self is the center of his philosophy. Kant, embarked upon a much grander project (giving laws to nature, legislating what nature is), decides to reduce the transcendental 'I' to a husk. Nothing humanly recognizable must be detectable in Kant's pure apperception. That 'I' which is the unity of the mind for Kant, which combines everything into one great whole; which thereafter represents nature as one seamless whole by this authority; this 'I' proposes to speak in the name of the whole human race. The laws of the understanding have apodictic certainty. They are necessary laws, they are not open for investigation or inquiry.

Thus, when it comes time to discuss identity more pointedly, Kant does so in the paralogisms. The paralogisms are defined by Kant as patterns of illusory thought to which the human race is prone. What are these paralogisms? One of the paralogisms or false beliefs is that the human mind must have a conscious self which knows of its own existence, and thus regards itself as a substance. 'I, as a thinking being, am the absolute subject of all my possible judgments, and the representation of myself cannot be used as the predicate of any other thing. This I, as thinking being (soul), am substance.'<sup>56</sup> Kant indicates that this paralogism suggests that the person has a soul, by which it is signified that the self may have convictions regarding immortality; or even just that one is merely a self, a distinct substance, apart from the other selves. Kant's principles of understanding do not allow for diversity of opinion. Kant insists that he is speaking for the whole human race. That 'I'

which in Kant is legislator, must be sworn to be the operating mechanism of every human mind whether the people are familiar with it or not. Kant intends to close down discussion as to 'what is' in nature, entirely.

Kant is appalled at the prospect of a rational psychology. The notion that one can become aware of qualities that one's own mind has is forbidden to Kant's transcendental apperception. For to recognize the self as a self, would obviously interfere with the effort to legislate for all of nature, to engage in the Copernican revolution. The self must disappear from view, assume the name of the 'logical self', without possessing any recognizable attributes of a self as human beings know selves. In fact, the self is operative for Kant in the entire new definition of logic. It is the authority of the 'I' on the transcendental side which combines everything. It is the same authority which is operative in every logical syllogism. *As if* Kant has any business using Aristotle's model for human reasoning, anchored as the latter is in ordinary perception and ordinary thought. There is no reasoning in Kant's model of mind. There are only 'rules', orders, directives, commands. The mind is its own authority, if you are Kant.

One of the great canards that Kant is able to pass off on his readers is that human freedom has no place in the study of nature. Really? Is Kant's radical rebellion against the generality of the human race, and everything that is felt, seen and thought by billions of people, not an act of 'freedom'? Must Kant really wait until the 'moral sphere' to get his freedom? Or is his capacity to legislate reality for the human race the foundation, the true foundation for the moral freedom which he will assert in its place?

## THE SECOND PARALOGISM

What is at issue in the second paralogism is the nature of the 'I'. Those whom Kant regards as confused or lost believe that the 'I' is in time. The external observer perceiving Kant, therefore, in Kant's view, will believe that Kant himself as a consciousness must be in time. Yet Kant rejects this proposition. For time belongs only to the faculties of intuition, and in the faculties of intuition time does not represent something real or part of the object in itself. The individual reflecting upon herself does not reflect upon herself through intuition, and therefore our self, for Kant, is independent of time.<sup>57</sup>

Kant also insists that the 'I' is simple. But the people whom Kant regards as misguided believe in a unity of the mind; an identity of a self. Kant's pure apperception concerns a 'logical I' which is capable of accompanying, nay which must accompany every single thought as its legitimating aspect. Thus there is nothing in Kant's transcendental apperception which is *not* 'I'. Kant's 'I' is both simple, and distributed to absolutely every thought that there is, of any object that is conceivable to think about from the vantage

point of the transcendental self. This is the dilemma for Kant's 'I'. Kant's apperceptive or pure 'I' is the creator of all thoughts, the origin of the judgments, the justification for the rules; and therefore everything is included in Kant's 'I'. Yet it still must be offered up to us by Kant as 'simple'. This is not what the ordinary philosophers mean by having a simple soul. For Plato, the soul is a unity insofar as it has prospects for immortality, since those objects with parts are corruptible. Yet Plato never suggests for a moment that his soul is identical with 'justice', or 'courage', or 'Theaetetus'. Kant's 'I' must be simple because it is his thought, and his thought must be a unity because in Kant's view all thought strives for one all-unifying principle. Yet in Kant's model, since truth is 'a priori', i.e. known without the benefit of experience—the 'I' is the true author of all of the 'categories', which would not be real if they were not accompanied by the mind as 'my' thoughts.

In fact, in proportion as Kant's pure apperception might be seen as a true and recognizable self, Kant would have trouble passing off his 'transcendental apperception', the 'I think', as the authority for the whole new project of legislating to nature. Kant insists that the 'I' is simple but it is at the same time 'distributed' to every single thought, appearance, imagination, intuition, mathematical operation, natural scientific investigation, that there can be. Anything that lacks the accompaniment of the 'I think' for Kant, doesn't exist, cannot exist for the 'I' at all. Therefore the Cartesian localization of the self in a soul, which is not distributed to the rest of the universe, but which is the source of the thought upon the rest of the universe, will not do.

Descartes does not start out with 'I think'. That is his *conclusion*. Descartes starts out with sense perceptions, which he must have in order to dismiss them. This dismissing of sense perception is the very experiment which sends the Cartesian subject into terror and anxiety; and out of this terror and anxiety, the Cartesian self is born. We do not need to rehearse very much of the Cartesian project here. It should suffice to bring up Descartes' evil demon, which the soul and its existence have to fear and worry about. What if all our thoughts are planted there by an evil demon, Descartes worries. He is a recognizable self, if a warped one, in his posture towards sense perception and his new atomistic theory of science. Kant, incidentally, affirms this of Descartes in his *lectures on Metaphysics*.<sup>58</sup> Through his whole career, Kant argues, Descartes was an atomist. Yet Kant's project is so much more aggressive, and far reaching. Descartes does not have a political science. Descartes does not have the audacity to claim that he, and his mind, are to be the legislators for what nature is.

Thus, the dispute, or the illusion, that Kant purports to discover in the second paralogism is the concept of simplicity which most other people have of themselves, including Descartes at least, that they are a single self. Descartes infers something about himself. He infers that he exists. Kant has a major problem with the utterance of this name 'being' or 'existence'. For

Kant, existence is a simple sign, which is to be used by the authority of the transcendental principles of the understanding and nothing else. This is why Kant will not dignify his account of any natural body with the property of being. It would lead to knowledge and remembrance of knowledge of the actual world we live in, rather than the one Kant would like to situate us in.

The function of the copula or 'is', the symbol for being, is predictably situated by Kant in the mind's enterprise of creating objects for itself. Pure apperception is not subjective, but 'objective'. The employment of the copula therefore does not refer to any external object, but to the mind's process of combining its diverse representations. That is the aim of the copula 'is' in them: to distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective.<sup>59</sup> Kant is a Cartesian in a loose sense. For Descartes, self-awareness is rather passive. Perplexity stuns the mind into self-awareness; yet in Kant, this 'I' is assertive. It is literally creating its own ideas and the accounts of the objects with which it has to deal. "The 'I think' expresses the act of determining my existence. The existence is thereby already given, but the way in which I am to determine it, i.e. the manifold that I am to posit in myself as belonging to it, is not yet thereby given." Kant's self proudly boasts of its spontaneity, indeed of self-determination. This cannot be said of Descartes. 'Yet this spontaneity is the reason why I call myself an intelligence.'<sup>60</sup>

Unlike the Cartesian self, which is a recognizable human self, and simple, Kant argues for a different kind of 'simplicity'. Kant's 'I think' is *everywhere*. It is the mysterious force which enables Kant to undertake all of the edicts and rules and combinations of his 'logic', in a mind purified of experience allegedly. Kant's 'I think', because it must be said to accompany every single thought that is valid, and since the only truly valid thing in Kant *are* thoughts; the 'I think' of Kant must be everywhere at once *and* simple. If we added the predicate or nature of 'being' to Kant's 'I', that would be an impossible feat for him to transact.

In the formally stated paralogism, Kant is talking about a 'composite whole'. Such a whole is composed of many substances, allegedly. (If this is not the atomist model of a perishable object, I greatly mistake.) The average person argues that it is not possible for the soul to be simple, and distributed to each and every member of the composite. Kant lashes out at this thinking. For his 'I think' must be capable of being infinitely distributed, to every single thought which is allowed to pass for any kind of thing at all.

We have to go a bit deeper into Kant's second paralogism, for this is where Kant establishes the 'I' of the thinking self, and what it is. It does not have any recognizable human characteristics. How could it, if the transcendental self is purified of experience? Kant has segregated his knowledge apart from the entire order of experience. Kant does not learn from things that have being; Kant's transcendental categories prescribe what exists with-

out reference to any empirical object that has being. There is no room for 'being' in the transcendental self. Thus Kant characterizes his 'I think' of pure apperception as an 'entirely general thing'. That is highly interesting, from the man who coined the motto of his age to be 'think for yourself'. Kant is therefore possessed, he claims, of a simple self, of an 'I think' that is a simple unity; except that it is the basis for the existence of every other thought, out of itself. No wonder Kant despises dialectic, real dialectic. Is it possible for the 'I' to be both 'simple', and therefore a unity, i.e. without division; and also everywhere, accompanying and the very basis for and reality of every thought? And every object of thought? Kant says yes.

Descartes' infers the whole of actual science from himself. Descartes is but an early and a mild example of the neo-atomist ideology. Descartes had his fights, but he really was not a pugilist. Hobbes treated Descartes with utter contempt, and insisted that he Hobbes had been the founder of the new science. Hobbes certainly possessed the spleen and vigor of Bacon much more than Descartes did. Bacon was a revolutionary. Hobbes was a revolutionary. Descartes did not want to be regarded as a revolutionary. Thus the self is alleged to be simple, but it is the foundation of every other thing that can be said to exist at all, for Kant.

Kant is a good Lockean in the second paralogism. He has decided that he is not going to use the name of substance the way even Descartes did. Nor is he going to use the concept of the 'I' the way that Descartes did. Obviously, since terror is the basis for the only knowledge that Descartes professes to have (i.e. anxiety is the experience that can't be denied), Kant is not about to work with this subject. Since Kant has ruled that the human mind must invent nature; since Kant has ruled that the human mind must give order to nature, because nature allegedly does not have any order of its own; because of these things, Kant denies that his 'I' indicates anything like any other person's concept of the I. In what does the Kantian 'I' consist finally? Kant calls it 'simple', but what is this simple thing? Kant calls it 'logic'. It is the 'logical self', i.e. it is the authority by virtue of which the entire Kantian conception of knowledge and reality is constituted. It is indeed autonomous, although Kant does not want to make that conspicuous here. It is indeed spontaneous, for it is subject to no evidence, to no common opinion, certainly to absolutely nothing in the empirical realm.

### KANT ON 'BEING'

We can see here very well in the context of the paralogisms one of the reasons why Kant is so deathly afraid of the name 'being' or 'existence'. For to utter these words is to call forth the external world. It is to call forth a fight over that which has existence, or that which does not have existence. Kant



had rather suspend our ability to be acquainted with any object in nature, a la Hume, in order to be capable of prescribing what *ought* to exist in his view. All of Kant's theory of nature, all of the neo-atomist theories of nature, all of the neo-Epicurean theories of nature, are moral projects: they are all determined to submit that which does exist, to the will of the philosopher. This is the oldest fight that has ever existed in philosophy, and it is time to renew it.

It is not for no reason that Kant chooses the name of 'aesthetic' for all things perceptual. In the common parlance, 'aesthetics' sounds like something that one performs at an art museum. Everyone has his own idea of beauty, that is a very easy idea to sell. It is a less easy idea to sell that every person has his own idea of what a horse is, or a tree, or an ice cream cone, or a liar. Yet Kant's employment of the term 'aesthetics' applies to all of the domain of perception across the board, everything whatsoever to do with 'intuition', which is another word that to the ordinary person sounds like something mysterious and obscure. Either the ordinary opinion uttered is a matter of taste, by this estimation, or it is a matter of mystery. But aesthetics is the larger name that Kant prefers to characterize ordinary discourse, and the modesty of this name hardly conceals the brutal dismissiveness implicit in this usage of speech by a philosopher claiming to represent public and common truths.

The use of the name 'being' or 'existence' would really toss a wrench into Kant's gears. It would make it impossible to close the door on the domain of experience, for the new generation of sciences. For the people cannot conceive of morality in abstract terms, they can only discover morality in experiences, which is where morality actually *counts*.

Kant concludes the second paralogism by getting down to brass tacks. Kant is upset with the rational psychologists, because it is alleged that they know of their own existence. This concedes far too much to the human race, Kant opines; and in this he is with Hume more than Locke. The mental faculties of the human race must be utterly discredited, absolutely crushed in reputation.

Kant warns, at the conclusion of the second paralogism, that the rational psychologist's conception of the self, which is more complex and closer to Hume's than Kant is willing to allow to his 'I think', that rational psychology encourages people to look to their experience to see what is real. This is the great error, Kant intones. It is only the a priori laws of the transcendental apperception which can determine what is real, i.e. can *create* nature, and determine what it is eligible to be.

## THE THIRD PARALOGISM

Among Machiavelli scholars, there is a general consensus that the Florentine is not a philosopher. I do propose though that Machiavelli is very much a philosopher, and that evidence of Machiavelli's philosophy can be found right here in Kant's third paralogism. In two places in the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli gives his definition of a human being. Man, Machiavelli argues, is that being who nature has made capable of desiring everything; but of acquiring only some things. This means that Machiavelli and his breed of person is always disgusted with what he has; and he is forever trying to narrow the gap between that which he possesses and all things, the entire universe as it were. This is the foundation for Machiavelli's theory of *acquisition*. There is no limit to that which the self seeks, and the self seeks to command. This is not the morality of any people. This is the reversal of every custom of any civilization. It is the war against nature as it is in itself; and Kant's attempt to deputize himself as the new author of nature, as the new lawgiver to how things can be and are, savors of this flavor of acquisition. Machiavelli writes:

It is the verdict of ancient writers that men are wont to worry in evil and to become bored with good, and that from both of these two passions the same effect arises. For whenever engaging in combat through necessity is taken from men, they engage in combat through ambition, which is so powerful in human breasts that it never abandons them at whatever rank they rise to. The cause is that nature has created men so that they are able to desire everything, and are unable to attain everything. So, since the desire is always greater than the power of acquiring, the result is discontent with what one possesses and a lack of satisfaction with it.<sup>61</sup>

The distance that Kant holds himself apart from the rest of the human race is the evidence. Kant will not even concede to his fellow human beings that he exists in time along with them. He will not concede to them that any part of his soul exists in time; or even that he has a soul; as if Kant's 'I think' is this mysterious lunging, commanding, creating, appropriating, ad infinitum. Kant's appetites are the things that would show up if he admitted to an existence of his own soul in time.

Locke is not ashamed to hide this. Locke's version of natural right even in the *Second Treatise of Government* is there, partly concealed, but easy enough for a skilled undergraduate to root it out. Kant however is another apostle. He wants his own fame. He wants to leave his own acquisitive imprint on civilization. He wants to take his bite out of the apple, after Hobbes and Spinoza and Locke and Hume. This is why the account of identity that Kant yields is not recognizable to us.

We live in time, after all. We are affected by things that happen in time, but Kant's 'I think' is adamantly *not*. He is invincible. He is immune to destruction because he does not exist properly speaking. This is following the philosophy of Epicurus about as closely as one can. Epicurus famously proclaimed that he could teach a man how to be master of death. 'Death Is nothing to us'. 'Get used to believing that death is nothing to us. For all good and bad consist in sense experience and death is the privation of sense experience. Hence a correct knowledge of the fact that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life a matter for contentment not by adding a limitless time to life but by removing the longing for immortality.'<sup>62</sup> By banishing the gods, by banishing the prospect of judgment in the domain of souls, Epicurus obtains his immortal independence and absolutely boundless liberty. Epicurus absolutely refuses to concede anything to the community, that he may be sovereign over his own experience, over his own pleasure and pain, the only terms of good and evil that he will acknowledge. The atoms do not exist in time. And the time that the people perceive, as Kant takes such pains to argue, is mere 'aesthetics'. It is merely a feature of the human mind, impressing unintelligible datums of formless sensation, with the mind's alleged own attributes. This time is not real, Kant never tires of arguing. Here in the paralogisms Kant insists that he has proved, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the truth of his transcendental aesthetic. I demand of the reader, that he reveal to me where Kant has proved these 'appearances and representations' as the truth of perception. I have not been able to find it. Certainly I find the assertion, the repetitive assertions, but nowhere demonstration. 'In the transcendental aesthetic we have undeniably proved that bodies are mere appearances of our outer sense, and not things in themselves', Kant argues.<sup>63</sup>

The issue at hand in the third paralogism is identity. What is it that makes up a self? John Locke had argued that a self involves remembrance of one's existence in different times. Kant, while he is happy to borrow much else from Locke, does not propose to accept this inference. There can be no inferences for Kant when the 'I think' of the pure apperception is at stake. There must be nothing but simplicity, divisionlessness, absolute unity. This is why Kant is reluctant to refer to the soul as a substance, which in Aristotle's definition is that of which predications are made.

Kant cannot allow parts to his 'I think' in the 'a priori' domain of the new philosophy. For the slightest distinction between 'I' and its properties, opens the door to investigation and critique. Kant closes the door. Kant insists that this 'I think', while it is absolutely simple, yet it holds together the whole mental universe of his philosophy. The 'I' is the cause of it all. It accompanies everything that qualifies as cognition. There is no cognition that is conceded to exist which is not first of all 'I think'. Yet Kant still will not allow that this is a predicate of a *thing*, a soul. This is why Kant argues that Descartes is wrong. Descartes makes an inference; Cogito, ergo sum. 'I

think, *therefore* I am.’ Thinking is proof of a self for Kant, and this is precisely what he cannot tolerate in his own philosophy. Kant is claiming that the truths he holds out are above and beyond time. Kant is holding out that his ‘I think’ is beyond time. Or it is always in its own time.

Kant makes the following argument. Kant denies that this can be true for anybody who has true thought, true cognition, true access to the principles of the understanding. The people, condemned to languish in the murky regions of imagination and intuition, believe in appearances and think that the appearances are real; the philosopher, lifting himself high into the aether of the a priori principles, insists that he is always in the same time, that his very self is generative, *causative*, of everything else.

There can be no parts to this self, Kant objects. The other person who looks at us may perceive us to be in time, but that is only knowing us as appearance. In other words, the people perceive Kant and may regard him as a being in time. Yet appearances are not real by the lights of the transcendental apperceptive self. Therefore Kant from his own point of view is always in the same time, immune as it were to the ravages of time, or shall we say to the effects of *history and events*. The people, and the wars that Kant encourages for their welfare, take place in time. Kant does not exist there. His identity is not with the others.

## NOTES

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4. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 249.
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6. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 184 B 228.
7. Plato. *The Parmenides* 142c.
8. *The Parmenides* 144b.
9. *The Parmenides* 142d.
10. *Parmenides* 156A.
11. *Metaphysics* 1064a10.
12. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 196 A 157.
13. *New Organon*. Edited by Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne. Cambridge University Press, 2000, 17–18.
14. *The New Organon*, 102.
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17. *Letter to Herodotus*, paragraph 39. *Epicurus Reader*. Translated by Brad Inwood. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
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22. *Critique of Pure Reason* A7 B 11.
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24. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Peter Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, 479.
25. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 34 A 20.
26. *Posterior Analytics* 81a38.
27. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 124 A92.
28. See my *Locke, Hume and the Treacherous Logos of Atomism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 145–50, for a discussion of the psychological aspects of Locke's model.
29. *Critique of Pure Reason* B xiv.
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31. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 130.
32. *On Generation and Corruption* 335a33.
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34. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 111.
35. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 99.
36. John Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978, III.ii, 2, p. 405.
37. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 408. Same cite.
38. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 133.
39. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 152.
40. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 156.
41. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 107.
42. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 132.
43. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 134.
44. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 381.
45. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 135.
46. *Critique of Purer Reason* B 132.
47. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 472, B 500.
48. *Critique of Pure Reason* Bxiii.
49. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 125.
50. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 127.
51. *Critique of Pure Reason* B157.
52. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 155.
53. Thomas Hobbes.. *Leviathan*. Edited by Noel Malcolm. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014, volume 2, I.i.156.
54. *Leviathan*. I.xi.158.
55. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 355.
56. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 348.
57. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 363.
58. *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 31, 230.
59. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 142.
60. *Critique of Pure Reason* B 157, B 158 note (p. 260).
61. *Discourses on Livy*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, book 1, chapter 37. Cf. book 2, chapter 1: 'Besides this, human appetites are insatiable, for since from nature they have the ability and the wish to desire all things, and from fortune the ability to achieve few of them, there continually results from this a discontent in human minds and a disgust with the things they possess.'
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63. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 357.



## Chapter Three

# Kant's Logic

Submissiveness. Genius. Inscrutability. Prestige. These terms all concern Kant's philosophy of logic very intimately. They are either terms that Kant himself prefers, or they are terms which truly characterize his teaching. In the anthropological lectures and in the *Blomberg Logic*, Kant pronounces upon the status of philosophy as a distinctive field of human learning. Kant characterizes philosophy as something that cannot be taught. It is a product of 'inventiveness' and genius. 'Philosophy involves more genius than imitation.'<sup>1</sup> 'In the use of the understanding there is something that nature has reserved for genius, as it were, and which no art can replace.'<sup>2</sup> 'Philosophy and the art of philosophizing cannot possibly be learned, but mathematics can' (38). 'My philosophy must be grounded in myself and not in the understanding of others' (38). 'But other sciences on the other hand, are again of such a kind that they cannot be learned at all by imitation, but instead genius is required to know, to learn them' (119). 'These include the whole of philosophy' (149).

Kant ridicules the role that memory plays in true philosophy. Among the ancients, Kant lauds Democritus as the first philosopher. 'Democritus deserves to be called the first philosopher. He was the instructor of the great and famous Epicurus, who is among the ancients what Cartesius represents among the moderns, and who improved the previous method of philosophizing.'<sup>3</sup> Democritus was a contemporary of Socrates. Kant disdains Aristotle in the *Blomberg Logic*, in almost Hobbesian language. 'Aristotle developed a blind trust in himself and he harmed philosophy more than he helped it.'<sup>4</sup>

Kant claims that he is in the process of charting the 'rules of the understanding'. Aristotle, in Kant's appraisal, 'established some; but these were nothing but road signs towards errors'. Aristotle, in Kant's estimation, must be overcome in the domain of logic. Allegedly, Aristotle provides us with

nothing but ‘false propositions’, which must be forgotten (Kant does not say refuted) in order to lead the understanding to its ‘natural perfection again’.<sup>5</sup>

And yet Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to appropriate for himself the terminology of Plato and Aristotle both, of the ‘ideas’ of the former and the syllogism of the latter. Kant had not during the 1770s developed any new respect for the Socratic line of Greek thinkers. Kant seeks to borrow from the prestige of the names of Plato and Aristotle, but in so doing he misleads.

The characterization of philosophy as the product of genius, as ‘that which cannot be taught’, is spectacular. How can anyone call philosophy knowledge if it cannot be taught? How can anyone claim to know anything that he cannot teach and *demonstrate*? ‘All cognitions whose agreement with the laws of our understanding and reason occurs immediately are indemonstrable; these can be accepted without investigation, they need not be proved, indeed, one cannot even undertake an investigation of them.’<sup>6</sup> ‘The understanding and reason, left to themselves, never err: this much is settled without doubt and is certain.’ (132) ‘That which can be demonstrated through pure reason not only does not require a proof from experience, but does not even permit one.’<sup>7</sup>

This is the true engine of the Early Modern movement in philosophy. It seeks to replace, to wholly expel, the old philosophies of nature and morals descended from those Socratic Greeks; but it never dares to directly engage those philosophies in their arguments and to actually attempt to *refute them*. This is in fact why the language of genius has become so important to Kant. The nomenclature of genius is a preemptive attack against those who would either seek to call Kant to account for his appropriation of the names of the concepts of Plato and Aristotle, or for anyone who would require of Kant that he actually demonstrate and prove *any* of his doctrines: from representations and appearances, to empirical apperception, the transcendental apperception, or the alleged fraudulence of the dialectic as Plato and Aristotle employ it.

Kant’s scorn for the principle of non-contradiction is evident in the *Blomberg Logic*. Kant may have his antinomies, but this is not to be confused with the dialectic developed by the Socratics. Kant will not even refer to Plato and Aristotle by name, but only to the ‘ancients’ in this passage which dismisses their dialectic: ‘it was nothing more than the logic of illusions’. Kant dismisses it as a ‘sophistical art’, and accuses ‘the ancients’ of ‘intentional tricks’. Kant closes the passage by equating dialectical logic with a ‘logic of illusion’.<sup>8</sup> What is certain is that for Plato and Aristotle, dialectical reasoning cannot be applied unless and until one has a stable *object* to apply it to. Kant, with his phenomena and noumena, withholds such an object. For Kant dialectic ‘deals merely with the form of the understanding and of reason’.<sup>9</sup>

First it needs to be said that Kant’s logic is a metaphysics; it proclaims what is most real, it ranks the various kinds of knowledges, it claims to be



able to distinguish between those objects of opinion which have no being and those objects of science which cannot be challenged. This is the origin of *prima philosophia* in Aristotle, but Kant has moved it into the category of logic because Kant does not want his metaphysics to be open to challenge and inquiry. Kant lays down many strictures of truth, including the assertion that every claim has truth and falsehood in it. Aristotle makes the claim that every opinion of the truth contains some part of the truth, but this is not Kant's meaning. Kant gets irritated and angry with the point of view that seeks to remove contradictions from opinions. Kant calls the effort to apply the dialectic in this way a form of toxic self-love and narcissism. It is anything but that. The principle of non-contradiction says just what it means: that contradictory claims cannot apply to the same object at the same time in the same way and in the same sense. This is what Kant seeks to undercut.

The origins of Logic, for Plato and Aristotle both, is some nugget of knowledge. Science cannot build upon ignorance. Something less than scientific or perfect knowledge must underlie science in the way of *evidence*. It must be some kind of correct insight. In Aristotle's view:

All teaching and all intellectual learning come about from already existing knowledge. This is evident if we consider it in every case; for the mathematical sciences are acquired in this fashion and so is each of the other arts. And similarly too with arguments—both deductive and inductive arguments proceed in this way; for both produce their teaching through what we are already aware of, the former getting their premise as from men who grasp them; the latter proving the universal through the particulars being clear.<sup>10</sup>

It is evident that if sense perception is wanting, it is necessary for some understanding to be wanting too—which is impossible to get if we learn either by induction or demonstration; and demonstration depends on universals and induction on particulars, and it is impossible to consider universals except through induction (since even in the case of what are called abstractions one will be able to make familiar through induction that some things belong to each genus, even if they are not separable, insofar as each thing is such and such) and it is impossible to get an induction without perception; for it is not possible to get understanding of them; for it can be neither from universals without induction nor through induction without perception.<sup>11</sup>

And just as there are some non-demonstrable principles, to the effect that *this* is *this* and belongs to *this*, so too there are some to the effect that this is *not this* and this does *not* belong to *this*; so that there will be principles some to the effect that something is, and others to the effect that something is not.<sup>12</sup>

An induction, too, is sufficiently convincing; for we have never yet become aware of anything by giving a definition—neither of anything belonging in itself nor of any accidental.<sup>13</sup>

For Plato, this is recognition of the forms or patterns. The human ability to correctly name an object for what it is constitutes for Plato the judgment that everybody possesses but which people are not aware that they have. It comes so easily to people to know the various kinds of objects and to name them that it is effortless, and therefore they are not conscious that they indeed know something when they correctly name the objects. In the *Cratylus*, Plato examines the nature of correct naming and philosophical challenges which have been posed to it:

Socrates: Well now, let me take an instance. Suppose that I call a man a horse and a horse a man. You mean to say that a man will be rightly called a horse by me individually, and rightly called a man by the rest of the world, and a horse again would be rightly called a man by me and a horse by the world—that is your meaning?

Hermogenes: He would according to my view.

Socrates: but how about truth, then? You would acknowledge that there is in words a true and a false?

Hermogenes: certainly.

Socrates: And there are true and false propositions?

...

Socrates: But is a proposition true as a whole only, and are the parts untrue?

Hermogenes: No, the parts are true as well as the whole.

Socrates: Would you say the large parts, and not the smaller ones, or every part?

Hermogenes: I would say that every part is true.

Socrates: Is a proposition resolvable into any smaller part than a name?

Hermogenes: No, that is the smallest.<sup>14</sup>

Kant, since he applies the criteria of Locke and Hume in their definitions of sensory perception, opposes this ordinary and effortless knowledge. He dismisses it as ‘imitation’. He claims that it is always wrong. The Lockean and Humean sciences of understanding reduce perception to what Kant calls the ‘aesthetic’ or ‘taste’. Now these are not words that the community uses to

describe its knowledge of matters of fact. To call a table a table is not aesthetic. It has nothing to do with taste. To recognize a tiger is not a matter of aesthetics or taste. But Kant shepherds the entire category of perception into the nomenclature of aesthetic or taste, as we see in the transcendental aesthetic of the *First Critique* as well as in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

For Plato and Aristotle both, experience furnishes the original datums of knowledge. Plato's theory of the wax block of the soul traces accurately how people come to learn the different kinds of objects. No comparison is involved. People do not learn what a table is by comparing it to chairs, or mountains, or mice. The soul takes the impression of the form, and this is an apt characterization of the way it happens. In the Kantian model of perceptual learning, one must engage in a comparison of one 'object' with another object. This has nothing to do with experience or how people learn. It is the language of the association of ideas, of fragmented and amputated ideas, not of apples but of round and red and tart. For the so-called empiricist tradition that Kant builds off of, the mind must invent its own objects; it must piece together the alleged fragments that the senses are said to bring before the mind. Kant's conception of aesthetics undermines the foundation of the logic of Plato and Aristotle both. Kant fundamentally denies, not as nakedly here in the early 1770s in the still pre-critical period, that experience reaches the objects themselves. So instead of the apple, the house, the dog, Kant has us awash in representations and appearances. For Plato and Aristotle the objects to be known are out there in the world, woven into the nature of things as the forms which make them the kinds they are. The moderns never refute this philosophy of form.

Early Modern philosophers have a different conception of form, one that is originated by human will. Machiavelli is the founder of that teaching. Here in the *Prince* Machiavelli illustrates the political ideology of his theory of form, one which Bacon developed for the purposes of a natural science.

But let us consider Cyrus and the others who have founded or acquired kingdoms: you will always find them all admirable; and if their particular actions and orders are considered, they will appear no different than Moses, who had so great a teacher. And as we examine their actions and lives, one does not see that they had anything else from fortune but the opportunity, which gave them the matter enabling them to introduce any form they pleased.<sup>15</sup>

Francis Bacon, a fervent admirer of Machiavelli, does indeed seem to reproduce the Florentine's conception of form in his own *New Organon* of science.

The task and purpose of human power is to generate and superinduce on a given body a new nature or new natures. The task and purposes of human

science is to find for a given nature its form, or true difference, or causative nature or the source of its coming-to-be (those are the words we have that come closest to describing the thing).<sup>16</sup>

For Kant, in the *Blomberg Logic*, there is something called ‘laws of the mind’. Kant openly claims that the knowledge of reason and understanding cannot be required to prove itself. ‘The natural understanding has its own laws, according to which it alone can proceed. These are called natural laws.’<sup>17</sup> Kant claims that these rules for the use of the understanding can be known without reference to any object whatsoever except reason itself. These, Kant argues, ‘can themselves be recognized a priori and without experience’. The understanding here is alleged to have insight into ‘its own rules and makes thereof a discipline’.<sup>18</sup> ‘No power in nature deviates in its actions or conditions, under which alone it can function; thus the understanding taken alone cannot possibly err.’<sup>19</sup>

Aristotle’s definition of knowledge is pointedly different. Let us consider it:

Now what knowledge is, if we are to speak exactly and not follow mere similarities, is plain from what follows. We all suppose that what we know is not capable of being otherwise; of things capable of being otherwise we do not know, when they have passed outside of our observation, whether they exist or not. Therefore the object of knowledge is of necessity. Therefore it is eternal; for things that are of necessity in the unqualified sense are all eternal; and things that are eternal are ungenerated or imperishable. Again, every science is thought to be capable of being taught, and its object of being learned. And all teaching starts from what is already known, as we maintain in our analytics also; for it proceeds sometimes from induction and sometimes by deduction,. Now induction is of first principles and of the universal and deduction proceeds *from* universals. There are therefore principles from which deduction proceeds, which are not reached by deduction; it is therefore by induction that they are acquired. Knowledge, then, is a state of capacity to demonstrate.<sup>20</sup>

Science, the citadel of demonstration, is segregated by Kant apart from even the obligation to attempt to demonstrate its claims. The mind functions according to laws without our knowing it, Kant says, and we must accept that this is so. The laws of the mind, whatever they are, cannot be challenged. ‘If we were to suppose that some judgments could be utterly false, it would have to be possible for the understanding to deviate from all laws and in this way, under this suggestion, all the prestige of our doctrine of reason would fail and disappear; on the contrary, we would be able to trust it very little.’<sup>21</sup> But we will come to find that Kant’s laws of the mind are first of all an actual cosmology, a theory that is not only originally developed as a cosmological theory, about natural objects and objects in nature; but that it is a false theory that is not too difficult to refute. Kant is hammering authority into place for

this cosmology, and it is the categories of this cosmology that Kant is moving into place. For Aristotle, the major premise of a syllogism is the product of inference from a gaggle of empirical individuals. Just as for Plato, the precursor to the hypothesis that the form exists by itself in isolation is the observation that we use the same name to indicate a variety of objects, and it is the thing that all those objects have in common under said name that is the object of Plato's science of definition.

Kant attacks this whole possibility, ridiculing 'imitation' and by extension memory; and custom too comes in for a long series of rebukes by Kant. 'Imitation and custom are the greatest sources of aesthetic prejudices. Frequent approval of one or another object, makes, as it were, an archetype in the soul, with which one is in no position to compare other things that look otherwise than this original which has been established, and which, as a model, is incapable of improvement.'<sup>22</sup> But we do not want to get into moral education yet, although Kant brings morals too into his logic. The theory of the a priori nature of reason is already present in these logics. The mysterious allegation of the 'loss of the understanding' which must be accepted without question are the measure of correct thinking in Kant's model. This is strictly authoritarian, because these cosmological ideas of the understanding that Kant wishes to market as innate are not that. False ideas are not innate. Besides, if they were truly 'laws of the mind' and innate the people would already think this way and their customs would reflect these beliefs too, which is quite evidently not the case for Kant who must turn all of his brainpower against custom and opinion.

## ON CUSTOM

Kant belongs in the Epicurean tradition. This means that will is the foremost aspect of Kant's philosophy, and there is abundant evidence of this. Reason and will are not identical. Indeed, this is the foremost question in a metaphysics of fact determination. Either the first thing to be known is outside of our power, and is something we must strive to comprehend without creating ourselves; or it is something under our power, subject to our wills. Kant insists in the B preface to his *First Critique* that we can only know what we make. In this he follows Hobbes and Bacon and all the experimental philosophers, for whom the experimental approach is a mode of control. There is no place for experience and the truth learned in experience in Kant's logic. The 'laws of the understanding' are sui generis in his account. They are presented as unimpeachable and as the standard for everything else. It is no use to refer to Kant's famous claim that he believes in discursive reason when his account of sense perception has already blocked that inlet of knowledge. Kant's theory of intuition and a priori intuition, let alone his doctrine of phenomena

and noumena, preempt experience and what it can tell us. It is a preemptive attack on truth.

There is no doubt that there is such a thing as custom and that it does not reflect the highest levels of thought that are possible for human beings. Plato and Aristotle both agree with this observation, but that does not mean by any stretch of the imagination that they therefore lack respect for ordinary praise and blame. To the contrary: for Aristotle, it is the very basis of morality. ‘Those who object that that at which all things aim is not necessarily good are talking nonsense. For we say that which everyone thinks really is so and the man who attacks this belief will hardly have anything more credible to maintain instead.’<sup>23</sup> Even for Plato, the people do not judge incorrectly when it names actions just and unjust, brave or cowardly, temperate or intemperate, wise or ignorant. It is only general opinions that are shaky in Plato’s view.<sup>24</sup>

The unsophisticated do not mistake the individual exemplars. In morals a great deal of the communal way of life is anchored in custom; and this is the sum total of the human race’s attempts to order its life without philosophy, but with art. A great many varieties of human experience are contained in these customary regulations and attitudes. They extend to the careful ceremonies celebrating births and marriages and the mournful rituals surrounding deaths and accidents. It involves and extends to the domain of punishments and jurisprudence. The Common Law is a great example of this kind of art, and the Enlightenment brought this form of law rooted in the contemplation of individual cases and broader principles under relentless attack.

### APAGOGIC PROOFS

What Kant labels the ‘apagogic proof’ has become exceedingly common in contemporary scholarship. It is telling to find this in Kant’s logic as a method of argument he admires. The apagogic proof is a psychological strategy essentially. Instead of addressing the subject matter before one, either in its evidence or in the method of the acquisition of the evidence, it makes a bee-line for prestige as a mode of leverage in argument. Kant calls it the consequences of believing in a certain claim.

A cognition whose consequences are all true is true, too. But if just one consequence is false, then the cognition is false too. From a false cognition nothing true can arise. For a false cognition is the true *nothing*. But the consequences of a cognition that is partly true, partly false, can be true. In the investigation of a cognition one will thus need to look not too much to its truth as to its false consequences. It is admittedly true in general that so-called apagogic proofs, or the demonstrations *ad absurdum contrarium*, where in order to establish and support his opinion, one makes it clear and shows how ridiculous and completely absurd it would be if one were to suppose its oppo-

site—it is true that these proofs are very easy, but they do not give enough light in regard to the sources of a cognition.<sup>25</sup>

Kant may argue, when one makes a certain claim, that the consequences of believing in this claim would involve contradicting a great number of learned individuals, whose views he does not take the time to elaborate or present. This is not a method of argument that is ever designed to reach inquiry. It is not a method of argument that is ever designed to reach evidence as to the substantial issue. Not in the case of the learned individuals who are not named, nor to any of the prestigious others who are claimed to be evidence against this claim, to render the speaker ridiculous or absurd. This is a method of argument that is designed to deliver a quick blow, a quick method to stifle inquiry and argument. It is not meant to lead to claims of other discussants, who themselves take up the issue for debate. For obviously if the speaker has learned anything from those prestigious people which refute the claim, then he should present their evidence, rather than resorting to the specter of their naked authority which is what the apagogic proof does in a sufficiently indirect manner. The long and the short of it is that it is an appeal to authority, unnamed authority, and a way to avoid coming to the question at issue.

Kant spends a lot of time talking about the ancients and the moderns, all along apagogic lines however. He never takes us to the actual teaching of Plato and Aristotle: not in the logic, not in the *First Critique*; and certainly not in his practical reason and those books of morals. Kant assails attitudes in an apagogic way. He claims, as we have seen in the case of the principle of non-contradiction, that every claim is alleged both partly true and false. This encompasses all claims, that is, which do not arise out of the magical a priori domain of knowledge that Kant names or christens 'reason' and 'understanding'. Locke is not the father of these alleged a priori principles. These principles, which apply allegedly to all objects in nature, to the extent that nature is conceded to exist at all (and even matter ranks as a mere appearance for Kant), are in fact substantive. There is the claim that nature is a 'totality', one great chain of causes and effects; that it is infinite in extent such that one can't know the cause of any single object 'in itself', but one is automatically referred to a prior object, and ad infinitum backwards. 'The unity of the world whole, in which all appearances can be connected is obviously a mere conclusion from the tacitly assumed principle of the community of all substances that are simultaneous; for were they isolated, they would not as parts constitute a whole, and were their connection (interaction of the manifold) not already necessary on account of simultaneity, then one could not infer from the latter, as a merely ideal relation, to the former, as a real one.'<sup>26</sup>

There is the doctrine of phenomena, which means that the perceptual experience is a kind of dummy experience, conjured up by the collision of

atoms with the perceptual organs. There is the claim that the real and true objects are eternal, which is the backbone of atomistic ideology. There is the claim that all change in nature is merely alteration. Kant in the *First Critique* makes a great show of giving way to the testimony of the senses in this one particular, that there is change. But that is only because Kant's larger circle of concepts delimit the proposed sort of change to appearance. The atoms are the permanent substrate. They alter their position relative to one another, changing the appearance; although as we see Kant has transferred this function of altering appearance to a priori modes of intuition. All of these points of view were originally argued for based on substantive thinking. But the moderns have undertaken to simply parade the positions as if it is absurd to entertain any other notion. They do not bring up the fact that these points of view were defeated on the merits in antiquity. Kant himself goes much farther than anyone else. He attempts to make it appear as if these points of view make up what he calls the 'laws of the mind', setting up these partisan delusions as if they were the only way the human mind is eligible to think. In fact, merely in order to buttress his ideology, Kant is forced to reject and exclude the evidence of all of our sensory experience, as well as the principles of thought that we actually do rely upon such as the principle of non-contradiction. Kant limits the horizon of metaphysics to Locke and Leibniz, as if they were the beginning of thought. As if their thought did not depend and originate on earlier or ancient thought. This is what the great war upon the history of ideas has wrought, irresponsible ignorance. It might be nice to imagine a chain of history where the philosophers begin anew each time, where the main conduits of conviction and argument are not tied to more ancient teachings. But that is not the way it has unfolded. For us at least, and based on the records that we possess of human thought, there are two traditions of cosmology and philosophy and they both originated so far as we know in Greek antiquity. The modern philosophers such as Kant idealize Epicurus, who himself reproduces the thought of Leucippus and Democritus, who in turn operated under the shadow of Parmenides' argument. They suppress the teaching of Plato's philosophy, making it appear as if Plato is hostile to sensory perception when this greatly distorts the truth.

We can only begin to repair the damage by reviving evidence from Plato's texts. Thus the Socrates of Plato's *Laches*, *Cratylus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, and *Parmenides*, defends the evidence of sense perception against its ancient critics and enemies. This is still the Plato of the forms and ideas, which are however for Plato wrought in the natural objects themselves, where perception must discover them in order for them to ever make their way into the mind. This holds even despite the doctrine of anamnesis, whereby the soul originally knew all of the forms at a time before birth. In Plato's famous account of anamnesis in the *Phaedo*, at birth, the soul forgets all this knowledge of the forms. And it is only the



knowledge of the forms brought by perception which revives memory. Without this inlet of information from the conduit of experience, the soul possesses no knowledge at all. Needless to say, Kant's 'forms' involve an abuse of language. For Kant, 'form' means not the pattern or idea in the perishable objects, but the superior posture of the principles of the understanding towards all empirical intuition, as Kant prefers to call it. 'In all cognition, matter and form are distinct. Matter means the object, form the way of cognizing the object. With form, it depends on consciousness. A cognition of which I am conscious is called clear. If I am not conscious of it then it's called obscure.'<sup>27</sup> The understanding refuses to consider any object as it is in itself; Kant claims that one will never be led to the principles of the understanding as he knows them to be by starting out with any object as it is in itself, or mere observation;

There are two kinds of inferences that actually do not belong to logic but really have no other place, namely *per inductionem* and *per analogiem*. We infer *per inductionem* when we take it as a basis that what belongs to many things of a genus belong to the remaining things of that genus. This is not really a pure inference, of course, for I cannot infer from the particular to the universal.<sup>28</sup>

Kant wants to pass off the ancient atomistic cosmology as if it is innate to the human mind, and has the nerve to claim that this is how the community thinks.

I find that at all times and not merely the philosopher but even the common understanding has presupposed this persistence as a substratum of all change in appearance, and has also always accepted it as indubitable, only the philosopher expresses himself somewhat more determinedly in saying that in all alterations in the world the substance remains and only the accidents change. But I nowhere find even the attempt of a proof of this so obviously synthetic proposition. Indeed it only rarely stands, as it deserves to, at the head of the pure and completely a priori laws of nature. In fact the proposition that substance persists is tautological.<sup>29</sup>

The argument was founded by Parmenides, of course. It was shared in and developed by all three varieties of atomism that emerged in the wake of Parmenides' argument, but most powerfully in that of Democritus, and Epicurus who later adopted that argument. According to Kant Epicurus was the best natural philosopher of ancient Greece. Yet here Kant appears to want to claim ownership of the doctrine, although he, unlike his predecessors (including Epicurus) offers no new proofs. Kant would take exception to this, and claim that his transcendental idealism enables him to make the argument in such a way as it has never been made before. By adopting an agnostic attitude formally to what bodies are actually like in the world, Kant instead predetermines how we are eligible to think about any such. Kant transfers the

principles of Parmenides and Democritus to the mandatory thinking process or logic of the human race, as the new parameters of thought. It may be that Kant himself is not familiar with the refutations of these arguments. He did not after all highly value the study of ancient doctrine. That doesn't change the fact that all of these arguments are not only refutable, but fatally refutable.

### KANT ON SKEPTICISM

In his *Blomberg Logic* Kant talks about skepticism and its varieties. He talks about dogmatic skepticism, with disdain; and 'dialectical skepticism' with approval. Dogmatic skepticism is anyone who has become convinced to abandon investigation because one has arrived at doubt. The skepticism that Kant favors is a general mental attitude of postponement of judgment. 'Previously, however, an honest skeptic was nothing but someone who postpones his judgment until he has had opportunity and time to take this or that matter under consideration; and who only then ventures to infer whether a cognition is to be taken as true or is rather to be regarded as false. The skeptical method is directly opposed to the dogmatic.'<sup>30</sup> Doubt is ubiquitous and spurs investigation. But what is of moment in this section of the work is Kant's discussion of Plato and Epicurus on the issues of sense perception and reason.

One does not know if Kant communicated to his students alleged passages from Plato, where he is made to say the following: 'every thing that we want to cognize well and have proper insight into must occur a priori and solely through reason. The senses contain nothing but deception.'<sup>31</sup> I am not familiar with Plato saying this anywhere. Now since there are a fair number of pseudo-Platonic dialogues, in which the resident Socrates can be made to say anything, I do not discount the possibility. But as a general representation of Plato's thought it is radically false. This is not the Plato of the *Gorgias*, of the *Laches*, of the *Republic*, of the *Phaedo*, the *Cratylus*, the *Parmenides*, or the *Theaetetus*. For Plato, there is the doctrine of anamnesis to which we have alluded earlier. It is true that Plato holds in the *Phaedo* that the soul originally knew all the forms. But the soul forgets these forms at birth into a body, and only perception, perception of enmattered forms, can bring the knowledge of the forms into the soul. To be sure: For Plato, it is the soul that judges, but it employs the senses *as its instruments*. Perception for Plato is a judgment, and above all else, this preserves our access to the objects of our experience as real and true things. This is what Kant takes away with his philosophy of appearances and representations. By indicting the faculties of sense perception, Kant removes our knowledge of the ubiquitous objects from the ranks of knowledge itself. Kant's phenomena are *eternal* substances.<sup>32</sup>

This is done through sense perception, since for Plato nature is actually organized into the formed objects. This is a full-fledged theory of natural causation. Intellect moreover is not separated from the particular objects in the way that Kant makes necessary. For Plato, perception is a judgment (*Theaetetus*).<sup>33</sup> It involves memory at the center, along with sense perception. Memory records the forms, the immaterial forms wrought into the natural objects. Memory records the forms which are 'universals', and which apply to many bodies. The immaterial, therefore, as form, is part of the perishable particulars. The form is in the perishable body. As Aristotle would say, the perishable body has a formal cause, its formulate for development in accordance with its kind. This is sometimes called 'entelechy' by scholars. For Plato, the intellect possesses nothing a priori to work from. Memory is obtained through sense perception, and before sense perception of a kind of object, there is no record of memory to use in judgment.

The intellect therefore does not supply, for Plato, quantity to a perceived object; it does not supply quality to a perceived object; it does not supply 'relation' to a perceived object, and it does not supply 'mode'. Plato's intellect borrows from sense perception, it does not order sense perception or make it possible. Intellect for Plato and Aristotle involves logos, definition in speech of the various kinds of objects. Plato abstracts from a number of courageous actions and individuals, to hypothesize the independent existence of the form of courage and to begin to purify the definition of it by driving out all contradictory elements. This form of dialectic Kant despises. He ridicules it as a sophists' trick, that form of dialectic which for Plato is the true practice of scientific definition.

Kant's characterization of Epicurus is no more accurate than his characterization of Plato. Epicurus, for Kant, is a 'sensualist', for whom perception is the sole fount of knowledge. One could not teach Epicurus in a more false manner. According to Kant, the teaching of Epicurus consists in the following: 'Everything that we are in a position to cognize a priori through reason is nothing but a chimera. Only the senses give real, true certainty.'<sup>34</sup> First of all, perception does not come first in the order of mental operations for Epicurus. Knowledge of the atoms, a pure deductive science, comes first. Epicurus theorizes the existence of imperceptible bodies which thereafter are thought to be the very cause of perception. Epicurus writes:

After distinguishing these points we must next arrive at a general view about the things which are non-evident. The first point is that nothing comes into being from what is not; for in that case everything would be coming into being from everything, with no need of seeds. 39. And if that which disappears were destroyed utterly into what is not, all things would have been destroyed, since that into which they were dissolved does not exist. Further, the totality of things has always been, just like it is now and always will be. For there is

nothing for it to change into. For there exists nothing in addition to the totality which could enter into it and produce the change.<sup>35</sup>

Epicurus has a theory of ‘images’ which underlay his theory of perception. These ‘images’, in Epicurus’ telling, fly off from the configurations of atoms and are received into the mental organs of the percipient. This account of images, however, cannot hold up. For the images cannot be material, for the atoms do not shed matter. They are unchangeable. Nor can the image be immaterial, for Epicurus has limited the immaterial to the void and nothing else. Hence they are unaccounted for even in his theory.

Kant then refers to the position of Epicurus and Plato as admitting of a ‘middle way’, with Epicurean sense perception coupled with Plato’s alleged a priori ideas. An Epicurean theory of perception, coupled with a theory of a priori ideas (which cannot be found in Plato because they are not there) is very much Kant’s philosophy.

Skeptical thought is an important domain to consider in Kant. Kant himself spends a great deal of time meditating on the tradition of skepticism, and his fondness for the skill is profound. Kant has almost only kind things to say about Hume in the *Blomberg Logic*. Indeed he has only kind things to say about Spinoza in the *First Critique*. One can’t begin to discuss skepticism in Kant proper, however, until one has addressed the issue of the relationship between philosophy and society.

The modern era is radically different from the ancient era of philosophy in this respect. Philosophy conceives of its project differently in antiquity, and modernity has rejected that legacy. Ancient thought, anchored in the Anaxagorean tradition, extending to Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, puts truth first. These philosophers, though they may eventually end up making arguments that depart considerably from public opinion, nevertheless respect the parameters of ordinary opinion. For Plato’s Socrates, it is the community, the interlocutors, the observers, really, who establish the foundations of discourse. When Socrates professes ignorance, it is philosophic doctrines that he seeks to expose, at the outset of discourse. Correct knowledge of particulars is the province of perception, but it contains, for Socrates, a hidden universality in the awareness of kinds. The untrained layperson, if asked ‘what is courage’, will enumerate various actions that she has seen performed. Plato does not doubt that the layperson has witnessed acts of courage in the enumerated examples. Philosophy therefore takes its original bearings from ordinary opinion, and its imperative is *to know*. Aristotle formally comes out and declares this imperative to be *the* human characteristic in the first line of his *Metaphysics*.

The layperson recognizes courage only after she has first had an experience of it, or witnessed it, in herself or others. She learns the name that denotes the pattern. Thereafter, when she uses that name, it will involve

remembrance of that pattern, in its essentials. The layperson is not thereby suited to provide a definition of courage in speech. This is what she cannot do. Her knowledge is not reflective. She grows dizzy at the thought of contemplating the isolated form of courage. She is no match for the sophist speech makers, who make appearances emerge around the use of the term. Plato always begins his search for definitions with perceived particulars, relying upon memory and that barely conscious knowledge of recognition of the patterns for which the names have been devised.

Aristotle, when he sets forth the model of his logic, insists that the audience is the judge of the premises, and that the premises must all be inducted from experience. These Greeks therefore are interested in truth. The ancient skeptics, such as Pyrrho, did not have this imperative. Pyrrho had freedom for his imperative. He wanted above all to be free from the responsibility of judging, for this imposes accountability on the human being, and extends customary authority over the individual. The ancient skeptics did not want to convert the whole society, or the rules of society, to the cult of skepticism. They used skepticism as a shield against the community, to defeat the customary authority for their inner conviction. Modern skepticism is a very different animal.

The ancient skeptic proper insists that all judgments, all opposed judgments, are equally possible. He calls all other views 'dogmatic'. Sextus Empiricus, the Pyrrhonist philosopher, believes that skepticism is "an ability or mental attitude which opposes appearances to judgments in any way whatsoever, with the result that owing to the equipollence of the objects and reasons thus opposed, we are brought forth to a mental state of suspense, and next to a mental state of 'unperturbedness' or quietude".<sup>36</sup> The Pyrrhonian skeptic developed in the world where the philosophy of atomism already existed. Atomism is a dogmatic account of nature, one which is not skeptical by Pyrrho's rules. But it also, like skepticism, calls into question every judgment of the senses. Thus there is a breed of skeptics, that is founded on non-skeptical principles. Atomism, the most powerful version of such a philosophy, seeks to discredit most human opinion about the world. The difference between these two views is evident. The truly skeptical view of the world professed by Pyrrho yields inaction, stasis. But atomism can serve as a wrecking ball. Atomism can compel belief, as a purported science. These are two very different doctrines. The truly Pyrrhonic point of view can never be more than an outlier, it could never possibly rule society as Hume observed. For the people would drive it out.

Hume writes:

The great subverter of Pyrrhonism or the excessive principles of skepticism is action, and employment and the occupation of common life. These principles may triumph in the schools, where it is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to

refute them. But as soon as they leave the shade and by the presence of the real objects, which actuate our passions and sentiments, are put in opposition to the more powerful principles of our nature, they vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined skeptic in the same condition as the other mortals.<sup>37</sup>

There is no need to overlook the fact that Hume would like to see human nature driven to such extremities, their every thought and perception stifled and throttled by philosophy, and herding mankind into desperation. But the skeptical influence of atomism, since it relies upon doctrines which profess to know truth, is far harder to drive out. It can only be driven out by refutation. One cannot very well refute atomism if it is true; but one cannot refute atomism either if the believers claim to be skeptics of a moderate variety. In the case of the modern philosophers, their science and worldview *is* atomistic; but they refuse to own the name. In fact, they deny the name, as Descartes does. They postpone the day of reckoning with possible refutations endlessly and very effectively. Yet they assert the reality of the worldview native to atomism, which cannot be done on the basis of Pyrrhonian skepticism proper.

Modern philosophy is not driven by a commitment to truth. It does not concede anything to the ordinary opinions, so far as truth is concerned. The modern philosopher will allow people to live unmolested, with their customary use of names, within certain tight guidelines, ones deprived of any binding legal authority as to truth. Thus begins the likening of the demos to lower animals, especially in Hume.<sup>38</sup> Modern philosophy is driven by an impulse of freedom, conceived in a very specific way. Machiavelli gave classic formulation of this vision of freedom twice in his *Discourses on Livy*. It views man as fated by nature to desire all things, but unable to obtain all things; freedom, for Machiavelli, is the right to fight to narrow the gap endlessly between one's boundless desires and one's possessions. This is the 'game' of modern philosophy. It is the mark of the man in Hobbes's state of nature, as it is of Locke, and Rousseau's man once he is in society. Freedom for the moderns goes together with seeking advantage over the others. Philosophy, in the modern evocation, again anchored by Machiavelli, begins with the determination to found committed to this eccentric principle of freedom, intemperate though it is.

'Skepticism', when it emerges in modern philosophy already with Bacon and Hobbes, is not Pyrrhonian skepticism by a long shot. It is Epicurean skepticism become aggressive. From Epicurus the modern impulse to freedom borrows spite, resentment at the world, contempt for the modest hopes of the people. Epicurus himself is very different from Pyrrho, but he followed Pyrrho in withdrawing from the community, or seeking to withdraw from the community. When Machiavelli transformed Epicurean physics into an aggressive political philosophy of conquest, the new era commenced: to

build a state that enforced the new impulse of freedom, which made the new imperative of freedom mandatory, binding, the moral polestar.

Kant enjoys the advantages of the latecomer. Hobbes's skepticism regarding sense perception is blunt and assertive. Bacon's skepticism is similarly aggressive and rhetorical. Locke and Hume, however, are parts of the Cartesian revolution. Descartes, whose early work is certainly atomistic, in the *Meditations* crafts a much shrewder rhetorical strategy, making it appear as if skepticism is simply common prudence. Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke and Hume all fail Pyrrho's test of equal possible judgments, in their doctrines. But Locke and Hume have undertaken a new wrinkle: they have made arguments about what it is possible to bring before the mind for judgment, and that which they have defined as simple ideas and impressions is unrecognizable to the community. Whatever object the community perceives empirically, the Lockean and Humean philosophers 'analyze' into simple ideas and impressions, which are not familiar objects at all. In this way, Locke and Hume enforce arrested judgment upon the community whenever they brandish their powers of 'analysis'.

They arrest the power of judgment of the familiar objects, and their forms, by denying that these familiar objects can ever possibly come before the mind as objects. Only the mind itself can invent the red ball, as it were, for Locke and Hume, out of the raw materials of its simple ideas or impressions. This process is justified by Locke with not just an atomism, but with an 'experimental atomism'. As if this was a doctrine that could be tested, based as it is upon those alleged objects which are not perceptible. Yet Locke and Hume both offer a way out of the quagmire that their epistemology enacts: the human being is denied the right to assert or know truth with legitimacy, but is ushered along the path of naked assertiveness out of 'need' or 'right'. In other words, the epistemology of modern atomistic skepticism has a pressure release valve linked to the impulse of freedom which modernity is built upon. The individual is entitled to regard his perceptions as justified if his need is great enough, or if her desire is great enough. Hume observes:

But a Pyrrhonian cannot expect that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind or it if had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge . . . that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourses, all action, would immediately cease; and men remain in total lethargy, til the necessities of nature, unsatisfied, put an end to their miserable existence. It is true: so fatal an event is little to be dreaded; nature is always too strong for principle.<sup>39</sup>

Kant belongs to this modern tradition. The atomistic philosophy of nature, which insists that the only real bodies are eternal ones, could never be

reached by Pyrrhonism. The view that all the objects in nature are essentially of one kind, that nature itself is a grand oneness, that all events in nature are foreordained and necessary, these are atomistic shibboleths which lay to waste all Pyrrhonist pretensions. But Kant too refuses to own up to the atomist label. Kant prefers to enact a new philosophy whereby truths are imbedded in the mind, out of necessity or deduction.

The radical shift between ancient and modern philosophy is nowhere more apparent than in the doctrine of causation. The Greek theory of causation, i.e. the Anaxagorean or Socratic Greeks, is multiple. Why an object is what it is, is thought to be its cause. An object might be known for what it is made out of, such as a gold goblet. The layperson might refer to it simply as gold. Or the layperson might refer to it simply as the form, the goblet. Or the layperson might refer to it as the object that the craftsperson made, bringing the goblet form to the gold; or, the ordinary person might refer to the cause of the golden goblet as its purpose, or telos, to drink out of.

The modern theory begins by excluding all of these theories of causation, not just the teleology. The matter of the object, insofar as it is perceptible, is denied. The form of the object is ignored. The craftsperson who brought the form to the matter is suppressed from consideration as well. The modern philosophy rather inserts the issue of causation, in precisely that place where the layperson finds no issue. That the object is a goblet of gold is to the layperson a fact. Here is where Kant brings to bear certain Pyrrhonist principles, postponing the judgment. That which is the proof, i.e. that which is certainly known, is dragged before the authorities and forced to prove itself. Thus emerges the new language of 'ground' and 'consequence'. What ground makes the object a golden goblet? In fact, there is no such prior case, beyond what we have enumerated. But the modern philosophers require the obvious fact to be treated as dubious, as uncertain, as in need of proof. Now all the modern philosophers will agree, elsewhere, that there must be something that is not in need of proof in the business of inquiry. But they have transferred these unquestionable factums, in the case of Kant, to 'a priori' truths that allegedly exist in the mind, though extremely abstract, and irreconcilable to the people. 'Quantity', for example, from the vantage point of the people, belongs to the perceived object as one of its attributes. One may call this the 'unity' of the object. But Kant has denied that such an object can come before the human mind, in the manner that Locke and Hume taught him. Only 'appearances' and 'representations' may come before the mind, for Kant. This is a shibboleth with him, an unquestioned truth, although also one that he never proves the reality of.

This maneuver that the proto-skeptics of modernity have insinuated into official discourse and inquiry, wreaks psychological havoc upon the community. First, it silences and terrifies them. They do not know how to prove that which cannot be proved, even though it is of all things most certain to them



(and for Plato and Aristotle as well). I know that commentators will interject that Plato regards the forms as more real than the perishable objects, but this is confusion. Plato regards the forms as susceptible to a stronger kind of knowledge than perishable perceptible individuals, not that the forms are somehow more real or *preferable* to perishable objects. The forms are wrought by nature *into* natural objects. Again, these forms are banished by the rise of modern science, which insists that all nature must be one object, subject to the same rules, the same laws, as if even all human beings could possibly be.

This power to arrest inquiry, where it is not natural for it to be arrested; to halt inquiry, even when it *knows* the current step; this might as well be the power of a god, for it tosses the whole psychological equilibrium of the community topsy-turvy. And it opens up a whole new vista of authority, based on the modes of 'probability' and persuasion that philosophy now becomes eligible to apply. These mostly trade upon the devastating authority of prestige, mystery, 'genius', through which doors the greatest absurdities may be and have been trotted, with success. The apagogic proof is one of Kant's favorites. To return to our golden goblet, what 'grounds' must there be in order for this to be true?

There must be a gold industry, or the people must have access to gold; which can lead us into a discussion of economics, and occupational relationships, which in turn can lead to endless other 'grounds'. But the apagogic proof depends upon 'consequences', i.e. what will result if this is true about the object being a golden goblet? What if the great authority in the universities disputes that there is such a thing as gold? What if the community of knowers bound to the prestigious institutions all deny that? Then in order to believe in the golden goblet that we perceive, and have no reason to prove to ourselves, we must be prepared to make the absurd claim that we know better than the most learned people in the land. The way has been opened to a kind of psychological authority that is almost irresistible. Insofar as the great pockets of prestige (and nobody did more than Kant to mystify philosophy in wreaths of prestige, and to deny that it is even capable of demonstration!) are themselves irresistible, then the infinite gradations of their raised eyebrows and smiles of approval are likewise irresistible.

## KANT ON EMPIRICAL CONCEPTS

It is important to point out that Kant does, in this logic at least, raise the issue of 'empirical concepts' such as 'horse'. This is the Platonic form. Now for Plato, the form of horse actually exists *in* the perishable animal. The immaterial form is part of that object. And therefore perception is in contact with the form on the level of perceptual judgment. Perception is able to use common

names to denote a kind of object, and a multitude of such objects. There are very many horses. For Kant, however, empirical concepts are denied to have any contact with the object as it is in itself, with the horse *per se*. Therefore everybody is free to compose a definition of the horse as he pleases and it will always be correct because this is arbitrary. Kant refers to this both as ‘nominal’ definition and as ‘real definition’, but in both cases it merely means arbitrary description of the nature. Kant writes:

Now description is distinguished from definition, for the former is a distinct concept, which, however, is complete merely *comparative*. Its exhaustiveness is sufficient merely for my purpose, although this can be completely contrary to the purpose of all others. Description is thus not absolutely complete, i.e. it does not serve for every purpose, but only for my private purposes.<sup>40</sup>

Concepts of reason consequently are not concepts that the perceptual faculties can discover in the perishable objects for Kant. Well, let alone the fact that Kant’s concepts of reason banish the perishable objects themselves from thought. It is just notable that Kant strictly follows Locke here, as the object is reduced to a bundle of predicates. And each is free to apply the predicates that he likes, nobody can be wrong; and this of course ensures that nobody is talking about the same object. Which strips this form of discourse of all probative value.

The syllogism for Kant has nothing to do with ordinary speech and the knowledge it possesses without being aware of it, as does that of Aristotle. The syllogism of Kant is driven by metaphysics. Which is to say that the particular, the ‘matter’, i.e. the subject matter of intuition, is subordinated to the rules and regulations of the ‘form’, i.e. the categories and the table of judgments. The perceptual faculties lack the power and authority to judge for Kant, whereas for Plato perception itself is judgment. Kant is just bending and warping the syllogistic form to accommodate his metaphysics. The forms that Kant is dealing with are not learned about from external objects, nor are they forms that the external objects possess. They are said to be forms inherent in the mind and its a priori knowledge. Just as ‘experience’ is the name Kant reserves to sensation that is shaped by the categories, and ‘perception’ is the name imposed upon the mental contents of that which trades in what he calls ‘empirical judgment’, and is hence invalid for all purposes of reasoning; so the very nomenclature of appearance and representation is derived from the understanding and categories, which is to say the conception of perception is predetermined by Kant’s a priori metaphysical worldview. Logic is therefore for Kant not a way of organizing knowledge that is commonly possessed. Kant makes a distinction between ‘healthy reason’ and ‘learned reason’. Healthy reason is the reason of those unsophisticated who

do not know the philosophy. For them, the syllogisms will be prepared in a different way.

Method is nothing other than the form of a whole of cognitions, insofar as it is all arranged according to the rules of logical perfection. Now because logical perfection is of two kinds, however, either logical perfection according to healthy reason or logical perfection according to learnedness and science, method will be divided in the same way. For the rules of healthy reason are distinct from the rules of science. In all science and learnedness the method of healthy reason must reign, to be sure, but everything that occurs in learnedness need not also, conversely, occur in healthy reason.<sup>41</sup>

For the learned, a syllogism will be prepared in a different way which healthy reason could not follow. Logic is the perfect location for Kant to bring his metaphysics because it appears to be innocuous and neutral, but it well conceals Kant's metaphysical premises and absolutely excludes the possibility of challenging them. When Kant works his metaphysics into a system of thinking itself, which is to be taught as the way to think, and suited to the audience for whom it is intended, by gender, class, age; this is a very aggressive movement of an ideology. For example, the application of the metaphysical postulates of Kant's theory to the operative rules for thinking itself is to abolish the possibility of dissent, of even thinking dissent. This is going to be a major issue because the principles of Kant's metaphysics are wholly at loggerheads with ordinary experience. The reach of administration deep into the bowels of philosophy is executed by Kant. Would Kant authorize every person to bend and warp the rules of thought in such way as to ensnare the others in a mode of believing that they did not truly share? Is this a display of his categorical imperative?

The factoid of ultimate significance in Kant's logic is that one will never be allowed to articulate the truth of particulars. The specific nature of that man, in that moment, under that duress, undergoing that betrayal and violence, and the repercussions to his life, and the way he conducted himself in his time of woe: None of this can be known as a truth for Kant. This must be swallowed by empirical concepts, as must the whole domain of morality that people live in and work with. But this inability to mark the actual true objects in one's world, is a serious effect of Kant's logic. Those objects are segregated apart in an entirely arbitrary reality where nobody can do more than speak his preferences, and none of those preferences are allowed or tolerated even to count as judgments in the new regime of thought. They are descriptions, they are 'arbitrary', they are effectively imaginary. When the true power of judgment is applied to any 'intuition', it is never allowed by Kant to be proved in any individual case, he claims. Nor will Kant ever allow anyone to try to begin with an intuited particular and from that vantage point try to reach these a priori principles of reason and the categories of judgment.

‘Horse’ is not a category of judgment, a real thing, from the vantage point of Kant’s science. If it were, then science would have to allow that horses as a kind exist, with their own separate natures, different from all the mice and lichens, and rocks. Nature has no stomach for diversity in Kant’s view. All objects must dissolve into one nature, into one ‘totality’. Kant pretends that this is the despondent part of his philosophy and that freedom must rebel against it; but that is merely an appearance. Kant’s definition of nature entirely allows him to excuse himself from the expectations and praise and blame of ordinary society, the customary authority which tyrants have always regarded as oppressive. Kant insists, in his logic, that ‘right and wrong’ are a priori truths; that they must suffer no tincture of experience to be mixed in with their application, ‘Some logicians, to be sure, do presuppose psychological principles in logic. But to bring such principles into logic is just as absurd, as to derive morals from life.’<sup>42</sup>

Concepts of experience are thus ones that were given through experience and become universal through abstraction. Therefore all concepts of experience are abstracted concepts. Pure concepts of reason however are not given through experience by means of abstraction, but instead through pure reason; and in this way they differ from concepts of experience. The concept of right and wrong is in this way a pure concept of reason.<sup>43</sup>

And for that reason, Kant’s categorical imperative cannot be proved, because it cannot possibly have any empirical content. The good and bad that the people speak of, that too is just their construction of words, ‘empirical concepts’, like horse and turtle. This is to stifle the community, to suspend and overpower its judgment.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING AND SENSIBILITY

The logics reveal a different Kant than the *First Critique*. It reveals just how much Kant is toying with his reader. He has to withhold a fair amount, because ultimately the pieces do not add up. But the scholarship on Kant is accurate in settling on the relationship between understanding and sensibility. This is the terrain where many scholars are hopeful about wringing from Kant some admission of at least our partial knowledge of the external world. And indeed, in the *Blomberg Logic*, though not yet in the *Vienna Logic* at least, Kant is willing to allow talk of a ‘concept’ ‘horse’. Now, ‘intuition’ cannot judge. But intuition is not ‘sensation’. ‘Intuition’ is part of the a priori mentality, at least to some extent. ‘Sensation’ is nothing, of no standing whatsoever. Kant has also draped over this area the nomenclature of aesthetics, ‘taste’, and he prefers to talk about the beautiful for his example of

'concepts' that are 'empirical'. The issue of course is whether the contents of ordinary experience, overlap with Kant's theory of intuition and the understanding.

Does Kant even concede that the ordinary person's intuitions qualify as subjective knowledge? The answer to that is no. But Kant does a very good job at disguising this. 'A short while ago much was said about sensation. He who speaks much about feeling cannot think, however, but everyone can feel.'<sup>44</sup> 'Logic, since it abstracts from all concepts, cannot say more of the influence of sensibility than that it presents the subjective ground of our judgment. The understanding is the objective ground of our judgment. But when something subjective, which in fact belongs to sensibility, flows into our judgment, then sensibility has mixed itself in, and this is the source of errors.'<sup>45</sup>

He who merely senses and does not judge does not err. Thus every error lies in judgment. Judgments are actions of the understanding and of reason. One can say generally that objectively, truth is the agreement with the object; subjective truth is equivalent with the laws of the understanding and of reason.<sup>46</sup>

There is a difference between appearances and representations. Appearance, evidently, is another of Kant's names for sensation. It addresses what ordinary people feel and speak about. This does not constitute thinking for Kant. Thinking for Kant requires the employment of his theory of the understanding. Ordinary people do not know of this theory of the understanding and consequently they do not have the status of thinking. They cannot judge if they have not been trained in the ways of Kant's logic. Thus all of the ordinary awareness of objects dissolves into appearances, although these recognizably same objects can show up on the scientists' side of the ledger as subjective judgments, or thinking. The ordinary person does not learn what an object is by adding up 'marks'. The ordinary person does not learn what a bear is by enumerating attributes and adding them together synthetically.

For natural logic, or logic of common reason, (*sensus communis*), is not really logic but an anthropological science that has only empirical principles, in that it deals with the rules of the natural use of the understanding and of reason, which are cognized only in concreto, hence without consciousness of them as abstracts.<sup>47</sup>

Aesthetic truth. A merely subjective truth, which consists only in the agreement of cognition with the subject and the laws of sensory illusion, and that which is consequently nothing more than a universal semblance.<sup>48</sup>

To make concepts out of representations one must be able to compare, to reflect and abstract, for these three logical operations of the understanding are the essential and universal condition for generation of every concept whatever.

I see, e.g. a spruce, a willow, and a linden. By first comparing these objects with one another, I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, and leaves themselves. I abstract from the quality, the figure, etc. of these, thus I acquire a concept of a tree.<sup>49</sup>

This arithmetic of representations is therefore at the base of Kant's science of definition, at least insofar as the understanding goes in its subjective mode. Which subordinates 'experience', the approved subjective segment of 'sensibility', to mathematics, or addition of marks; and the synthetic-analytic distinction is the methodology of Kant's sciences. It is clear now why Kant needs a reason that is a priori above the understanding. The understanding gets its concepts from the transcendental domain of reason. The domain of marks and measurement, science, phenomena, is guided by reason. Reason is only supposed to be in accord with itself. It is not an enumeration of any object at all. It is simply the form of thought allegedly.

It is not a surprise that Kant has exiled memory from his story of the mind. For this, as Plato argues, plays a massive, a decisive role in how people judge by perception. Kant disallows all of these notions. Ordinary people do not judge, the senses cannot judge. Of course Plato would not go along with this. For Plato it is the soul that judges, but the soul employs the sense organs to judge *through*. Moreover, the forms that Plato identifies, and 'bear' would be one, are themselves indivisible patterns in nature. They are not learned about by any processes of synthesis or analysis. The bear could be wearing a tutu and a hat, a spilled bottle of beer at its feet, but the ordinary person would still call it 'bear', and if the person in question had prior experience of a bear, through direct encounter, or film, it would recognize the object for what it is and judge it to be so. On the level of the individual object, philosophers don't do any better. Forms are recurrent patterns in nature, and when people have had experience of the kind of object, that makes judgment possible and the soul judges through the senses. And what it judges is not propositional, but recognition based, the pattern: courage, beauty, justice, house.

Aristotle's theory of the formula has become a principle that guides the development of the object towards its fulfilled kind, which really is not all that different from Plato's theory. For Plato in the *Phaedo* claims to have learned from Anaxagoras that nature makes all objects in the way that is best for them. 'However, I once heard someone reading from a book, as he said, by Anaxagoras, and asserting that it is mind that produces order and is the cause of everything. This explanation pleased me. Somehow it seemed right that mind shall be the cause of everything, and I reflected that if this was so, mind in producing order arranges each individual thing in the way that is best for it.'<sup>50</sup> It is not inevitable that they will fulfill themselves, as art can either fulfill or ruin nature, at least for Plato. But for Kant all of this is gone. The

forms are banished in Kant's definition of 'sensation'. This is what is given to the human being without any intervention by the understanding. It is only when the understanding has already crept into the process, as the formal guide for learning, that sensation is converted into representation. Representation depends upon the arithmetical method of adding together 'marks', and this is really just a continuation of Bacon's and Locke's experimental methods.

Kant argues that something must occur to a representation before it is converted into a concept. Some judgment will need to be applied. In the case of empirical concepts, as we have seen, 'comparison' must be applied. Yet Kant refuses, absolutely refuses, to give an account of representations themselves. 'But we will not investigate how representations arise'. Allegedly, 'this latter cannot be explained at all. For we would always have to explain *what* representation is by means of another representation.'<sup>51</sup>

In Kant's experimental method the scientist controls how the object shall be defined, because the form itself is suppressed. The object is a whole of parts but the parts can never all be enumerated; and people are furthermore free, even scientists are, to define the whole of parts as they please. This preserves philosophy's dominion over sense perception, which Bacon first asserted in this mode. Hence it is only as subordinated 'representation', as material already subsumed under the 'form' of understanding that subjective knowledge or 'healthy understanding' is allowed to progress. And in this distinction between science, subjective reason or judgment, and healthy opinion, Kant preserves the distinction between those who have been trained in the method, and those left out. We are talking about the quest for truth here, and he who controls the quest for truth has political advantage. He can decide all questions in his own favor. And Kant's philosophy is a philosophy for a type of person.

The real trauma of modern civilization can be traced in evaluating the distinction between those who are not scientists, relying upon 'sensation' in Kant's terminology. For they will see the human being deceived, or some other unsettling reality. But this reality is not a product of Kant's methodology of thinking. It therefore does not have any status whatsoever. Science can talk about the same man from its vantage point of analysis, collecting marks, repudiating memory, repudiating knowledge of the form itself. And the public will recognize enough of the words in the description to think it is talking about the same object with the scientific investigators; but it is not so. For the scientific investigator the synthetic collection of marks is an entirely arbitrary process, whereas for the uninitiated it is the opposite. This is where the new relationship of authority asserts itself in Kant's philosophy. This is the front lines of the metaphysics of fact determination. Kantian philosophy and science feigning ignorance, begin with data collection, assembling marks. The limit of this data collection is subjectivity, the arbitrary. This has been prede-

terminated. While for the uninitiated the facts of the case are objective and not subjective. The sciences will enumerate marks as products of its stimuli, not as characteristics of the object as it is in itself. Thus the distinction between noumena and phenomena. But really the category of phenomena is already saddled with Kant's metaphysics. It has already divided and conquered the ordinary opinions. It has persuaded them that it is neutral. Just as Kant misleads the literate public by insisting that understanding is nothing without intuition, appearing to concede authority to sense perception; and this dominates our Kant scholarship to this day.

Reality, those perishable objects for which we feel the most anxiety, are sealed off as unknowable things, except for the uses to which science decides, arbitrarily, to put them. Science there is not thinking outside Kant's approved methods, guided by his definitions, as set forth really best in the logics; and since in this model the approved thinking is really the master of these objects, because she decides what shall qualify as a definition of same; this is *de facto* opposed to the ordinary perception which believes that nobody has any right whatsoever to preside over the determination of the truth in such a way that alters it or conceals it. In the case of all true facts, muteness is the new destiny. The new rules of thinking silence the truth. For the truth of the matter is that Kant's theory of the understanding is false. Ordinary perception does reach the dreaded 'objects in themselves'. And the fact that they do so explodes Kant's concept of phenomena, first of all, because Kant's definition of phenomena includes the necessary attributes metaphysically determined, i.e. that those apparent objects have the predicates of eternal being, as parts of a system which embraces the whole of nature. Kant has not discovered any such system, but he claims that it is innate to the human mind to know. This is not subjective knowledge, but objective knowledge in Kant's view. This is the transcendental realm, which is fully operative in the treatment of phenomena.

### THE OBJECT IN ITSELF

The only place where Kant allows the principle of contradiction to really operate, is in the rules of the understanding and reason. But these rules are self-referential, self-evident for Kant. They need only be consistent with themselves. When it comes to the principle of contradiction as practiced by Plato and Aristotle, Kant negates it by subverting its application. One can't employ the principle of contradiction to an 'appearance', or to a 'representation'. The principle of contradiction only works with objects that one actually perceives for what they are, and assumes that one can do so. This is why Kant attacks the principle of contradiction as the enterprise of sophists in



antiquity. Kant's dismissive attitude towards Aristotle is therefore characteristic.

Kant seeks to supplant the principle of non-contradiction with his theory of the analytic concepts. First of all, the mind invents any object that it will talk about through collecting marks or data. This is all synthetic mathematics. It depends upon one's will, as Kant argues mathematics does. There is no limit to the number of marks that one can add to a definition. To search for 'analytic' definition, one begins eliminating marks. One begins eliminating marks until one has reached a pair of marks that cannot ever be separated, such that to utter one is to think the other. But there are no such concepts in truth that mutually require one another's presence, not in the real perishable world. Matter and form will be present in any real object, but real objects are not eternal and matter can be separated from form at the dissolution of the object. Body is not infinitely divisible, not in its extremities—unless one is in Kant's illusory mode of perception. A body has extremities, which when divided destroy the object. Divisions merely imagined by the mind are not real divisions. For Kant there is no distinction between parts as they are in the object itself, versus parts as the observing mind simply imagines to exist. All of which means that we cannot give up the object in itself.

The empirical concepts move in the domain of what Kant calls probability. In this domain, the alleged discursive power of science is most pronounced. Here Kant does not discuss or refer to the relationship between matter and form, and we have seen how rigidly this relationship of matter and form applies. 'Form' is the concepts of the understanding in Kant's nomenclature, not empirical concepts. Scientific probability goes forth in the construction of empirical concepts, but under the aegis of the a priori concepts of the understanding. The a priori concepts of the understanding predefine the objects of experience as representations and phenomena. Representations and phenomena cannot be the objects that common people are familiar with. Thus, the entire empirical construction of concepts by those deemed competent by Kant to make them, begin with the premise that they can never concede reality to what is ordinarily experienced. The community waits with baited breath as Kantian science undertakes its investigations, but the result is predetermined, insofar as the empirical concepts constructed can never allow the articulation of the real experienced object.

In the *Vienna Logic* Kant unfolds a litany of accusations against the common person on moral grounds, which unfit the common person for 'testimony' as to empirical truth. The legacy of Machiavelli. Accusation is used to conceal the philosophic commitments of the philosopher. It is not the veracity of the common person which Kant is truly concerned about, but concealing the more than dubious nature of his a priori claims:

The competence of a witness consists in the fact that he was able to say the truth. This requires A) that he have sufficient skill to obtain experience. . . . The common man is not a suitable witness. For he cannot attain experiences properly. B) that he was in circumstances, in which he was able to obtain experience. Above all, the common man cannot do this in all the inner circumstances, e.g. he is often sleepy, fearful, distracted. 2) The sincerity of the witness. That he wanted to tell the truth. The common man is too crude to place great value on the truth. A mouth full of lies, he believes, does no harm, if one has some interest in the matter.<sup>52</sup>

Subreption is the name that is constantly uttered in Kant studies, but scholars do not seem to understand the implications of Kant's term. It indicates an inappropriate combination of experience and reason. In other words, it indicates any case whereby common people insist on the veracity of their experience of an object, and insist that reason take it into account. But since Kantian reason predetermines what it is possible for an object to be, as its 'form', the gate is locked. It cannot be allowed into scientific status. The employment of experimental perception doubly underlines this observation. In experimental observation the experimenter is measuring something that he does to the object. He is measuring his own actions. The object is at his mercy. The object depends upon how he chooses to hypothesize it. And these hypotheses conceal the obligations and commitments of Kantian science.

Kant's *Lectures on Logic* convey a great deal of useful information about his metaphysical philosophy. Since Kant's metaphysics refuses to concede any deference at all to sense perception as the non-philosophers experience it, there is no kernel of knowledge, that 'this goes with that', as Aristotle likes to observe, that Kant's logic can build on. Kant's logic is unlike Aristotle's logic fundamentally. They are incompatible sciences. Aristotle's logic is beholden to ordinary opinion for its premises and its conclusion or proof. Kant's logic is not beholden to ordinary opinion in any way for its premises, and it absolutely denies that it can demonstrate its knowledge. Bacon and Hobbes set loose a great mischief in their attacks on the common use of names, and Locke did worsen that situation mightily. Kant is the one who has the advantage of the 'latecomer', as Marxists are wont to observe. His predecessors had served as a wrecking crew for the authority of the common use of names; and Kant is in a position to make use of this leverage as he does in his employment of the term 'logic' to describe his science of thinking. Form is the principle that unites the ancients and the moderns; but the form of the Platonic Socratics is not even partly compatible with the moderns who have taken their direction from the use of the name of form that was developed by Machiavelli, such as Bacon did. For Plato and Aristotle, form is the 'whatness' of an object, and the human mind is not at liberty to impose this pattern, to originate this pattern, or to found this pattern, in any object whatsoever, for purposes of knowledge. Form is nature; and forms are radically diverse. In

the Kantian metaphysics, 'form' is a property of the human mind and its alleged a priori knowledge. It is something that the human mind imposes on the outer stimulation of the senses which have been subjected to the laws of Kant's theory of understanding.

For Plato and Aristotle, investigating the form of an object involves no art. It involves an appeal to common perception, first of all. The external objects as they are themselves in nature provide the information to us through our sense perceptions, and human beings are subject to no moral authority pursuant to recognizing these patterns. Form exists in the perishable objects, and perception is able to know the forms on the level of judgment. This judgment, while it is a rudimentary form of knowledge, is in Plato's view immune to error so far as it goes; but it requires isolation of the form apart from the perishable object in order to apply the dialectical analysis to purify the definition of contradictory elements.

Kant claims that the principles of logic are the principles of thought *per se*; that they themselves do not behold any particular object ever, but supply the 'laws of thought' which must control our investigation of any and all objects the same. Kant does not trouble himself to inform his readers that the principles of 'logic', the principles of thought which Kant himself has claimed to be principles of knowledge that the mind obtains without consultation of any experience whatever, has a long and storied history in antiquity: That the a priori laws of Kant's model of thought derive from the Parmenidean school of metaphysics; that the predicates of thought which Kant buries in his a priori categories, imitate the atomistic philosophy of nature which emerged in the shadow of Parmenides' argument.

Parmenides' and Epicurus' arguments about nature, about eternal reality, about the unreality of genesis and passing away, depend upon thoughts concerning the perishable bodies themselves. They arise as inquiries into the origins of perishable bodies. These principles of metaphysics could not emerge or begin to emerge in any other way. Atomism itself is a response to the query of how objects can come to be out of materials which themselves are transient and subject to decay. There must be some ultimate material which does not come into existence or pass out of existence, Epicurus reasons; and if this is so, then such a material has no need to come into existence, since it already *is*. This is the metaphysics that generates the great gap between perception, focused on the perishable objects, and the supposed eternal bodies which have been indicated by the atomist metaphysics.

The Early Moderns parade this metaphysics around as if it is the only game in town, and Kant attempts to consolidate these principles into the only possible forms of thought itself. This is a sad day for Western metaphysics seeing as how the atomist metaphysics is ultimately entirely vulnerable to challenge, and worse. This is perhaps a reason why Kant is anxious to entirely sever metaphysical thought from all vestiges of experience not subject to

the control of these postulates. But the fact remains, that Kant's laws of the understanding present a most partisan view of nature, which no neutrality or alleged ignorance of 'noumena' could possibly afford.

That all possible objects of experience must be eternal, that only alteration is a possible source of movement in nature, is no knowledge that is accessible in any human experience. These are not characteristic of any phenomena that ordinary opinion is eligible to experience. Kant's conception of phenomena is therefore distinct from the ordinary sense perceptions and the information that is registering in those experiences. Kant's conception of phenomena is already a metaphysics, a metaphysic which fully throws over the authority of sense perception, enforcing a severe regimen of natural philosophy which experience nowhere give us to know. That nature is a unity, all the same single object, all governed by the same laws, cannot possibly be even entertained by anyone who begins inductively with experience itself. Kant knows this, and thus proscribes induction as a method for his model of logic. That all objects in nature are interrelated as cause and effect of one another, in one infinite chain, is another postulate. This nature is bereft of possibility, bereft of intelligence that we can fathom or understand, that it is itself formless: all of this flies violently in the face of our experience, and therefore sets philosophical metaphysics in opposition to ordinary opinion.

For Aristotle, so that we have some understanding of his theory before us—matter and form do not exist separately ever. They only exist in actuality as fused into one object. Both of these, form and matter, are natural. Forms are not made by men. Even couch and table, in Plato's view, are not forms made or contrived by human beings, as the *Republic* informs us. Human beings invent particular beds, but they do not invent the form of 'bedness'. This is something they discover through experience, along with all the other forms. In the *Republic* Plato writes:

Could you tell me in general what imitation is? For neither do I myself apprehend what it would be of.

It is likely then, he said, that I should apprehend!

It would be nothing strange, said I, since it often happens that the dimmer vision sees things in advance of the keener.

That is so, he said, but in your presence I could not even be eager to try to state everything that appears to me, but do you yourself consider it.

Shall we then start the inquiry of this point by our customary procedure? We are in the habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in case of the various multiplicities which we give the same name. Do you not understand?

I do.

In the present case, let us take any multiplicity you please; for example, these couches and tables.

Of course.

But these utensils imply, I suppose, only two ideas or forms, one of a couch and one of a table.

Yes.

And are we not also in the habit of stating that craftsmen who produce either of them fixes his eyes on the idea or form, and so makes in the one case the couches and in the other the tables that we use, and similarly of all other things? For surely no craftsmen makes the idea itself. How could he?

By no means.<sup>53</sup>

Justice is not a form that human beings invent for Plato, but a pattern in human relationships that human beings learn about through experience as well, and which they can learn the essence of. For the Early Moderns, human beings invent the form of justice, and it has no more reality than what they choose to give to it. For Aristotle, nature supplies form and matter for one purpose only: to be joined the one to the other, form ordering and establishing the possibilities of matter in perishable existence. This is to say that for Aristotle, form by itself is inferior to form impressed upon matter. The perishable objects in Aristotle's metaphysics are superior in dignity and first in nature's purpose; and in my opinion, Plato holds the same viewpoint, even though human knowledge of forms is superior to human knowledge of mere singular perishable bodies. The goal for Plato as for Aristotle is to know the true reality of the perishable objects. That is certainly the entire purpose of the *Republic*. A republic devoted to justice would not be necessary or desirable for imperishable people.

For Kant, not even phenomena are allowed to sit in the class of perishable objects. For Kant, perishable objects are wholly excluded from the domain of reality, at least insofar as his metaphysical a priori laws of thought are concerned. This does not mean that Kant himself discounts the reality of perishable bodies, any more than Descartes discounts the importance of relying upon his senses in the conduct of his personal affairs. It means only that Kant is unwilling to allow perishable bodies into discussions that have a bearing upon truth. This is an entirely different matter, a struggle for authority, rather than any commitment to a truth.

Let us take an apple, from Aristotle's perspective. Apple is a form, impressed upon a matter. It has these two elements then, matter and form. Matter is not a predicate, form is not a predicate. Both are rather causes of the object. Both are indeed recognized as causes by ordinary opiners. The apple is red. The redness does not exist only in our eyes, as the Early Moderns have it; nor does the taste exist solely in our mouth. The shape of the apple is actually how we perceive it to be. The weight of the apple is a real predicate of it. The apple, as a formed object, is not like a banana. It is not like a walnut. It is not like a tree. It is not like a house. The laws of an apple are not like the laws of the house or the walnut. One does not behold the object in the same way nor does one treat them in the same way nor expect them to be alike as objects in nature. All of these materials, form and matter, belong to nature, and only in a combination of heterogenous natural power does the apple exist.

For Kant, the apple as we have described it above does not exist. It counts only as 'sensation', as nothing. As 'phenomena', that apple counts as something that is allegedly unique to human knowledge. Except, as we have seen, that which humans experience of the apple has been excluded by Kant's laws of understanding from consideration at the outset. The laws of the understanding are the only possible source of judgment, and the a priori categories of judgment exclude the apple as ordinarily perceived. The categories insist, as we have indicated above, that the 'phenomena' is not allowed to come into being or pass out of being; that it must be recognized as an effective unity in its predicates with every other object in nature; and that its cause is not to be found in its own nature, allegedly unknowable to us, but in the laws of thought which mysteriously exist in our brains—yet which have a long prior history as a cosmology of nature.

### THE JASCHE LOGIC

The *Jasche Logic* has some advantages. First, it enjoys Kant's imprimatur. Kant asked his student Jasche to publish his logical lectures in the form of a textbook, and he provided to Jasche his own notebooks and the annotated texts from Meier that he used as a scaffolding. Kant, at various points, admits that he is following no text in his logical lectures. He proclaims himself a trailblazer extraordinaire, and he doubtless deserves that epithet. The nature of his trail, and the instruments employed for the blazing, remain to be contemplated.

The *Jasche Logic* is more useful than the earlier transcribed accounts we have of Kant's logic, including the earliest *Blomberg Logic* composed by Kant in the 1770s. The *Jasche Logic* comes some thirty odd years later. It is streamlined, and designed for educating instructors. But it provides the most

open account of intellectual administration that Kant ever produced anywhere. Of all issues that matter to Kant scholarship the relationship between intuition, so-called, and judgment or concepts, would have to be the most interesting thing. The *Jäsche logic* bears upon these things with great importance.

The individual who has not studied and made progress on Kant's metaphysics can never understand his science of logic. Not that the metaphysics is really difficult to learn. For though Kant denies that the 'laws of thought' need an object to be studied; though Kant denies that the laws of thought proper contain any objects, or substantial knowledge or knowledge of substance, it is quite the opposite. Kant has separated his laws of thought or logic from his metaphysics as an instrument of coordination, as a way to distance the administrative power of his philosophy, for which he cares very deeply, from the issues that lead to insights and questions. The logic repudiates all questions in advance. But it is fair to note that in the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant has made it clear that 'cognitions' always have an 'interest', 'ends', i.e. goals. These goals belong to the philosopher. These goals or ends are *moral* imperatives, indicating the way the human race 'ought to think', not how it does think.

Logic is a science of reason, not as to mere form but also as to matter, a science a priori of the necessary laws of thought, not in regard to particular objects, however, but to all objects in general; hence a science of the correct use of the understanding and reason in general; not subjectively, however, not according to empirical (psychological) principles, for how the understanding does think, but objectively, i.e. according to principles a priori for how it ought to think.<sup>54</sup>

Aristotle, in his logic, first of all traces out the way the human race *does* think. Aristotle's syllogistic model does in fact do that, just as Aristotle's theory of moral character traces out the logic inherent in ordinary praise and blame. These are not inventions of Aristotle, they are not moral undertakings. In fact Aristotle denies that morality can ever be taught per se.

Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence owes in the main both its birth and growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word 'habit'. From this it is also plain that none of the moral excellences arise in us by nature, for nothing exists by nature from a habit contrary to its nature.<sup>55</sup>

Kant is on the other end of this philosophical spectrum. For Kant morality can only be taught, especially to the people. Readers of Kant's *Vienna Logic*, or his *Heschel Logic*, will be familiar with the blizzard of categories that he

appropriates from semi-common speech and transforms. Words and language in general turn into a liquid form in Kant. He bends and breaks the meanings and significations of words with stunning rapidity, and the reader who has not penetrated into the depths of his metaphysics is simply going to be waylaid by this tactic. A tactic it is, of course. But we, in our exposition of Kant's system, do not profess an 'end'. We do not profess to pursue an 'interest', other than to know it for what it is. Kant, in the *Jäsche Logic*, gives his own sad definition of truth: the agreement of the mind's cognition with the mind's cognition. 'Truth, however, according to formal criteria, is the agreement of a judgment with the laws of the understanding.'<sup>56</sup> 'Since we abstract from all relation to the object, and consider only the rules for the agreement of the laws of cognition with themselves.'<sup>57</sup> As we have stated, this definition of truth will not pass muster even for the majority of the learned world. Kant himself knows this full well. It is why he speaks of the world of logic and the world of aesthetics so called, i.e. sense perception, as domains that must be interwoven from the vantage point of the philosopher.

As we have said, many scholars and philosophers today are gravely concerned about the way the extant definitions of thought and mind fail to reach any external objects even in pretension. The public is the object of Kant's philosophy in its entirety; which is to say he wants to impose a form of thought upon it which it does not know, nor can know. And in order to do this he must be a skillful orator, a rhetorician of the first rank, and he takes for his model Hume in his *Essays* which is a good model indeed for this sort of thing. The architecture of Kant's logic in the *Jäsche* is therefore designed to be artfully concealed by the instructor, as he seeks to bring the logic to the domain of common objects. Now these common 'objects', say a house, a stone, the sun shining upon it, a man, a black man, or a ship, to use some of Kant's more famous examples, are recognized by the public as one thing. But they are not recognized by Kant's philosophy as the same thing. The ship, for the common man, is an object that is a real substance, a real 'thing' in nature. He can know this object as a noun, and he can know its form, its shipness. He does not invent these things. He does not call the ship 'phenomena' (and Kant, so far as I have studied, does not use this metaphysical nomenclature in any of his logical lectures). There is no 'noumena' for the ordinary man or women as they behold the ship, the stone, the sun, the house. But for Kant, from the vantage point of his philosophy and metaphysics, truly speaking, the ship is not a true object that the mind can know. For the Kantian, 'the ship' is a nominal word, indicating a mere usage of the philosopher, a mere verbal tool. For Kant, the human mind does not behold any object but one it has *made*. For Kant, the human mind is not eligible to so much as 'judge' any object, unless it is relying upon the metaphysical categories of judgment anchored, independently of any and all experience allegedly, in the understanding. Among those categories of the understanding, which must be incor-



porated into the judgment of any object whatsoever (coeval with judgment itself, for Kant), is the insistence, the absolute insistence, that any such object that is capable of being judged be eternal, i.e. that it is incapable of coming into being and passing away. It can only be 'altered'. This debate, or this claim rather takes us back to one of the most powerful debates at the founding of Western philosophy: Whether coming into being is real or not. The Eleatics and their atomistic descendants deny coming into being. Plato and Aristotle insist that they prove its reality.

So we should start at the beginning of Kant's philosophy of mind, for the sake of the reader. And right off the bat we should confess several things. In the first place, Kant's philosophy is interested in what it calls 'cognitive' philosophy, the cognitive domain of the human mind as the sole source of judgment. It is quite possible, we must inform the reader, that 99 percent of the human race does not know of cognitions, does not possess the means to *have* cognitions as Kant defines the term. For cognition is the only sort of mental operation that Kant will dignify with the name of 'judgment'. All knowledge depends upon cognition for Kant. But since this domain of cognition involves metaphysical postulates that are foreign, entirely foreign to the common experience and memory and what they regard as thinking, the common opinions do not qualify as cognitions. Ninety-nine percent of the human race, it is entirely possible, is excluded from Kant's domain of cognition, and thus disenfranchised from the domain of judgment altogether; a fine predicament for the so-called categorical imperative. Kant himself has no problem inventing a theory of judgment that disenfranchises almost all of the human race, and would subordinate them, make them the helpless sires of his philosophy and its satellites.

Let us return to the ship, or the house. For the common person, indeed, it is not hard to teach them Plato's theory, that they know something that they are not yet aware of. They know the form of the ship, if they have indeed ever before seen one. They know the form of the house, if they have indeed ever before experienced one. For Plato, the form is *in* the house, *in* the ship; and our perceptions are fitted to know those forms, as they are in the external objects, thus subordinating philosophy in the Platonic model to that which is *commonly* known.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant never employs a common object to illustrate his *metaphysical postulates* about the human mind. Just consider: how could Kant possibly talk about the 'ship', as an example, in the *First Critique*, in a context which trades on his assertion, that both time and place are mere figments of the human sensibility and no part of the external objects themselves? The 'ship' of which Kant *may* speak, in his effort to popularize his philosophy, a constant enterprise, is formally and technically, as a matter of judgment in Kant's philosophy of mind, a mere nothing. Whatever it is out there that we have some commerce with through our sensory apparatus (it

cannot be said metaphysical object), must actually have the parts of time incorporated into it. Kant's ship cannot have come into being. It cannot pass out of being. It can only be the appearance generated by the alteration of some eternal stuff. No true object eligible for judgment can fit in Kant's categories which have that description. Time is a property of the human senses, not of the objects that it would discern. And so too with space, or place or location, as the people would call it. This is the famous Kantian transcendental aesthetic. It is 'transcendental' because the philosopher claims to know of these things without help from the sensory organs and the information they bring about external objects. Kant claims that the mind simply possesses this 'knowledge', that whatever the real objects out there are (and Kant does insist that there are real objects external to us), they cannot have the parts of time or location. As indeed the atoms cannot. For the atoms are timeless being, and they have no location but rather fall (accidentally as it were) 'in the void'.

### THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF KANT'S LOGIC

From the vantage point of Kant's metaphysical philosophy of mind, the sensible, the domain of 'receptivity, knows no ship. It knows no house. The senses cannot judge for Kant. The senses are not themselves the instruments of judgment for Kant, the means by which the mind seeks to know. The senses are not part of any domain of truth whatsoever. And there is no 'concept', which does not trace its root back to the human understanding and the encampment where the metaphysical categories are quartered.

In Kantian terminology, 'representation' is that which the mind can know from 'intuition'. Intuition is the category that dominates sensory operations in Kant. And the intuitions, are able to produce materials out of themselves, in the a priori way. So one can never be sure that they are even supplying material stimulated by some blank external object, 'phenomena'. The intuition which is not a priori, which is stimulated by some unknown external object, is thus the closest the human mind will ever get to perception of external objects for Kant. But in Kant's philosophy the intuition which the human mind receives is fragmented, and manifold, bits and pieces of color and shape and atomistic 'representations'. No ship is perceived. Plato's form is banished, suppressed, as are all four causes known by Aristotle's philosophy. Indeed, for Kant, 'causation' is an a priori category. It exists in the mind and it operates according to transcendental principles, which have no dependence at all upon any objects actually out there. Kant insists that the mind cannot prove these transcendental principles, that they are incapable even of demonstration; but that they are the whole truth of human knowledge. In Kant's metaphysical categories of human judgment and mentality, lay the

Epicurean side of the scientific debates on natural philosophy. The other side, which in fact demolished the Epicurean account in antiquity, is banished even from memory. It is never recounted by Kant in any way, shape or fashion.

'Representation' is a word that people commonly use. Their common usage is of no use whatsoever when it comes to understanding Kant. 'Representation' can refer to one of two things, for Kant; it can refer to the 'subject' (the one who senses, feels, perceives) or it can relate to the 'object'. That which relates to the 'subject' is mere 'sensation'. It is reduced by Kant to pleasure or pain, the entirely arbitrary Epicurean desideratum for perception. It is also called by Kant 'appearance'. Its truth value is *nothing*. There go the ship and the house that ordinary people talk about. There go the rock, the man, any recognizable object you like. For representations that concern the object, however, it is the human mind, the faculty of 'apperception', driven not by deference to what is, but driven by 'spontaneity' and 'will', and 'imagination', which must combine the representations into some 'concept'. Thus concepts are invented by the human mind from the vantage point of Kantian philosophy. But the inventions of the human mind must be dependent on the understanding and its laws; and the understanding, no matter how veiled in Kant, trades on its postulates of cause and substance: it must be eternal as an object, and it must involve a cause that applies exactly the same to the entirety of nature. Thus the ship and the water, as well as the riders in the boat, must all be one quantity for the Kantian understanding. They must all be identical reality, governed by the same laws, *logically* indistinguishable from one another. And we have seen that the one infinite nature that Kant regards as the sole perfect logical quantity, as determined by the understanding, simply abolishes the ordinary use of names effectively.

But this is before the logician teaches the sciences how to apply their philosophy of mind to the popular domain. This is what the *Jasche Logic* does. The *Jasche Logic* teaches the instructor of logic to appear to dignify enough of the common experience, which it formally dismisses as mere 'aesthetics', or issues of 'taste', to persuade the popular class to trust it. And when the popular class trusts it they are putting their trust in a philosophy which regards logic itself as a moral enterprise, as the pursuit of *ends*, the philosopher's ends, which marries thought itself to the exertion of power, to the struggle for control over the objects in the world, and for how they are to be represented. Kant fully incorporates morality, practical reason, into the transcendental category. Kant ridicules, and humiliates all evidence from sensory experience concerning morals, when these would be appealed to as moral tutors. Kant denies that ordinary people know what virtue is, or what justice is. Kant denies that these can be known at all through experience and reasoning upon them, as ordinarily understood. Kant's categorical imperative therefore forswears all dependence upon experience, suppressing the dreaded

‘affective’ experience, which is in truth the very backbone of moral life in human society and learning.

In the *Jasche Logic* Kant sings the praises of Bacon as the first great experimenter. Bacon did indeed lay the groundwork for Kant’s experimental approach to fixing the meaning of ‘concepts’. Now, Kant borrows from Locke the experimental method too. Locke denies that we can know any ‘substance’, though this is not consistent with his dependence on the atomist theory which has a very definite commitment to the domain of substance (the atoms themselves being those substances). But to the public, Locke denies that we can ever know anything about an object except its ‘predicates’. We can’t know the object as a noun (the ship). Rather, all we can *know* in this model of logic, is what we *do* to the object, and then the senses are given a temporary and limited authority to report on the effects or ‘consequences’ of the experiments.

In the case of categorical propositions, however, there is no settled condition. They are judgments essentially distinct from one another, then. With all hypothetical judgments I have two modi, modus ponens and tollens. The modus pollens is that if the antecedent is true, the consequence is also true. The modus tollens is that if the consequence is false, the antecedent is false.<sup>58</sup>

For the record, there is no limit to the number of experiments that one can perform upon any object whatsoever; and because it is not possible to list all the predicates, all definitions are really just what Kant calls ‘descriptions’, i.e. at the mercy of the experimenter and what he decided to do to the object, which then becomes for that purpose its effective reality and identity. And thus Kantian logic as the experimental method itself obliterates truth, insofar as the ‘what is’ question is concerned; and replaces it with ‘my purpose for the object’ or will, ‘spontaneity’. But remember, this is not how Kant represents the principles of the transcendental understanding. Kant presents his transcendental principles in such abstraction that one could never *find* the will in them, so that they appear *neutral* and applicable to *all*.

No Kantian experimenter is therefore ever tied to any scientific examination of any object beyond the time of his experiment. If the public tries to pin the sciences down to that ‘description’ of the object, to at least have a stable referent, Kant comes forth with his alternative method for approaching an object, enumerating its ‘essential marks’, rather than the expansive list that goes on forever. But since the experimenter is still beholden to the principle of the understanding, the ‘essential marks’ are as we have already indicated; the object must be eternal, it must be identical to all other objects, an effective unity with nature itself, and this nature must be driven by necessity to be what it is, i.e. it must be wholly aloof from freedom and development of potential at all. Thus when Kant describes the conflict between his scientific

theory and his moral theory, a mere appearance, he will say that the will can be free even as the body is determined as part of nature to its operations. By commenting as we are on the logic and the metaphysics, we see already that these *are* moral philosophies, practical philosophies, though deeply cast in abstraction.

## REPRESENTATIONS AND CONCEPTS

As we have stated, he who would attempt to learn Kant's system by learning the categories or classifications one at a time would never come out of the maze. Except for very highly trained professionals, 'representations' sounds for all the world like 'concepts'. Certainly the student is not going to know the difference. And concepts sound awfully like 'form'. These are names that the layperson will use interchangeably. But since Kant is here detailing what it is possible for a human mind to know, these terms must be comprehended in relation to one another. And the great dividing line, as we have said, as all Kant scholars agree, is 'experience' very loosely construed, and 'understanding' construed in a highly unusual way. 'Experience' is not really a useful category as it misleads. The typical individual will take 'experience' to refer to his or her experience, as they themselves use that name. Kant's definition of 'experience' excludes what the ordinary person takes to *be* their experience. And thus Kant's attempt to disseminate his metaphysics through the science of logic that he develops in the *Jasche*, in this manual, is pernicious.

'Representation' is all that the domain of the 'sensible' is able to afford human beings, in Kant's category. A 'representation' for the well-educated person, who is not trained in the Kantian philosophy, will refer to someone whose object is represented. A person may 'represent' a tree. But this is not possible in Kantian usage. In Kantian usage, a 'representation', that which comes into the mind through the domain loosely speaking of the 'sensible', can be no more than some datum, such as a color, a texture, a shape, a sound. My claim here is that Kantian representation is effectively like Locke's 'simple ideas', or Hume's 'impressions'. Kant forbids that one may define representations, just as Locke denies that one can define a simple idea, and Hume denies that one can define an 'impression'. For the student who has learned Kant's metaphysics, furthermore, we know that the 'representations' themselves cannot be learned by sense organs. 'Intuition' is the philosophical category through which representations must be produced. 'Intuition', in common speech, signifies a mysterious something. One may have an 'intuition' that it is going to rain, a premonition; but Kant uses the name of 'intuition' to stand for the whole of the 'sensible'. This may sound like quibbling, but that can hardly be the case if a philosopher is undertaking to

establish formal laws of thought for a whole civilization in such misleading language.

Thus the representation involves no knowledge of any degree. It does not represent judgment in any degree. It does not constitute fact in any degree. It is what most people are limited to being aware of in the Kantian system, along with the lower animals who Kant insists have representations also. We have quoted Kant's definition of representation above. There, Kant defines representation as that which cannot be defined. For to attempt to define a representation leads one to other representations, and an infinite regress occurs. Thus 'representation' for Kant in the sense of the object experienced really indicates the infinite, the infinite nature of intertwined causes and effects which cannot be limited except arbitrarily. In contrast to Aristotle's logic, where logic is required to actually build upon pre-existent knowledge—Kant denies the possibility. Plato addresses this specific issue in his *Theatetus*, in the section known as 'Socrates' Dream'. We do not have time to go into that here however.

If we stay with our ordinary person, and if we invoke Plato and Aristotle, the ordinary person for these two thinkers does not have 'representations' flow through his or her mind by mysterious means; the ordinary person by the lights of these philosophers does not have 'intuitions' as the replacement for sense perception. For Plato perception *is* a judgment (*Theatetus*).

Socrates: My object in being so precise is to know whether there is some part of ourselves, the same in all cases, with which we apprehend white or black through our eyes. . . . Can you, if the question is put to you, refer all such acts of apprehension to the body? . . .

Theaetetus: Really, Socrates, I could not say, except that I think there is no special organ at all for these things, as there is for the others. It is clear to me that the mind in itself is its own instrument for contemplating the common terms that apply to everything.

Socrates: In fact, Theaetetus, you are handsome, not ugly as Theodorus said you were, for in a discussion handsome is that handsome does. And you have treated me more handsomely in saving me the trouble of a very long argument, if it is clear to you that the mind contemplates some things through its own instrumentality, others through the bodily faculties. That was indeed what I thought myself, but I wanted you to agree.<sup>59</sup>

It is not a high kind of knowledge, but it is certainly knowing; and as an ordinary way of knowing it is virtually impossible to get wrong. Either the sense faculties must be put in a very strained situation, say at a distance from their object, or the individual must never have had an experience of this kind

of object before. Otherwise, the individual, Plato argues, cannot get perceptual judgment wrong. And this is certainly a defeat of skepticism and all manner of nihilistic philosophy. For Plato, perception acquaints us with the 'forms', the so-called 'concepts' of Kantian experience, and likewise for Aristotle. But for Kant, nothing 'immaterial' can have a role, until the human mind becomes the inventor, the master, the creator of a 'concept'.

For Plato, 'tree' is a form or an idea interchangeably. It is a concept as well. All three names work identically for Plato. When one experiences one cow, one learns the form or concept or idea of the cow in that single experience. It is not necessary for the human being to begin to compare this single cow with other animals in order to develop the concept of the cow. It is not necessary for the human being to fabricate the concept of the cow by conducting comparisons and cross comparisons with other objects. Rather, the form itself is implanted in the memory, in the wax block model of mind. For Plato, once one has had experience of one cow, one will be capable of experiencing cow and knowing it to be so in all specific cases, because 'cow' is not something the mind makes, 'cow' is not something that the mind fabricates, 'cow' is not a 'phenomenon' that one does not know the true nature of; but rather 'cow' itself *is* a nature, a kind. But for Kant, it is not possible to have a representation of a cow. One can have a representation of a size, perhaps; of a color. Even if this contradicts Kant's formal definitions of the faculty of intuition and sensible representation, Kant allows this much to his scientific class, whose logical processes are to be surrendered to Kant's direction.

For Kant, the human being has no concept of cow because one cannot experience or perceive the cow-hood of the cow. One cannot perceive a cow. Sense experience is dissolved into atomic bits, in themselves a chaos. All power for organizing this 'matter' must come from the mind and its own resources independently of all experience. The Kantian thinker invents. And thus the *radical* separation of Kantian method from the functioning of ordinary opinion as *it* exists. It is, ordinary opinion, and its consciousness of itself, wholly disenfranchised from the domain of truth by Kant's logical metaphysics; and thus the expert in whichever discipline trained in Kantian models of thought will dominate the ordinary thinker in any and all cases. and that is a political relationship. Power is always political, and this power that Kant manufactures in his definition of how the human being thinks is therefore political in the strongest sense of the word. This is the domain of the metaphysics of fact determination as we have called it, and upon it hang every decisive political question known to humankind.

Consider the example that Kant gives in the *Jasche Logic*. We have a 'linden' a 'spruce', a 'pine'. We must begin to compare and contrast these objects if we wish to approach the concept of a 'tree'. We must invent the concept of the 'tree'. Now, in ordinary speech, one can be shown the pine,

and have a memory record of what a 'tree' is. The fact that it is a 'pine' tree will not, cannot come until later, when one has expanded one's experience of trees to their various distinctive varieties. But the concept 'tree' is in all of them. For the ordinary person, the concept of tree is not something that has to be invented. And once one knows that something is a tree, before one knows of a linden, a pine, a spruce, one possesses some knowledge. One can properly identify the treehood of any object that is a tree, and recognize a tree among a million other kinds of objects without needing to compare any of them whatever. When Kant introduces the doctrine of comparison and converts 'concept' into the artificial or fabricated domain of the philosopher mind, or the scientist mind, one is simultaneously *taking away* the objects from the purview of ordinary opinion. One is discrediting their very way of knowing *anything*. And Kant includes in his logical teaching a very brutal nomenclature for those who resist this new method of education.

This brings us to another important point about Plato's and Aristotle's theories of form, or concept, or 'universal', or idea (they are interchangeable for the old Greeks). For Plato, there is no such thing as a 'partial concept'. Concepts or forms or ideas or patterns are indivisible things for Plato. One can define them, but the forms themselves cannot be reduced to wholes of parts as concepts or ideas or forms. A leaf is not a partial tree. Concepts again for Plato and Aristotle are immaterial. They are not divisible. But for Kant, these concepts that deal with objects in the world of experience must be constructible. Kant reserves the indivisible aspect of definition to the supposed concepts or ideas that he locates in the human mind as wholly independent of experience and as immune to any calls for proof: such as Kant's concept of the 'whole world' or universe. This concept of the 'whole world' reproduces the natural philosophy of Epicurus, whom Kant so adores, representing nature as if it is a single object, to be considered as one thing, one master genus. There is no such genus in Plato. In Kant's ideology all objects can be dissolved into one object, operating according to the same 'laws'. But this is what Kant insists that the mind knows mysteriously and which it is not compelled to prove, and which it cannot prove. Kant never teaches his student that this concept of the 'whole universe' is a concept from the old natural philosophies, much less that it has been met with shattering refutations.

Thus the Kantian ideology of 'concept' fits well with the 'experimental method' that Bacon first developed. Thus the scientist is not only in charge of testing objects from the sensible world to examine their qualities. What the reader is not going to be aware of is that Kant's scientist is fully empowered to assign a definition to the object based upon his experiments, that he is not beholden to any conception of what the object is 'in itself', a terminology that Kant has sought to banish from human vocabulary. In this seemingly



innocuous procedure and terminology scientific culture is given the authority to serve as the creator of kinds, as the effective author of species.

Kant argues that there is no such thing as a species which is not also a genus. 'A species infima is only comparatively infima, and is the last in use', Kant writes. 'It must always be possible to find another species, whereby this last becomes a genus.'<sup>60</sup> 'One must assume that there are *conceptus communes* under which one cannot subsume any others. But it remains merely arbitrary, and hence one cannot say that a species infima can be found.'<sup>61</sup>

This revolution in the determination of names, the suppression of the evidence actually provided to us by sense perception, which Kant fully applies but never formally owns, tears the mind apart from its original knowledge of the world. Once it becomes not merely the power of science to originate the names out of its own resources, but its prerogative as a matter of authority in the educational system, all other knowledge is brought to its knees in helpless resistance or submission. It cannot be otherwise. 'Genus' and 'species' for Kant are mere relative names, and every name is both. For the ordinary person, for the educated layperson, 'human' is a species.

For Kant it is equally a genus. And there is *no limit* to the number of classifications underneath the name of 'human' for Kant. We cannot discover a last category, where the mind can finally rest itself, Kant argues, because of the 'law of continuity'. Which denies that there is any such thing as a species really. Science for Plato and Aristotle seeks to know the forms, those things that exist in nature, but in Kant's ideology, 'form' and 'idea' as they pertain to objects in nature are all fabricated by the scientists, submitted to his experimental controls and arbitrary jurisdiction. This divergence in the sources of knowing cannot be repaired. If facts differ in this radical way, between the demos and the Kantian scientific community, there is no way for the demos to conduct its own deliberations on anything which science cannot bring to an abrupt stop or halt through its intercession on the application and use of names. To be able to arrest discourse at any time, and for any reason it pleases, is the power a god might have; but that Kantian science has it, given the people's inclination to trust the learned, is a most terrible fate.

The democratic pretensions of the experimental method are ruthlessly deceiving in the Kantian genealogy of science. The experimenter professes to conduct his experiment in public, and promises that it will be reproducible for anyone else who undertakes the procedure. But only the scientist has this vantage point, this point of view, as to how the object is to be named; and the authority that he has to choose the experiments which will determine the relative name of the object. The people assume that the objects are already known and named; but it is precisely to generate a new naming process that experiments are authorized in the Kantian model. It is therefore a metaphysical power, a most subtle authority. For it is the definitions which control the use of the name. And therefore, the sciences colonize the common names,

reducing them to so much formless matter, in order that they may superimpose their form upon it. And as we have noted, there can be no trafficking in concepts of any kind that does not involve the categories of the understanding as Kant theorizes this term. For Kant, the understanding has a whole battery of requirements to apply to any objects in the sensible world, including that theory of the ‘whole of nature’ that we have already commented upon. This is where Kantian philosophy will impose its will upon the scientists themselves; for they are not at liberty to ever profess that they know what an object ‘really’ is, for to change their experiment is to change the definition, or to ‘discover’ a new species.

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## *Chapter Four*

# **Kant Scholarship**

### HENRY ALLISON ON KANT AND METAPHYSICS

Henry Allison provides an account of Kant that starts at the beginning. At least, Allison identifies the original problems that give rise to Kantian philosophy. Allison does not however describe these original problems very thoroughly. We should begin with the designation that Kant wants to impose upon his doctrine: ‘the critical philosophy’. To be critical, is to be suspicious. To be suspicious, is to be suspicious of something. What is this something of which Kant’s philosophy purports to be critical? One really must view philosophy in its broadest sense in order to examine the founding concepts. It is the ordinary opinions, the non-philosophical opinions, that Kant regards as insufficiently critical. For the ordinary opinions assume that in their perceptions, they are directly perceiving the real objects that exist out there in the world. Kant denies that they, the ordinary opiners or anyone else, can do this.

Kant insists that the only thing that can be ‘given’ to our minds to know through sensibility, are ‘appearances’, ‘representations’. These appearances, these representations, are not equivalent to the real ‘objects in themselves’ existing out there. Kant takes himself to know this. At this point, we must make some preliminary observations. First, among modern philosophers, and we can begin with Francis Bacon—who is not ‘critical’ in this sense? Bacon certainly does not dignify ordinary perception as competent to know the objects in themselves. Hobbes expressly indicts perception as incapable of knowing objects in themselves, as they exist external to us. Descartes rests his whole philosophy upon the premise that the senses cannot be trusted. This is the premise for his theory of learning about his own existence as a consciousness. Is it Allison’s true belief that Spinoza, Locke and Hume are any less ‘critical’? All three of them deny the evidence of the senses. The ordi-

nary opiner will tell you that he sees a horse. Locke will tell us that this is impossible. Locke will tell us that all we can say that we perceive, is a shape, a blot of color, a smell, a sound, and a host of other attributes. Locke denies that we can know of anything underlying all of these attributes, a 'substance' in the original Aristotelian sense.

What is the basis for this onslaught against the ordinary opinions? Certainly Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume all advance an atomistic theory of matter as the basis for their critique of ordinary opinion. This is *deductive metaphysics*. Allison denies that Kant relies upon any metaphysics in his critique of ordinary perception. Allison denies that there is any metaphysics involved in the other philosophies enumerated above as well. Allison prefers to argue that the modern philosophies tend to rely upon something that he calls the 'theocentric view' of perception, or the God's eye view of it.<sup>1</sup> These philosophers, along with ordinary opinion, in Allison's interpretation, suppose that God has presented them in their perceptions with absolutely true and valid access to the external objects as they are in themselves. It might be difficult to find a non-philosopher who does not believe that her senses give her accurate information about objects as they are 'in themselves'. As for philosophers, all of them admit that philosophy must accept some information as unprovable evidence, something that is not to be proved but accepted. Henry Allison is not being very humble then when he refers to the opinion of the man in the street as 'transcendental realism', much less as the 'teleological point of view' or God's eye point of view. 'As in the first edition, I interpret the contrast between these two standpoints in terms of the distinction between theocentric and anthropocentric models of cognition', Allison writes; 'transcendental realism is committed to the former, and transcendental idealism to the latter.'<sup>2</sup> Kant, in Allison's view, disputes this theocentric view. The mind does not rely upon divine guidance for knowing the objects that exist external to it in Kant's argument, Allison maintains. Kant rather wants to argue that man reasons for himself, and that because he reasons for himself, he must accept the humility of not trusting his senses, because they can only provide him with appearances (34).

Allison is trying to argue that Kant is stifling the trend even among modern philosophers, which is in no sense correct. In the first place, what is Kant's evidence for dismissing the ordinary view that we know objects through our senses, as they are in themselves? Exactly what divinity is required, in order to know that a dog is a dog, or a horse a horse? What information do we have, what means of knowing do we possess, which would suggest to us that there is a point of view from which a horse is not a horse, or a dog is not a dog? Upon what grounds, one wants to ask Allison, can one properly advance the name of 'representation' or 'intuition' in front of what all people perceive? Kant does not offer any convincing demonstration of this cause. Kant himself, as Allison points out, regards this ordinary

view that I have been describing, as ‘transcendental realism’. Allison admits that in the massive *First Critique*, there are only two measly passages where Kant even discusses this nomenclature of ‘transcendental realism’. So we ask Allison: upon what basis does Kant bring the charge against ordinary opinion, that it does not know what it takes itself to know about the external objects?

Bacon does not have any persuasive reasons. Locke does not say that the people are being injured by their beliefs in substances, or in their conviction that they know substances, in such a way that they ought to be dissuaded from such usage. Where then does the initial power of accusation come from? It is plain that Henry Allison could not today, in a college classroom, produce an indictment of sense perception that would persuade his students. The power of the ‘critical’ objection arises from natural philosophy, metaphysics—precisely what Allison says is not involved in Kant’s project in the least. Yet it is the naturalistic philosophy of eternal substances alone which gives rise to the theory that our perceptions are not coordinated by our central consciousnesses; that our souls receive piecemeal, from the separate senses, a parade of ‘simple ideas’ or ‘impressions’. Kant does not use the terminology of Locke or Hume when he characterizes the process of sensibility as mere ‘affections of our bodies’, but he is clearly following in their footsteps. It is only the atomist theory of perception which gives rise to the dislocated sense material that the mind is thereupon required to perform some magical surgery upon, to ‘create’ or ‘make’ an object according to its own liking.

There is not merely a metaphysics involved in Kant’s formulation of the ‘transcendental realist’ designation. There is a meta-politics as well. After all, Kant’s speculative philosophy in the *First Critique* is stated to be a mere preparation for moral or practical philosophy, which reveals man as the very centerpiece of nature, as the purpose for which all of nature has been created. Yet Kant’s moral or practical philosophy will rebel against the ordinary moral opinions, in precisely the way that Kant’s ‘critical’ philosophy rebels against the mind’s authority to know any perceptible object as it is in itself. Kant’s moral philosophy, in good old Baconian fashion, will attempt to overpower human nature, to substitute a Rousseauian artificial theory of virtue in its place. We should not be willing partisans of the critical philosophy, before we have subjected it itself to a sufficiently critical examination.

We can go further. In his analysis of Kant’s transcendental idealism, Allison claims that Kant is working merely with ‘epistemic’ matters. In other words, Kant’s transcendental idealism should be understood, from Allison’s point of view, as a humble admission of the limits of human mental powers. We are forced to argue that man has a priori knowledge of some sort, in order that man may arrive at some workable conception of the world that nature denies to him. Once again, Allison is militantly opposed to the proposition

that there is anything metaphysical about Kant's transcendental idealism. Yet it is not very hard to find the defect in this argument.

What, in the end, are the a priori ideas, the bedrock of the mental categories, that Kant's transcendental idealism provides to the human mind, and what purpose do they serve? Kant makes the argument that the only possible substance, i.e. the only possible real being in nature, must be an eternal object. It may undergo alteration, but it may not undergo coming into being or passing out of being. So this is what the transcendental understanding has to contribute to the 'making' of knowledge. We ask the question: what of value to the human race and its 'epistemic limits' is advanced by this claim that the only real substance in nature is eternal? What objects in our human world does this conviction or a priori belief enable us to know? None of us are acquainted with any eternal objects, and the objects for which we care the most are vulnerable objects, objects in danger of being injured or destroyed. In fact, that which Kant has nestled away in the a priori of his metaphysics, are just those eternal natures, which drive the whole theory of perception as 'appearances' and 'representations', with which Kant's theory *professes* to begin.

Allison's teaching suffers from a defect of natural philosophy. He does not know the debates of natural philosophy that the Early Modern philosophers all knew very well. They all wield the atomist theory of knowledge while suppressing the name, and the deeper rationale of the teaching. The rationale of the atomist philosophy is that there must be some ultimate body that is indestructible that the rest of creation can be built out of, such as Kant retails in his own early work on the *Universal Theory of the Heavens*. If these indestructible bodies did not exist, then the whole universe, as Epicurus observed, would dissolve into nothing. As if our theory alone could prevent that from happening. Yet the atomist theory cannot finally survive examination. Its account of body is not sustainable. Its account of any being is not sustainable. We do not determine the truth or falsity of a theory based upon the consequences of the theory, but based upon whether or not it is true or possibly true. The atomist theory is not possibly true. Not only is all body heterogeneous, but all body has a limit to its divisibility. That point of divisibility is not stopped at an atomic point, but at the point of destruction itself. To divide a body in its extremities is indeed to destroy it.

One needs to take a step back from Kant's theory of transcendental idealism to remember the theory of nature that he is attempting to construct. Kant's theory of nature is a meaningless whole, a web of causally interrelated but meaningless processes, which are bereft of freedom. Is this what the human mind would create out of its own resources? Is this the law of nature that the human mind would find in accordance with its own epistemic limits? What conception of human limitation is involved in designing a theory of nature which chases away man's every possibility of enjoyable freedom, or



which denies to his full life, of body and spirit, a purpose and direction? In order to make arguments for the soulless universe of nature that Kant wants to argue for, one must be talking about nature as an object, not as an epistemic condition of human mentality. The Kantian philosopher, in his theory of *substantiae phenomenae*, believes that he *knows* what external nature is.

For the ordinary person, Kant's theory of nature is chilling and even terrifying. It denies the natural principles of development that we find in natural objects, and reduces them to mere 'aesthetic taste', as the *Third Critique* demonstrates. Yet for Kant, as for Hobbes, this representation of nature as meaningless paves the way for men of science to make of that supposedly meaningless ball what they wish. For them, it is the right to proclaim as knowledge, that which in their mere wills they have deigned to wish to make. Kant's theory of purposeless nature is nothing more than a variation of Hobbesian skepticism, whereby the complaint that the senses disappoint us, is really nothing more than an attempt to confer upon scientific experiment the title of ultimate cause of knowledge, as creator pure and simple.

This is an absurd view. Man's 'making' is nothing more than the execution of his ideas. His ideas are not the most real thing in the universe. They do not become more dignified simply by means of the attack on the human ability to know of truths through discerning receptivity and perception. Kant's B preface is not a document of despair. It is a boast.

A second major point that Allison makes, is that the previous philosophies have failed to allow for a 'discursive' model of intelligence, where there is some interaction between the sensible part of the soul, and the part of the soul that judges, the understanding. Allison feels very strongly about this. Yet it is hard to see what is truly discursive in Kant's account. What, in Allison's view, is finally made available on the 'sensible' side of the ledger? 'Appearances' and 'representations'. What do these tell us, or what hard nugget of knowledge do they profess to leave us with? Nothing. These appearances and representations, Kant believes that he knows, are mere 'affections' of the mind, determined by we know not what objects. From an ordinary human point of view, this leaves 'judgment' entirely untethered. Kant is very emphatic about the fact that no judgment may take place in the merely sensible part of experience.

Since both Kant and Allison like to talk about Plato's model of knowledge, let us explicate it briefly. Allison's attempt to characterize Kant as humble, in contrast to the allegedly conceited Plato, is therefore ludicrous. 'Conversely, focusing on the discursivity thesis makes it clear that true Kantian humility cannot bypass transcendental idealism, because it is a consequence of this thesis that the thought of things as they are in themselves, abstracts from an existential condition of human cognition.'<sup>3</sup> In Plato's model of knowledge, the soul 'uses' the senses to learn about external objects.

We are not wrong when we judge a dog to be a dog, if we know what a dog is from prior experience, for Plato. If, that is, the dog is within the range of our senses. Perception itself is a judgment for Plato, and this is why ordinary opinion has a philosophical element in it. For perception is the first acquaintance we have with a form, what Kant likes to call a concept. We do not learn what a dog is by creating the rule for what a dog is. The form of the dog is an image, to all non-philosophers and philosophers alike, at least initially. Man does not create the dog, or the true account of what a dog is. His attempts at science will lead him to try to master the definition of what a dog is, and this is a whole different enterprise of knowledge. One could say that this is truly discursive knowledge. For the perceived dogs remain the original evidence upon which the inquiry into the definition occurs. One cannot say any of this about Kant's theory. One does not know the dog, for Kant, but only a blizzard of appearances. The soul must furnish to the mind a rule for what a dog is, so that it can create this object by organizing 'appearances'. But as the *Third Critique* makes abundantly clear, the form of the dog is not a real thing in nature for Kant. It is merely a part of nature's technique for rendering itself useful to man, so that he can make useful objects for himself. What remains real for Kant, in the *Third Critique* as in the first, is mechanism, i.e. meaningless atomism.

#### ALLISON ON THE COMPLETENESS OF KANT'S TABLE OF JUDGMENTS

The table of judgments, famously, is in four parts for Kant: quantity, quality, relation and modality. Allison finds no reason not to go along with Kant's ascription of these attributes as 'logical' ones. He also finds the table of judgments to be very complete. Exhaustive, Allison thinks. Yet do they tell the human race anything, or allow that the human race knows anything at all about the world? Let us first deal with quantity. Quantity is a synthetic a priori mental determination, in Kant's view. Quantity is not a property of objects that we learn of them, i.e. their unity. What Allison is silent about here, is the Kantian agreement with the Lockean and Humean accounts of perception as fragmented sensation which of themselves lack the parts of unity or being is decisive. Let us take an apple. For the 'God's eye view', the single apple is a unity. It is a 'one'. Its unity is inseparable from its existence. Not so for Kant. The apple is not an object for us in Kantian analytics. Appearances and representations are objects for us: which means that roundness is an object for us, redness is an object for us, sweetness is an object for us, smoothness is an object for us. For Kant, there is no unity between these things that exists as an attribute actually binding these things together. This strictly follows Locke and Hume. Our minds must supply the link as it were

between these ‘objects’, if we concede to these philosophers their highly philosophical starting point, which they never prove.

For Plato the soul employs the sense organs. There is a common consciousness overseeing all of the sense organs simultaneously.

Socrates: let us call it the gift of the Muse’s mother, memory, and say that whenever we wish to remember something, we see or hear or conceive in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring. Whatever is so imprinted we remember and know so long as the image remains; whatever is rubbed out has not succeeded in leaving an impression we have forgotten and do not know.

Theaetetus: So be it.<sup>4</sup>

And therefore one can know the unity of the red and the round and the sweet and the smooth for the Socratic Greeks but not for the Lockean moderns. So much for quantity. For Kant, the mind makes up quantity by counting, i.e. literally creating number through its actions of counting, just as the geometer allegedly generates his object of shape by tracing it out or drawing it.

Let us next address the ‘category’ that is missing: being, or existence. Kant is not willing to allow that existence even is a predicate. How does he do that? We certainly, we ‘God’s eye view’ people, think we know of the existence of the apple, and we would think it ridiculous if we were told otherwise. Yet for Kant, since the object we have awareness of is entirely constructed within our own minds, the ‘copula’ ‘is’ concerns the alleged pure transcendental apperception, that husk of a conscious self which unifies the representations and appearances. In Kant’s rendering, ‘being’ is transformed into a kind of action or function of the transcendental apperception, i.e. something the mind too *makes*. And so Kant’s very table of categories simply dispenses with ‘being’, even though the atomist philosophy upon which the whole Kantian theory of mind rests actually *reduces* to a philosophy of being, entirely aloof from Kant’s whole theory of mental constructivism.

Let us move next to quality. This is a pretty abstract category. Once again all qualities dissolve into appearances and representations. Time and space are the a priori form of all sensible intuitions, and we have already addressed those. Then we have relation, and modality. What objects can come before these two categories? For this, we are dependent on other categories that Kant does not mention here, like real objects in nature. Kant both wants to argue that there are external objects in nature, which are not noumena, nor phenomena; and which are not determined by our principles of understanding either. He also wants to limit human consciousness to things that the mind has made. Yet to acknowledge the dependence of our own mental processes,

as Kant does, upon being affected by real external objects not themselves either noumena or phenomena, is to surrender the Cartesian position, which Kant does indeed profess to do (part of the time anyway).

But let us notice what else is missing from Kant's table of the 'logical' categories; 'man' and 'dog', justice and injustice, tree and river, daytime and moonlight, all of the 'whats' which make up, for the human race, the objects of its experience. None of these have any place in Kant's representational model. All of these *whats*, these *whatnesses*, are purged, excluded from the 'logic'. Allison talks about how Kant's categories are resolved to supply us with the 'possible objects', but this does not go far enough by a long shot. Kant insists, that no possible object can ever be observed as a thing in itself, as a single object. 'Possible objects' must apply to *all objects in general*, which means that all objects in general must be regarded as a decisive unity. Or else all the objects that are truly real and possible would be left out of the table of judgment altogether. We return to Allison's claim that it is Plato who plays God when he asks his questions, what is 'courage'? What is 'justice'? What is 'knowledge'? What is holiness? What is friendship? But these are the objects that people know of and want to get to the truth of. Kant's epistemology vacates the entire universe of objects that people have meaningful experience of.

#### ALLISON ON SPONTANEITY AND JUDGMENT OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE

When Allison is talking about the transcendental deduction and spending much time talking about the apperceptive self, he lapses into a recitation of the objects that Kant deigns to talk about: the sun, shining on a rock; the sugar, and its possible sweetness; wormwood. A house. Now none of these objects show up in Kant's categories. They all fall into the domain of appearances and representations, things that the apperceptive self has created. With the simple fact being, that as Allison has proved, the apperceptive self underlies the categories. It is inseparable from the categories of the understanding. But the categories of the understanding have no place for sugar, or wormwood, or house, or the sun even. The objects of the understanding and the categories must be eternal. They can only undergo alteration, they cannot come into being and pass away. This creates a massive problem, when one is trying, as Allison is, to make the distinction between subjective and objective judgment. For Allison, as for Kant, this leads into the distinction between perceptions of experience and representations. The point is that for Kant, the 'objectively' valid domain of experience is valid for 'everyone', it is intersubjectively valid. Which lead us to a problem: because the categories enforce the eternal objects of which the people have no experience. Upon what

basis can Kant claim to speak for them? But this is the whole point of 'spontaneity' as a feature of the apperceptive unity.

For the non-philosopher, there is no moral aspect to calling a horse a horse. There is nothing spontaneous about it. If it is a horse, that is what one calls it. Yet the German idealist philosophers have introduced what Allison identifies as the 'normative' aspect of judging, and spontaneity covers that something. Exactly in what does it consist? Why would there be any discussion at all of spontaneity or moral freedom, the normative or 'ought', when we are making the distinction between objective and subjective, i.e. those valid for all persons, and those valid for only individual human beings? The 'objectively' valid domain of perception of experience, for Kant, is normative, because the principle of apperception is bound to the categories of the understanding. The categories of the understanding are bound to the desideratum of objects that allegedly all of them have in common, i.e. that of 'possible experience' but *never* that of any object 'in itself.' Objects judged in themselves, for Kant, qualify as aesthetics, taste. He will talk about this a great deal in the *Critique of Judgment*.

The moral aspect concerns philosophy and non-philosophers in a relationship of authority. Philosophers put themselves in authority here, and non-philosophers are subjected to serious blame and denigration if they do not follow suit. The categories exclude sugar, and wormwood, and the sun; these are not part of Kant's logic, they are not part of synthetic a priori knowledge, they are relegated to appearances and representations on a merely intuitive or imaginative basis, segregated apart from understanding and 'reason'. Kant plays fast and loose here. For the Kantian philosopher, all of the objects enumerated, including the sun, are merely apparent objects, aesthetic objects: sugar, house, wormwood. They do not qualify as real objects. The sugar, the house, to the ordinary person have the properties of time and exist in a particular place. For Kant, time and space are merely attributes of human sensibility, not of objects as we know them. To speak properly of inter-subjectively valid objects, then, for Kant, is to have recourse to the categories, which we have seen exclude the forms of *whatness*. Spontaneity is introduced for the apperceptive self of philosophy, to arrogate authority to its definition of objects.

Allison himself seems entirely sincere in this following of Kant's argument. Kant's discussion does not follow, even if one accepts the untrue parts of his foundations, such as the belief in representations and appearances as Kant defines them. Allison wants to refer to the Kantian category of phenomena as the inter-subjectively valid object that the understanding creates; except that the way Kant defines them excludes the very examples that Kant has recourse to (and what other examples does he have recourse to?). Kant and company talk about sugar and houses and wormwood even as they withdraw any truth value from those object designations. The rock that the

sun beats down upon is not eternal. It does not exist in a community of objects with all the infinite other objects in the world. It is not part of any infinite chain of causes and effects. But those are the categories of objective truth for Kant, fused to his theory of phenomena, and anchored as we have seen in a moral aspect of so-called spontaneity. Kant needs that spontaneous freedom in order to justify his claims. He cannot prove them. In the *Blomberg Logic*, Kant reveals his contempt for the ordinary point of view, as he does in the *Critique of Judgment* as well. The ordinary person does not regard it as a matter of 'taste' to call a horse a horse. She regards it as a matter of simple truth. In Kant's hierarchy of knowledge, taste is all that it counts as. Kant writes:

Plato was very rhetorical and obscure, and in such a way that he often did not understand Himself '(123). 'Experiences do not permit any universal judgments at all, except of possibility. 'Imitation and custom are the greatest sources of aesthetic prejudices. Frequent approval of one or another object makes, as it were, an archetype in the soul, with which it is in no position to compare other things that look otherwise than this original which has been established and which, as a model, is incapable of improvement' (136). 'Experiences do not permit any universal judgments at all, except of possibility. Experience simply cannot teach me with apodictic certainty that all men must die, e.g. But only that all men who have previously lived have died (189).<sup>5</sup>

#### BEATRICE LONGUENESSE ON KANT'S THEORY OF CAUSALITY

It is relatively common, in Kant studies, for commentators to construe Kant as attempting to provide some philosophic foundation for the perception of the everyman. In this way, Kant is portrayed as the opponent of Hume, who sought to challenge the sturdiness of the ordinary observation that 'there is a ship', or 'here is a house'. Beatrice Longuenesse does regard the two domains of ordinary perception, outside of philosophical sophistication, and the scientifically sophisticated Kantian view of transcendental knowledge as mutually supportive. 'From the fact that we have such a priori modes of ordering, forms of intuitions as well as form of our capacity to judge (forms of judgment), Kant derives a complex argument to the effect that we also have a priori concepts that have their origin in the understanding alone and nevertheless are true of all objects given to our senses: such concepts are what he calls, borrowing the term from Aristotle, categories.'<sup>6</sup> With the benefit of Kant's transcendental arguments, Longuenesse believes, philosophy can protect the ordinary person's conviction that he does indeed see a ship moving upstream here, and a house across the street.

Objects (appearances) are said to ‘make possible’ synthetic representations, but not to cause them, because they are necessary but not sufficient conditions of such representations; for these representations to be formed, mental activities are discursive activities of comparison and generalization’ (23). ‘For Kant, on the contrary, *universals* do indeed belong to the existence of things . . . but are revealed in things only by the acts of ‘comparison, reflection, and abstraction’ of the understanding. Although it is ‘made’ as to its form, a concept represents something universal ‘present in itself’ in the given object (12).<sup>7</sup>

Such reflections need to be entered into provisionally, as Kant himself might say. First of all, for the ordinary person, she who is fated to dwell essentially in the ‘aesthetic’ domain, I think it is clear that Kant does not assign this any probative value as to truth at all. In the second case, we need to be aware of how Kant advises, in his *Jasche Logic*, the modern sophisticated thinker to *employ* aesthetic helps in putting his argument before a larger domain of readers.

Aesthetic truth. A merely subjective truth, which consists only in the agreement of cognition with the subject, and the laws of sensory illusion, and which is consequently nothing more than a universal semblance (549). ‘In expanding our cognitions or in perfecting them as to their extensive quantity, it is good to make an estimate as to how far a cognition agrees with our ends and capabilities. This reflection concerns the determination of the *horizon* of our cognitions, by which is to be understood the congruence of the quantity of all categories with the capabilities and ends of the subject. The horizon can be determined:

1. *Logically*, in accordance with the faculty of the powers of cognition in relation
2. to the *interest of the understanding*. Here we have to pass judgment on how far we can go in our cognitions, how far we must go, and to what extent certain cognitions serve, in a logical respect, as means to various principal cognitions as ends;
3. *Aesthetically*, in *accordance with taste* in relation to the interest of feeling. He who determines his horizon aesthetically seeks to arrange science according to the taste of the public, i.e. to make it *popular*, or in general to attain only such cognitions as may be universally communicated, and in which the class of the unlearned too find pleasure and interest (550).<sup>8</sup>

Let us be frank: on the best of days, in probative terms, Kant will not allow any ship, or any house, as empirical objects, to be more than phenomena. ‘Phenomena’ for Kant indicates objects that are only appearances. Kant will not allow that we perceive the ‘object in itself’, not even in the case of ships and houses and trees. So on the very best face that we can put upon the matter, Kant does not alleviate anxiety in the ordinary mind. Or, rather, we

should say, the impact of his arguments does nothing to comfort the ordinary mind against philosophical doctrines which indicate that the ordinary mind traffics in a good deal of delusion, all the time.

One could say that Kant's very definition of Enlightenment, 'the ability to think for oneself', is tied to a willingness to turn against the opinions of the whole world. To suppose that the whole world, or that the ordinary mind (for they are synonymous sayings) represent mere 'authority' is a bold, not a humble attitude. The Enlightenment thinkers are bold, not humble thinkers. They strike out, and strike down, that whole domain of ordinary perception and its supposed familiarity with the objects of the world, at least in their core theories.

John Locke, for instance, absolutely denies that we can know what a 'substance' is.

'I confess, there is another idea, which would be of general use for mankind to have, as it is of general talk as if they had it; and that is the *idea of substance*, which we neither have, nor can have, by *sensation* or *reflection*.' If nature took care to provide us any *ideas*, we might well expect it should be such, as by our own faculties we cannot procure to ourselves: But we see on the contrary, that since by those ways, whereby other *ideas* are brought into our minds, this is not, we have no such clear idea at all, and therefore signify nothing by the word *substance*, but only the uncertain supposition of we know not what; (i.e. of something whereof we have no distinct positive *idea*, which we take to be the *stratum*, or support, of those *ideas* we do know.<sup>9</sup>

Substance is a philosophical term invented by Aristotle. Aristotle, in his formulation of the name of 'substance', sought to name that object which is the most real, which has the most *being* in our experience and its various levels. Aristotle decided to settle that mantle upon combinations of matter and form, *perishable objects*. 'That it is not a science of production is clear even from the history of the earliest philosophers', Aristotle writes; 'For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize.' (982b11 *Metaphysics*) 'For every demonstrative science investigates with regard to some subject its essential attributes, starting from the common beliefs.' (997a18)

In Aristotle's view, substance includes the simple bodies (Water and fire, earth and air) and the bodies composed of them. 'All these are called substance because they are not predicated of a subject but everything else is predicated of them.' (1017b10)

It follows, then, that substance has two senses, (a) the ultimate substratum, which is no longer predicated of anything else, and (b) that which is a 'this' and separable, and of this nature is the shape or form of each thing.<sup>10</sup>

For Aristotle, *ordinary* people have knowledge of causes: and philosophy must borrow this knowledge from ordinary opinion merely in order to get



started. Thus for Aristotle the perishable objects are the most real, as they are the objects for which we feel the most anxiety. They reflect, in Aristotle's view, nature's purpose of *generation*.

Philosophers reared in the last fifty years seem unlikely to have had much training in natural philosophy. Why that is, is a subject that will have to wait for another place. Yet there can be no doubt, but that the Early Modern philosophers are natural philosophers with a vengeance. Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant: they advance a very distinct theory of nature, one that is far from the ordinary conception. The Early Modern thinkers advance the philosophy of a nature that is a unity, governed by mechanical laws, purposeless in its way; and above all, a doctrine to which they all adhere, constituted by *eternal* objects. These eternal natural objects harken back to ancient atomism, with which certainly Bacon demonstrates considerable familiarity.

Now an abstract principle is not an entity, and again a mortal entity is not a principle; so that a clearly irresistible necessity drives man's thoughts (if they were to be consistent) to the atom, which is a true entity, having matter, form, dimension, place, resistance, appetite, motion and emanation. Likewise amid the destruction of all natural bodies, it remains constant and eternal. For since the corruption of greater bodies are so many, and various, it is absolutely necessary that that which remains as an unchanging center should be either potential or extremely small, but it is not potential!<sup>11</sup>

Locke goes so far as to note that he is an atomist of an 'experimental' sort. Kant, for his part, names Epicurus as the greatest of the ancient natural philosophers. 'The Epicurean School was never able to achieve the same repute that the Stoic did. Whatever one may say about the Epicureans, however, this much is certain: they demonstrated the greatest moderation in enjoyment and were the *best natural philosophers* among all the thinkers of Greece.'<sup>12</sup>

Thus when we come to the 'First Analogy of Experience', she who has studied natural philosophy will recognize, on the first page and in the many footnotes, all of the ancient doctrines of natural philosophy. Chief among those doctrines is the teaching that the real objects in nature are eternal, and that the only sort of movement that is possible in nature is local movement. Kant insists, in the First Analogy, that the only change that can take place in nature is 'alteration'; and in the footnotes to the First Analogy of experience, Kant equates alteration itself with 'movement', i.e. local movement, as in the shifting around of atoms. 'In all appearances, that which persists is the object itself, i.e. the substance (phaenomena), but everything that changes or that can change belongs only to the way in which this substance, or substances, exist, thus to their determinations.'<sup>13</sup> That Kant was in his early work an

unabashed supporter of the doctrines of Epicurus is well known. Kant announces it boldly.

Kant, as we well know, denies that sense perception can enable anyone to know what the 'object in itself' finally is. In the case of the 'ship', what could it be except a ship? In the case of a house, what could it be except a house? Yet 'ship' and 'house' are common names only in the 'aesthetic domain', the domain of 'popularity'. Kant does not concede, in his logics, that the aesthetic sensation is probative in any way except for determining the pleasure or pain of the sentient individual. Aesthetic perception, i.e. ordinary perception not subjected to Kant's philosophical concept, has no truth value whatsoever. Thus while Kant may speak of the 'appearances' of the stone, upon which the sun shines, and the 'ship', which moves up river, these examples do not address the larger issue: will Kant allow that the ordinary person actually perceives a 'stone' for what it is? Will Kant allow that the ordinary person, in the domain of 'aesthetics', or as he calls it in the logic the 'entertainment', knows the 'house' for what it is? Hardly. Not at all. 'Ship' is a 'concept'. 'House' is a 'concept'. She who is confined to aesthetic sensation, who does not understand the principles of judgment as Kant sets them forth in his transcendental theory, is not even eligible to be conceded to judge *at all*. 'Perception', in Kant's artful nomenclature, does not yet indicate 'experience'. 'Before a judgment of perception can become a judgment of experience, it is requisite that the perception should be subsumed under some such concept of the understanding; for instance, air belongs under the concept of cause, which determines our judgment about it with regard to its expression as hypothetical.'<sup>14</sup> 'Perception' without the guidance of the understanding is still in the aesthetic domain; but in the principles of the understanding are the doctrines that the real bodies must be eternal, and furthermore, that they must be necessary (the principle of sufficient reason). It is denied that the real objects can perish, and it is asserted that it is necessary that they be eternal.

Longuenesse tries to build an argument out of Kant's transcendental aesthetics, out of the Kantian theories of time and space as mere characteristics of human sensibility, that do not belong to the 'objects themselves'. Does anybody, in their ordinary perception, doubt that time pertains and belongs to the ship we see sailing upstream? Is there anyone who doubts, about the house across the street, that time and location are directly, really and truly parts of that house? Kant's argument, that time and space are not characteristics of objects in themselves, is far from being evidence that he is attempting to 'save' ordinary perception from any skeptical doctrine. Indeed: later in the *First Critique*, when Kant comes to talk about space, he will assert its reality only for the human mind itself. And space is the extension of real objects for Kant, of 'outer perception'; and yet however much he asserts the reality of this space, Kant always comes back to the point that this is merely a feature of human consciousness, and not of anything beyond that.

Kant was much affected by Locke and Hume. This is no secret. In their theories of perception, the argument follows the model set forth by Descartes: their arguments focus on attempting to establish what it is possible for the human mind to receive through the senses. Locke calls it ‘simple ideas’. No ship can be accommodated in any ‘simple idea’ of Locke’s. Hume calls his perceptions ‘impressions’. No ‘tree’ can be accommodated in Hume’s ‘impressions’. Instead, in both cases, the mind is said to be limited to perceiving bits and pieces of objects: a jot of color, a shape, a size, a texture, a sound, a smell. To simply perceive a peach is impossible, for either of these thinkers. This is what Hume is talking about when he puts forward the ideas of ‘cause’ and ‘effect’. How can one prove that the color of the peach is really part of the same object that has the taste of the peach, and the shape of the peach, and so on and so forth? If the mind can do no better than to present the soul with these amputated bits and pieces, *this* is the issue of succession, and ‘cause’ and effect’, that Locke and Hume reduce causation to. The mind, in the case of Locke, can only invent the object, by tallying up predicates through experimental investigations, allegedly. Our ordinary person does not possess this capacity to see and know that ship on that river. For Hume, the mind must pretend that it knows that the bits and pieces of objects go together, merely in order to be able to satisfy his urgent need for action and tending to his wants.

When we finally follow an object in its successive changes, the smooth progress of the thought makes us ascribe an identity to the succession; because ‘tis by a similar set of mind we consider an unchangeable object. When we compare its situation after a considerable change, the progress of the thought is broke; and consequently we are presented with the idea of diversity: in order to reconcile which contradictions the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to contain the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a *Substance*, or *original and first matter*.<sup>15</sup>

In the First Analogy, Kant certainly does begin to unfold precisely that sort of theory of appearance; and we are all familiar with Kant’s essential faculty of ‘empirical apperception’, that consciousness which is not really self-aware at all, but which combines the appearances.

Yet empirical apperception is not capable at all of *judgment*. Not for Kant. Therefore judgment is absolutely fused to transcendental apperception, which is fused to the *eternal* substances. When Kant talks about a rock, a ship, a house, he is employing aesthetic presentation, as mentioned above in a cite from his *Jasche Logic*. He is trotting out a merely popular presentation with these examples, not one that meets the actual full rigor of his system. In which case, the ‘tree’ or ‘noise’ must be viewed as mere secondary objects, as ‘phenomena’, as appearances too. For the real objects which allegedly

underlay them are eternal, and it is clear that the ship and the house do not forever persist. Kant employs the example of the burnt wood in the First Analogy to illuminate his point. The 'substance' survives the burning of the tree. For Aristotle that is not true. For Plato, that is not true. The tree is destroyed. The tree is not ashes. Ashes are what is left when the tree is no more.

A philosopher was asked: How much does the smoke weigh? He replied: If you take away from the weight of the wood that was burnt the weight of the ashes that was left over, you will have the weight of the smoke. He thus assumed as incontrovertible that even in fire the matter (substance) never disappears but rather only suffers an alteration in its form.<sup>16</sup>

Kant is *not* referring to the ordinary perception with his doctrine of phenomena. And the evidence is in the First Analogy as well as in other places. For the phenomena, the appearances which Kant is willing to concede that the human race is capable of knowing, *are deemed by Kant to be eternal*. Phenomena is the house as seen through the eyes of the old natural philosophies. I know that the Early Modern philosophers do not like to fraternize with the name of atomism, but their philosophy of nature trades in the very same definitions and principles. It is not in line with Aristotle's philosophy of nature. It is not in line with Plato's philosophy of nature. For neither Plato nor Aristotle is it necessary to refer to that which is ordinarily perceived as 'appearance' as if that object was not the real object in itself. To be sure, both Plato and Aristotle think that our knowledge of the objects can be improved by science, *but not* that we lack access to the objects themselves through our perceptions.

Longuenesse's point of view is therefore overly generous to Kant, bestowing upon that philosopher's theory a respect for ordinary mental life that it does not possess. I realize how entrenched these Early Modern principles of natural philosophy are; and how the doctrines of natural philosophy are barely taught in modern philosophy departments. I realize the immense scorn which has been generated against the older teachings of Plato and Aristotle when it comes to models of perception and accounts of what a real object *is* in the human world. In this case, at least, we can appeal to Kant. For he was no admirer of prestige when it comes to the investigations into truth. Kant's model of 'a priori' knowledge seeks to elevate principles of natural philosophy above the possibility of challenge. Yet those principles of natural philosophy did not originate in human minds a priori; they were created by argument about the world we do perceive and know. Return to that domain of argument we must, if we are to get to the bottom of the paralysis that besets modern intellectual culture generally.

## WAYNE WAXMAN ON KANT AND THE EMPIRICISTS

Wayne Waxman would like to argue that Immanuel Kant should be considered in the same category as the supposedly empirical philosophers, John Locke and David Hume. 'So far from departing from the course charted by British empiricism, Kant's transcendental theory of the understanding is continuous with, indeed the culmination of, the psychologization of philosophy initiated by Locke, advanced by Berkeley and developed to its empirical outrance by Hume.'<sup>17</sup> 'Empirical' is a useless word in the lexicon of our current scholarship. Even the term 'experience' is violated to such a degree by Kantian definition, as not to serve. One cannot rely upon labels then, in order to navigate one's way through this treacherous cove. Kant certainly does sustain the psychological emphasis on sense perception developed by Locke and Hume, but how are we to evaluate this theory of perception itself? Does it concede that ordinary opinion knows the actual external bodies? This strain of empiricism that includes Kant does *not* concede that human beings actually know the true 'empirical' bodies that they perceive.

John Locke does not begin with perception as ordinary opinions know it. John Locke begins with a theory of perception, and in fact in Locke this theory of perception is anchored and preceded by a theory of body. Physics, in other words, a very particular physics, determines Locke's definition of experience and sense perception. For Locke, sense is not really perception. The sensory organs are isolated from one another in this model, so that there is no unified experience of an object that is conceded at the outset. The non-philosopher does not experience an apple as a series of disconnected ideas: redness, roundness, the scent and taste and so on. It is therefore incumbent upon Locke to prove that his theory is correct. It is therefore incumbent upon Locke to disprove the assumptions of ordinary opinion. Locke places the weight of his proofs upon his theory of something that comes before perception: i.e. his theory of a perceptual process, one that consists in atomic operations, one which therefore depends upon the theory of atoms, and its great legacy.

David Hume's theory of sense impressions follows Locke's 'simple ideas' model. Hume too anchors his philosophy of perception in something which he insists that he knows: that there are certain points in the world that are indivisible; and that these points are both physical and not physical. Hume is unable to surrender the conception of body for his theory, because it would reduce his theory to a laughingstock. So he makes a claim that stupefies readers, to the effect that these irreducible points are both material and not material, physical and not physical. Suffice it to say that to the extent that the points are physical and material, as well as indivisible, they are atoms. For this is the definition of atoms.

Waxman is obviously smitten with the authority of Locke and Hume. He does not feel himself entitled to question their representation of the perceptual process. Waxman does not feel that he himself can even raise questions about this portrayal of the perceptual process of the atomist Early Modernists, but rather that these arguments must be vouchsafed as simply true and all further inquiry must proceed upon that basis.

Finally, I would challenge anyone who would discount or disregard Kant's own assessment of his debt to Hume to do what I once did: comb through Kant's collected Writings, assemble all of his remarks about past and present philosophers that relate to the theory of the understanding, and then see if you can still rest content with the notion that Hume's influence on Kant was not fundamentally and importantly superior to that of all others. Sensibility, in pre-Kantian and intellectualist theory alike, is the most elementary level of consciousness, the source of the raw, unassociated, unthought, yet-to-be-ordered-or-related inputs which the imagination and understanding were supposed to operate. At the same time, sensibility is, and must be, a multi-sensory consciousness in which data of all the senses are represented as given immediately together, a single homogenous manifold of data, completely a priori.<sup>18</sup>

Waxman is correct to analyze Kant's theory of perception as kindred to that of Locke and Hume; but he is presumptuous to employ the name of 'empirical' to characterize these theories and the ground of atomism upon which they rest. Even if centuries of scholarship have affirmed these theories on the terms that they themselves have proffered, that does not mean that they are accurate. The 'problem' of perception which Waxman identifies in the work of Immanuel Kant, is how this rhapsody of seemingly unrelated sensory datums are to be connected by the mind, made by the mind, into a serviceable object for our operations in the world. This prejudices the issue. Philosophy did not originate with Machiavelli. Atomism in fact originated during the time of Plato. The Early Moderns refuse to employ the name of atomism in most instances. Locke is an exception, but even he appends the descriptive of 'experimental' to the term. The other Early Modern philosophers shun the nomenclature of atomism, but the atomist vision of nature is everywhere apparent in their arguments.

The origins of atomism are important for the study of the Early Moderns, because the original atomists undertook a task that the Early Moderns do not really openly undertake. The original atomists undertook the task of making arguments as to the incorrectness of ordinary perception, making not flimsy but earnest arguments as to the reason why ordinary perception is invalid. In order to attempt to refute the perceptual evidence relied upon by the people, the original atomism had to appeal to evidence that the people were themselves assured of. That evidence rotates around the reality of existence, or 'being'. Ordinary people are very concerned in making a distinction between

what exists and what does not exist. They certainly believe that the real things in nature exist. Upon this distinction the balance of common understanding rests. The atomist philosophy undertakes to make arguments about the nature of 'being' or 'existence' itself. And it is on that basis that the atomist defines the atoms as nothing but 'being'.

Without this argument concerning 'being', the entire power and impact of Eleatic philosophy would have been naught. Yet, it is the vision of nature wrought by the Eleatic school and those it influenced, which reappears in Early Modern philosophy. The atoms are one universal stuff: 'being'. This levels the differences between all of the different kinds of objects in nature as well as those created by human beings. Atomism led the way in essaying the conception of universal laws of nature, ones self-propelled, the illusion of coming into being and the supposed 'conservation of substance'. Yet that atomist philosophy was defeated in antiquity. And this has to be one of the reasons why the Early Moderns are so shy about embracing the name. Kant builds upon the foundations laid by Locke and Hume. It matters greatly that those foundations are false.

#### MICHAEL FRIEDMAN ON KANT'S NATURAL SCIENCE

Michael Friedman. 'Philosophy of Natural Science'. In Paul Guyer, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge: 2007. Friedman makes the centerpiece of his focus here in the issue of infinite divisibility of matter. To argue that matter is infinitely divisible, would of course separate Kant from the atomist camp in which I have placed him. The first thing that has to be noticed, however, is that Kant is operating with a theory of *homogeneous* body. He is also separating himself, allegedly, from proclaiming what bodies 'in themselves' *actually* are. He is adopting a Cartesian approach to the issue of infinite divisibility, whereby and wherein the divisibility of the unknown external object is dependent on the divisor that our mind may happen to place upon our own conception of same. If I define an object as having as many parts as the divisions to which I subject it in my mind, that tells me nothing about the object as it is itself. Yet Kant's definition of phenomena as eternal precisely does tell us that he is against the bodies themselves, as they are in themselves, being infinitely divisible. For nothing can be eternal which is divisible. And something, which Kant calls phenomena, a way we are allegedly bound by our own human nature to think, *is* eternal.

Let us recur to the parts of body that we have proved. We have proved that the body in itself must have the parts of unity and being, as coequal natures. There is no homogeneity possible in body by itself. We have also proved therefore that every body in nature is a whole-of-parts. We have

deduced, from this, that every body must have the extremities of a Whole: and that among these extremities, there must be the extremities *in time*. In other words, every object in nature must come into being and pass away. Kant has, in his transcendental aesthetic, denied that time is actually a property of objects as they are in themselves. He has also, in his *First Critique*, defined matter itself as an ‘appearance’. Kant’s resolution of the issue of infinite divisibility depends, as he precisely instructs us in his antinomies, upon his transcendental idealism, i.e. upon his denial that we can know objects for what they are in themselves. Kant, in his antinomies, resolves the infinite divisibility of matter issue precisely as we have indicated above: he insists that matter is just as divided, no more and no less, than the number of divisions our own minds *impose* thereon.

Kant professes that Epicurus was the supreme natural philosopher of ancient Greece, the best of the lot, and Kant’s youthful Epicureanism and monadology has not been superseded or replaced in his Critical Philosophy. For when a thinker imposes a certain number of divisions on an object, through his own thought, for Kant—in that moment, the number of parts is limited as *per the thought*. In the next thought the thinker may divide the appearance of matter anew. Yet after that division, and before the next division is undertaken, the body has a *limited* number of parts in Kant’s view.

Friedman argues the following: ‘I will then consider the significance of Kant’s views on pure natural science for the entire critical philosophy as a whole. My own view—which is quite controversial—is that Kant is committed to the synthetic a priori status of specific principles of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics, and indeed, that without this commitment, some of Kant’s more important general doctrines (for example, his ‘answer’ to Hume concerning the necessity of causal laws of nature) simply become unintelligible’ (305). ‘In sharp contrast with the physical monadology, however, Kant abandons the idea of smallest elementary parts of matter or physical monads, and argues instead that all parts of matter or material substances, just like the space they occupy, must be infinitely divisible. Indeed, in the course of developing this argument, Kant explicitly rejects the very theory of physical monads he had himself earlier defended in 1756. A space filled with matter or material substance, in Kant’s new theory, now consists of an infinity or continuum of material points, each of which exerts the two fundamental forces of attraction and repulsion’ (312). ‘The specific realization presented in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, under the rubric of pure natural science, is a precise mathematical one, described at the level of physics itself, by Newton’s mathematical theory of motion. Indeed, in the *Metaphysical Foundations* Kant expressly distinguishes between ‘special metaphysics of corporeal nature’ and ‘general metaphysics’ or ‘transcendental philosophy’ by the idea that the former is necessarily mathematical while the latter is not’ (319).



The argument that Friedman is trying to make is a bit too subtle for the reader. It actually packs in several arguments, and indeed wishes to assume several arguments, en route to allegedly making one point. The one point that Kant wants to make in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, according to Friedman, is that the physicists cannot rely upon 'pure theory' to guide his scientific investigations. Rather, in the specific sciences, like physics, Friedman argues, Kant expects the scientist to rely upon 'mathematics', or 'synthesis', and experience a posteriori. The philosopher in the *First Critique*, by contrast, may rely upon the pure theory afforded to him by his 'unity of apperception', for his alleged knowledge about body. Where to begin? In the first place, Friedman ought to be so good as to give us his reasons for believing that 'pure reason' can teach anyone, that 'substances', or real bodies in nature, must be 'eternal'. Friedman insists that this is simply something that pure reason knows, as Kant himself insists. Yet that position, the view that substance is eternal, requires the postulate that substance is *indivisible*. Friedman will quibble with us on this matter. He will attempt to limit our discussion of what bodies in nature, or 'matter', are eligible to *be*. Yet we have already identified the first problem with Friedman's account of 'matter'. Friedman, following Kant, at least in the *First Critique*, wants to argue that the only parts of matter are 'attraction and repulsion'.

This argument simply won't withstand a bit more philosophy. The argument about the divisibility of body is very ancient. It was devised during the lifetime of Plato's Socrates. Parmenides was the first one to make the argument about indivisible reality. Zeno his helpmeet advanced arguments against the possibility of plurality, which involved the application of the infinite divisibility theses. Finally Democritus and Leucippus developed the philosophy of atoms, which by the way, Kant, in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, all but proudly claims as his own heritage. The content of the atoms is 'being' for these thinkers' indivisible being. These atoms, like the corpuscles of Descartes, have size and shape and weight; but they are 'being', and the only way a natural philosopher can leave out the part of 'being' from his account of real body, is if the public, or the representatives of the public, have become unable to follow the implications of the natural philosopher's argument. Without the part of 'being', no body can exist. Elsewhere in this work, I have discussed, several times, how the part of 'unity' can also not be lacking to any coherent and respectable theory of body. That the smallest body in nature must be irreducibly a whole of parts; and that from this basis, we can prove, and do prove, that all bodies in nature can undergo alteration, but also must undergo coming into being and passing out of existence altogether. Kant, relying on the tide of Enlightenment revivals of the atomist faith, adds blistering conviction to this position: but conviction is no obstacle to truth. We can and do defeat Kant's argument and any claimant to 'conservation of matter' theory in nature, to

any eternal theory of 'substance'. So much for the knowledge of 'pure reason', which in Friedman's analysis, Kant securely presents in his *First Critique*.

The major point that Friedman wants to make, is that the theory of body portrayed in Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (MFNS) is somehow not based on the 'pure reason'. It is based rather, Friedman argues, on 'mathematics'. The MFNS is intended for experiments conducted by functioning scientists in the hard disciplines, as it were. They must present their findings in such a way, Kant insists, that it at least appears as if they are obtaining information from the empirical data. Yet it is the purpose of the MFNS to instruct all experimenters, that they are not so free to rely upon empirical discoveries; for they must explain their findings in the language of eternal substance, those notorious indivisible bodies or alleged ones. Friedman thinks that this MFNS involves a 'mathematical' theory, because body is said to be infinitely divisible here by Kant. This is incorrect. Kant says that division stops at 'points'. Friedman wants to interpret these points as 'geometric' points. Upon what basis? Can geometric points locomote? Or be pushed by other bodies? *These* points can. Furthermore, Kant argues that he must 'abstract' from the other properties of the 'points', in order to limit his definition of matter to 'the movable in space'. Upon what grounds shall we accept the stipulation, that 'matter' is to be defined, as the 'movable' merely? Shall we define water merely as 'the drinkable'? The human body merely as 'the walkable'? The horse merely as 'the galloping'? Kant does not make any persuasive argument for his 'abstraction' from the 'points' of 'matter', to limit them to 'the movable in space'. We insist, frankly, that we recognize the parts of being and unity that the 'points' too must have, if they are indeed representatives of 'matter'. When we have added 'being' and 'unity' to the 'point' (and Hume, who reduced all physical reality in his treatise to 'indivisible points', which, while 'not physical', nevertheless possess 'color and weight'—only to finally concede that these points are physical in his *Enquiries into the Human Understanding* afterwards)—it will become clear that there are three kinds of motion: locomotion, alteration, and coming into being/passing away. All natural bodies undergo the last two forms of motion, though not all bodies can locomote. This discussion fully explodes the premise of Kant's MFNS; but for the record, we can observe that the theory of body in the MFNS is the same one Kant relies upon in his 'transcendental' or 'critical' work in the *First Critique*, we have defeated 'both' arguments anyway. Kant, so far from being an innovator, has gotten his theory of atomism maybe sixth hand. Kant, in his earlier work, even notes how Newton's theory of attraction is basically just another name for the original atomists' enumeration of 'weight' in the atoms. Newton himself is no major player in the genealogy of atomist theory. He is dependent on it, but not nearly so sophisticated a practitioner of it as Kant. Cf. Friedman, 'Matter and

Motion in the Metaphysical Foundations and the First Critique: The Empirical Concept of Matter and the Categories'. In Eric Watkins, editor. *Kant and the Sciences*. Oxford: 2001, 53.

### PAUL GUYER'S KANT

Francis Bacon, in his *Advancement of Learning*, asserts that Democritus was the preeminent natural philosopher of antiquity. Aristotle, who provides devastating critiques of Democritus' theory, is subordinated by Bacon to the reputations of Leucippus and Democritus.

But setting all conceits aside, my meaning is simply this, that a science be constituted which may be a receptacle of all such axioms as are not peculiar to any of the particular sciences, but belong to several of them in common.

Among such axioms Bacon lists the following: 'all things are changed and nothing is lost'; 'the quantum of nature is neither diminished nor increased'; things are preserved from destruction by bringing them back to their first principles as a rule in physics'.<sup>19</sup> The Florentine cadence is rather unmistakable. Note that while Machiavelli suggests, abstractly, that things have a 'limit to their life', he employs the language of alteration, and the influence of Lucretian Epicureanism on Machiavelli is presently gaining interested adherents.

It is a very true thing that all worldly things have a limit to their life, but generally those go the whole course that is ordered for them by heaven, that do not disorder their bodies but keep it indeed so that either it does not alter, or, if it alters, it is for its safety and not its harm. Because I am speaking of mixed bodies, such as republics and sects, I say that those alterations are for its safety that lead them back toward their beginnings.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, Aristotle in modern philosophical historiography is widely condemned for having given false testimony on the Pre-Socratic philosophers, for having allegedly imposed his own theory upon those predecessors he examines. Yet the examination of Aristotle's presentation of these thinkers in their supposed defects is scant. There is a reservoir of unease, along with the traces of hostility, following Aristotle's reputation across the modern age. Aristotle makes philosophers nervous when the question is natural philosophy.

Descartes, in his youthful scientific works, asserts in essence the atomist hypothesis. The later *Meditations* provide a new philosophical framework for the contemplation of natural philosophy, one whereby the very existence of external body is called into question. Obviously, this is not an atomist tenet. For the atomists, the atoms are all there is; at least for the classical atomists

through Epicurus. Even the soul is composed of atoms for Epicurus. In the natural philosophy which Descartes sketches from this posture of doubt as to the very existence of external objects (absolute idealism), he nevertheless produces a theory of body which, though at the mercy of God's concurrence, otherwise exists eternally.

Eternal body is the essence of atomism. The word for this is 'being' in the original language. Eternal being is the assertion, in the domain of body; and this argument is used by atomist philosophy to cast grave doubt upon the anxiety that ordinary people feel for the objects they regard as perishable. With the advent of Epicurean atomism, this moral aspect of the atomistic theory is radicalized: for Epicurus rejects all ordinary notions of good and bad, right and wrong, and reduces all morality to one supreme principle, fixated on the minimization of pain, and the kind of pleasure that this can bring. It is a very thin oxygen for most people to live in, to say the least; and the Epicurean community's effective withdrawal from the common life is simply an extension of that logic.

'Death is nothing to us. For what has been dissolved has no sense-experience, and what has no sense experience is nothing to us' (II). 'The removal of all feeling of pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures' (III). 'No pleasure in itself is a bad thing' (VIII). 'The purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many . . . (XIV) 'Chance has a small impact on the wise man, while reasoning has arranged for, is arranging for, and will arrange for the greatest and most important matters throughout the whole of his life' (XVI).<sup>21</sup>

Early Modern philosophers, and scholars such as Guyer find it entirely easy to talk about the 'conservation of substance', and the eternity of substances. The titan-like Early Modern philosophers are wary of the name of atomism, however, and do not own it. The scholars who specialize in Hobbes, Bacon, Descartes, flee the designation of atomism, and its concomitant doctrine of eternal body. But the point is that atomism is one of those philosophies which originate a drastic attack on sensory faculties. Atomist philosophy furnished the prototype for the argument that each sense organ is affected separately by atomic bombardment; that all sense is effectively reduced to the same thing, touch; and that what enters into the soul from such concussions, atom against sense faculty, lacks all intelligibility. Epicurus asserted that sense perception is the basis for all human experience, but he denied that sense perception is capable of receiving into itself from without the pattern or form or 'ideas' of Plato or Aristotelian argument.

This atomist philosophy, in its classic form, makes its appeal to tell the truth about 'being', about what is most real. Atomism reduces the objects known to be perishable to a second-class status; they are mere assemblages of atomic bodies which themselves neither come into being or pass out of

being. There is a kind of soothing effect imparted by the atomist philosophy, a veritable tranquilizer for moral emotions especially. For why worry about the perishable bodies if they are merely like garages for the truer bodies, which are immune to injury? I have elsewhere described how Machiavelli appropriated this philosophy, and I think the results are breathtaking in a bad way.

What Guyer does not seem to possess any awareness of is, that the issue of coming into being lay at the very apex of ancient Greek philosophy. It was the decisive battleground, especially since it directly bears upon perception. Parmenides, the founder of the Eleatic doctrine that all that is real is simply eternal being, utterly dismisses the evidence provided by the senses; and the atomist philosophies which sustain the eternal being in the infinite atoms follow in that path. Plato is greatly underestimated as a natural philosopher, which indeed his Socrates is in the *Phaedo* and more importantly in the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus*. Plato proves the reality of coming into being and the reality of passing out of being. From Plato's arguments, it can be inferred that the community is wise in regarding life as a fragile thing, and furthermore perception is vouchsafed as the original evidence upon which philosophic argument must go forward. Aristotle also attacks the claim that there is no such thing as true coming into being or going out of being. He employs different arguments than Plato, but he ends up in the same place.

One thing can be said for certain about the arguments of Plato and Aristotle. They teach us that there is no escape for the atomist theory, from its original claim that it is homogeneous being. The proof that the smallest body in nature is actually a whole-of-parts, which Plato accomplishes, once it is unfolded, cannot be resisted or refuted. It yields the insight that every object in nature must have the extremities of coming into being and passing away. If this is the reason why Early Modern philosophers shun the name of atomism, because they fear the revival of ancient critique, they have understandable causes, though not admirable ones; for one should search for truth and not merely look for advantage in argument. Yet it can be said, and I do say it here, that any argument which asserts the eternity of substance, asserts the atomist thesis, i.e. is bound to that homogeneity of 'being' which gave the theory its birth. The Early Modern philosophers however do away with this language in their discussion of natural bodies. They do away with the language of 'being' (and nobody more egregiously than Kant). They 'psychologize' (Waxman) man's encounter with nature, to make it seem as if the desideratum of atomist philosophy is merely the requirement of the unique human way of viewing the world. So argues Guyer. But Guyer reveals himself to be an uncomplicated believer in the atomist philosophy, without indeed needing to rely upon his own knowledge. He refers the matter to departments of physics, which are allegedly certified to know better than philosophy could.

The principle that a substance cannot (be known to) come into or go out of existence is certainly not compatible with all of our ordinary usage of the term ‘substance’: we might well call a human or a pig or a porcelain pig a substance, but also think that such things are precisely the sort of things that can come into or go out of existence by being born or manufactured and then by being killed, butchered or smashed. But there is also a more scientific usage of ‘substance’ in which such everyday objects are not genuine substances, but only whatever is thought to persist through the creation and destruction of such everyday objects is a genuine substance: the elements and minerals of which everyday objects are made, or if those can be created or broken down as well, then the atoms of which they consist, or if atoms can be created or broken down, then the protons, neutrons, and electrons of which they consist, and so on, until we get to miniscule strings—or *whatever* science will eventually discover to be the ultimate survivors and therefore substrata for all change.<sup>22</sup>

This is just the movement of which Kant is so much the mover: to embed the principles of a *philosophy* as if it *were* the desideratum of human thought, as if there was not any way for the human mind to know or think otherwise. This is a very sad state of affairs regarding a theory that is finally indefensible and demonstrably false.

Guyer makes it out to be the case that Kant is only talking in terms of the manner in which the human mind must regard objects from the circumstances established by Kant’s philosophy. It can be appreciated better now, perhaps, how those circumstances, including the illusoriness of time, and the infinity of space, are themselves postulates of the old atomic theory of nature. So too is the theory of ‘community of body’. But let us call attention to the fact that the doctrine of ‘cause’ that Kant and the Early Moderns work with, is *not* a part of atomism’s legacy. The ‘cause’ of the atoms is ‘being’. It is what the atom is. The Moderns have relegated the doctrine of cause to relationships between two objects. They have suppressed the discussion of cause insofar as causation is concerned with single objects, the true objects in nature. By substituting the language of ‘cause and effect’ for causation proper, Kant is able to suppress the analysis of ‘being’ which is at the root of the philosophy of eternal substance.

For Aristotle it is true that a substance cannot be the predicate of some other object. A substance is the underlying thing that Locke ridicules to infinity. Both Plato and Aristotle furnish arguments as to this underlying something. Both Plato and Aristotle provide metaphysical definitions of bodies and objects. Yet Locke does not mention any of this. Beginning with Descartes, the language of substance is joined to the doctrine of eternal being, although the name of being is still suppressed. Kant follows Descartes in defining the name of substance so, thus reversing the argument of the founder of the teaching. Yet the mere change of names does not conceal the

theory. Though indeed we must replace the original language in order to connect the ancient doctrine to the modern representation thereof.

Kant attempts to distinguish himself from Descartes. Descartes, who clings to the argument, in some moments, that it is impossible to know that there indeed are any external objects, is one that Kant rejects. Kant, the philosopher who argues that ‘being’ is not a predicate; who argues that time is not really and truly a property of objects in themselves; Kant insists that the whole human process of mentation can only be set in motion by some external body that ‘affects’ the human mind: Kant is not at liberty to deny the reality of external objects, and thus he is not at liberty to deny the property of ‘being’ which those objects *must* possess.

The scientific community of this time are in fact dependent, parasitic upon the Early Modern philosophies, and thus upon the more ancient cosmology upon which the Early Modern philosophers are parasitic. If the scientific community wants to join this debate as to the merits of the theory that true body in nature is eternal, I can guarantee that they will not long be able to remain aloof from the philosophical debates which spawned the theories. And once we are back in those debates, we can study anew the refutations of this theory that Plato and Aristotle developed. No amount of name calling, or derision, or ridicule, or attempts to dodge the issue can be permitted to delay our approach to the investigation of the arguments which are truly at the root of the modern indictment of sense perception. The status of the ordinary human voice in the modern supposedly democratic community has been stifled to an extraordinary degree through these methodologies tiered upon the false prestige of philosophies such as those we have enumerated.

#### KARL AMERIKS’ MODERATE INTERPRETATION OF KANT’S IDEALISM

There is a good deal of jousting about in the secondary literature when it comes to discussing Kant’s idealism and its relationship to his empiricism. What looms large here is the contemporary division between philosophy and science. Science, for its part, claims to possess a nomenclature to distinguish between ‘objects themselves’ and the appearances that scientists allegedly must settle to work with in their experiments. The scientific version of ‘realism’, which comes in several varieties, is not presently vulnerable to the criticisms that are riveted on Kant’s complicated and almost embarrassing language. It is worth making the point that Kant himself was instrumental in establishing the new distinction between science and philosophy, one that did not exist in antiquity.

In the philosophies of the Early Moderns, veritable titans of argument and rhetoric, including Bacon and Hobbes, Descartes and Locke, and Hume, an

old natural philosophy is espoused. The account of nature that the Early Moderns above enumerated uniformly is highly distinctive. Nature in their telling is governed by laws of 'necessity'. Nature, in their telling, is bereft of natural kinds. All of nature is a 'unity' in this version. True and real objects are allegedly eternal, and this is the definition of substance that they work with (when they tolerate the concept of substance at all). This is not the only natural philosophy that has ever existed, but the Early Moderns do not do more than ridicule and jab at the natural philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

Kant himself is taking a revolutionary step in the development of Modern philosophy. For he is making the claim that the principles of nature above indicated, principles coinciding with those of atomist philosophy, are in fact known by the human mind 'a priori', prior to all experience. Kant will go so far, in his *Logic* (which is suffused with metaphysical assumptions) to hold that correct thinking itself must observe these convictions, as shibboleths. Kant is pushing the modern project further along. By suppressing the name of atomism from their respective cosmologies, the Early Modern philosophers sought to exempt themselves from the defects which ancient philosophy had discovered in those doctrines. Science, newly baptized by Kant, and certainly with help from Locke, henceforth regards itself as free to operate on these questionable assumptions, as if they were not questionable; as if they were not speculative at all. Henceforth philosophy itself can refer the inquiring mind to science, the science which it has formed, in order to dodge the investigations which might otherwise be forthcoming. Early Modern philosophy created a science that is empowered to regard the foundations of cosmology as essentially closed. It does not deserve to be closed, to say the least.

Lost in all of this jostling for position among the mighty minds of the Early Modern generations, is the status of the public and its opinions. The general public does not possess the wherewithal to dispute the foundations of science as modern philosophy lays it down. Indeed, Locke ridiculed the ordinary man for not having the time to spend investigating such matters.

The great difference that is to be found in the notions of mankind is, from the different use they put their faculties to, whilst some (and those the most) taking things upon trust, misemploy their power of assent, by lazily enslaving their minds to the dictates and dominions of others, in doctrines, which it is their duty to carefully examine, and not blindly, with an implicit faith, to swallow: others employing their thoughts only about some few things, grow sufficiently acquainted with them, attain great degrees of knowledge in them, and are ignorant of all other, having never let their thoughts loose, in the search of other enquiries.<sup>23</sup>

But ordinary public opinion may well be preferable to a science that is blindly wed to dubious or even false principles. What Ameriks fails to take into account, in his 'moderate' interpretation of Kant's idealism, is the pre-



dicament of the public. Across the board of common experience: in law, economics, contracts, moral issues of all sorts, public opinion depends upon a precise and unquestioned account of the facts merely in order to *commence its* deliberations and learning. The ‘empirical realism’ of Kantian phenomena, utterly suppresses such certainty. The fact that Kant furnishes a working material for science in its conduct of experiments, only preserves the upper hand for the now orthodox doctrine of nature, which in antiquity was recognized as a severe and marginal one.

Kant makes a distinction between phenomena and noumena. Phenomena concern certain ‘appearances’, allegedly; or ‘representations’ which the human mind is said to undergo. It is not allowed to be the case, by Kant, that these appearances and representations inform us about the ‘true’ objects, the ‘things in themselves’. Yet, for all that, in Ameriks’ opinion, we have no warrant for being harsh with Kant. For it is possible, Ameriks argues, for scientists and public opinion too to make do with the appearances that Kant allows us to experience. “In this way the *Critique of Pure Reason*, like Kant’s other critiques, can be said to begin in arguments not from the premise of a strictly individualist and subjectivist psychological perspective, but from commonly presumed objective and public claims of some kind—in this case the minimal commonsense position that we human beings are basically alike in being ‘receptive’ to ‘objects’ that are ‘given’ to ‘us’, and that are even presumed to be given to all of us in the same forms of space and time.”<sup>24</sup> We are by no means required, Ameriks insists, to so construe Kant’s speech as to think that he is denying that the appearances we do have access to are real on *some* level. ‘the key point here is that the fact that something is at a higher level than something else does not mean that the latter item must lack objective reality and be illusory or non-existent; it merely means that the latter item is ontologically less basic, and this is compatible with such a second-level feature still playing a genuinely rather than merely phenomenological role in our experience’ (109).

Ameriks urges us to be charitable to Kant. Yet there is a difference between being liberal in one’s construction of a text and giving the store away. The ‘phenomena’ that Kant speaks of, as within the domain of our representations and appearances, cannot be known unless they are *judged* thus and so. In order to perform a judgment in Kantian philosophy, one must rely upon the laws of the understanding. There is no exception to this rule. Though the intuitions too are said to be subjected to a priori forms, these intuitive forms are not judgments, or constituted by judgments. Judgments can only be carried into effect by the apperceptive self, i.e. literally the human consciousness which, in Kant’s philosophy, itself creates the objects of its own experience. We ask that the reader remember the predicament of the public, for whose sake the pursuit of truth is undertaken in the first place. It is vehemently not the experience of general public opinion that the objects of our experi-

ence are things that we ourselves have created within our own minds. The situation is the reverse in the case of Kantian phenomena.

To render a judgment on an appearance, or representation, is unavoidably, for Kant, to invoke the categories of the 'laws of the understanding'. These mystical categories insist that every object of judgment, every 'possible object', must indeed itself be an eternal object, i.e. one that does not come into being or pass away. This is Kant's definition of phenomena. Thus, even in the mere domain of appearances that human beings are said to be able to experience in Kantian philosophy, the actual experience of the public is wholly overthrown. For the people do not have experience of eternal objects. They do not confuse alteration with destruction. And the path forward, by which the new science will undertake to 'reconcile' public opinion to the new laws of the human understanding, speaks very loudly about the direction that western civilization has since taken. No matter what the people experience ('experience' here being meant in its vernacular, not in its Kantian or technical sense), the scientific report on that experience will simply not yield the same set of objects, much less the same sort of facts. This is the crisis of the metaphysics of fact determination. I understand that the political implications of this development need to be unfolded for the reader, and indeed we shall see this in action in the case of Kantian practical reason. Yet even in this discussion of Kantian philosophy, the impotence of public opinion, the helplessness of public opinion, in the face of this management, ought to be conspicuous enough.

In the case of every appearance and representation that Kantian philosophy allows the human being to be eligible, simply eligible to experience, the criteria of the transcendental aesthetic are in full force. This means that time cannot belong to any of the objects of appearance themselves either. For it is the objects of appearance which are subjected to judgment, the domain of judgable objects; the theory of phenomena, which is part of the categories, insists that no apparent object in nature is allowed to be destroyed or generated. These are the objects of judgment, the judgment which is already circumscribed to the lower level of subjective reality by Kant. It does not really matter what Kant finally counts as 'things in themselves' or noumena. It is not surprising either than Kant almost, or perhaps vacates this very category in the B edition of the *First Critique*. The domain of judgable appearances themselves, in the Kantian oeuvre, reject the ordinary perception, the ordinary experience, root and branch.

Ameriks is of the opinion that Kant underwent a radical transformation when he studied Rousseau in his pre-critical youth. Rousseau, Ameriks argues, taught Kant to appreciate, and have respect for, the 'rabble'. Rousseau did indeed have a significant impact on the formulation of Kantian moral philosophy, but respect for the generality of the human race is not to be confused with the alleged pity for the human race that Rousseau certainly

does profess. One can hardly come up with so charitable a locution to adequately denominate Kant's attitude towards this demographic.

Human beings disagree on many things. This is a cardinal fact of human life. But science has the power and the reputation needed to close debate, to at least appear to establish a common foundation for investigation. In the science founded by Early Modern philosophy, and so powerfully molded by Kantian doctrine, this power of suspending dispute and debate arrives in the guise of allegedly eternal and self-evident 'laws of the mind', which laws equally mysteriously possess substantive metaphysical arguments about nature and freedom among other things.

Kant best illustrates the new terrain of public debate, the one that science will be fashioning, the domain of debate over which science will preside as neutral arbiter, in his logic. The public and the scientific community meet in the empirical realm, in the effort to ascertain 'concepts'. For the new science, 'tree' is a concept that must be constructed, built by science itself. It can only be constructed by the experimental method; and this experimental domain of procedure, though it will satisfy the sort of 'moderate' reality that Ameriks is pleading for, nevertheless wholly disables and disenfranchises the general public opinion.

The generality of the public, upon seeing a fir tree, will name it a 'tree'. It will not have any part in any procedure where the definition of a tree is 'invented' by 'comparison' and evaluation of parts. Nor will the generality of the public possess the means to conduct experiments upon said objects, which Kant has established as the sole means for ascertaining the predicates of these constructions. Among the scientists themselves, they are to be entitled to infinite freedom as to which experiments they choose to perform, and consequently, in their official representation of the fact in dispute. In fact, for Kant, there is no possibility for ascertaining an objective fact via the experimental method, as there is no limit to the number of experiments that can be performed, and thus the description of said object remains fluid and at best temporary. If the public ever does catch up to one operative definition, it requires little more than a moment to shake it loose from its mooring.

I do not think it is reasonable to regard Kant as a unique phenomenon in Early Modern philosophy, at the core of his views. Yet I do think that commentators such as Ameriks make too much of the role that German metaphysics played in Kant's development. Surely the more important figures for Kant are Hume and Locke. When we turn to Hume and Locke, we are turning to what is usually referred to as the 'empiricist' tradition of Early Modernity. Yet Locke, Hume and Kant all present the content of sense perception in a way that makes a radical break with the way non-philosophic thought experiences things. There are philosophical reasons for this which our commentators do not contemplate. For Locke avowedly professes a kind of atomism. He describes it as an 'experimental' atomism, but it is an atom-

ism nonetheless. Locke's 'simple ideas' only step to the fore of the empiricist ontology on the back of his atomism: and his atomism, like every atomism, is a metaphysical theory of deductive origin, a metaphysical theory that carries within it, no matter how hard Early Modern philosophers work to suppress it or forget it, *a language*. That language, which cannot be separated from the very founding of atomist theory, involves *being*.

Huge philosophical debates from antiquity coalesced around this language of being and its indivisible nature, in accordance with the development of the theory of Leucippus and Democritus. Kant, who espoused Epicurean metaphysics in his pre-critical career, is no stranger to this language. Kant's discussions in his Logical lectures on the history of philosophy rank the Epicureans as the foremost natural philosophers of antiquity, which puts atomism at the helm. Kant never deigns to bring to light Plato's critique of atomism, or Aristotle's critique of atomism. In this Kant is simply imitating the lead set by Bacon. Bacon, who originally avowed a preference for Democritus over Aristotle in his early writings, later sought to distance himself from the name and reputation of atomist philosophy. And with the exception of Locke, who embraced the name of atomism very modestly under Boyle's influence, the other Early Modern philosophers likewise eschewed the natural philosophy of *being*.

This has led to much confusion. For the Early Modern philosophy has appropriated the atomist philosophy of nature in all its particulars: eternal substances, 'conservation of matter'; infinite nature, infinite bodies implicated in one 'system' of cause and effect; the banishment of potential from nature, and the banishing of coming into being and passing away from nature. These were huge issues in antiquity for good reasons. Yet at the forefront of the reasons is the relationship between philosophy and ordinary opinion itself. The language of being directly addresses the convictions of the populace. It at least professes to believe in that which the people regard as most real, the things that they regard as existent. Atomism, like Parmenides' philosophy, sought to make an argument which appealed to the reality of existing things, en route to making its argument for eternal things. The legacy of Socratic philosophy lay dormant in the dissection of the Eleatic and atomistic arguments. Meanwhile, beginning with Locke, the Early Modern philosophies have commenced to psychologize natural philosophy; to transfer to the human mind the categories of unity and being, those building blocks of the original atomist philosophy.

Locke and Hume made large strides in this direction. It is inappropriate to refer to them as empiricist or as skeptic, to the degree that they adhere to atomism. I have demonstrated that Hume himself is bound to the atomist ontology. Atomism is as far from skepticism as it can possibly be. Sextus Empiricus is well enough aware of this. He regards atomism as a dogmatism. Simply because Hume does not employ the name of atomism, he has been

exempted from scrutiny as a metaphysician tied to the atomist line of philosophy. Yet since he does insist on the indivisible points as the ultimate metaphysical reality; and since these points in Hume indicate nature, and not psychology; these predetermine his account of what sense perception can be, because atomism has its own theory of what sense perception is. And that philosophy of sense perception is as foreign to the ordinary awareness of experience as it is possible to be; and all of this has escaped critical scrutiny. If Early Modern philosophers wish to espouse the foundations of atomist philosophy, the cornerstone of which is eternal bodies in nature, and the reversal of the Aristotelian definition of substance, then they must be subjected to the critiques which are adequate to those claims. Yet our scholarship lags behind.

Ameriks is a case in point. Ameriks prefers to analyze Kant with what he regards as the ‘regressive’ approach of the latter. ‘All that is presupposed with my view of the regressive form and commonsense starting point of Kant’s arguments (at the most fundamental layer of his transcendental philosophy) is that there is some objectivity to our experience, that some of our states (of a basic kind, i.e. perceptual, moral, aesthetic) are not mere private events but can be justified and are true or false.’<sup>25</sup> By a ‘regressive’ approach, Ameriks wishes to indicate that Kant begins indeed with ordinary experience, or with some part of ordinary experience.

Kant starts by going along with the common thought that there are things distinct from us. Then he subtracts from the intrinsic characterization of these things whatever features turn out not to be able to be consistently ascribed to them in that way. Finally he concludes not that there is nothing, but rather that some ‘matter’ (not in a physicist’s sense, but just in the commonsense starting-point sense of ‘something or other out there’) still exists, and it is such that it cannot in itself have the specific spatio-temporal forms that our experience manifests.<sup>26</sup>

Ameriks is emphatic about this. Kantian appearances or representations contain the kernel of ordinary experience, in Ameriks’ view; and it is only later, with ‘considerable reflection’, that the philosopher is supposed to discover flaws with the ordinary assumptions about experience, and to begin to learn arguments which subtract from the qualities that ordinary opinion believes to be properly vouchsafed by its experience. Ameriks has in mind the distinction between primary and secondary qualities as developed by Locke.

Yet one cannot say that Locke’s ‘simple ideas’ are equivalent to ordinary experience. Non-philosophers and philosophers too do not experience objects as collections of simple sensations. They do not experience the rose in a collection of distinct datums, separated by the respective sense organs. This is post-atomic sense experience. It is only in the atomist account of sense experience that the organs are ignited separately from one another by distinct

atomic contacts. Hume's theory of impressions can be seen to follow a similar path of development. Atomism is already in place before Locke begins to essay the distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

This is apparent in Locke's radical attack on Aristotle's idea of a substance. Locke insists that the human mind can know no more than qualities of objects. It can know redness, sweetness, a shape, a scent or texture. It cannot know the underlying object in which these qualities are imbedded. To contemplate the underlying object which possesses the predicates, one would have to at least turn to Aristotle's theory of the compound of matter and form. One would have to turn to Aristotle's theory of causation, the four-fold account of causation which is again anchored in ordinary experience. For ordinary experience *knows* matter, and it knows forms. It knows the form of a bowl. It knows the matter of gold. It knows the efficient cause of the potter which brings the form of the bowl to the matter of the gold, and it knows the 'final cause' of the bowl as the purpose of eating out of it.

The more powerful discussion of the metaphysics of an object surely belongs to Plato in his *Parmenides*. There Plato laid the foundation for the understanding that every object in nature is a compound of *unlike* parts, an argument which overcomes every problem of infinite divisibility. Philosophers such as Kant herald the problem of infinitely divisible objects as the bane of metaphysics, as does Locke. Yet this is only because the older philosophical language addressing the underlying equation of being are not active in our discourse.

Ameriks' claim that one can 'progress' from the ordinary experience, in some degree, to the ideality of space and time is an argument he never comes close to proving.

The main point for the prior issue of interpretation is simply this, that even if his most radical idealist claims are left unquestioned, Kant is in a situation where he has not given, and does not mean or need to give, the slightest ground for doubting that we were always, all along, literally in truth with the things themselves, with the facts of their existence confronting us.<sup>27</sup>

The only way one can approach the ideality of location and time is to first make a fateful break with the objects that ordinary experience takes itself to be experiencing. In order to make that break, the philosopher must first occupy the position of the ordinary opinion, as the old atomist philosophers do; they must demonstrate the inadequacy of the ordinary opinion, because they too must start out with the ordinary opinion. If we revived that much of the atomist argument, we would be in a position to introduce the critiques of that argument by the Socratic philosophers, and the entire debate over natural philosophy would be in front of us. If it were, our reading of Kant would be very different.

Commentators who maintain that the essence of Kant's work is moral, are not incorrect. Yet the ultimate aim of Parmenides' work is moral, and so too of Epicurus and Lucretius. For the battle over the reality of the objects of experience originated, for Parmenides at least, not in a mistrust of sense perception, but in a resentment of it. Epicurus is the atomist who best revived the flavor of Eleatic philosophy, in his utter disdain for the moral philosophy of the customary community. Now those morals may be objectionable from any number of vantage points. There is no reasonable way to claim that the moral opinions circulating in common sense are always correct, as this is quite obviously not the case. Yet moral delinquencies should be addressed by moral arguments, not by the taking away of the external objects of reference upon which moral philosophy must be dependent. Epicurus looms much larger in Kant's philosophy than has been hitherto recognized for all of these reasons. Indeed, Kant not only celebrates Epicurus as the foremost natural philosopher of antiquity; he also exonerates Epicurus' eccentric moral attitude from censure, and in this he *follows* Hume.

Ameriks' suggestion that 'modesty' is the nature of Kant's philosophy, that it is a cautious moving away from the unfounded assumptions of ordinary opinion as regards the evidence of its experience, is walking down a lost road. Atomism is many things. A modest theory it is not. No matter how normal modern philosophy has sought to make the atomist ontology appear, its claims toss experience to the winds. Even Descartes, whom Kant himself regards as an atomist, is forced to disavow the man who mistrusts his sense perception as 'insane' in his *Principles of Philosophy*; this from the man whose entire scientific ontology is founded upon the indictment, without reservation, of those same sense perceptions. Hume, the man who officially reduces sense perception to the status of a mere heap of random data, likewise insists that he leaves his philosophical postulates in his office when he goes out to engage in business with the world. And obviously, for all of these philosophers, all of these philosophers who have made the break with ordinary knowledge of fact, it is the social contract model of politics which is their major public relations campaign.

This brings to mind another issue that is very relevant for our contemporary experts in Early Modern philosophy, the distinction between the rationalist philosophers and the empiricists. Descartes is regarded as the epitome of the rationalist philosophers, as Locke is considered as the epitome of the empiricist philosophers. Surely this is a confused distinction. For all of these philosophers begin by making the radical break with ordinary experience: their chosen means are different, but their rupture with the ordinary experience is effectually identical. Descartes' claim is that prudence must require him to jettison the evidence of the senses, because it has betrayed him even once; while Locke and Hume and Kant all define sense experience in the language of atomist ontology.

It is possible for there to be a latent battle by philosophers for political authority. Any serious student of Plato's work knows that he regards philosophers as the most powerful adversaries to just politics. It is with philosophers that Plato's Socrates has all of his most famous battles. Thrasymachus is no innkeeper; Protagoras is no farmer; Parmenides and Zeno are not 'the man in the street'. Nor for that matter is Heraclitus. Or Euthydemus. Or Gorgias.

The reader may well ask why this is an important thing to bring to view. It is to bring to view the obligation of philosophy to reality, to truth, which Kant endlessly professes. Towards this end, it is not necessary to attempt to cast philosophy as an inherently dubious enterprise. It is an inevitable human enterprise, as the human endeavor for knowledge and power is an inevitable enterprise. But it is to repudiate the suggestion, tacit or otherwise, that philosophers are somehow above the tawdry defects of the lust for power. The modern philosophers do not generally have a high opinion of the rank and file of the human race. Kant claims to have learned from Rousseau to have respect for the 'rabble' (Ameriks again), but to evaluate Rousseau is to learn that this is not a philosopher from whom such a lesson could be truly obtained.

### STRAWSON'S KANT

P.F. Strawson is famous for having written a book that seeks to indict Kant's transcendental idealism. For Strawson, much of Kant's alleged a priori knowledge is distasteful. Yet Strawson has a strange way of doing philosophical mathematics. When all is said and done, Strawson would like to banish what he regards as the metaphysical portion of Kant's philosophy. All Strawson would like to preserve from Kant's philosophy, is rooted in Kant's account of 'appearances' and 'representations', the neo-Lockean account of sense perception that Kant begins with as a premise, one which he claims to prove which of course he never does.

In his espousal of the principle of significance and in his consequential repudiation of transcendent metaphysics, Kant is close to the tradition of classical empiricism. The tradition of Berkeley, and Hume, which has probably, at least in English, received its clearest modern expression in the work of A.J. Ayer (18). These themes of the Critique which I have so far referred to have an evident harmony. Together they form, one might be tempted to claim, the framework of a truly empiricist philosophy, freed, on the one hand, from the delusions of transcendent metaphysics, on the other, from the classical empiricist obsession with the private contents of consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

The only 'proof' for the account of sense perception that Kant offers, in his theory of 'representations' and 'appearances', is indeed metaphysical, the



atomic theory that Kant constantly adumbrates but refuses to name. But Strawson takes the metaphysically drawn account of sense perception from Early Modern philosophy to be entirely innocent of metaphysics: as if Locke had not been an atomist, nor Hume. Both were. And it is only their atomism that makes Locke and Hume able to break ranks with perception as it is ordinarily experienced, and to claim that this is simply scientific knowledge in a way that has nothing to do with ‘philosophy’, that dreadful and contentious discipline. For Strawson, Kant was simply availing himself of the ‘historical situation of science in his time’, as one might walk the roads that have been paved by the county because there are no other ones.

It is only with qualifications that our fairly definite hope can be said to be fulfilled. The qualifications are serious. They are so serious as to make it unsurprising that many philosophers have taken a quite different view of the principles from the hopeful one that I just mentioned. This quite different view . . . is itself an application of a certain general doctrine regarding the nature of metaphysics; and the application of this doctrine to the Principles rests upon the fact that what Kant actually offers as the explicit conclusion of the arguments of the principles can, in a number of cases, be reasonably viewed as fundamental assumptions of physical theory as it existed in Kant’s day and for some time before and after his day (118).

According to the conception of metaphysics which I have just alluded to, this position is in no way unsatisfactory. . . . For on this view of metaphysics the whole foundation of the enterprise is precisely to articulate the buried, basic framework of ideas within which the scientific thinking . . . of an epoch is conducted (119).<sup>29</sup>

Yet it is cheeky in the era of the supposed dawn of individual rights that the only access human beings have to reality, sense perception, has been declared meaningless and verboten by the authority of the science that is also author of the political theories.

Strawson is only too happy to adopt an ‘austere’ version of Kant’s argument. The austerity consists in doing away with the metaphysical part of Kant’s argument, at least in Strawson’s opinion. The transcendental aesthetic is part of the metaphysical part of Kant’s argument. Strawson is not in favor of regarding time and space as idealistic attributes of possible objects. He also is not delighted with the transcendental deduction, Kant’s claim that in order for the human mind to have an object to think about, there must be the apperceptive self which both knits together the flotsam and jetsam of sensation, and remembers that it has done so with each new piece. When it comes to discussing the distinction between the sensory aspect and the understanding, Strawson sees much to preserve out of Kant. Strawson agrees with Kant that the sensory faculties possess no capacity to identify immaterial objects. It is the understanding which must furnish a ‘concept’, something that the

human mind creates and makes, in order to be able to determine a 'kind' for the sensory material.

Strawson throughout reveals immense discomfort talking about the history of philosophy, and he is not keen on acknowledging the genealogy of philosophical names, such as substance. Strawson to some degree attempts to lend his point of view to Kant himself. Kant, Strawson argues, was simply under the spell of Newton when it comes to natural philosophy. Newton had laid down certain postulates, and allegedly Kant rather awkwardly espoused these hypotheses as the truths of his day. This, according to Strawson, is what 'science' means: it begins with 'presuppositions', which are historically alterable. The 'presupposition' of Newton is that substances are eternal. Strawson kicks and strains against this sort of analysis. Science does not involve philosophy, he argues.

Strawson does attempt to make cases for Kant's categories which do not seem to have much to do with Kant himself or what he thought. Given the temporary, fleeting, and formless natures of sensory datums, Strawson alleges, Kant's conception of a substance as an object that permanently endures can be allowed to signify merely that there is need for the mind to have some stable object to refer to in order to classify the sensory materials. Strawson vigorously disputes that there is any suggestion in Kant that this theory of substance has something to do with eternal bodies. It may or it may not, Strawson argues. It is irrelevant one way or the other.

Strawson is selective in his remembering of modern philosophy. Bacon, however, had a lot to say about natural philosophy and the history of atomism, the history of eternal substances. Bacon dismisses Aristotle, the actual founder of the theory of substance, who argues that the most real beings are perishable beings. Aristotle, for that matter, argues that sensory faculties are capable of knowing immaterial forms, and in this he follows Plato. To be sure, neither Plato nor Aristotle regards perceived immaterial forms as scientific knowledge, but they do regard it as correct fact. For the Socratics, the 'kind' or universal form is *in* the perishable singulars. The individual cow has the universal cow *in* it. Plato writes the following in his *Phaedo*:

'Well, said Socrates, what I mean is this, and there is nothing new about it; in fact I have never stopped saying it, especially in the earlier part of the discussion. As I am going to try to explain to you the theory of causation that I have worked out myself, I propose to make a fresh start from these principles of mine that you know so well. That is, I am assuming the existence of absolute beauty and goodness and magnitude and all the rest of them. If you grant my assumption and admit that they exist, I hope with their help to explain causation to you and to find a proof that the soul is immortal.' 'Certainly I grant it, said Cebes. You need lose no time in drawing your conclusion.' – 'Then consider the next step, and see whether you share my opinion. It seems to me that whatever else is beautiful, apart from absolute beauty, is beautiful because

it partakes of that absolute beauty, and for no other reason. Do you accept this kind of causality?' 'Yes, I do . . .' 'Well, now, that is as far as my mind goes.'<sup>30</sup>

The human being, Aristotle and Plato both argue, learns the form from one experience. In the second encounter with a single kind of object, they are capable of judging its reality, and in fact, if Plato is the focus, the individual is not eligible to get it wrong.

Hobbes and Descartes and Spinoza all provide serious ontologies of body, Hobbes in *De Corpore* and Spinoza in the *Ethics*. Locke is trimming the discussion of natural philosophy en route to psychologizing sensory experience, but he still employs the name of atomism. Hume does not employ the name of atomism, but he nevertheless insists on the reality of 'indivisible points' in nature as the foundation of certain knowledge. Hume is coy about his indivisible points; he insists that they are something in between physical and non-physical, before reversing himself and conceding that they are physical in his *Enquiry*. The issue is that the very definition of sense perception as constituting formless (Epicurus) bits and pieces of disordered, or non-ordered sensation is anchored in the premise of eternal substance, invisible atoms. Kant is only too well aware of this, and he takes pains to refer to the history of Eleatic philosophy in the footnotes to his First Analogy. There can be no doubt that Kant is referring to natural philosophy when he speaks of eternal substance, and in fact Kant is undertaking to revolutionize thought by making it mandatory for any account of correct thinking to advance the thesis that all true substances in nature must be eternal.

Strawson's suggestion that philosophers simply work with what 'science' offers to them in the way of 'presuppositions' is quaint. This was not yet the case in the eighteenth century. It was the Early Modern philosophers themselves who established the new dominion of science as a category of thought which was purified of natural philosophy, but yet which actuated a *partisan tradition* of natural philosophy. By enacting the atomist arguments, while suppressing the philosophies that originated the theories, Early Modern philosophy sought to create an allegedly objective and non-partisan or neutral field of knowledge which philosophy could then appeal to for the doctrines that it bestowed upon science but did not wish to explain. There is no evidence in the people's experience of eternal bodies. Strawson may point to planets, and indeed physics itself, seeking emancipation from philosophy, prefers to focus on very distant objects, or on infinitesimally small ones, all of which elude the senses. But the issue of substance revives the issue that Aristotle thought philosophy itself had to answer: which objects have the claim to being most real, and for Aristotle they are those for which we feel the most anxiety: the perishable ones, including ourselves.

Kant's *MFNS* is hardly an illustration of a philosopher helplessly stumbling around the precincts of science. Kant is giving science its marching orders: ably outlining the shibboleths of an atomist interpretation of nature, and instructing science that these must be its presuppositions.

Since the word 'nature' already carries much of the concept of laws and since this concept carries with it the concept of necessity of all the determinations of a thing which belongs to its existence, it is easily seen why natural science must derive the legitimacy of its designation only from a pure part of natural science, from that part which contains the a priori natural principles of all remaining natural explications, and why natural science is only by virtue of this pure part of science proper.<sup>31</sup>

But in order to make possible the application of mathematics to the doctrine of Body, it can become natural science only by means of such application, principles of the construction of concepts that belong to the possibility of matter in general must precede. Hence a complete analysis of the concept of matter in general must be laid at the foundations of the doctrine of body. This is the business of pure philosophy, which for this purpose makes no use of particular experiences but uses only what it finds in the separated (although in itself empirical) concept (of matter) with regard to pure intuitions in space and time (according to laws which already depend essentially on the concept of nature in general); hence such a doctrine is an actual metaphysics of empirical nature.<sup>32</sup>

Only local motion is able to be contemplated in accordance with Kant's *MFNS*, and only space and time coordinates are enumerable. 'Nothing but motion is to be discussed in phronomy; therefore no other property than movability is here attributed to the subject of motion, namely matter. Matter thus endowed can itself be taken, then, as a point.'<sup>33</sup> In the *First Critique* itself, Kant makes it clear that space, the 'form' of external objects allegedly, is itself very much an appearance in the mind. Kant insists that matter too is an 'appearance', and thus while Kant regards Descartes' idealism as defective because it is unwilling to allow for the necessity of external bodies, leaving this issue undetermined, Kant nevertheless regards Descartes as an atomist in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*.

Sorting is what one calls the separating of species from one another, but dividing is when one separates something into diverse parts according to matter. Atom is a part of matter that cannot be divided by any power of nature. Such atoms have been assumed by many; among the moderns Descartes was attached to this opinion. He said, if these primal bodies, or constitutive parts of all matter, could always be further divided, then no species, would remain perdurably; then ashes could come from water. But now since every species consists of particular parts, there must be certain primal parts.<sup>34</sup>

*The Third Critique* is however a much more forceful illustration of the extent to which Kant is treating science as a servant. Science is conceded the authority to regard forms and patterns in nature as useful for the classification of data, but Kant refuses to allow that these perceptible forms are metaphysically true. Kant insists that mechanism must be the truth, that we cannot rule out mechanism and that perceived forms and aesthetic order in nature (a defamatory classification not incidentally) can only be regarded as serviceable for the use of reason as 'regulative'. In the *First Critique* Kant makes it clear that there are no categories for the cows and men, or for the stones and the light that shines upon them. The categories enact one type of body, which covers all of nature, leaving the particular species and kinds of human employment in the feeble category of empirical reason, where it is left up to the determination of the investigator of science to define the classes and 'concepts'.

Aristotle argued that philosophy was born out of the human inclination to wonder. The human animal wants to know, Aristotle argues. It is possible for human beings themselves to make all kinds of arguments. It is possible for human beings to argue that they can know when the world began, or that it began. It is possible for human beings to argue that the world did not begin, had no beginning. It is possible for human beings to argue that the ultimate constituents of the world are infinitely divisible, issuing in no final members. It is possible for human beings to argue that the ultimate constituents of the world are indivisible.

For Kant, all of the above 'antinomies' are alleged to prove the inherent illusoriness of human reason, its natural vulnerability to delusion. For one argument is as valid as the other, at least upon first glance. If, however, it is stipulated that the world is mere appearance, that we are eligible to have no experience that exceeds the bounds of mere appearance, then it is possible to work out the contradictions. In the case of the ultimate constituents of matter, (which Kant also regards as mere appearance), one is liberated, pace Kant, from having to argue that the world is both something that exists independently of our faculties, and is susceptible to these contradictions. If we assert the thesis of transcendental idealism, that the world and all of our experiences simply are appearances the existence of which we do not know as 'things in themselves', then it becomes possible to resolve the antinomy.

This is incorrect. Based upon the premises of transcendental idealism, one remains ignorant of the truth of the question. Simply redefining thought itself as something that cannot possibly reach the issue at hand, as raised by interlocutors, is no substitute for knowledge. It is a magician's trick. If Kant really wants to prove that the ultimate constituents of body are indivisible, then he is first going to have to reckon with the implications of what real body *is*. We have denied Kant's claim that we cannot know the 'object in itself'. The question as to the reality of indivisible parts of infinitely divisible parts

remains to be resolved. It can be resolved, contrary to Kant's argument, once it is established that we can know the real properties of 'the object in itself'. For the object in itself in its extremities is not infinitely divisible at all. This can be proved in argument more powerfully than it can be illustrated in experience, but the people relying on their senses have never suspected infinite parts and for good reason.

Descartes had argued that all body is infinitely divisible. Descartes, who did not concede the reality of any empirical body external to our faculties—Descartes applies what Kant calls the mathematical approach, which concerns merely our thought and what we choose to do with it. If we choose to divide a hypothetical object by the divisor of two, then we come up with two pieces. If we choose to divide the hypothetical object by four, then we come up with four pieces. It is true, Kant allows, that one can always make a further division. But since all we are talking about is division, an operation conducted by our minds (the true existence of which Kant refuses to concede that we know of), then we may say that at any given moment we are subjecting the hypothetical object to a certain divisor. In that moment, 'reality' will consist simply in the divisor that we apply to our own thought. If we choose the divisor to be two, then the world is composed of two parts. In that instant, since we are not applying a further divisor, the two parts themselves are ultimate constituents. This is how Kant claims transcendental idealism allows us to resolve the riddle of infinite divisibility. In any given experiment, the philosopher determines what the ultimate constituents are in number, by the operations he performs upon the appearances with his mind. Thus Kant is able to claim that the objects in the world are not infinitely divisible without having to commit himself to admitting that there are any objects in the world. Kant takes a great deal of pleasure in referring to himself as the relaxed observer, as he urges the two sides of the antinomies he has fashioned into combat with one another. They must punch each other out, with neither capable of finally winning, based upon the premise that we cannot really know that there are objects in the world beyond the space and time of our supposedly biased faculties. This is the position Kant envisions for himself, that of the informed audience who steps in to strengthen whichever side has taken the hardest blows, to redress the balance. And when they have both desisted from making further arguments, both exhausted and frustrated and resigned to stalemate, Kant exempts himself from the debate as a means to resolving it. For they assume that there are objects that are truly real to subject to such interrogation, while Kant, assuming that he is not eligible to know anything at all of appearances, can provide the resolution as indicated above.

Ameriks actually believes that these arguments in the antinomies provide the Kantian philosopher with the right to abstract from the evidence of sense perception, and to thereby prove that our objects of experience must be mere

appearances. In other words, this thought experiment that Kant conducts, is said to contain the power to dismiss the knowledge that we have of simpler things, with simpler faculties such as sense perception. Herein lay a great deal of smoke and mirrors. Strawson is a willing participant.

Human beings cannot begin thinking about antinomies, or about objects of experience as mere ‘appearances’ first in the order of time. Human thought is coeval with the discovery of the reality of time. The original discovery of the human being is that he is not the whole world unto himself. In other words, the existence of objects external to him, indifferent to his will, is the original contact with what we may call reality. The needs which emanate from the infant’s wailing body are real enough, but they do not constitute thought. They constitute impulse, and impulse originally suppresses thought. The infant must learn, in a prelinguistic state, that it is not the whole world, in proportion as its cries do not automatically compel the relief of one’s need. Indeed, if one has Rousseau’s tutor for a wet nurse, one will cry oneself hoarse before one discovers that there is no remedy forthcoming. Yet for a more humane attendant, the infant will discover that wailing may provoke assistance that will relieve some need.

This is the original kernel of discovery of reality. It is the reality of objects external to us which we must first conceive of before we can even begin to develop a self. This process must be undergone continually as the infant matures into the child, and the child into the adolescent. By the time of early childhood the existence of the independent objects has been pretty effectively learned, although a whole new host of lessons as regards human personalities and their trustworthiness remains to be learned. A whole new degree of awareness of the forces and resources of the external world must be examined and thought about as our young person begins to make her way in the world. And still we have not arrived at the place where the human being is really in a position to engage in the abstract thought that Kant enumerates in his antinomies.

This brings us to the mysterious power of modern philosophy. For beginning with Bacon and Hobbes, these philosophers are attacking the allegedly high-flown thoughts of the Greeks of Socratic lineage, predominantly Aristotle. They are arguing, instead, that they the Early Moderns represent and embody the experiential school of learning. Such is the power of the use of names. Not for nothing does Bacon absolutely lash out at the ‘idols of the market place’, or the ordinary use of names in all manner and variety of forms of speech. Not for nothing does Hobbes insist that every informed individual has the right to found his own personal vocabulary anew as he pleases, conscripting the public and common words into his own lexicon. It is only with these arrogated powers that the Early Modern philosophers can represent their doctrines as ‘empiricist’ or experiential. For, in fact, in the view of Bacon and Hobbes, Spinoza and obviously Descartes, Locke and

Hume and now Kant, the original discovery of the distinction between the individual and the external world, and the faculties that make it possible, *stand indicted. The philosophy that the Early Modern philosophers seek to roll into effect, and which they do roll into effect with their public philosophies, roll back that original learning that the human race undergoes in infancy*; and drags the helpless mind, bereft now of its original moorings in sense perception, out into abstract seas of thought where there is no refuge from coercion and helpless floundering.

The reality or lack of reality in our perceptions must be settled on the level of perceptions. Those are the faculties which are capable of ascertaining the truth of particular objects or existence, and in the view of Plato and Aristotle the mind is operative in judgment *through* the sensory faculties. Strawson refers to such a point of view as 'naïve'. Kant refers to it as 'transcendental realism' among the people. Yet the fact remains, that the human race cannot make its way to abstract thought if it has not first mastered the knowledge which is available to it through sense perception. Abstraction is a movement of freedom and power, not helplessness and accident. In this, as in so many other things, we could learn valuable lessons from the Socratic Greeks, if we studied them without supervision from the Modern schools.

On the lowly level of perception, for example, Plato maintains that the human individual has experience both of the material and the immaterial object. In fact, the single perceptible external object for Plato, is actually already a combination of material and immaterial elements. Plato calls these immaterial elements 'forms', and they are in Plato's view woven into the natural objects of the world. 'And in respect of the just and unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves as a multiplicity of aspects.'<sup>35</sup> For Plato, the notion of 'concept;' or 'universal', are ready made in the objects we perceive; we do not invent concepts, we do not invent universals. There are three apples on the table in front of me. Each one of the objects is an apple. One is green, one is red, one is a greenish red. All are apples. The human being for Plato learns what an apple is, upon encountering that first apple. If it is red, the individual may be under the impression that all apples are red. Yet even if a green apple is the second one brought before the confines in which his senses can comfortably operate, for Plato, he is already competent to judge its 'appleness', and he will correctly judge it. The form of the apple is implanted in the human soul upon that first encounter with the first apple. The form is in the apple. Forms for Plato are not reducible to wholes of parts. Forms are irreducible. The soul does not need to engage in logos, in definition in speech, to first learn the form as an image.



On this level of perception, then, Plato has argued and proved that the material of experience contains immaterial form. For the apple is enmattered. It can be eaten and destroyed. It did not always exist, but must be plucked from the tree. Philosophy is not empowered, for Plato's Socrates, to abandon the original learning experience inherent in the process of perception. Philosophy is responsible to demonstrate its theories and hypotheses to the ordinary community based upon the knowledge which the latter already has. There is no knowledge which can render the knowledge of the existence of the apple illusory. If some sophist created a painting on a piece of wood that merely appeared to be an apple, and the appearance was situated far enough away from the percipient to allow him to be fooled, this would not indict sense perception. It would lead to an inquiry conducted by sense perception, which would discover the practice of a fraud. Sense perception would initiate the investigation, and conduct it, and conclude it. Nor is there any way to reach for theories about such things as 'being', 'indivisible being', which can or ever did begin without appeal to the knowledge obtained by the senses, if only in appearance. The atomist theory itself, which is everywhere apparent in early modern philosophy *except* in the names that are used to indicate it, emerged out of a variation of that wonder that Aristotle talked about.

Kant's account of human thought takes all the modern bearings. His philosophy begins with the premise that we can only sense and perceive 'appearances' and; 'representations', and he claims to know that these things are not real, not ultimately real, i.e. not what ordinary people *take them to be*. We have just discussed how it is not even possible to begin to speculate about abstract thoughts, unless and until one has been empowered by the knowledge that perception affords one. Now we have the specter of abstract thought attempting to demolish the bona fides of perceptual experience in the community, as a new domain of truth. Kant cannot prove that the perceptions we have of apples and chairs are 'phenomena', or 'appearances', or 'representations'. He begins with this premise, as Locke and Hume begin with this premise. But they do not *know* this premise. They cannot demonstrate the knowledge of this premise or the ground upon which this knowledge is available, which is only perception.

There is no ancient distinction between philosophy and science. At least, there is no such thing in the ancient world as a scheme of purported knowledge which is not subject to proof of argument. There is a distinction between art and science in antiquity. Art is the practice, the skill, the ability to work some improvement upon natural objects. It involves a kind of knowledge, but it is equally bound to the practical as philosophy is, in the way we have described. Because the doctor who cannot make the sick patient better, in a reasonable amount of his cases, given illnesses that other doctors are seen to cure, is not going to be practicing medicine for long.

Kant is undertaking something in philosophy that entirely escapes Strawson. It may indeed be the case that Strawson was initiated deeply into this worldview, whereby 'science' is a separate and autonomous dimension of human knowledge, simply operating with certain 'presuppositions' which are not subject to further review. Strawson attempts to provide us with this kind of account of Kant, which is ludicrous. Kant, as every one of the Early Modern philosophers except Locke, boasts that he is a trailblazer in human knowledge. He is not falling into any presuppositions; and the fact that Kant speaks often, in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, in the *First Critique*, and in his *Lectures on Logic*, of the history of natural philosophy, and speaks with authority, make Strawson's allegations about the helplessly bumbling Kant merely stumbling into historical 'presuppositions' of 'science', less pardonable.

Strawson likes to make a great deal by Newton's influence. Newton, it is true, does have the theory of eternal bodies in nature which are effectively atomic. Newton, however, did not come first in Early Modernity. He was preceded by Bacon, and Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza. These philosophers make lengthy arguments about the ontology of body, and offer related doctrines of sense perception. They have suppressed the language of the old philosophies, but retained the worldview. Nature as 'necessity', the view that Aristotle attacked, is revived. The claim that causation is limited to local movements of bodies; that apparent changes in perishable bodies is merely rearrangement of their eternal constituents (not even alteration really); the claim that there is no purpose in nature, i.e. that there are no natural kinds, but kinds themselves are inventions of the human race subject to the purposes of those who do the inventing. Even Locke, who extols Newton's influence, was heavily influenced by Robert Boyle and Boyle is well versed in the history of atomist theory (as is Kant). Kant's early boastful claim of Epicureanism, in his natural philosophy, and his eventual exoneration of Epicurus from even moral censure for his views in the *First Critique*, all render Strawson's pretensions ridiculous. Yet what Kant is engaged in doing is constructing a new domain of science, one which is not itself free to investigate its premises; one which is bound by philosophy, by Kant's 'a priori' principles of knowledge, to that once refuted old natural philosophy of Leucippus and Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius. Kant, in his logic lectures, makes it abundantly clear that he is not interested in being challenged. He himself is not going to provide proofs for this a priori knowledge he claims himself to have, but he does intend to enforce these postulates against any practitioners of science.

What we have envisioned in Kantian philosophy, as in Lockean philosophy, is a class of the population which arises upon almost priestly powers. They are not subject to the evidence of which ordinary sense faculties are capable, since they have ruled this evidence impossible and out of court to

begin with. Rousseau's dream, of radically revising the organization of the human psyche through political engineering, and cultural engineering, is advanced a great leap by Kant. We will examine this aspect of Rousseau, and Kant's specific attempt to discharge this vision, in our examination of the *Second Critique*.

### FREDERICK BEISER ON KANT'S STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBJECTIVISM

A good deal of the Kant secondary literature is neck deep in 'isms': subjectivism, objectivism, idealism, transcendentalism, dogmatism, representationalism, and the cross-breeding of many of these categories as well. The aim of human language is to communicate. To the degree that the nomenclature accomplishes this task, it should be cherished and developed. Yet if it obscures the signification of words, if it muddies the waters in such a way as to render discourse useless or even impossible, then it is time to clean up the nomenclature. The Augean stables are definitely in need of cleansing. What is wanted first of all, in the discussion of modern philosophy, is a 'foundation'. I know the word will provoke immediate resistance, but solid bearings are what we are after, and that is roughly equivalent to the signification of foundations.

In the view of philosophy which I propose, it does of course have original commitments and foundations. Philosophy, to the degree that it seeks respect as an art or profession in the service of the public good, obviously owes something to the public. It is perfectly legitimate for philosophers to claim that they are only interested in serving themselves. It is perfectly legitimate for philosophers to argue that they have no obligation to the public, or at best weak and negligible ones. Our nomenclature would make this apparent. For those philosophers who concede that their art is founded originally in service to the public, through the pursuit of truth, then this is a foundation, and no counterargument will threaten it ever. Eccentric philosophers have always existed, but the great institution of modern philosophy is wildly committed to public influence and prestige. It is hardly in a position to deny that its influence and prestige rest to a very great degree upon trust and the benefit of the doubt from the public. They will not be willing to classify themselves as renegades disinterested in the public good. Those who fall into this classification will soon enough see their research budgets dry up, and the scope of whatever influence they have had, rapidly diminish. In fact commitment to public service, to the good of the public, is the unwritten commitment of philosophy. It was first formally recognized by Plato, who has exerted a not inconsiderable influence upon the career of philosophy in the West.

This then is our foundation, our bearings. Modern philosophy, from its inception with Machiavelli, has disdained the validity of human judgment that employs the sensory organs. Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume and now Kant have all taken aim at this foundation of human community. The stakes could hardly be higher. Philosophies which call into question the capacity of the public to correctly know objects as they actually are in themselves, immediately call into question the common use of names. To call into question the common use of names is to threaten public discourse, to permanently saddle public deliberation with a crippling disease. In the view of modern philosophy that I am sketching, it is *partisan*. Scholars will balk at that characterization, understandably; because they do not know of any specific party line that has been laid down. That does not mean that no such party line exists. It does. We will recur to it below shortly. Yet to understand modern philosophy as partisan, is to return philosophy to its origins, its first beginnings, its justifications and if you will its 'cause'.

Philosophy, in its origins, arose as a discipline due to public need. The need was for political authority, authority committed to the public good. It thus arose inseparable from politics. Natural philosophy, or wonder about the origins of things, may originally have had some more innocent origins. Yet it very quickly, natural philosophy, became a political weapon, as any student of ancient philosophy is well aware. One only needs to utter the names of Parmenides and Democritus and even Pyrrho to bring to mind the massive power that doctrines of natural philosophy had on issues such as the validity of perceptual judgment, the integrity of the common use of names, and really one cannot get deeper than these issues. The public, in this age and in every age, regards the suggestion that our sensory organs are entirely unreliable for our purposes of judgment, as the very ranting of a lunatic. The public would likewise immediately reject the proposition that names can be used howsoever any person pleases, such as the model of language that Locke proffers in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 'And every man has so inviolable a liberty to make words stand for what ideas he pleases, that no one hath the power to make others have the same ideas in their minds, that he has, when they use the same words, that he does.'<sup>36</sup>

Plato's Socrates for his part, fashioned his profession of ignorance precisely to illuminate this boundary line. Those philosophers who claimed to know that the perceptual judgment of the people is invalid, nugatory, or effectively so, must believe that they know something that the public does not know. When Socrates, Plato's Socrates, utters his profession of ignorance, he is swearing that *he* does not possess any such knowledge. Plato's Socrates demands of Parmenides, of Protagoras, that they *prove* their doctrine. Plato's Socrates for his part stands with the ordinary opinions.

Plato does believe that the people can know objects as they are in themselves. He believes, in fact, that nature is *ordered* by the forms which the

bulk of contemporary scholarship insists is Socrates' only concern. Without perception, Plato's Socrates argues, it would be impossible to know the forms. Yet the case is very much the reverse. As we have provided evidence in this work, according to Plato's Socrates, once a person has perceptual experience of one kind of object, through one example (say one cow), that individual will be ineligible to judge the next cow he comes across incorrectly. That is quite a statement, from the philosopher who is widely reputed by our specialists to have abandoned the whole domain of judgment *through* sensory perception as useless.<sup>37</sup>

This is the way we should approach modern philosophy. Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume and now Kant tear into the authority of the ordinary exercise of perceptual judgment. Plato and Aristotle, of course, do not hold that the senses judge anything. But the mind judges through the sensory organs for Plato's Socrates, and this is something that Kant simply forbids. Kant denies that we can know 'objects as they are in themselves'. This would be referred to, the indicted category, as 'transcendental realism', a scary sounding name to denominate that which the public takes for granted as the most obvious reality. We are talking about Kant here in particular. Kant never offers an explanation for his definition of perception as incapable of knowing 'objects as they are in themselves'. Kant utters his terminology of appearances and representations, over and over. Yet he never proves that these categories deserve to replace the common understanding, which so easily recognizes kinds and forms of objects, effortlessly in fact. None of the moderns prove it. Hobbes is a great example. He just slanders the category of perception, and insists that the cause of perception is direct bodily contact between *something* external and the mind. Locke slices up human perceptions into what he refers to as 'simple ideas', i.e. we are not conceded to perceive anything with a common awareness, by Locke. The 'simple ideas' are limited by sense organ: sounds for the ear, images for the eyes, texture for the touch, and these are said to parade into the mind separately as it were. Kant supplies much evidence to the effect that he is building on the model of Locke (and Hume, who imitates Locke to a great degree with his theory of impressions). The pure or transcendental apperception, after all, is invented by Kant to combine the 'appearances and representations', and combination is necessary because the alleged appearances and representations are mere pieces of what could be regarded by the people as objects.

Beiser, in his analysis of Kantian philosophy, argues that Kant is engaged in a battle with 'subjectivism' and 'idealism', respectively.

Kant tacitly admitted, therefore, the skeptical idealists' point that the perception of external objects is not immediate, and that we have to determine the validity of perceptions through inferences or by determining their causes. Yet it is important to see that this concession is not fatal to Kant's general critique

of skeptical idealism in the first edition of the *Kritik*. For Kant is still in a position to claim that the transcendental idealist alone can establish the truth of our perceptions.<sup>38</sup>

We need to clarify the signification of these names. By ‘subjectivism’, Beiser seeks to indicate a philosophical point of view where one person’s mind is free to think what it pleases to the exclusion of every other mind and what it takes to be real. The subjectivist; in other words, will argue that Protagoras (or more recently, Wilfrid Sellars) is right: that every man (or scientist) is the measure, of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not. Subjectivism, Beiser says, is regarded by Kant as a ‘cancer’ in metaphysics. Kant seeks to combat subjectivism, Beiser claims. Throughout his career he has combated subjectivism, Beiser maintains, even if Kant is guilty of harboring some subjectivist tendencies of his own. In Beiser’s view, ‘The critique of subjectivism, the attempt to establish a satisfactory form of realism, was indeed the driving impulse behind the development of German Idealism’ (3). ‘Thus the aim of Kant’s critique of Leibniz and the Platonic tradition is to vindicate knowledge through the senses. His chief concern is to show that we do have knowledge of appearances, and that the idealist is mistaken in thinking that all knowledge of sensible things is only illusory.’<sup>39</sup>

By ‘idealism’, Beiser explains what Kant has been good enough to define for us. Idealism indicates the belief that the mind knows only those ideas which are in itself, and that we are not entitled to claim that we know that these ideas provide any evidence whatsoever as to the external objects that exist (if there are any such) outside of our minds. Kant is not an idealist in this sense, Beiser argues, and we allow this much. Kant is committed to the conviction that there are actual bodies out there external even to our own inbuilt conceptions of space. In other words, Kant is committed to the belief that there are external objects that exist outside of our merely human faculties, outside of our allegedly subjective or anthropocentric senses of space and time (which Kant regards as merely properties of our sensibility, and no part of objects as they are in themselves).

According to Beiser, Kant’s transcendental idealism is compatible with ‘empirical realism’. This means, according to Beiser, that Kant’s doctrine that our perceptions are merely appearances and representations, which are not eligible to tell us anything about objects as they are in themselves, is compatible with the conviction that Kant also defends the integrity of ordinary perception, and generally defends the perceptual judgments that the people make as valid. This is false.

## ELEATICISM AND PLATONISM

Beiser frequently makes reference to the larger trends of Western philosophy, and Eleaticism and Platonism are big names that he invokes. However, it must be pointed out, that we need clearer and more accurate accounts of what these two traditions actually consist of. It is true that Parmenides, the famous philosopher from the city of Elea, denounced sense perception, and in that sense could be said to be an ‘idealist’. Yet this is not what he is known for most significantly. What Parmenides argues, is that coming into being in nature, is impossible; that generation is a mere illusion, and that the only thing that really exists is ‘being’, which itself never came into being, and can never perish. This shibboleth, which deeply affected all schools of atomism in antiquity (and Leucippus-Democritus, Empedocles, and even Anaxagoras all succumbed to this teaching), was the central object of investigation in Plato’s *Parmenides*. Plato’s Socrates refutes the theory.<sup>40</sup> Aristotle, for his part, also vigorously argues for the reality of coming into being and passing out of being in nature. That teaching has been effectively suppressed in modern philosophy. This is because the Early Modern philosophers did not convey the teachings, only their consequences; or rather, the Early Modern philosophers all asserted the reality of the Eleatic vision of nature, or atomic one, without either explaining the deductive logic that Parmenides employed, or communicating anything about the counterarguments made by the Socratics.

A philosophy which disputes the reality of coming into being in nature, disputes the reality of the objects that the public lives and dies for, i.e. the perishable ones: There is a natural foundation for a critique of sense perception in this very cosmology, since the human senses obviously discern a great deal of coming into being and passing out of existence. Atomism furnished a more detailed critique of sense perception, *as it is ordinarily regarded*, especially Epicurus did. This doctrine, in both aspects is sustained by almost every major Early Modern philosopher *including Kant*.

## BEISER’S READING OF KANT

Beiser believes that Kant is trying to fend off the subjectivism and paralyzing forms of idealism in the modern period of philosophy. As evidence, Beiser points to the transcendental aesthetic itself, and also to the categories of the understanding. It must be the vantage point from which Beiser appraises the situation that leads him astray. It is possible to understand how Beiser could regard the categories as evidence of a war against subjectivism, because the categories are valid inter-subjectively for Kant. For that matter, so too are the a priori intuitions of the transcendental aesthetic intersubjective. They are

valid for the whole human race, and to this degree, Beiser's point of view is defensible, that Kant is struggling against a philosophy of subjectivism and solipsism. This however is a very nearsighted point of view. For the public, the community of non-philosophers, cannot possibly function with either of these 'inter-subjectively valid' premises of Kant's system.

Here we must make one observation. A philosopher might not present his argument in the order of its true reasoning. This is to say that the transcendental aesthetic, which Kant offers to his reader first, as his indictment of ordinary perceptual judgment, does not therefore *come first* in his overall philosophy. *We* say, that Kant's categories come first. In particular, we say that Kant's category of a *substance* comes first. Kant's conception of a substance belongs to the Eleatic line of philosophy, certainly not the Platonic or Aristotelian ones. All substances, Kant argues, are *eternal*. The only change in nature that Kant is willing to countenance is alteration; but for bodies that exist eternally, as Kant's substances do, they are not eligible to undergo any sort of change except for locomotion by accident as it were (as the atoms falling through the void). In the atomist doctrine, and Kant was an early adherent of Epicurean atomism, the local movement of the changeless atoms gives the appearance of alteration in the larger composite bodies. There is no evidence that Kant has anything other in mind.

The transcendental aesthetic argues vociferously that time is no part of objects as they are in themselves. How, in Beiser's view, is this supposed to be part of a struggle against subjectivism? To be sure, it is a class interest of philosophers which is vouchsafed to be true, but this is something that Kant claims that he knows. How does Kant know that the parts of time in the objects we perceive are not really in them? For that matter, how does Kant know that substances are eternal? We don't really get argumentation from Kant on either side. And while Kant does retain some slippery intermediary between himself and the ontological debates about body, flitting back and forth between his allegation of some variety of skepticism towards bodies in general, and absolute knowledge of what body can and must be—the fact of the matter is that Kant insists that there is no possible other way to *think* about body. Beiser does not think that Kant is a 'foundationalist'. If the virtual decree of Kant's a priori categories of the understanding, without which no judgment whatsoever can be made by any human being in accordance with Kant's strictures, is not a foundation, then the word is without meaning altogether.

Readers of Kant's logic will have an easier time analyzing and understanding Kant's point of view, which seems to have been intact from the 1770s when he composed the lectures now known as the *Blomberg Logic*. The reading of ancient natural philosophy could not be clearer. The exaltation of Epicurus, a mere imitator, as the greatest natural philosopher of antiquity, and the slander of Plato and Aristotle are conspicuous. Kant's adoption



of the ancient cosmology of the atomist variant can hardly be called novel or bold. Commentators cannot seem to get past Locke's discussion of primary and secondary qualities, to see that he avows atomism, which precedes and gives form to any doctrine of perception he might advance; and they do not pay attention to the doctrine of 'indivisible points' which Hume insists are real in nature, and the basis for extension. Once again, these distinctive foundations, asserted but never reasoned for or proved, pave the way for the doctrines of perception that those philosophers employ; and the mere fact that Kant has made it appear as if this Eleatic logic is innate to the human mind, and inseparable from the very possibility of human thought, does not make Kant any different. The fact that the doctrine of eternal body can be refuted and fatally so; that it has been refuted and fatally so; is not something that anybody must take upon faith. Indeed, the whole point is to change our angle of emphasis. My whole concern is to shift the focus of investigation and argument toward precisely these pivotal, absolutely decisive issues. Plato and Aristotle are much easier to read than the moderns, because they begin with the ordinary opinions and prove every step of the way their venturing out into broader arguments. Plato's *Parmenides*, which is reputed a complicated dialogue, gives way pretty quickly to the reader who has studied Parmenides' texts and knows the issues.

We do not think it is a mark of intelligence to succumb to apagogic arguments. Kant is a great lover of apagogic arguments. Yet we are interested in reality, in what can be proved. We are interested in foundations, and we have commented upon that. We cannot agree with Beiser by any stretch of the imagination, that Kant is effectively trying to rebut the subjectivist idealism of modern philosophy. To be sure, there are passages in Kant where he depicts himself as if he were a Cartesian; but what does that ultimately signify? Descartes was far from believing in a solipsistic destiny for the human race. To the contrary, Descartes proposed to revolutionize both science and morality. One could not very well undertake those tasks if one did not believe in the existence of other people; and what is clear is that anyone who seeks to give marching orders to science, tacitly concedes his conviction not merely of the reality of those scientists, but of the power of that science to shape public opinion. Hence our obligation to engage. Philosophers who simply wish to believe, like Epicurus effectively did, that they want to live alone with their doctrines, insulated from public opinion, really don't concern us all that much. To the degree that even an Epicurean like Lucretius puts his philosophy into the public domain, however, it becomes a 'player' in the governance of public opinion, and so we are obligated to investigate it. Yet in modern philosophy, the ambition is so overt and so vast to reshape human culture, to remake the very edifice of thought, that it is ludicrous to suggest that Kant's major preoccupation is 'subjectivism'.

## FORM AND MATTER IN KANT'S DOCTRINE

There is another issue in Beiser's presentation of Kant that demands our attention. The signification of transcendental idealism as Kant intends it is a subject that Beiser spends a considerable amount of time investigating. Beiser narrows his search, when he is contemplating the *First Critique* in its two editions, to a handful of brief passages where Kant formally tries to state what his doctrine is. As if the other 700 pages did not provide us with our answer. We can say that Kant's transcendental idealism concerns the very issue that Beiser is discussing: the relationship between sensible knowledge, and the principles of the understanding such as they are in Kant's teaching. The whole structure of Kant's *First Critique* is devoted to just this issue, and it seems absurd to limit ourselves to less than a half a page of statements where Kant formally claims to be defining his doctrine. We have the doctrine and should focus on its substance.

The first thing to acknowledge is that Kant's principles of the understanding do not depend upon the domain of perception in any way. The reader will say that the principles of the understanding cannot be invoked until intuition sets them into motion, but this does not disprove our point. The principles of the understanding *do not work* with the data of sensibility. Furthermore, Kant denies categorically at the outset that our sensible faculties *have access* to any objects as they are in themselves. From the vantage point of the public, therefore, all of their perceptual evidence is *negated* at the outset. The ordinary person might as well be without sensory organs or language insofar as she is situated by Kant's model of mind. I do not see any way to deny this. The argument that time itself is but a feature of our unique sensibility, and no part of objects as they are in themselves, turns the ordinary world upside down. It does make a great difference to argue that time is merely the way we see things, but not a part of things in themselves; just as it makes a great deal of difference to lay it down as gospel that the true and real substances in nature are eternal. These teachings are false. Yet they will have their impact on the public mind in so many ways.

Kant borrows, and radically violates the Aristotelian language of matter and form. For Aristotle, 'matter' and 'form' are natural realities: they are parts of *every* object as it is in itself. Kant tears these names away from the Aristotelian context. Both 'matter' and 'form' refer merely to the human mind, for Kant, and the status of components *in it*. The objects that are perceived, for Aristotle, are formed matter, in themselves. Thus our perception, for Aristotle, discerns both material and immaterial elements and both of these elements are *in nature*. For Kant, the entire domain of perception falls into the new classification of 'matter' meaning it is just formless stuff to which the principles of the understanding (the 'form' in Kant's philosophy of mind) will assign their true identities and significations. There is no tree, no

house, no stone upon which the sun beats, that the human being could perceive, which does not fall into the Kantian category of mere mental ‘matter’, i.e. unformed and meaningless stuff. All the meaning and definition belongs to the mind in its alleged a priori categories, and those categories define even appearance in such a way as to wed them irrevocably to the doctrine of eternal substance. This is the meaning of Kant’s transcendental idealism. To suggest, as Beiser does, that Kant is trying to defend the ordinary perceptual judgment from a trend of subjectivist idealism in philosophy, is mistaken.

### JONATHAN BENNETT’S KANT

Those who study philosophy professionally are often times, in the grand scheme of things, closer to the ordinary opinions than they are to the towering philosophical voices which have gilded the modern age. Whether the philosopher in question be Hobbes, Locke, Hume, or Kant, most scholarly commentators are determined to find these philosophers’ views to be at least reconcilable to the ordinary opinions on some level. The notion that the Early Modern philosophers might be hostile to the reputation of the ordinary opinions, or that they might seek to bully them, seems to our scholars unreasonable. I do not think this belief itself is unreasonable. A trained philosopher, no more and no less than anybody else, needs to be shown, to have it demonstrated to them, that any aggressive impulse motivates a philosopher, especially ones which have been sanctified by time. The prestige of our modern science is incalculable due to the powers which it can show us. Yet it is careful to suppress areas of discourse in which other dimensions of its powers would be noticeable.

I am sure that it is clear to the reader that I do not regard Locke or Hume or Kant as tolerant of ordinary human opinions. Thus the first point that I would like to make is that Early Modern philosophy is extremely concerned about power and influence. It presumes, not just to establish a new basis for politics; but it presumes to establish a new basis for fact determination, and it refuses to begin with the ordinary opinions that it sweeps so casually to the side. I think that the reason why I myself did not fathom this dimension to modern philosophy for a long time, was because I did not have access to a language that would enable me to understand the radicalism of its agenda. For this, natural philosophy is required. This is not something that the modern philosophers themselves teach. It is something that they themselves have carefully *studied*, in the texts of Aristotle mostly. Yet they do not convey this teaching to us, only their rebuke of such.

One has to make one’s way back to the dialogues of Plato to understand the linkages between natural philosophy and more prosaic concerns such as the validity of perception, the constitution of morals, and politics. If one

begins with Parmenides, or Protagoras, both of whose arguments Plato presents in enormous detail, one begins to understand why Plato's Socrates sides with ordinary opinion. Philosophy does not begin on neutral ground. For philosophy did not invent human communication. It did not invent the human encounter with reality. It did not invent the human interaction with nature, or the teaching which experience itself has conveyed to human beings without the benefit (or hindrance) of philosophy. Parmenides it was who supplied the sophist educational movement in Greece with powerful arguments to convert into weapons of conquest frankly. Gorgias was a great admirer of Parmenides. Gorgias liked to boast that his students could defeat any expert on any issue in argument, despite the fact that Gorgias' students would have no familiarity whatsoever with the discipline or art under consideration. It bothered Socrates that the weaker argument could prevail in debate: that the sophist debater with no knowledge of the human body or how to care for it could defeat the trained doctor in debates as to how to care for a body.<sup>41</sup> The issue of truth crystallizes for philosophy in such illustrations. Yet truth is not a name that modern philosophy likes to utter.

Parmenides' argument concerns the nature of what is real. Parmenides tries to prove that all of the things that the people regard as real, especially the individual objects of different kinds and shapes and sizes and colors, are illusory.

One should both think and say that Being Is for to be is possible, but Nothingness is not possible. This I command you to consider; for from the latter way of search first of all I debar you. But next I debar you from that way along which wander mortals knowing nothing, two-headed, for perplexity in their bosoms steers their intelligence astray, and they are carried along as deaf as they are blind, amazed, uncritical hordes, by whom To Be and Not to Be are regarded as the same and not the same, and for whom in everything there is a way of opposing stress.<sup>42</sup>

Parmenides advances arguments about what true 'being' must be. Argument is powerful because it can defeat, and overcome, opposition. Philosophy, even when it gives itself the name of science, is therefore a hugely influential political power, because it has the means to compel assent, and the ability to argue carries with it a considerable deference and prestige from others. Parmenides, who argues that there is only one true reality, and that its name is 'being', persecutes the evidence of the senses. Plato in his *Parmenides* demolishes this argument of Parmenides, by disproving Parmenides' claim that the true reality is partless, a 'unity'. 'Unity', in Plato's philosophy of the forms, can only have one cause; the absolute form of unity. It cannot be a property of 'being', or derive from being in any way. This means that the irreducible reality in nature must be a heterogeneous mix of being and unity, and this once established yields many irresistible deductions. I have

enumerated these elsewhere, as well as my critique of the many modern commentators who claim that in this dialogue, Parmenides schools Socrates, and forces him to abdicate his theory of forms.<sup>43</sup>

The battles which Plato's Socrates and Aristotle fought constituted a plateau of Greek philosophy, an entrance into a new domain of intellectual richness and contact with reality. In the cosmologies of Plato's Socrates and Aristotle, the reality of potential in natural objects is argued for and secured; the reality of the perishability of natural objects, of their fragility, of the lack of necessity in their being, brought to higher intelligence what the common opinions already knew. Yet especially in the Socratic Greeks, the power of definition, of scientific definition of kinds of objects, emerged. The decisive concept in this philosophical development is Aristotle's theory of a substance, which Kant does not even mention in his own attempt to revamp metaphysics, the discipline that Aristotle founded.

The Socratic Greeks did not lack for a theory of politics. To the contrary, they developed a highly sophisticated political science. Yet for Plato and Aristotle, science and philosophy are not identical with politics. Knowing is non-denominational. Truth involves ascertaining *what* objects exist and how they exist. Against this impulse, modern philosophy, girded by Machiavelli, fights with all of its might. It repudiates the conception of form as natural; and replaces it with the concept of form as an instrument of human *will*. Kant writes:

Thus even physics owes the advantageous revolution in its way of thinking to the inspiration that what reason would not be able to know of itself and has to learn from nature, it has to seek in the latter (though not merely ascribe to it) in accordance with what reason itself puts into nature. This is how natural science was first brought to the secure course of a science after groping about for so many centuries.<sup>44</sup>

This is spiritually a dark revolution. Though it sells itself by promising new powers to human beings, it does not call attention to the power that it subtracts from society and its members: the authority to ascertain *truths*. When Kant proclaims, in the B edition of his *First Critique* in the Introduction, that the decisive impulse of his philosophy is that man can only know that which he *makes*: this is the continuation of Machiavelli's revolt, supplanting knowledge with force of will. To make human will, and therefore the strongest appetites among human beings, the decisive agenda of what will now count as 'knowing', is to sentence the human race to a brutality which it has yet to awaken from.

To go back and do the digging to uncover the roots of the natural philosophy of the moderns, is therefore to find the loose ends of its condemnation of the reality of the perishable bodies, in that endlessly recurrent insistence that the true bodies must be eternal. They roll back the clock to the earlier stages

of Greek antiquity, before the reality of immaterial form in nature was discovered; and supplement that rough and crude theory of the world as mere eternal matter, with a conception of science as a hammer.

Bennett, when he examines Kant's conception of the transcendental aesthetic, reads the ordinary opinions into Kant's theory, though Kant has expressly set up a wall in between the two. For Plato, the mind employs the senses to judge the reality of sensible objects. Sensibility therefore is conscripted into the very *process* of judgment by Plato and Aristotle. In Kant, sensibility is entirely isolated from the power of judgment. Judgment belongs to the understanding in Kant, the *a priori* understanding. Bennett does not quite get it right when he investigates what is meant by *a priori*. What Kant means is *independent of experience, entirely*. The ordinary human being who judges one object to be a man, another object to be a pumpkin, does not have judgment from Kant's point of view. He is limited to 'taste', to 'aesthetics', to 'feelings'. The concept of man is not *available* to the ordinary person for Kant. 'Man' is an empirical concept for Kant. It is not part of his *a priori* principles of the understanding, but remains to be invented by scientists. These scientists create through experiments, and this is within its own sphere entirely subjective. One scientist may conduct one experiment, another scientist a different experiment. Their definitions of man will vary, and neither one prevails. For the people who are not scientists, this is paralysis pure and simple. They are at the mercy of the merry go round of experiments and definitions and the subversion of the validity of the common vocabulary is another major aspect of the Early Modern platform. For the purposes of human discourse, this furnishes science with unconscionable power to arrest, suspend, distort, and otherwise confound the ability of human beings to communicate with one another. It flies in the face of the ordinary opinions to hold that reality is something the human being invents. Yet this is the deeper agenda of Early Modern philosophy. It is an agenda that Kant means to enforce as a rule in the depths of human education itself.

Bennett supposes that Kant means the term 'intuition' to characterize what is ordinarily perceived and named.

For Kant, an intuition is just a sensory state: to 'have an intuition' is to be in a sensory state, and to 'have an intuition of' something is to be sensorily aware of it. One way of having an intuition of a man for example, is to see a man. To 'have a concept of' a man—or of humanity—is not to be in any kind of sensory state; it is just to be able to recognize men as men, to distinguish men from apes, to know that man cannot be a vegetable, and so on.<sup>45</sup>

This is not what Kant means by his theory of 'intuition'. It is not what Kant means either by his terms of representations and appearances. Bennett thinks that Kant is justified in his theory that time is simply a property that human beings inevitably perceive as a condition of their having perceptions. Yet

Bennett is not paying attention to what Kant claims to *know*: that the real and true objects out there are *not* in time. Such a claim is to wreak utter havoc upon what is ordinarily understood, and furthermore, more study in natural philosophy as it developed in antiquity will enable philosophers to tame this presumptuousness in Kant and like-minded thinkers.

Locke and Hume created a new precedent in Early Modern philosophy by insisting that the human sense organs are entirely bereft of a conscious, inquiring mind. The sense organs are entirely passive to these thinkers, as they are to Epicurus and Lucretius. This is precisely to give the philosopher the power and authority to *deny* what is perceived. According to Locke and Hume, that which enters the mind is an amputated, dismembered particle of sensation: a color, a shape, a texture, a sound, none of which is intelligible at this stage of the game. The mind is thereupon chartered to invent compounds of the simple ideas, i.e. to enforce that principle of man as *inventor* of reality. It's a false theory of perception, but we would not be vulnerable to it if we were not vulnerable to the false theory of what a body is, that really precedes it theoretically.

Human sensation is not radically passive, but nor is it 'action'. The human mind employs the sensory organs to discern objects, and it does so in such an effortless manner that people are not aware of this power and knowledge that they in fact possess. For once people learn the kinds of objects, they do not mistake them. This knowledge, in Kant, comes to naught however. For it is excluded from the domain of judgment entirely in his theory. To merely develop the conception of a tree, as Kant details it, is quite an undertaking. It is alleged to be a process of invention.

A concept of every species and genera of things that strikes our senses is a *conceptus abstractus*, e.g. of horses, sheeps, etc.: if I say *a horse*, then this concept is given *per experimentium*. But the universality of the representation arose through abstraction. . . . Every inventor must fabricate, and all inventions are fabrications. . . . Fabrication produces archetypes, abstraction produces imitations through arbitrary combination or through arbitrary separation.<sup>46</sup>

One must be able to compare the object to unlike objects, allegedly, in order to ascertain anything about it. One must construct the conception of the tree piece by piece, and there is so much room for variation. This is not the way people learn, but it is the manner in which the new science will exert *authority*.

Moreover, human beings, even if they are very smart philosophers, will simply tune out that teaching which they do not possess the concepts to evaluate. Kant's conception of a phenomena is a case in point. Bennett simply declaims that this phenomena is what ordinarily appears to people, just as Bennett seems to take Kant's entire transcendental aesthetic. 'Kant thinks ultimately that statements about phenomena are not merely supported by, but

are equivalent to, statements about actual and possible sensory states', Bennett maintains.<sup>47</sup> Yet he does not pay attention to Kant's definition of phenomena in the transcendental analytic. The phenomena, Kant argues, emphatically, must be eternal. It cannot come into being and it cannot pass out of being. 'Therefore in all experience, that which persists is the object itself, i.e. the substance (phaenomenon), but everything that changes or can change belongs only to the way in which this substance or substances exist, thus to their determinations.'<sup>48</sup> No empirical or inductive experience is authorized to challenge any part of Kant's categories. Human perception, in other words, is impotent to so much as convoke a challenge to Kant's definitions, based on the regulations that Kant has established.

Kant argues, in his *First Critique*, that when we say certain things are combined in an object, we are never, ever to believe this to mean that such combinations actually exist *in* the objects we are attempting to speak about. All combination is *something we do*, Kant insists. The number of human minds that such an authoritative teaching is destined to utterly pulverize and wreck, is hard to fathom.

When it comes to politics, it happens to be the case that the modern philosophers prefer that human beings correlate their actions with strong passions. We have to quote Hume on this score, in his definition of reason as the 'slave' of the passions. 'Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.'<sup>49</sup> Modern philosophy, in other words, is determined to 'make' this into a reality. Yet it is against human nature, I believe, to be governed so crudely by one's feelings, especially if those feelings are being formed and evoked by abstract science. By nature, in accordance with human potential, people will strive for rational control over their appetites, and to direct their actions in accordance with what is right and *just*. This modern philosophy of artificial form is bent on thwarting these better impulses, and I think it is about time we started to reckon with that fact.

#### PATRICIA KITCHER ON KANT'S THINKER

As we survey and investigate the secondary literature, we find that it is almost standard for the scholar to struggle and strive to make Kant's arguments appear to square, somehow, ultimately effectually, with the experience of the human being in the street as it were, the *plain* man or woman. The implication is that Kant is a philosopher who, to some real degree, is trying to come to the rescue of the human race with his transcendental idealism. Kant is deeply felt by many of his commentators to be attempting to fend off the dragons of skepticism, nihilism, and the general paralysis which Hume so seems to revel in. This tendency in the commentariat is commensurate with



ordinary opinion itself, which does not experience its own experience as problematical *at all*. This is to say, that the generality of the human race never has, and never does, and never will find itself perplexed about how to name external objects; and it will not find itself paralyzed by fear that it does not really know how to correctly name *and know* external objects for what they are.

‘Experience’, as that term is commonly employed and intended, is not problematic for the human race in terms of the ‘what’ of it. The human race frequently has trouble with experience in terms of the ‘why’ of it, i.e. why did that job disappear; why did this disease occur; why did the enemy invade unexpectedly; why is the leadership of the country so small-minded and focused on its own petty intrigues. The ‘what’ question is vastly different from the ‘why’ question. The human race does not suffer from helplessness in the ‘what’ category. It simply finds itself unable to defend itself when philosophy opts to complicate the representation of the ‘what’ and to withhold its authoritative assent, from that which the people effortlessly judge to be so about objects

It is not paltry evidence that the human race is educated, without help from the vast scientific apparatus, on the various kinds of objects and how to identify them. We could very easily be having a discussion about form, the philosophy of form, and how this makes it possible for people to indeed know these things. If we were serious students of Plato and Aristotle on these issues of epistemology and the enterprise of perception, that is the debate we would be focused on, because that theory of form discovered at the apex of ancient Greek philosophy does indeed explain how ordinary people possess this knowledge so effortlessly. It would also make us look differently at the tide of modern philosophers who vehemently denounce the authority of the sensory organs, and who fail to even allow that there is such a thing as a unitary conscious mind employing those sensory organs in acts of judgment which virtually everybody participates in making, and *correctly*. Yet this has not been the educational situation for half a millennium. The modern philosophical movement is a church militant. It does not inform its students that the attacks on judgment which make use of sensory organs, has an old pedigree; and that modern philosophy relies upon those old convictions, without doing us the decency of conveying to us the teaching that the ancient philosophers developed to justify their attacks on the judgment through sense perception. We would not be vulnerable to rumors stating that Plato has abandoned the domain of the senses, as not merely Kant but so many commentators of the last hundred years argue. In the *Cratylus*, in the *Phaedo*, in the *Theaetetus*, in the *Republic*, the opposite is proved.

To the degree that investigation into the texts just mentioned above of Plato were a common serious enterprise, the view I articulate would prevail, not because it is my view, but because it is correct. The rumor that in the

dialogue of the *Parmenides*, that the character of Parmenides defeats Socrates' theory of forms, would likewise be reversed, no matter how many scholars have signed onto it; because the evidence, once it is sufficiently examined, will speak for itself. To become seriously acquainted with the philosophy of perceptual judgment in the Socratic Greeks would provide something that contemporary philosophers almost entirely lack: an alternative to the story told by modern philosophy about amputated sensations, the absence of a unitary and coordinating consciousness of mind overseeing the sensory organs; an alternative to the allegation that we cannot possibly know the perishable objects for what they are in themselves; and for that matter, that the perishable objects are indeed perishable, something uniformly denied by the Early Moderns. To become instructed in the arguments that the Early Modern philosophers themselves rebelled against—but never attempted to *refute* in print—would greatly alter the psychological foundations of our research and the questions that we ask. It would certainly alter the way we approach Kant. It would enable us to hear things that he says which are utterly incompatible with the view of Kant the Knight errant, with Kant the defender of the human race against nihilistic philosophy. Patricia Kitcher I am sure would feel differently about Kant if these conditions that I have described existed.

Kitcher ends up arguing that in Kant's view, the 'a priori' principles of the understanding provide the function of making ordinary sensible experience possible.

The Duisberg notes provide some evidence for how Kant understood the special use of the concepts (and so the principles). The principles provide the standards for observation, a use that could not be established through empirical observation. A 'transcendental' deduction is an argument defending the legitimacy of the use of a priori concepts by demonstrating that the principles associated with them are required for cognition in general—because they provide the standards for the observations that are the foundation of empirical cognition.<sup>50</sup>

Kitcher tries to make the case that Kant actually makes available the concept of noumenon to fulfill this role in his philosophy: that the noumenon can both order the semi-chaos (alleged) of our sensory impressions, and provide for them the intelligibility which alone can make it possible for us to successfully navigate the external world. I do not believe that Kant's conception of noumenon serves any such function in his philosophy; yet I think the point is, I am convinced that it is no part of Kant's intention to seek to provide any foundation or justification for the people's sensible experience. Where does Kitcher think that this Kantian philosophy *demonstrates* such an intention? Is it possible that Kant is underwriting the common convictions when he depicts nature as a great whole, bereft of the forms and kinds which

are commonly known, and which is in his view effectively a domain barren of any sort of potential or freedom? Is it in Kant's portrayal of the domain of nature where Kitcher gets the confidence that Kant is so engaged in the role of protector of the common beliefs? Or is it in the moral sphere, where Kant literally banishes and persecutes every single degree of affect felt at the experience of factual situations, as base, prejudiced, impossible to conduce to any kind of justice or truth? Where only Kant's theory of the categorical imperative itself is supposed to be the generator of proper sentiments—a theory, not incidentally, which Kant insists he cannot prove the reality of in any concrete example?

The modern war against the evidence of perceptual judgment is not without pragmatic value: for that evidence, and it truly is evidence, directly counteracts so many of the doctrines which the modern philosophy has sought to anchor in departments of science which no longer permit philosophical scrutiny to occur. Yet let us come to the B introduction to Kant's philosophy, and survey his attitude towards nature, and towards the philosophies which have existed which sought to learn *from* nature what it is. Kant, with his endless boasts about a Copernican revolution, promises that it is given to him and his philosophy to actually *assign the law* to nature.

If intuition has to conform to the constitution of the objects, then I do not see how we can know anything of them a priori; but if the object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can very well represent this possibility to myself.<sup>51</sup>

This is the 'new' way of doing things. Kant insists, and this is not a profession of weakness but of *ambition*; that in the scheme of knowledge that he will advance, man will not ever attempt to lay claim to any knowledge which he has not himself created and given birth to out of his own *will*. This is hubris from any tolerably humble posture. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are ridiculed, as Machiavelli ridiculed them, for failing to produce 'results'. Yet, for Plato and Aristotle, science of *prima philosophia* is not itself a productive enterprise: it is the attempt to know the truth about the objects in the world, not to rearrange or exploit them, which is the purview of *their* metaphysics.

This does not mean, and it does not entail, that the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle would impede the development of any productive philosophy or art which society decided to undertake. Truth obviously does not stand in the way of productivity, as it is not a judgment of productivity. Yet it might get in the way, if a philosophy sought to rename the objects of the world in accordance with its own ambitions to *rule* them. For example, when Machiavelli characterizes the people of the world as 'matter', he is stripping them of their forms and identities, their true selves, in a theory that is designed to

enable intellectual engineers the better to encase them in equations of bondage.<sup>52</sup> To this degree, a metaphysics of truth may indeed pose obstacles to 'invention'. But for any legitimate purpose, which is not at loggerheads with the actual truth about external objects as they exist in nature and by and for themselves, such a metaphysics poses no obstacles whatsoever. On the moral front, let us say that the Socratic philosophers espoused a much more ambitious philosophy, one savoring of the possibility of beauty and fulfillment, which the moderns sweep away with scorn and accusation. Some of our most degenerate moderns have claimed that Plato's very philosophy of justice itself is the greatest inspiration and cause of injustice that the world has ever known. To such theorists, we would commend Aristotle's principle of identity, which is an adaptation of Plato's theory of cause: the only cause of injustice is injustice. Justice itself cannot be the cause of injustice.  $A=A$ .<sup>53</sup>

#### SENSATION, APPERCEPTION, AND SYNTHETIC A PRIORI PROPOSITIONS IN KITCHER'S KANT

Kitcher begins her analysis with the account of sensory perception that has existed since the time of Locke. It is alleged by Locke that the conscious mind is not directly involved in the operation of the senses. Locke's conscious mind is like a cashier: the mind is not free to regard the evidence of the senses until they have been handed across the counter. Left to themselves, the senses are thought to function passively and impotently. Each sense organ must fend for itself, and no intelligible form is allowed to be present in the materials furnished by the senses. Why are we obliged to this model? What evidence is there that this is truth? It is not our experience that we sense objects this way, piecemeal, sense organ by sense organ, saddling the mind with a chaotic blizzard of pieces and sense bereft of form and order. Does it matter that this model of perception was developed by atomist philosophy? Epicurus in particular led the way in this model. It makes a great deal of difference, because it doesn't bear up to scrutiny.

Sense perception is defended by Epicurus as incontrovertible reality for each individual, but it is not allowed by Epicurus that anybody's sense perception teaches him or her anything about what the sensed objects *are*. Epicurus expels form from what is sensed. He does not take up Plato or Aristotle in argument, as he well should have. He certainly does not refute their views. And their views happen to square with the ordinary opinions, which while not a definitive proof, is certainly not nothing. Yet what needs to be pointed out is that perception does not come first in the order of knowledge for Epicurus: the *atoms* do. Epicurus, while he claims that nothing can be learned from perception that tells us anything about any external objects that is real and true, reverses this attitude when talking about the atoms. Epicurus

claims to know about these external objects, that they are eternal: and that the whole natural universe is reducible to these identical objects. The atoms have no purpose: they cannot become anything, and they do not themselves come from anything.

Kitcher, then, is focused upon the chaos of sensations, which (she accepts on the authority of the modern teaching) simply cannot and do not tell us anything about what external objects really are. If we go this far with Kitcher, we can appreciate her interest in apperception and the categories of the understanding. *If* sensation and the sensible realm *were* a chaos, then indeed, philosophy must explain how this chaos can be resolved, since the people again evidently do not mistake one kind of object for another. The issue that Kitcher focuses on well is the manner in which the a priori knowledge of the understanding can thereupon make experience *possible*. Yet Kant's a priori principles of the understanding do *no such thing*. 'Phaenomena' are what the a priori principles of the understanding make it possible for us to regard the appearances as; but these phenomena, as eternal objects, as substances, as the reversal of Aristotle's definition of substance—give the human race understanding of *no* object that appears to it. What other attributes of phenomena does Kant supply us with? That they (all the substances) exist in one great natural system of cause and effect; and that therefore none of these can really be considered apart, or separately, which is the crowning insight of Aristotle's concept of substance in nature, and the revolution in natural philosophy that we have since lost.

When Kant claims that perception is not experience; that only when we regard sensation as mere 'matter', and the a priori principles of the understanding as the true 'form' of all sensations, and that only this is qualified to count as experience—what does this do? It denies all of the experience as that term is commonly known. It leads directly unto the conception of meaningless nature, of nature with no potential, no coming into being, and dare we say, no hope. A war against hope: that is quite a slogan, but it is not unrelated to the modern conception of the natural universe as matter in motion.

### SPONTANEITY AND NECESSITY

Another issue that Kitcher recurs to with some frequency is the distinction between necessity and freedom in Kantian philosophy. The mind evidently has freedom, of some sort, since it has 'spontaneity'. And yet this is an odd definition of freedom. We can easily become blind to the fact that it is an odd characterization, if our minds have been pumped full of the contention that nature itself is automatic 'necessity', irrevocable, fated, right down the line, right down to the last twitching muscle, and the last wink of an eye. When all reality has been driven out of the conception of nature, when every last exit

door and breath of fresh air has been denied to us by the heavy burden of the philosophy of nature as eternal process, a la Epicurus (Kant's favorite natural philosopher), from that vantage point spontaneity starts to seem like salvation itself. So long as we are allocated the power to do anything of our own volition, or outside of the domain of what is predetermined, it *sounds* great.

Certainly, we can say, there is *some* truth to this. America is famous after all for the 'road trip'. *Thelma and Louise*, or teenage boys out to become men, and every other conceivable demographic in American society is well represented in this genre of film. This is certainly something that savors of spontaneity. Let us take leave of our ordinary jobs and lives and take to the great open American road. We will be met with surprises along the way; with unexpected visions of natural beauty and friendship; with a breath of fresh air, indeed. But yet clearly here is not the whole of freedom, as it is merely an escape, an escape for a brief time. Moreover, in 99 percent of the circumstances and situations where our moral emotions are called into play, 'spontaneity' is the least accurate name to describe the action that is appropriate, measured to the circumstances, fitting and essentially characteristic of *free and dignified people*. Our judgment, our actions, either fit the truth of the facts or they are *vicious*. Aristotle was not wrong when he observed that the human race generally condemns viciousness and *expects* virtuousness. To be 'spontaneous' in the face of that, is to positively insult the human beings who are depending upon one's action. In the case of determining truth, which is important not merely in moral situations (though certainly there!) but in dispassionate quests to know that which is, spontaneity is absolutely worthless and inappropriate.

#### ARTHUR MELNICK ON KANT'S PARALOGISMS

We should first of all pay attention to the meaning that Kant gives to the denomination 'paralogisms'. For Kant, the paralogisms constitute a domain of almost habitual thoughts to which human beings are subject, but which are fallacious. Thus, 'a fallacy of this kind will have its ground in the nature of human reason, and will bring with it an unavoidable, although not insoluble, solution.'<sup>54</sup> Kant is designating this special category (although it is not the only category so regarded by Kant) in order to call attention to the inherent defects in the way human beings think. As is often the case when talking about Kant's philosophy, we must recognize the reality of an *issue*, while nevertheless separating that issue from Kant's characterization thereof. To be sure, the human being is ripe for delusions. One does not need to be a philosopher in order to achieve as much insight. Human beings may be deliriously over-optimistic about their prospects in life in one or many ways. Human beings may also be overly pessimistic about their prospects in life in

many ways. Yet I do not think human beings are liable to confuse a horse for a sparrow, a tree for a canoe, or to be otherwise segregated apart by nature from what external objects happen to be.

We need to call attention to this, because in the ‘A’ version of the paralogisms—which Melnick proposes to focus on—Kant boasts that he has ‘undeniably proved’ his transcendental aesthetic.’ In the transcendental aesthetic we have undeniably proved that bodies are mere appearances of our outer senses, and not things in themselves.’<sup>55</sup> This is false. Kant has not proved it anywhere in any of his writings. He has not even made a serious attempt at proving it. He has regaled us with repetitive statements, claims, assertions, but no persuasive argument. It was the conviction of Plato’s Socrates that the greatest weakness and delusion to which human beings are subject, concern our uncritical taking into our souls and acceptance, of claims that are made to us by others. Since it is relatively easy to evaluate claims based on sense perception and evidence that is commonly available, and since people do not make mistakes, generally speaking, regarding the assignment of the correct name to the object referred to them for naming, it is therefore philosophic opinions which cost us the greatest ignorance. When false philosophy hatches its claims in our very brains, and we unknowingly soak up these teachings, it is then that we are subjecting ourselves to the worst kind of slavery.

A false opinion, taken into one’s soul, is thereby ever after relentlessly reasserted, a minion of deceit and delusion within our very minds themselves. If we are lucky we can grab hold of such teachings as may wreak havoc upon our souls, drag them out into the light, and scrutinize them and cross-examine them. For readers of philosophy who have been charmed (or overpowered) by Kantian claims, such a cure is inevitably necessary. Melnick is a true believer in the Kantian ‘cogito’. Thus he is a good focus for our examination of the secondary literature.

There are two very major terms involved in Kant’s and Melnick’s discussions. One is available to all readers, those who have philosophy and those who do not. That would be the concept of the *self*. The second concept of great weight in these conversations is a philosophical category, and the non-philosophic reader needs instruction as to what it is. That second concept is that of ‘substance’. Kant is himself already working with a notion of substance that has been warped and twisted from its original signification, and the reader deserves to know this. For Aristotle, a ‘substance’ involves the most real beings in nature. It is the name that Aristotle gives to his theory of what the most real beings in nature *are*. Aristotle developed this concept specifically to address the domain of philosophers, because they are the ones most prone to advertising various chimeras, hallucinations, hollow names, and other such things to the people as very real. If philosophy cannot establish effective criteria for identifying the most real beings in nature, and

recognizing things of inferior, or no being, then it would not be of public use. For Aristotle, all human efforts aim at some good, and truth is a good. For it hurts us, injures us to put our faith and belief in things that do not exist, and to fail to acknowledge the reality of the things which truly do exist.

As it turns out, we cannot possibly begin to discuss the self, the subject of Kant's Paralogisms and Melnick's book, until we have ironed out the nature of substance. Kant, for his part, does indeed borrow from Aristotle a portion of his definition of what a substance is. That which cannot be used to function as a predicate of some other object, and which is itself the object to which predicates are referred, is a substance in Aristotle's teaching. Yet this is not all of Aristotle's definition by a long shot. Aristotle's substance, is that thing which is capable of existing *apart*. It is perishable. It is a compound of matter and form. It comes into being and it will pass out of being. Kant's theory of a substance reflects the modern revolution in philosophy, or at least that is one way of talking about it. For the bodies of Bacon, of Hobbes, of Locke and of Hume, and even of Descartes and Spinoza, are *eternal* bodies. Spinoza, for example, reverses Aristotle's theory by playing on the words 'by itself'. For Spinoza, any object which cannot exist *forever* by itself, without aid from any other substance, is not a substance. Thus a horse for Aristotle is a substance. It is a compound of matter and form. It reflects nature's determination to generate. The substance comes into being with little in the way of actuality, much in the way of *potentiality*. The Aristotelian substance has a mortal career which has nothing whatsoever to do with 'necessity'. The substance can perish at any time. Yet for Aristotle, the substance is the scene of nature's drama. The human substance is possibility, with a chance to make its potential *actual*. Yet this actuality to be sought for among human beings is not just any actuality, for there is *bad* actuality as well as good actuality. The human substance has the opportunity to strive for excellence, and goodness, and justice, and to realize the fulfillment of this sort of being in happiness. Kant and the moderns reject this entire metaphysics, but one must say that they do not dismiss it with *argument*. They rather retrieve an alternative theory of substance, one husbanded by the Eleatics Parmenides and Zeno, and the atomists who were so affected by Eleatic theory. Our scholars are not well versed in the distinction between Eleatic and Socratic natural philosophy. They do not even concede that Plato's Socrates is a natural philosopher, as if his theory of form is not that. To resume with Spinoza then, for him, a horse is not a substance because it needs food to eat and water to drink. It is not eternal, and Spinoza has decreed that substance must be eternal.<sup>56</sup>

This should be enough background for us to get into Kant's paralogisms and Melnick's discussion of them. For Kant, we must repeat to the reader, there are many important alleged nuggets of knowledge which denizens of his philosophy miraculously possess without having had to consult any expe-



rience whatsoever. Kant maintains that his own mind provides him with ‘a priori’ ideas, and he often calls these same ideas ‘logical’. In my view, these are claims that Kant is either not able to defend or that he does not want to have to defend. Since Kant’s theory of substance is an ancient idea, and since his natural philosophy of a nature that is ‘necessary’ and unfree, bereft of potential, confined to eternal objects, so resembles atomism (as do the host of other modern philosophies that we have enumerated above), we say that it is possible that he does not want to fully explicate his theories, because this would in turn expose them to the refutations of such theories which were also developed in antiquity, by Plato and Aristotle most notably.

This brings us to the issue of the self. Now in the Paralogisms, Kant has an opponent in mind, which is Descartes. Descartes, in Kant’s view, is a ‘rational psychologist’. This is quite possibly an abuse of language. Descartes dismisses all the evidence of the senses en route to his theory of the self; and this is not a position that very many human beings would assent to. Descartes asserts that the mere possibility that the senses may deceive us is warrant enough to exclude them from the domain of knowing. Descartes has access to the sense perceptions of course, when the issue is practical reason, i.e. when he is determining his prospects in the practical world and wondering how to *act*. Most undergraduates would regard this as mere chicanery. They would not be wrong. This double-barreled attitude towards sense perception is common to all of the philosophers we have noted above, and it should not be ignored that the social contract model of government is the one that they advertise to the people. Presumably they are not advertising to the people also that their senses are no part of the contract, no part of the access to truth which is being invoked in the contract motif. It is not irrelevant to note that Epicurus too regarded political relationships among human beings as essentially contractual. What Epicurus meant, and what the moderns often mean as well is that the meanings of names are contractual. ‘Justice’, in the view of both Epicurus and Hobbes, is merely that which the people guided by philosophy consent to define that name to indicate.

To resume, Descartes developed the argument that one can know of one’s existence simply through the anxiety that one feels when the evidence of the senses is barred at the gate of knowledge. I assume that one could simply make the argument that one could strike one’s head with a small bat in order to generate a pain real enough to serve the same purpose. Yet Descartes argues that one can know, in his method, only the reality of one’s *consciousness*.

The formulation is: cogito, ergo sum. ‘I think, therefore I exist’. It should probably read something more like ‘I have denied to myself the power to think, or used my mind to oppose all of my thoughts, and this has left me nevertheless with a definite mental content or anxiety and hence knowledge that I exist.’ Kant, we should say, wants to go along with Descartes a certain

distance, for sure. Kant also wants to limit his discussion of the self to the 'I'. This 'I' cannot include a body. Descartes claims that he cannot know that he (as this consciousness) possesses a body. This is the foundation of his whole philosophy, one that commends itself to the human race for the benefit that it will bring to it in the way of *material* improvements.

Descartes introduces that name that Kant is so allergic to: 'being'. Descartes claims that he can know that he exists, by virtue of the fact that he feels anxiety in his thought experiment. Kant agrees with Descartes that this 'I', fully insulated from the external world, is the essence of the self. Kant writes:

Now in all thinking the 'I' is the subject, in which thoughts inhere only as determinations, and this 'I' cannot be used as the determination of another thing. . . . For the 'I' is, to be sure, in all thoughts; but not the least intuition is bound up with this representation, which would distinguish it from other objects of intuition.<sup>57</sup>

Kant insists that this 'I' exists without any cause. This self does not emerge through learning how to distinguish itself from the external objects out there in the world. Kant argues that his 'I' has absolutely no admixture of anything *empirical*. 'Now since the proposition *I think* (taken problematically) contains the form of every judgment of understanding whatever, and accompanies all categories as their vehicle, it is clear that the inferences from this proposition can contain a merely transcendental use of the understanding, excluding every admixture of experience.'<sup>58</sup> Nor can this 'I' be something that one has learned. One never learns it. It is always the presupposition of all of our thoughts: and I think this reveals something about Kant's 'I'. It is as radically removed from the world as it can possibly be, *deliberately*. Kant's 'I' will be able to repair to his magical 'transcendental' or logical concepts, which include theories of substance and nature effectively, which Kant insists no experience can possibly figure into the learning of. This would be a great problem for Kant if he had to prove his concepts; because the Eleatic and atomist variants of this philosophy that Kant develops, do indeed begin thinking about the perishable objects, even though they are en route to founding arguments that will deny the *primary* reality of these perishable existences.

Kant denies that the 'rational psychologist' is entitled to infer anything from this 'I'. We note that Kant shares Descartes' allergic reaction against the empirical. Kant's self may interact with the world, but it is never *affected* by the world. Kant withholds the self, barricades the self against the world. Kant refuses, absolutely refuses to have any factual truth in common with any other person. Thus the possibility of discourse is severed at the root

really. What then is this 'I' that Kant speaks about? How shall we understand it? Melnick has an answer.

Melnick refers to Kant's 'I' as a kind of 'intellectual marshaling'. 'The marshaling action, then, includes within it not just the thought but that which it is a determination of, and so the thinking subject . . . exists literally within the action of intellectual marshaling, not as a self-subsistent entity to which the marshaling action itself belongs.'<sup>59</sup> This 'I' of Kant's, is forever *acting*. This 'I' is not to be confused with any *experience*, or receptivity to any external object. This mind does not contemplate external objects, nor can it. It cannot *inquire*. It cannot investigate, or ask: 'what is this?' Kant's 'I' has to be on the offensive, always 'marshaling' or imposing some order and will on whatever it is that it addresses. Spinoza is the best psychological metaphysician among the moderns, and this looks very much like what Spinoza calls 'active virtue' or 'desire'. The whole basis of Spinoza's distinction between 'active virtue' and 'inadequate ideas' is that the latter is 'passive', i.e. receptive to what other objects are. The 'active desire' or 'virtue' of Spinoza is similarly always on the offense. It cannot be interfered with because no other object or power is conceded to be on the same playing field with it. For that matter, we can recur to Hobbes's 'ceaseless quest for power after power, unto death', to contextualize Kant's 'I'.

Melnick offers the most interesting discussion of Kant's 'I'. For this 'I' is said to be an *action*. It is an indivisible, simple action. It lives in one unity of time, but it is very obviously not a *substance* in Aristotle's founding definition of the term. For the action cannot exist apart. There must be something that is doing the acting. Melnick however is not about to concede this. For Melnick, the self emerges out of the action, as if a horse might be generated from galloping. This is a most strange way to speak. Melnick refers to occurrences such as 'it is raining' to suggest how there might be an action without an obvious *actor*. Yet the rain itself, is water. It is not simply 'falling'. Water is falling, one could say. This is not so mysterious. Melnick has another example, that 'it is thundering'. As if the thunder, or the noise, emerged out of itself, or as if the noise itself gave birth to something else. In such matters, one should always begin with what is more easily known, with what is more intelligible to us, as Aristotle liked to say, before moving on to examples which might perplex. We would like to have the explanation about the horse and the galloping. Melnick seems to suggest that the Kantian 'I' can simply be this intellectual 'marshaling', this constant, indivisible chain of actions; which has no past, no future. Those would be empirical contents, and Kant's 'I' is not subject to them. 'In sum, my contention is that the thinking subject in the context of the Cogito exists for Kant within a real action of intellectual marshaling.'<sup>60</sup> 'My contention, recall, is that the Paralogisms turn on the ontological distinction between the thinking subject as an entity (for the

rational psychologist) versus the thinking subject as sheer intellectual marshaling action (for Kant).<sup>61</sup>

We have spoken above of Spinoza's theory of the self in a psychological sense, and also of Hobbes's theory of the self in a characterological sense. Both of them are aggressive, on the move permanently, impermeable, impenetrable, never capable of so much of laying down their arms for even a moment. This 'logical' subject, and that is what Kant finally resolves to refer to it as—would more properly be called a 'disposition', i.e. a character. This is very much something acquired, as it is licentious, incontinent, excessive. The true parent of Kant's 'I' is Machiavelli's art of war, as practiced by the new prince. 'Thus a prince should have no other object, nor any other thought, nor take anything else as his art but the art of war and its order and discipline; for that is the only art of concern to one who commands.'<sup>62</sup> That is the motif of the entire pantheon of Early Modern philosophy, in its moral orientation. That is very much what Kant is engaged in doing in his Paralogisms. We certainly cannot say that Kant's very 'cogito' is itself a paralogism, because it would be ludicrous to suggest that this is something to which human thought in general is susceptible. It is a very rare orientation, and it takes endless labors to acquire it. Kant would like to suggest that this 'I' is simply always there, before we are conscious of it, and indeed that we cannot be conscious of it, since it underwrites our every mental action. Like the mysterious a priori categories of Kant, it is *sui generis*. Yet it is endlessly useful for Kant in the practical business of argument, and in his effort to establish effective new orthodoxies for how human thought shall be regarded by everyone.

Kant makes a revealing statement in the paralogisms, one which Melnick calls our attention to and one which he endorses. Kant says that it is not possible for us to regard another thinking being aside from ourselves, except in one way and one way only. The only way we can regard another thinking being, is to project our own thought, our own thinking self, out onto our notion of the other thinking self. 'It is obvious that if one wants to represent a thinking being, one must put oneself in its place, and thus substitute one's own object for the object one wants to consider (which is not the case in any other species of investigation).'<sup>63</sup> That is the only way we can even contemplate another thinking subject, Kant argues. Just imagine the implications for discourse. Nobody else would be able to bring up an argument to us, that we had not first altered and created ourselves and then projected into their minds. This is very much the relationship envisioned by Kant's philosophy in the larger sense. For he proposes to impress his model of thinking orthodoxy upon the entire culture. The rank and file of human beings do not even qualify as capable of judging by Kant's standards. They are confined to the 'aesthetic' domain of 'taste' and preference. Certainly this is the way Kant deals with Plato and Aristotle. When he borrows from Plato his theory of

ideas, he guts the whole theory without informing the reader that this is what he is doing. When Kant borrows Aristotle's model of the syllogism, he does the same thing: he eviscerates the theory entirely, and replaces it with his own model of thought. Once again he does not inform the reader of this; but why should he, if he is incapable of so much as beholding another different thinker from himself, whose ideas he would have to reckon with based on *common* evidence?

We have not quite finished with Kant and Melnick here. We should return to the issue of substance. Kant has given to us his definition of substance in the *First Analogy of Experience*, and he is very firm about it. All substances are eternal. We have noted Kant's virtual dissolution into arguments about cosmology in that place and others. Yet Kant does uphold the principle that substance must be eternal. Kant is not willing to concede that the 'I' is a substance. The 'I' is a subject, but not a substance. Yet Kant does not want to make the argument, or concede the argument, that the soul is eternal, and Kant has agreed to name his cogito 'soul', though *he* puts it in quotation marks.

This could be of great interest to Kant scholars who are focused on his discussions of theology. It would not be hard for Kant to argue that his 'I' is eternal. He is almost forced to do so, given the way he characterizes the cogito as 'intellectual marshaling', to quote Melnick again. Yet Kant, even though he is working within the rarefied airs of philosophical theory, does not want to leave any wiggle room for interpreters. Kant is the sort who seeks to give new modes and orders to the human race in his thought. He seeks to inform others as to how they think, and how they must think, rather than engage in conversation with us. No, Kant argues, we cannot say that we know the soul is immortal as his definition of a substance requires. But it pays to note that Epicurus too, had a theory of body as eternal; but he argued, Epicurus did, that the soul itself, also made up of the atoms, is perishable. Epicurus' argument was driven by his overriding concern, to banish from within his own breast his fear of God, and the prospect of being *judged*. By believing in the atoms, Epicurus sought to emancipate himself from any obligation to share judgments with any other human being as regards the disposition of the perishable objects. The belief in the eternal and necessary atoms, bound in infinite chains of cause and effect, soothed his soul. It enabled him to evacuate the sphere of obligation, since the world is as it is and cannot be otherwise, in his teaching. But the eternity of the atoms cannot be transferred to the eternity of the soul, for it revives the prospect of *accountability*. Kant, who insists that Descartes was an atomist throughout his whole career, is close enough to Descartes in his reasoning. Descartes, if we recall, insisted that free will and predestination are compatible with one another. So Kant argues that a determined natural body is compatible with a free will in the soul, as if these two did not cancel each other out. And now

we note that for Kant as well as for Descartes and Epicurus, the soul cannot be vouchsafed immortality. The domain of potential cannot be allowed to exist in these theories.

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## Chapter Five

# Rousseau

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive view of Kant's philosophy. We have spent much time investigating Kant's philosophy of mind. Now we turn to Kant's moral philosophy. In my view this cannot be done without a careful examination of Rousseau, at least in his educational and political teaching. I have written sufficiently on other Enlightenment figures who have exercised an influence on Kant's writings: Hobbes, in my view, is foremost among them. This may be read as an ironic comment, but it is not intended to be such. Kant in my estimation is very much a liberal social contract theorist in the Hobbesian tradition. So, for that matter, is Rousseau.

Rousseau offers a puzzling visage to many scholars however. There is Rousseau's apparent critique of the Enlightenment, which it is the purpose of this section to visit. The great doctrine of the Early English and Scottish Enlightenment, of course, focused on individualism. Writers such as Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Hume have all been addressed in other writings. Rousseau, however, is the formulator of a great new rhetoric. Rousseau is the father of the 'General Will', and he speaks eloquently about the sacred transformation from the popular state of nature theories to the civil regime. Kant is clearly affected by this rhetoric, and in order to fully understand Kant's categorical imperative, or universal law of nature, we must have a grounding in what Rousseau actually argues and intends.

This discussion of Rousseau will be confined largely to his *Emile* and *Social Contract*. There is obviously a strong anthropological component to Rousseau's writing in these works, and therefore the next thing to be investigated, when the Rousseau section is concluded, will be Kant's anthropological writings. I will spend just enough time on that subject matter to build the bridge between Rousseau and Kant, and to lead us directly into a considera-

tion of Kant's overtly moral writings beginning with the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Rousseau is firmly nestled within the tradition of Enlightenment philosophers. Machiavelli, Hobbes, and 'the wise Locke' are among the authors he cites most frequently. It is true that Rousseau makes some statements to the effect that it is not a good idea to spread enlightenment among the people, in his First Discourse. It would be easy enough for a superficial reader to mistake Rousseau for a Spartan, some version of antiquity. Yet he is not that.

What one finds in Rousseau is perhaps the most original development among Enlightenment philosophers. Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke are mostly arguing against something: against the supposed moral ignorance of the demos, the majority. Rousseau however has more positive content than negative merely: he has a vision of the human being, and it even appears to be an ambitious one at first glance. Machiavelli and Hobbes are dismissive of human potentiality, human capacity: Machiavelli famously insists that 'all men are bad', and that they must be regarded as bad by philosophical founders no matter what they in fact think and do. Hobbes likewise represents his natural man as a lawless beast of prey. The state of nature for Hobbes is a state of war, 'nasty, poor, brutish and short'. Men must surrender what they *really* are at the gateway to civil science, for Hobbes and Machiavelli too.

Rousseau however celebrates human nature, or at least his own version of it. Human beings, in Rousseau's eyes, are good. They are not evil. In the natural state, Rousseau argues, men are animated by only one passion really, which is a sense of pity for all suffering beings. Man for Rousseau is essentially a suffering being. Rousseau promises that the human being will always know more pain and suffering in life than he will know of happiness. 'The fate of man is to suffer at all times' (48). 'Always more suffering than enjoyment: this relation between the two is common to all men' (80).<sup>1</sup> The struggle of human life, for Rousseau, concerns this disproportion between suffering and human existence. Man suffers, for Rousseau, because his desires exceed his powers.

Rousseau could be lifting his moral theory directly from Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*. In *the Discourses*, Machiavelli twice provides us with the metaphysics of human moral emotions. 'Besides this, human appetites are insatiable, for since from nature they have the ability and the wish to desire all things and from fortune the ability to achieve few of them, there continually arises from this a discontent in human minds and a disgust with the things they possess.'<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli actually knows, and admits, that this is the personality profile of very few, namely his candidates for the office of new prince. For those 'chosen' few, life will be a relentless state of war, unto more war, all imbedded in this *pointless* calculus. It is clear that Machiavelli absolutely cannot bear for anyone in his new republic to be insulated from this morality. Nobody shall be permitted to enjoy the realm of goods that

Machiavelli has proscribed as impossible to obtain. Among these are all of the things that Rousseau banishes from the life of his *Emile*.

Rousseau does shift Machiavelli's theory partially. Rousseau claims that it is not human nature that desires endless goods, but that human society is coeval with a desire to be recognized as preeminent, which in turn leads to the Machiavellian dynamic.

Rousseau blames civilization for bringing about this reversal of the natural estate. In nature, man does not aspire. He does not reflect or think. He lives in the moment, like other animals do. It is civilization that enlarges man's mind and breathes fire into his imagination. It is especially the opinions of others, and one's dependence upon the opinion of others, which for Rousseau cause the human being to aspire to things that exceed his powers. Rousseau however is no romantic. He does not by any stretch of the imagination seek to lead human beings back towards the alleged natural state. He wants to change the way that human beings live in the civilized state, and in this he is one with the Enlightenment tradition.

It is necessary to remind the reader of the views of those philosophers who are out of favor among the Enlightenment crowd, Plato and Aristotle. Rousseau says nice things about Plato, but this is misleading. Rousseau talks about Plato's educational philosophy in the *Republic*, as if the latter was kindred spirit to Jean Jacques. It is not so. Both philosophers claim to begin with human beings as they are in nature, but what they recognize in the natural characters, and the qualities that they emphasize for human happiness, could not be more opposed.

For Rousseau, the human being is a loner. He is not desperate in this condition. Nature is generous enough to human beings to actually enable him to live without labor. He can pick fruit off the vine, he can drink from the brook. His needs are very modest in nature, Rousseau argues, and he is even a vegetarian by original disposition. It requires some process of brutalization to make of man a carnivore in his view. Nor does man in the natural estate really require someone to love. He is not a social being, much less a political being. In this aspect Rousseau is like Hobbes. Hobbes argues that the human beings for whom he wishes to found his civil science should be thought to grow out of the ground like mushrooms, not even to have the rudiments of a family involved in their coming into being.

In Rousseau's analysis, man is happy in his natural estate. He does not think. 'His soul, which nothing stirs, yields itself the sole sentiment of its present existence, with no idea of the future, however near it may be.'<sup>3</sup> Aristotle's observation that it is the mark of the human being to 'want to know', vanishes in Rousseau's anthropology. The mental processes of the human being in Rousseau's state of nature are strictly bound by utility. If he has a practical problem, like how to obtain his dinner, he can set his mind to thinking about it. When he obtains his dinner, he may even forget what he

has learned. He is back to his natural self, sated. As we have indicated, Rousseau points to suffering as the distinctive human attribute. The other species of animals do not possess this degree of self-awareness. The human being, however, for Rousseau, must trace the arc of her pleasure in the degree to which she exercises personal control over the satisfaction of her needs. The natural savage for Rousseau has very modest needs, and Rousseau is all for keeping these needs to a minimum. It is only association with other human beings that will expand human appetites, in Rousseau's opinion. Therefore, it must be the goal of education to oversee this mixture of the private with the public. The public must not be enabled to interfere with the individual's essential freedom to minister to his own needs. Rousseau's educational model is designed to shield the socialized human being from the opinions of the majority. It is the role of the educator that showcases Rousseau's affinity for Locke

While we are talking about this indictment that Rousseau brings against civilization as it exists, we should note a distinction. There is indeed a sense in which competitiveness makes human beings strive for more acquisition. In society, where people may measure their possessions against the possessions of others, it is reasonable to say that the human being is forced to strive to keep up in order to save his reputation. However, I do not think that this is at all what Rousseau is worried about. This is not the dimension of public opinion which Rousseau regards as a mortal threat to his Emile. In fact a good case can be made that Rousseau expects Emile to be a grand competitor in the social race for power. No, the true influence of society that Rousseau despises and seeks to combat, is the moral expectations that ordinary praise and blame exert on the individual. Rousseau is the man who left several children to be raised by orphanages. His *Confessions* are a shameless recitation of the life record of perversity that he has engaged in, and which he himself admires. It is because society seeks to make man bend the knee before moral duties which he does not make for himself, that Rousseau rebels. We have already examined Kant enough to savor the sound of that sentence: for Kant, man refuses to allow that anything can be known which the thinker himself has not *made* and been the author of. Rousseau is brandishing this argument in the moral sphere, in a new style more than anything. It is the very warp and woof of Kant's 'autonomy' that Rousseau fights for. We will examine this in more detail in the chapters below.

For both Plato and Aristotle, man's suffering is not a spiritual fate. In other words, it is a social condition. Man's suffering is linked, not to his lack of control over the means to exist, but to injustice. Plato and Aristotle dispute Rousseau's point of view that the human being in the undeveloped social state is self-sufficient. To the contrary. Society is born from the division of labor for the Greeks, and it is through the division of labor that the human first of all approaches a condition of peacefulness and satiety.<sup>4</sup> In Plato's

view, an agricultural society can essentially furnish all of human needs. The people in Plato's early or natural city are not more needy than Rousseau's savages. They will need clothing, shelter, food, and not even a police force. Where there is no wealth to speak of, where everybody is in the condition of needing the cooperation of everyone else simply to get by, there will be no crime.

The point to focus on is the dual presentations of human *nature*. Rousseau regards the human's most essential attribute to be needy suffering. This is his tutor for all time. He must calibrate his feelings and his thoughts so that his needs never outrun his powers. So long as there is a surplus of powers, he will not be in pain. But wherever his needs outstrip his powers, there is misery. Society is not a natural destination of man for Rousseau, any more than it is the natural place for Hobbes's man. Hobbes's man never entirely relinquishes his 'natural right', that moral ethos through which he is a law unto himself. If ever the state should turn against this preservation, even in order to punish him for capital murder, the Hobbesian man reverts back to this individualistic morality from the state of nature. He has the moral right to kill the sovereign's guards, who would otherwise lead him to the gallows. The morals of Hobbesian man are flimsy. They rest upon 'convention', i.e. artificiality. They have Epicurean roots.

The distinction between Socratic political philosophy and the political philosophy of the modern Epicureans can be reduced to the distinction between 'right' and 'justice'. Justice, as Aristotle argues, is a virtue that requires two people in order to exist. There is mutual dependence, as each depends upon the other to practice justice towards him. For Aristotle, justice is the foundation of human civilization. It is not achieved first in time; but for Aristotle justice is still the imperative of first rank for human nature and happiness. 'For this reason justice, alone among the goods, is thought to be another's good, because it is related to the others..' <sup>5</sup> Justice recognizes interdependence as the first fact. How human beings exchange, the proper terms of respect, these become the decisive aspects of communal life in Aristotle's theory. The theory of justice spans the distance between original need and excellence: between an original division of labor and a society that aspires to standards of beauty, courage, happiness. For Aristotle this higher register of social goals is entirely dependent upon the recognition that man is meant for politics: that he is meant to be a communal being.

The philosophy of 'right' formalized by Hobbes eviscerates Aristotle's theory across the board. The philosophy of the right of nature, or natural right (and we are speaking of its modern incarnation now)—regards the individual as both spiritually and economically in rivalrous relations with the others. In Hobbesian terms, the individual who climbs to the top of the competitive economic pyramid is by definition the most honorable, if he be in fact the most powerful. Hobbes repudiates justice as defined ordinarily; just as

Hobbes repudiates courage, preferring cunning; and just as Hobbes regards temperance as imbecility. There is no wisdom strictly speaking in Hobbes's theory, but it is not often understood that Hobbes's philosophy is designed for the power maximizer, not the conservative everyman. The conservative everyman is not capable of this degree of emotional detachment from the others; he would regard it as perverse and shameful. Hobbes's philosophy is designed for a new edition of Machiavelli's 'new prince', the type of individual who seeks for power over others, not so much to lead them, as to render them his servants.

That which is obtained for the Hobbesian individual in the new state of 'right', is limited to that individual resentment, to that tiny aspect of defense from the sovereign power which he cannot furnish to himself. Otherwise, even inside the Leviathan state, Hobbes enumerates a roster of perverted virtues. Selfishness saturates them all, and it is a lengthy list. We behold in Hobbes' roster of virtues the delinquency of a civilization: the banishment of all that is truly common, the very possibility of justice correctly understood, as well as excellence and beauty in public life.

The philosophy of 'right' recognizes the individual as the social atom. Society is artificial, from this very Epicurean point of view. Hobbesian man surrenders to the society only what is extorted from him by terror. The only bond of sociality that Hobbes's state allows for is submission to the sovereign for purposes of safety. Beyond that aspect, the Hobbesian individual remains an asocial animal. The silent but deafening noise in Hobbes's philosophy is the eclipse of culture: against the expectations and assumptions that the generality of the human race bring to their interactions, the truly Hobbesian individual brings rigorous and formal detachment. Voluntary contract for such an individual is quite easily converted into an instrument of subjugation. In Hobbesian society, since justice is defined simply as contractual relations, there is no higher court to appeal to. There is not even a higher intelligence to appeal to in Hobbesian philosophy.

For both Aristotle and Plato, in their respective anthropologies, the division of labor is the consecration of justice in its natural estate. People need one another as a condition for living at all. The Enlightenment denies this argument. For Hobbes, for Locke, and for Rousseau, civilization is chosen out of a kind of compulsion that is *moral*. Hobbes and Locke seek civil society because conflict, not need writ large, dominates the natural state. Moral corruption, in other words, rather than human need, is the cause of civilization for the moderns. For Plato and Aristotle nobody can speak of any kind of human life absent his dependence upon the others; and therefore his dependence upon the others is part and parcel of his *nature*.

It makes a great deal of difference how the arguments are constructed. When Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau all argue that the human being in the pre-civil state is violent and barbarous, it indicates that natural human moral-

ity is barbarous. Therefore civilization must denature the human being, strip her of her emotional and psychological coordinates, and subject her to conditioning in the new set of institutions. By defining society itself, civil society, as an involuntary necessity, as a necessary evil, the guns of philosophy are trained upon human nature itself as the obstacle to civilization. Yet the modern argument is false. Human beings are interdependent, and that need exists in the pre-civil state. In the models of Plato and Aristotle, therefore, the popular morality furnishes guidelines for what morality shall be in the state, not the negative version of what the state seeks to achieve.

### ROUSSEAU'S EMILE

When Rousseau writes his educational treatise, he begins with his characteristic natural man. The child, or rather the infant for Rousseau, must be removed from parental authority instantaneously, or all is lost. Rousseau's tutor must obtain full rights over the infant, beginning with the very swaddling and feeding of the days-old being. Rousseau shines a light on Emile's emergence into the world. Emile is crying because he is in pain.

Plato's *Republic* is truly an educational treatise. Plato, like Rousseau, is commending an educational regimen for leaders. For Emile is going to be the strongest member of his society, beginning at the level of childhood. Plato does not claim to be able to know whom to educate when human beings are in their condition of infancy. For Rousseau, by contrast, education *makes* the strong person. For Plato, *nature* makes the strong individual. For Rousseau, the strong man is the one who properly balances his needs with his powers. He is the one who ensures that he never desires more than he needs, or has the power to obtain. Plato's guardian, however, is far from being characterized by his *personal needs*. The quality of Plato's students, and he unlike Rousseau does not privilege males over females—is the allegiance to *truth*.<sup>6</sup>

Plato's ideal leaders are therefore not made by education. They are perfected by education but they are made by nature. Rousseau's strong man is only defined by nature insofar as he is *needy*. For Rousseau, the strong man and the well-educated child will never lose sight of their own personal balance sheets of powers and needs. Rousseau's selected child for the educational project is diverted from all public opinion in his learning. He is forever pointed to *his pain*, and towards this end authority in Rousseau's educational project simply becomes invisible.

The Platonic leaders in waiting select themselves by their natures, which absolutely refuse to be seduced or intimidated into cheating. They feel contempt for such fraud, and this is rooted in the actual human interdependence which is nobody's choice, but everybody's fate. Truth is common for Plato, but for the Enlightenment philosophers it is bound to the individual. Society

will never have the power to compel the individual to submit himself to a truth that he has not fashioned out of his own pain and efforts to overcome it.

### ROUSSEAU'S EDUCATOR

Both Rousseau and Locke urge the importance of physical education for the pupil. The body must grow strong in order for the youth to be healthy. Plato is in agreement with this for his guardian class. They divide their time between gymnastics and the study of geometry and philosophy. However, the educational environment of the two larger philosophical traditions could not be more different. For Plato, the subject matter is common. Perception knows the images in the perishable objects, and these are the things that sound and sight make most intelligible. The teacher appeals to the common evidence, but there is no invisibility in the case of the teacher. The teacher is bound by the common evidence, which makes the students in an important way the witnesses and judges of his proofs. This is not possible in Rousseau's model.

From a very early age, well before puberty, Rousseau's educator seeks to make an environment where the child is unaware of the educator's presence and design. Rousseau does not want to teach the student about external objects *per se*. Rousseau wants to teach the student about his relationship to objects, about his relative power *vis a vis* those objects and his ability to make those objects serve his ends. The very first relationship that is involved in Rousseau's education, as is the case for Locke, is that between the philosophic tutor and the child. It is to be a contest of strength, and wills. The educator must dominate the will of the child. There is absolutely nothing in the educational strategies of either Plato or Aristotle, not even the myth of the metals, which comes anywhere near this relationship of coercion.

When the child cries, for Rousseau, it is an attempt of the child to bend the will of the teacher. The teacher must instruct the wailing infant that he, the tutor, is in charge. The baby will be left to cry. The baby must be made to learn that its will cannot overcome the power of the tutor's. When the baby learns that its cries will be unanswered, it will eventually grow quiet. The infant, much like in the later versions of Rousseau's educational project, will be directly acquainted with the facts of *power*. 'The first tears of children are prayers. If one is not careful, they become orders.' 'The more he screams, the less you should listen to him.'<sup>7</sup> If he wants something from the stronger force, upon which by nature he depends (the caregiver) then the infant must please the caregiver, the stronger force. When the baby grows quiet, Rousseau indicates, the tutor should immediately run over to the child and minister to his needs.

This relationship between the teacher and the student is vastly important, for it discloses the manner in which authority, in its Enlightenment varia-



tions, becomes invisible. When the caregiver refuses to respond to the child's natural need, when the caregiver regards the child's natural need as *willful*, the whole of Rousseau's educational project is present in seed. The child must learn that obtaining anything is a function of paying a price. Rousseau's tutor's ignoring of the child's need, is a philosophically premeditated form of education that consecrates the individual's independence from others as its core teaching. Rousseau insists that the child will mistake the tutor's domination, for his own choice. When the baby grows quiet, and the tutor comes running, the baby will instinctively think that this is in its power to compel the attention. Yet in fact, as Rousseau observes, the infant is strictly in subservience to the will of the educational authority. 'Let him know only that he is weak and you are strong, that by his condition and yours he is necessarily at your mercy.'<sup>8</sup>

There is doubtless some degree of willfulness that emerges in a baby's wailing. Yet it would be absurd to suggest that this is the *origin* of the wailing. Natural need is the origin of the pain. The baby's helplessness is also cause of the defect of power. It is by nature, not by choice, that the infant suffers. Yet Rousseau wants to educate even the infant in the ways of the world: the need will be met not because it is a need, but because one *pleases somebody*. In this case, the educator is the one pleased. Yet it is Rousseau's intention that the growing child will not be aware of the educational design in this arrangement. The child must believe that it is him alone against the world, of necessity; and that anything he wants, he must rely, not upon cooperation, or good faith, or even exchange, but his own power. The impulse of Machiavelli's new prince is redrawn in Rousseau's educational treatise but it is operative. Rousseau wants the child to experience the world as a power exchange, as consisting simply in his needs and desires on the one hand, and the recalcitrant world on the other. Resistance is the educational experience that Rousseau wants to drive home even to the week-old infant. In order to get any needs met, he must surrender his dignity. To be sure, it is hard to say this of a wailing infant, but it is less difficult to say of the child of six or seven. Rousseau's tutor is radically inflexible. This educational philosophy seeks to pass itself off *as if it were nature*. Yet it is not nature. Cooperation and the need for cooperation is nature.

The great attractiveness of Epicurus' atoms is precisely this: that they deny that any two human beings can ever experience precisely the same set of facts. This highly technical philosophy ensures *moral* separation between the two people. One individual cannot say to the other, that the facts are thus and so, and accordingly you should do thus and so. When the facts are embargoed in a theory of perception (like the one on display in Kant's *First Critique*, which would make even Rousseau blush), the one individual must begin to appeal to the preferences of the other individual. He must please him in some way in order to obtain cooperation. Thus the cardinal issue of the

Enlightenment really concerns the state of nature situation. Is it cooperation mandated by nature, and facts; or is it the story of naturally self-sufficient individuals, or individuals en route to being self-sufficient, asserting right, who learn how to treat the rest of society as mere potential opposition, to be seduced or conquered?

### ROUSSEAU ON PROPERTY

When little Emile is still well shy of puberty, it's time to teach him about property. Rousseau, the tutor, arranges the entire experience. The little halfling is unaware of this. Rousseau inspires in the child the desire to plant a small garden. The planting shall involve beans. Rousseau ushers the child towards a spot of earth, and the two together do the planting, the child doing most of the work. After a week's time or so, the tutor and the child return to the plot, and find that the bean seeds have been dug up. A farmer appears, who has been coached by the tutor.

The farmer explains to the child that he had planted melon seeds in the plot first. He was the first occupant. He has mixed his labor with the soil. Rousseau is the one who has arranged for the child to plant in this location; and the farmer has been instructed in what he is to say. The child is to learn that he has no right to the land in question, because someone else has gotten there first. If the child wants to plant the bean seeds, he must ask the farmer's permission. This experience humiliates the child; but again, all of the relevant facts are kept secret from him. The tutor has wanted him to have this experience of injustice, so that he learns certain terms of justice. The issue is one of power. The farmer is older and stronger and knows how to argue in favor of his possession. The farmer has laws to back him up. Again, the world resists, and this is a child who has not yet reached puberty. The child will be desperate to avert such resistance in the future; he will be resolved, in other words, *not to have his will thwarted*. This is all that justice involves for Rousseau. It is an artificial thing.

Plato would not have arranged this humiliation of the child. Plato would not have wanted to impress upon the child that it is all about *him*. Plato would have let the child observe the farmer working the fields hard and sweating, putting in his melon seeds, before any discussion of planting the beans was in the offing. Plato would arrange it so that the child sees the labor and pain that the farmer experienced, well before any discussion of planting takes place. Yet again, Rousseau's educator hides behind the veil. He has arranged events, and the outcome of the events is quite like the situation with the infant wailing in his crib. In order to plant his beans, Rousseau makes it appear, the child possesses it within his power to bring about the satisfaction of his will, not to participate in a cooperative justice. By asking the farmer

for a favor (Rousseau speaks for the child here, setting the direction), it is just like the infant in his crib who has not obtained anything by crying. Yet it is Rousseau's intention that the child's mind will focus on nothing but his own pain and suffering. He is deprived of any insight into that of the farmer. The teaching is about the individualistic child, when he may assert his will and when he must bend the wills of others. There is no sense of commonality, because in Rousseau's modern Epicurean point of view, the human being is essentially solitary by nature, and his power therefore rather than his relationship to others is the decisive thing.

## ADOLESCENCE

It is on the subject of adolescence where Rousseau becomes conspicuous for what he is, beyond a doubt. Yet there are a couple of things that should be observed at this point. All of the anthropologies of the Machiavellian era (that of Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume and now Rousseau) are *political* anthropologies. This is to say that the philosopher envisions 'digging in' and helping to shape, or even outright forming various stages of human development in society. Machiavelli enshrined the new virtue of self-preservation in Western culture. Machiavelli at least introduced the new conception with dryness and a touch of embarrassment. He provides excuses for it. Not Rousseau. For Rousseau, it is a holy and proud thing. 'O man, draw your existence up within yourself and you will no longer be miserable.'<sup>9</sup>

One must observe that Rousseau's tutor is certainly subject to the anthropology that he is setting forth. In other words, there is no more fervent or devout believer in Rousseau's anthropology than Rousseau. Since preservation, 'love of self', is regarded by Rousseau as the true great and all-purpose tributary for all human passions and emotions, this must be guiding Emile's tutor. Certainly it is.

Rousseau is absolutely terrified of his emotions. He is equally anxious about mere reading materials for his student. Rousseau mistrusts language, speech as a vehicle for that which he regards as thought. For Rousseau, there is only one question that his pupil should ever ask himself when he is presented with a subject matter or a teaching: 'what is this good for?' 'What shall I do with this?' "Why should I care about this?" Emile's tutor has disguised himself in the educational treatise, before the pupil, a fact that Rousseau candidly admits. This indicates, of course, that the tutor is governed by his own self-love, at least from Rousseau's point of view. Any education that the tutor imparts to Emile, must serve the self-love of the tutor in one way or another. This concealment of authority in the supposedly neutral educational process has stark intimations for the future of Western culture. Rousseau never doubts for a moment the degree to which his philos-

ophy can actually serve to shape and even cause lives to be what they become. As the educational language is rendered obscure, and because the pre-adolescent receives the brunt of the educational training, the seeds for irresistible authority are certainly being laid here in Rousseau's educational model.

Rousseau's student, as we have indicated, does not know the difference between a mere fact of nature, and that production of the tutor's designs which is a mere equation of philosophy to elicit and shape his emotions. Rousseau absolutely prides himself on formulating the world as the child shall experience it: and that child will experience overwhelming resistance; and this will cause what Rousseau wants it to cause, a burrowing deep within the self, a mustering of a stronger will for the purpose of surmounting the wills of other people. Rousseau frankly states, and it follows from his state of nature, that in society, one man's gain is another man's loss. Self-preservation, Rousseau has decided, is not only nature, it is glorious nature: it encompasses not only human need but human excellence, even the farthest reaches of the human heart. Yet this education will not fall to the youth by accident. Rousseau, or his social agencies, must put it there.

Plato's Socrates would be the first to admit that philosophers do not know facts any better than the non-philosophers do. Plato's Socrates would be even more emphatic to state that philosophers do not know the human register of emotions any better than the commonweal. Yet Rousseau presumes to speak for all. Allegedly, love is ultimately love of self. 'Our first duties are to ourselves; our primary sentiments are centered on ourselves; all our natural movements relate in the first instance to our preservation and our well being.'<sup>10</sup> There is no other reservoir of emotion in Rousseau. He has taken pains to see to it that the child under his care has no alternative but to experience the same thing. Other people are obstacles, in Rousseau's anthropology. The solitary soul is self-sufficient for happiness. Love is just a derivation from self-love, in Rousseau's view. 'The precept of never hurting another comes with it that of being attached to human society as little as possible, for in the social state the good of one is necessarily the harm of another.'<sup>11</sup>

Up until the age of adolescence, Rousseau's educational program has kept the child as isolated as possible, in order to formulate the groundwork for his morality. From the very cradle, he has been christened in the fires of a combat of wills, in which he always loses to the tutor. Therefore he experiences the representations made by the tutor as simply the facts of life. Yet in adolescence, the emergence of human passion in massive proportions is set to erupt. Rousseau prepares for it as if for a war. The passions will lead his Emile in one way: Rousseau's education must be even more powerful to counterbalance those tendencies, to lead Emile in the opposite direction. Adolescence brings with it explosive dimensions of feeling and a deep need to relate to others. This would be fatal for Rousseau's empire of self-preser-

vation. Emile's emotional rendezvous with others must be organized by the tutor in such a way that it repulses him, or makes him withdraw back into himself.

Anyone who is reading this book knows what it is or has been to be an adolescent. It truly is a revolutionary time. In addition to the emergence of sexual emotions, whole new wells of feeling and sensitivity arise. Rousseau refers to it as a second birth.<sup>12</sup> The first birth was for the sake of existence; the second birth is for the sake of the soul. Truly, what really occurs in adolescence is the emergence of the *political animal*. At no other age are the canons of character so ruthlessly enforced between peers. Above all else, the individual needs to be known for who he is. He needs to separate himself from the crowd, and bring forth those aspects of his character which are most preeminently his. The opinions that his peers hold over him possess unrivaled power. At this stage of life, even the influence of the parents easily takes a second seat to the influence of the peer group.

It is clear that in adolescence, the pupil, the individual, has new needs to be loved. He also has a need *to* love. Rousseau regards these passions as a poison. For in affection, in love that is not self-love, the individual will be pulled out of himself, exposed to the obligations and risks which will thwart his dominion over his own needs. He will not be in control. He will not be the master of his own emotional life. Rousseau cannot bear for this to happen to his Emile. Therefore Emile must be introduced to the rest of the human race through the tutor's eyes. Emile must be met with revulsion. He must be led to the abysses of misery and suffering that can be found in the human community, and force-fed this steady diet of despair and terror. Rousseau means to drill it home into his Emile, that this could easily be his fate. 'It follows, therefore, that in order to incline a young man to humanity, far from making him admire the brilliant lot of others, one must show him the sad sides of that lot, one must make him fear it.'<sup>13</sup> The direction of Rousseau's teaching is to indicate to the pupil that if he is as stupid as the others, it will be his fate.

In the experience of adolescence, pity is almost a lethal form of aggression. It enacts inequality of the most radical sort: for the pitied one is excluded from the domain of *respect*. In a less warped, less perverted anthropology of adolescence, respect would be recognized as that for which human beings truly strive by nature. This is not something that they can control by themselves, or anything that they can give to themselves. No, they must earn it by being worthy of it, by being brave, by being true, by being loving, by being honest. Yet Emile is destined to have his whole moral personality tilted toward the passion of pity: this will keep him at a distance from the rest of the human community. It will prefigure any feelings that he might have for the others. Pity will keep the distance that will enable him to cultivate self-love first of all, and to dismiss any other emotion as mere disguised self-love. Rousseau does not care why he is loved. He may be loved as easily by a

murderer or a swindler as by some decent person. For Rousseau all lovers are indiscriminately one. They serve one purpose, to reinforce the self-love of the one beloved.

### AMOUR PROPRE

The fact of the matter is that for all but a very few philosophers, Rousseau's psychological anthropology is a recipe for an entirely meaningless and use-less life. It involves the massacre of everything true, the conduct of perennial war against everything that is emotionally real, and a true opposition to human nature correctly understood. One finds nothing remotely like Rousseau's attention to the emotional life of the young in either Plato or Aristotle. Plato never for a moment could conceive of such a thing, and he is not attempting to organize a political society by administering human passions anyway. This is the Enlightenment project however, in a nutshell. Never will the human being have time alone to feel what he would. Always feelings will be conjured up in him by searing educational campaigns, which occupy and distract his limited emotional resources until he feels nothing at all. This is the way Rousseau proposes to navigate the revolution of adolescence: by destroying it, by infiltrating and poisoning it.

Rousseau prefigures Kant in his tendency to formulate new names for all of his ideas. 'Love' will not do, to characterize how one human being feels for another in Rousseau's anthropology. No, love must be placed in a new taxonomy, which subordinates it to the self-love which is both nature and virtue for Rousseau. It makes a great deal of sense that Rousseau ended up his life a tormented man, given the way he sought to order his own emotional and psychological life. Bereft of any reality, what else is there but turbulence. In any event, the redefinition of love on Rousseau's terms is 'amour propre'. In this configuration, the individual's very love is supposedly revealed as a vicious fraud. For what the individual allegedly does, when he loves, is seek to make the other person love him. The other person, by the lights of Rousseau's anthropology, is committed to his own nature, his own 'virtue', his own self-preservation and self-love. Therefore, the way is clear for the permanent conflict between individuals in society, in accordance with the new mantra. Anybody who loves commits a moral crime against the one beloved, in Rousseau's view, asking the other to do what that person cannot ever possibly do. When a person loves another, he demands that that other love him, more than that person loves himself. 'Self-love, which regards only ourselves, is contented when our true needs are satisfied. But amour propre, which makes comparisons, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, preferring itself to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves, which is impossible.'<sup>14</sup> Rousseau's individual both insists on

loving himself more than any other, and that other individuals shall love him above themselves. This is indeed a tyrant's disposition, but it is false to suggest that love is properly self-love.

When a human being loves another person, he loves another person. No doubt, there is a fraught balance of love that must obtain between individuals. What individuals demand in love is *equality*. To love another person more than that other person loves oneself, would be quite humiliating if it were to become obvious. Such an exposed inequality of love may well wreck a relationship. Yet it will not wreck the love itself. For the individual does not love another for selfish purposes. Real love is not Eros. Eros is the possessive desire which is quite distinct from true love. True love does not try to dissolve oneself into another person. It preserves the distinction between souls. If there is to be commitment, it must be equally chosen. If a commitment is so equally chosen, it will be immensely strong. What Rousseau describes is not love, but vanity. An individual who values himself first above all others, even in relationships, is a mutilated human being. Rousseau does not see it that way.

The education in the feeling of pity that Rousseau imposes on his young charge prefigures another new development: the combination of the intimate with the most anonymous and large scale. Pity is something that can be felt on a very large scale. All one needs to see is people suffering, in order to coax out of our person the charge to pity. By confronting the individual with endless images of countless people from all corners of the earth suffering one thing or another, pity can be mobilized to churn up all available human sentiment. In this way, the natural logic of the emotions, which settles on one most powerful individual rather than on the indiscriminate many, can be suffocated and discouraged.

Rousseau now proceeds more directly to discuss the way Emile, his ideal student, will be trained to approach people in society. Though Emile has been trained in such a way as to exclude all feeling for others up until this point; and though he himself has been trained to regard self-preservation as his first and ultimate duty, we have seen that Rousseau greatly worries at the outset of adolescence that all of the teacher's work will be undone.

Rousseau will strive to make the child understand that the tutor alone knows the truth: that the love Emile feels for others, is only love for himself redirected. He wants the other to love him the same way that he loves himself. *Amour propre* indicates this phenomenon of comparing oneself with others. Rousseau sternly rebukes his student as to any kind of individual he may admire: a leader, a general, a teacher. Direct, interpersonal admiration would draw the youth out of himself, and jeopardize his ratio of power to need. He must remain in his psychological tower, which Rousseau has the temerity to denominate 'liberty'. One's entire personality sculpted by a deluded misanthrope hardly sounds like an approximation to liberty. The whole

world is a liar for Rousseau, and all governments are unjust. ‘The universal spirit of the laws of every country is always to favor the strong against the weak, and those who have against those who have not. This difficulty is inevitable and it is without exception.’<sup>15</sup> Allegedly, this is simply the way things are and the way things must always be. ‘The multitude will always be sacrificed to the few, and the public interest to the private interest. . . . From this it follows that the distinguished orders who claim that they are useful to others are actually only useful to themselves at the expense of their subordinates.’<sup>16</sup> There is therefore no justification for feeling *really* for the suffering of others. Behind the ramparts of pity, the safe distance of superiority, Rousseau’s student is privileged to be able to look at the suffering of others as *an opportunity*.

An opportunity for what? This is the question that we must ask. First of all, Rousseau makes it very clear that the tutor must absolutely prohibit that the youth find himself deeply affected by the circumstance of any *particular* individual. Again, this would raise the specter of actual love and empathy, which would in turn expose the youth to vulnerability, which in Rousseau’s moral canon is forbidden. The tutor must lead the way. Emile must be instructed to enlarge the object of his pity, until it is so large that there is no possible chance that he will ever *identify* personally with the condition of another human being, or come to care directly about another. Therefore Emile must be made to feel his pity for ‘the species’, in the abstract, and then even unto other species, but never for any specific individuals for particular reasons. ‘For the sake of reason, for the sake of love of ourselves, we must have pity for the species still more than for our neighbor.’<sup>17</sup>

Who better to appoint himself the representative of the suffering people than this student of Rousseau? The purpose of teaching Emile about the ins and outs of society is to enable him to make use of other people for his own purposes. By singing the song of the oppressed, while carefully excluding his own self from that number spiritually, he can elevate himself to a very prominent role in society if he so desires. Yet if he cannot, there is no harm done. For he did not really care about any member of society to begin with. His whole preparation in the philosophy of pity has been to protect his own self-preservation, his ultimate and sovereign gospel, his only real conception of virtue.

One can certainly imagine the celebration of intercontinental governments, such as the ones that Kant will propose, from Rousseau’s point of view. There is no risk of overextending the human beings who are educated in the way that Rousseau is educated, for they are shielded from direct emotional involvement with the others precisely by this formulation of feeling as pity to begin with. That was its purpose. To articulate the interests of ever larger and ever broader categories of human beings, in ever larger geographic proportions, is the most effective means of concealing his actual



agenda inside of the rhetoric of compassion for others. When Kant argues that government needs to approach global proportions, thus causing the human individual to disappear psychologically, this is the perfect remedy against the dreaded prospect of intimacy. One cannot love millions. One cannot really love hundreds. One can at last only love individuals, and this is why the modern Epicurean forms of government prefer vast size. Contrary to what Allan Bloom has argued, Rousseau regards a rising population as the first indicator of a healthy state.

The whole general Economy relates to a final object which is the effect and the proof of a good administration; this object relative to the general good of the human species is the multiplication of people, the inevitable consequence of its prosperity. Do you want to know whether a state is well or badly governed? Examine whether the number of its inhabitants is increasing or diminishing. All other things being equal, it is evident that the country which—due allowance being made—nourishes and preserves a greater number of inhabitants is the one in which they are best off.<sup>18</sup>

## ROUSSEAU ON JUDGMENT

Rousseau has some unpleasant things to say about Locke's epistemology, but the one Rousseau finally emphasizes seems to be quite in line with Locke. On the first level is sense perception, which really must be called 'sensation' for Rousseau. These sensations would conform to the simple ideas of Locke. The sensations of Rousseau are linked directly to particular sense organs, divided from any combination such as a conscious soul would allow for. The mind, for Rousseau, stands back at a distance from its experiences in this way; and like Kant, Rousseau denies that any judgment is taking place on the level of perception.<sup>19</sup>

Judgment for Rousseau follows Locke again, in attempting to establish the fact that comparison is what the mind does, between different objects. How the mind can compare any two objects, before it knows what either object *is*, remains a mystery. Rousseau, in his example, refers to two sticks. Yet to identify either object alone as a stick *is* a judgment. Rousseau simply brushes past the obvious problems with his theory.

The rhetorical impulse behind Rousseau's theory of judgment is not far to seek. Rousseau is a great rhetorician, and comparison is very much what he transacts in his arguments. He can choose the basis of comparison for any object, and in his choices, through his choices, he can radically alter the emotions of the percipient. Let us say that we are talking about man and what he is. Let us say that we are talking about the happy man and what he is. Provide Rousseau with any example of any individual of a certain profession or rank or temperament, and he will subject the person to a comparison

which suggests the misery of that person. If one points to the common people, for example, and their idea of happiness, Rousseau cannot rest himself until he has compared the ordinary opinions to every scandalous sort of ignorance and disgrace.

The issue of perception remains a huge part in the Enlightenment anthropologies. The problem for Rousseau is ordinary opinion much more than it is the opinions of other philosophers. For it is the ordinary opinions that will keep popping up in Emile himself, and Rousseau must expend all of his energies as a tutor burning these opinions out of his charge. Rousseau does not worry about reforming the opinions of the majority of the people; rather he must combat them for the sake of the enlightened. Pity is the form of skillful aggression that will keep a distance between Emile and his peers. By pitying them, Emile both enforces his own conception of superiority, and keeps the common world at a distance.

When it comes to evaluating governments and the like, Rousseau pretends to know that every government whatsoever that has ever been, or ever will be, consists in the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger. This is the argument of Thrasymachus, the sophist whom Plato so soundly defeats in the first book of his *Republic*. It is also the argument of Machiavelli. By proclaiming all governments corrupt, Rousseau again shields his student from the possibility of becoming engaged in the governing process along the lines of policy disputes. Rousseau's pupil must stand outside the entire political regime, in order to retain direct and perpetual access to his personal moral impulse of self-preservation. When Machiavelli argues that the people as well as the governors 'need' to be bad, regardless of what the facts may report, what he is really stating is that the new prince needs them to be bad in order to facilitate his own enterprise. To reduce pain, and to increase pleasure for a new prince, or a Rousseau as man of the people, is hardly in the interest of those people.

If the anthropology has burned away all moral virtues except for the sacred principle of self-preservation, if all other virtues are dismissed as derivative from the principle of self-preservation, this is the principle of the Enlightenment teaching, and the cause of the radical distance between the people and the new philosophers. For the people will never call selfishness justice. They will never fall for that 'comparison'.

## ROUSSEAU ON ROMANTIC LOVE

It is perfectly legitimate for Rousseau himself to believe that love is an illusion. He is certainly not the first human being to have settled on this point of view, and he will not be the last. Yet Rousseau presumes himself to be the educator of souls, to establish models of education that penetrate to the

deepest layers of feeling. The only thing that one must remark upon in reading Rousseau's *Emile* is that Emile doesn't exist. He is a paper-mache cutout. He doesn't have opinions, he doesn't have feelings that the tutor has not first incited in him. Rousseau's philosophy envisions a virtual colonization of the deepest human impulses. The boundary lines between Rousseau and his pupil are increasingly hard to detect, and this is because Rousseau is seeking to govern that pupil in such a way that the pupil thinks he is governing himself.

Rousseau is writing in the eighteenth century, long before the appearance of poison gas and concentration camps and world war. Rousseau is writing a long time before Marxism and Fascism, those forms of the obliteration of individuality with which we are most familiar. Yet the totalitarian impulse saturates Rousseau's writings. There is the constant isolation of the subject, the skillful penetration of his inmost thoughts and even imagination. Education for Rousseau is very much a kind of house of mirrors: Rousseau constructs the house in such a way as to create the desired effect in the pupil's feelings. Rousseau also segregates the child from emotional intimacy in any unsupervised setting. The child's entire attitude towards human beings is fashioned before he has had any unregulated interaction with them. At least this is the model of Rousseau's Emile.

How came Rousseau to know that love is meaningless? This is what Socrates would ask. Socrates would ask Rousseau, 'what is love?' This is one of the huge differences between Socrates and Rousseau. For Plato, ordinary opinion knows a part of the truth. It does not know the exact definition of the truth of a kind of object, but it knows the objects as individuals and particulars. For Rousseau, all ordinary opinion is condemned at the outset.

We have seen the way that Rousseau has chosen to introduce Emile to human society. Famously, Rousseau claims to have taught Emile what the human species is, before Emile has even had a chance to know specific individuals. Emile, Rousseau observes, does not esteem the human race. He has affection for it, but he does not esteem it. In other words, he does not respect it. 'Although in general Emile does not esteem men, he will not show contempt for them because he pities them and is touched by them.'<sup>20</sup> He has been conditioned to be immune to its opinions, i.e. to its powers of praise and blame. This is the Machiavellian generator in Rousseau's philosophy: when Machiavelli pretends to excuse himself from virtue as ordinarily understood, he does so under a profession of weakness. He claims that the world is 'too harsh' for such opinions as those of real virtue to survive. Yet what Machiavelli actually feels is superior to the ordinary opinion, and contemptuous of it. He despises the supposed fools who do believe in virtue, and Rousseau imitates Machiavelli in these views.

Rousseau, for his part, seeks to make romantic love and life in society coeval things for Emile. In other words, Rousseau advocates a disproportion-

ate amount of attention to romantic love. The reason is that romantic love is by far the easiest to invade through imagination. Rousseau decides to make up a fictitious person for Emile to fall in love with, whom he names ‘Sophie’ (evidently after a woman that Rousseau himself had loved). This imaginary woman will be linked by Rousseau with such lofty attributes as could never possibly be satisfied by any human being. This approach will lead Emile to a quest that will consume him, but which will ultimately disillusion him. He cannot be allowed to simply discover love for himself. Rousseau would not hear of this.

One would have to remind Rousseau that his definition of ‘nature’ as the impulse of self-preservation, as love of self, has no room for love of another. Rousseau predefines love of another as but another means to self-love. This harshly prejudices the issue, but it is hardly one upon which the human race can suffer to trust expert authority. Rousseau is anxious to control the experience of first love in order the better to be able to shape the direction of its ultimate profile in human culture.

The link between romantic love and society, for Rousseau, is fundamental. Self-love, formed in the child by Rousseau’s education at every turn, is wedded to a predetermined image of a lover that is so lofty and otherworldly that love will never possibly be attainable in relationships. In other words, it will not be able to pose a challenge to the self-love which Rousseau regards as the utter truth of nature.

## ROUSSEAU ON MEN AND WOMEN

In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau writes that men are ‘born free’, yet everywhere they are in chains. Rousseau means it very literally when he writes that human beings are ‘born free’. At birth, human beings are wholly concentrated on their own needs. This is truly the standard of nature to which Rousseau seeks to oblige the entire education of Emile. In education, in socializing, in every aspect of life, Rousseau’s tutor seeks to enforce it in the child’s mind that his needs are nature and reality for him, and nothing more.

It is not possible, at birth, to discern the qualities of soul that a human being will possess. Yet even in childhood, Plato believes, decisive qualities crystallize. Plato argues that men and women should share equal education, an argument that offends Rousseau mightily, as well it might. For Rousseau, since the law of self-preservation is regarded as nature, and nature’s furthest limit and ultimate principle, any development that threatens to subvert this orientation is regarded as radical evil. Knowledge is something Rousseau regards as radical evil. He is not a great proponent of students reading books any more than Locke is. Both of these thinkers, in the field of education, want to shape emotions and characters. They have no tolerance for characters

that would resist their teachings, and Plato's teaching about women violates Rousseau's conception of nature.

For Rousseau, the problem of education is keeping the child focused on his impulses of self-preservation, and digging this teaching into the psyche in as many ways as possible. Lots of rhetoric and fables are employed to attack any countervailing principles that might emerge in the youth's mind. This is Rousseau's goal: to shield the impulses of nature, of self-preservation, from the opinion of society that would corrupt that selfishness, if that is not a contradiction in terms.

Plato has a different problem. For Plato, the problem is *justice*. We have seen that Rousseau does his determined best to teach Emile a conception of justice that subordinates it to the principle of personal power (self-preservation). Yet justice is something that accentuates the sociality of human beings, their interdependence. These two principles cannot share the first rank. One must be subordinate to the other. For Plato, interdependence is the first principle, the truth of human beings; and therefore justice is the supreme virtue. For Rousseau, blocking the claims of all social institutions to govern one, or to force one out of one's mode of self-preservation, is the first principle. Plato and Rousseau are ultimate opponents. This is not something that Rousseau however will admit.

To the degree that justice is the supreme virtue, the capacity to subordinate personal desires and selfishness is the *first concern* of government. For all of the rumors as to 'How men really are', it is the modern educators of the Enlightenment who are driven to focus a tonnage of educational energy on the youth before he has even learned to read. They meet the unformed youth with all of their philosophical powers, charms, and speeches, dazzling, seducing and intimidating. Plato expends no energy on such enterprises. The quality he is interested in among the young is the fidelity to *truth*. Pleasure and pain are the great corrupters, for Plato, whereas for Rousseau they are the *only* teachers. Aristotle wrote that it is because of pleasure that men do wicked things, and because of pain that they abstain from doing noble things. It is Plato's observation that there is a kind of soul that possesses a stronger persuasion for truth: which is capable of resisting seduction, and warding off intimidators, to cling to truth. This is the nature that Plato wants to educate for leadership, and it is a nature equally extended to men and women.

Rousseau's hostility to Plato's theory of raising men and women in common, neglects to mention that Plato's special education is only for the governing class, a small fraction of society. Since the suppression of selfishness is absolutely imperative in the leadership group, Plato undertakes to construct institutions that will arrest and deflect selfish impulses at every turn. The private family, for the leadership group, happens to be one of those temptations to selfishness. Hence the guardians are a large family.

For Rousseau, since the moral principle to which he is devoted has nothing to do with justice, the genders must be regarded in terms of their different dispositions in the sensual realm. Rousseau's women are reservoirs of emotional energy, and Rousseau's men are quite deprived human beings when it comes to feeling. It is also necessary in Rousseau's eyes to accentuate the distinction between the sexes in order to deny that any true union of the two souls is possible. The union of two souls in love would shatter Rousseau's principle of self-preservation.

The model woman that Rousseau develops in his *Emile* is contrasted very vividly with the model of the male. This distinction is fateful and revealing. When a young male speaks, Rousseau's tutor utters the words: 'what is it good for?' 'This is now the sacred word, the decisive word between him and me in all the actions of our life. This is the question of mine which infallibly follows all his questions.'<sup>21</sup> When a young woman speaks, Rousseau's tutor utters different words: 'what effect will it have?' For the woman, the effect must be to please the male, to seduce him, to solicit his need with her taste, her pleasantness, and her joy. But for the male, his relationship to the woman is based on desire pure and simple. Need is not part of the equation for the male. 'Men depend on women because of their desires', Rousseau writes; 'women depend on men because of both their desires and their needs.'<sup>22</sup>

Rousseau makes the argument that women need and desire men, but that men only desire women, not *need* them. This is the discovery one makes when reading Rousseau: so deeply has he driven the stake of self-preservation, so callow does this philosophical breeding make of him, that he is incapable of love. It is no wonder that Rousseau was appalled at Plato's teaching, for the male and female souls are effective equals in that account of nature. Not in Rousseau's.

Rousseau makes another remark of considerable importance. Any man who tells us, Rousseau argues, that he has our interest foremost in his mind, ahead of his own interest, is a liar. Rousseau is simply trying to eliminate the name of friendship from human vocabulary, by so altering the word as to render it what we mean by scoundrel. The obvious question of trust comes up, and there are indeed a great many people in whom we must place our trust, because we do not know so well as they the subject matter in need of tending. This trust is the backbone of society, and Rousseau wishes to expel the very notion from his civil roster of character traits. This is not to say that he doesn't extort trust from his pupils and readers.

One is made to think of Plato's definition of an art. An art is the possession of a power, and the purpose of an art is to put this power into the service of another. Thus the entire spectrum of arts are actually cases where the human being possessing the art serves the *weaker* in his actions. This is why, Plato observes, the possessor of the art commands a wage. The wage is necessary to tend to the self-interest of the artist, so construed; and this is

necessary because the performance of the art qua art is service, service of the stronger (the one possessing the art) to the one in need.

Rousseau banishes this whole point of view from his philosophy, and it is as apparent in his discussion of the relationship between the sexes as it is in Rousseau's discussion of the relationship between men. Both of these relationships, as Rousseau discusses them, bear ultimately upon the relationship of *rulers to ruled*. For Plato this is one of service: his guardians are denied the right to possess or accumulate wealth through their power, and this is the philosophy that Rousseau is deadly set against. Justice for one person cannot be justice for the other person. There must always be winners and losers for Rousseau, competing self-interests. The male brings his desires to the woman, in Rousseau's model, but never his vulnerability. The woman in turn brings entertainment and diversion to the man, but never honesty. Rousseau advises that she keep silent about any injustices that the husband may commit. The poison in Rousseau's doctrine cannot be lost sight of amid the verbiage and flowery rhetoric.

### CONSCIENCE IN THE 'AGE OF REASON'

In the twenty-first century, passion indeed seems to hold sway. When public intellectuals feel despair, they begin to yearn for the 'age of reason', and they think that this age of reason coincides with the Enlightenment. Kant is the pre-eminent name that the educational authorities summon before us in this context. However, it needs to be pointed out: yes, it is true that the Enlightenment philosophers are makers of arguments. They make arguments for everything. Yet this does not mean that they are interested in *truth*. Far from it. Most of the major Enlightenment philosophers have a huge problem when it comes to sense perception, which furnishes that nugget of knowledge upon which one *can* reason. The Enlightenment philosophers however wish to make the domain of facts itself subject to a contest of wills. In this situation, the philosophers will always win.

Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Kant make bold and thunderous arguments in their respective works. Yet does any one of them so much as present the arguments which have been made in an opposite direction? Plato and Aristotle, whatever one may think of them, are hardly hucksters or charlatans. They present arguments too; the difference is that the Socratic Greeks spend a great deal of time focused on the philosophic opinions that they do *not* agree with. Nobody presents Parmenides' argument with more eloquence and care than Plato does; nobody presents Protagoras' argument with more painstaking honesty and fair-mindedness than Plato does. This is because Plato is interested in truth, not mere victory in argument (an affectation which he despised). How many of Aristotle's argu-

ments does Hobbes present? How much of Plato's actual arguments does Kant present? The Enlightenment philosophers are makers of arguments in the way that Machiavelli is: and for Machiavelli, one can argue for absolutely any position, with equal propriety. This is why perception plays such an important role in argument. For perception establishes what is common knowledge. It constitutes the evidence for reasoning. This is what the Early Moderns rebel against with vehemence. This is the great issue, the metaphysics of fact determination. Ridicule is the great armament of the Enlightenment, not love of truth. And therefore one should qualify one's statement when one harkens back to the Enlightenment and its reason; for the reason which produces false arguments is nothing for us to follow; and the reason which would block off our access to true arguments is worse still.

'Conscience' is a name that Rousseau likes to assign to his convictions. Yet we have seen that Rousseau could never so much as use the word if he had to borrow the common signification of that name. Conscience is not an abstract thing for most people. It is not a 'general belief', or a 'natural law'. It concerns specific individuals, in specific circumstances, as indeed does all of life. When Rousseau speaks about the issue of conscience, he means nothing but the principle of self-preservation which he insists, but does not prove, is the true lodestone of human insight. Rousseau believes that he possesses actual knowledge that all love is an illusion. This is not a fact that the world would concede to him. Philosophers do not know facts better than non-philosophers. Philosophers do not know better what a dog or a tree is than the non-philosopher. They do not know better than the non-philosopher what lust and desire are, or how these compare to love and affection. Anyone who submits to Rousseau's shibboleths about love is following a pied piper. Experience alone can furnish this information, and I do not think human beings would have developed the name of love if there was no object to summon before the mind.

Rousseau and many of his contemporary partisans are great enthusiasts when it comes to Eros, possessive romantic love, which intertwines with love of dominion and control and possession. The least lettered man or woman is familiar with the difference between these emotions and that of love. The least lettered man or woman can discern the difference between a rabbit and a crocodile, but in the philosophies of the Early Moderns this power of judgment in sense perception is the first object of assault. This is the issue to which we must turn ourselves, if we are to find our way out of the sinkhole of confusion and despair. We must return once again to the issue of facts, and what is a fact, and how is a fact known. When philosophers such as Rousseau and Kant and Hobbes and Locke and Hume deliver their attacks on sense perception, we must not flee these arguments, or mindlessly dismiss them. We must face them earnestly, and take their due measure. If they prove out true, who will deny them? Yet if they do not prove out true, then the scholar



must admit that she is prepared to do battle with the sacred cows of modern civilization, the Enlightenment philosophers themselves, no matter what nasty names are hurled her way.

Trust is a backbone of human civilization by necessity, which is why every profession drapes itself in so many canons of ethics (even stockbrokers). We do not dismiss the doctor's diagnosis, nor do we tell the driving instructor that he does not know what he is doing, nor do we consult a dog-catcher when we need a plumber. Yet in the area of this emotive philosophy of the Enlightenment, with its fierce claws and raking opinions, philosophers whose sole purpose is not victory are needed to survey the field. That requires actually admitting into evidence the full range of argumentation to which our Western tradition has been witness. This does not mean that I would hide from any non-Western philosophy which has pretensions to truth. Yet all must come before the tribunal of judgment through sense perception, that fateful crossroads where political power and certification of truth of fact coincide.

Just imagine the amount of preparation it would take to maneuver Kant and his *First Critique* into a truly deliberative situation. Kant pursues his a priori theory of human judgment on the platform of theorized sense perception that is in thrall to deductive philosophical theories which can themselves be fatally refuted. In over seven hundred pages, Kant does not give one sentence to the philosophic teachings that would refute him. Rousseau's terror of opinion, ordinary opinion, is borne from the same ideological loins.

## ROUSSEAU ON GOODNESS AND VIRTUE

Rousseau published the *Emile* in the same year that he published the *Social Contract*, 1762. Locke published the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in the same year that he published his popular tract, *Two Treatises of Government*, 1689. The lesser, popular works that these two philosophers published alongside massive educational works, is no accident. For the educational treatises instruct those of sufficient learning as to how the more popular works are to be understood.

Modern culture possesses no conception of the authority in the heavy educational hands of the Enlightenment philosophers. People ignore that which they do not understand; and so the common people have totally ignored the wholesale scientific attack on the veracity of their perceptions, their sole capacity to know fact for themselves. Locke's educational treatise, and Rousseau's surrender the entire authority for determination of fact over to philosophers, and silence the ordinary opinions. This could never be tolerated by either Plato or Aristotle, those supposed 'elitists', since both of those Socratics believe that ordinary opinion is intelligent, and *does not mistake the*

*facts*. Throughout the *Emile*, we find that Emile thinks those thoughts that the tutor places in his head, and that these thoughts are not only bereft of reality, but that they are contemptuous of reality.

When Emile has been settled with Sophie in his heart, Rousseau the tutor takes the imaginary young man aside one day, and asks Emile how he would respond if he were to discover that Sophie is dead. Even the imaginary Emile gets angry at this suggestion. Yet Rousseau uses the opportunity to convey his final and authoritative teaching on goodness and virtue. Goodness is pleasure, for Rousseau. It is always in the present. It despises a postponed ambition, or any living for the future. Emile must always live in the present, and this is the definition of goodness as Rousseau understands it. It bears no relationship to what is ordinarily thought good, and we can well imagine that Rousseau's *Social Contract*, similarly anchored in nature, will not either.

Virtue, then, what is this? If we recall, pleasure for Rousseau is the private individual's enjoyment. 'Goodness' for Rousseau is for the solitary animal, that creature from Rousseau's state of nature who is never denatured. That is to say, Rousseau's Emile retains the cross-eyed, helpless selfishness that Rousseau has formed him to have, as he proceeds into the corridors of the 'moral' state.

Rousseau assures Emile that Sophie is not dead. 'But she will die'. Such knowledge would only have to be vouchsafed to a being that is created by philosophers. Ordinary opinion is far better equipped at preparing for the realities of life's vicissitudes than Emile is. It is the Church that Rousseau despises which bounds the marriage vow by death: 'til death do us part'. The Church does not hide mortality from its members. Yet Rousseau has had to bitterly attack the Church for interfering with the living-in-the-moment philosophy, the gospel of pleasure, the ridicule of all pain as vicious, the absolute refusal to surrender his 'right' to pursue his own pleasure and to drive away pain, or even possible pain.

Never will Rousseau's Emile believe in any real virtue. For Rousseau, Emile must be told that Sophie will die, so that Emile will calculate this into his daily emotions. He must be prepared to enjoy the day of her death because that is what goodness is in Rousseau's mind, and because Emile must be prevented from allowing his inmost affections from ever truly being joined to Sophie's.

Virtue, Rousseau instructs Emile, is domination over one's affections. Who then is the virtuous man? 'It is he who knows how to conquer his affections.'<sup>23</sup> It is in fact a war against affection, and it is affection that binds us to other people. The attachments that bind us to other people are not voluntary, and this is the reason why Rousseau has had to concoct an artificial educational environment for his imaginary pupils and lovers. They must be pulled apart from the world of experience, the world of the senses, into imaginary constructions of fevered philosophy.

There is no happiness to be found, Rousseau instructs Emile, other than the solitary pursuit of pleasure that he has been schooled in his whole life. It is the disposition which enables him to approach his peers with an advantage, i.e. he does not respect his peers. He does not 'esteem' them. He despises, has been taught to despise, what they believe. Rousseau insists that the human being does not change over time; that the pleasures of childhood are not different in kind from the pleasures of adulthood; they all level off into rank pleasure in the end. The distinction between goodness and pleasure, which it was the purpose of Socratic philosophy to establish amid the sophistry at Athens, is reversed by Rousseau. Goodness simply is pleasure. And accordingly, all valuable goals that require sacrifice, and enduring pain, are indicted from the outset.

The reality of actually choosing a way of life is so antithetic to Rousseau's convictions for Emile as to constitute an original crime of nature. Thinking is not native to man, for Rousseau. One can say this of the Epicurean tribe in particular. Rousseau is certainly a member of that tribe. Yet the colonization of the people, the attempt to export the Epicurean affectation to the public at large, is only a project that began with Machiavelli. Machiavelli had the honesty to admit that choice is to be suppressed in his ideal republic. Yet our Machiavelli scholars are all rather like Emile. Their thoughts are no freer than Emile's, and for people who have spent so much time studying, that should come as something of an embarrassment.

Rousseau concludes the *Emile* with a prefiguration of the *Social Contract*. It is clear enough that Rousseau regards government itself as a swindle, a potential obstacle to the right of nature that the Early Moderns prize. Rousseau's concluding observations would be chilling if they were not so hollow. Presumably Rousseau knows that life is nothingness; that commitments and attachments are the opposite of good living; that dominance over one's emotions, absolute control over them, and fidelity only to that over which one possesses absolute control, is worthwhile. 'In love, everything is only illusion,. I admit it.'<sup>24</sup> Emile never gets the chance to live his own life and to find out. Rousseau turns human values upside down: attachment is criminality; true duty to anyone or anything other than oneself is criminality, and righteousness and conscience are names that Rousseau seizes for his ideology.

Rousseau declines to give a definition of natural right, yet he acknowledges its existence. Rousseau advises against giving a definition of natural right. If one did define it, its defects would quickly become apparent. It is clear that Rousseau agrees with Hobbes that all of value is private, individual, limited to the bodily. The immense power that this ideology expends in invading, defaming, and infiltrating every human thought and emotion which exceeds this boundary, is the measure of the servitude that afflicts modern civilization. We must at least know what names go with which objects, in

order to be free to think once again. And for that we shall have need to be able to trust our sense perceptions; and therefore we must have recourse to flushing out the expertise which seek to come in between us and our own faculties for knowing truth of fact.

Judith Shklar's analysis of Rousseau has exercised a considerable influence on Rousseau scholars. In Shklar's view, Rousseau is very much a man of the people. Rousseau, according to Shklar, is both an inveterate opponent of inequality, and an unprecedented spokesperson for the sincere inner self of the human being. 'The combination of a psychology and a moral outlook exclusively concerned with the needs of the individual, an extreme hatred for inequality, and an intense dislike for change make it particularly useless to impose the traditional classifications of later political theory upon Rousseau. He was neither a traditionalist nor a revolutionary of any sort. So deep a hatred of inequality is a perpetual challenge to any known society. The demand that the psychological and moral integrity of individuals must be served before all else is always radical' (30).<sup>25</sup>

Shklar's comments are helpful. To investigate Rousseau, it is necessary to have a starting point. Shklar thinks that this starting point is Rousseau's alleged contempt for inequality. However, I do not think that this point of view can be sustained. Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* begins with a portrait of human beings which is hardly suitable to the virtue of equality. For the Rousseauian savage does not need other people. Ninety-nine percent of other human beings do need other people. Thus Rousseau belongs to the modern political philosophical tradition because he seeks to subordinate all things to the individual's alleged natural right, his isolated right, to throw off the influence of the community. This argument that I am presenting is well illustrated in the *Emile*. What Rousseau proposes to do to the child involves a determination to ruin and wreck the child's emotional personality. To isolate and browbeat the child, under the tutor's calculations and ministrations, has nothing to do with nature. Rousseau for all of his alleged love for the ancients bears no trace of resemblance to the Socratics. Plato's Socrates cannot so much as begin any investigation whatsoever *without an audience*. Plato's Socrates famously husbands the role of the 'midwife' to his pupils: he must investigate the ideas in their brains, using his own conceptual tools. The point of Socrates' profession of ignorance, 'I know that I know nothing', is to give the assembled learners a starting point: that which they all share in common, which is judgment through sensory faculties, familiarity with the forms that are mixed in with the common objects. This is the whole fabric of Socratic science, and Aristotle builds upon it. There is no grotesque struggle in the Socratic Greeks between the individual's 'natural emotions' and the self-sacrificing emotions demanded by Shklar's definition of antiquity. Rather, the classical Greek teaching begins with the insistence that the individual suppress the unruly appetites

within himself and give way to the common truth, which is a very different thing from self-sacrifice.

When Emile is first introduced into society by Rousseau, he is kept on a very tight leash. He is not permitted any free time, alone time, to form relationships with other people. He must rather be confronted with mass spectacles of badly oppressed human beings. Rousseau insists that Emile's first knowledge be of the species, rather than of individuals. This obviously gets things backwards. One cannot obtain knowledge of the universal without first inducting from specific knowledge of particular individuals. This is the way of classical Greek science. Yet Rousseau blocks this entire way of learning. Instead of direct experience with other human beings (and the tutor hides himself so well that the child doesn't really have the chance to get a bearing with him), Rousseau wants to suffuse his mind with images of despair and great suffering. This is to overwhelm the child's sense of justice. What does the tutor tell Emile? He tells Emile that the rich always use the government of the state to oppress the poor and that there is no remedy for it. Governments are all corrupt, Rousseau teaches Emile. This is hardly the education of a radical egalitarian. It is education as corruption, as intimidation. Emile is being warned that if he does not put himself first he will run the risk of becoming like the suffering masses.

This is very much the teaching of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. In Aristotle's political science, based as it is on Plato's model, the key distinction between regimes is that between governments that serve the common good versus those that serve the private interests of the rulers. Rousseau has already attacked that standard, repudiated it, slandered it. Machiavelli is not admired by Rousseau for nothing. The *Social Contract* is all concerned with the way the human being conducts himself in his relationship with the state. Now for Aristotle again, all members of society articulate a principle of justice. This is a key part of their membership in political society, and the principles of justice are not uniform across the society. The many argue for equality, that every person's happiness should be counted and given equal weight in public deliberations. The few, be they the rich, the excellent, or the accomplished, argue for a different principle of political justice. They argue for some form of inequality, for *merit*. The few seek *distinction*.

Aristotle argues that the art of politics involves both asserting one's own principle of justice, while observing the just limits of that claim, and acknowledging the just claims of others. There is no room in Rousseau's inventory of human relationships for this sort of justice. Rousseau has only bad things to say about human interaction when it involves *choice*. Rousseau's human being, at the gateway to the *Social Contract*, is invited to engage in rhetorical manipulation of the others. He will profess to 'surrender' all that is his, to 'everyone else'. Which is of course to surrender all that is his to nobody. Everybody else will surrender all that is theirs to everybody else as

well, in which case everybody ends up with exactly what he started out with. Except that now he gets to claim that he has been baptized by virtue. He now claims that he has walked under the divine yoke of equality, in the spurious surrender of his goods to everyone else. It does not matter to Rousseau what possessions people have at the beginning of the *Social Contract*, or how they have obtained their possessions, whether through fraud or rapine or violence. The new *Social Contract*, which is miraculously something that a man makes with himself somehow, rather than with other people, places a halo over his possessions. Rousseau is an individualist first and foremost.

The totality of forces can be formed only by the collaboration of a number of persons; but each man's strength and freedom being the main instruments of his preservation, how can he commit them to others without harming himself, and without neglecting the duty of care to himself? The difficulty as it relates to my subject may be defined in the following terms. 'Find a form of association which will defend and protect, with the whole of its joint strength, the person and property of each associate, and under which each of them, uniting himself to all, will obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract gives the answer.'<sup>26</sup>

Justice, in the Greek formulation, involves 'giving to every man his own'. Aristotle defines justice as the virtue which requires two people, as justice is imbedded in rules of *exchange*, the very spine of society. The individual must get equal value for what he brings into a bargain, not more and not less. This equality is what justice is about for the Socratic Greeks, and it is not to be divided into individual versus society. It traces the relationship between individuals in society. Rousseau seeks to extend a zone of natural right around the individual, so that he can 'obey himself' as he allegedly did in the state of nature. In real justice, nobody is obeying only or primarily or essentially himself. One is obeying the principle of equality rightly understood, as it occurs in the interactions of human beings, and it is the purpose of law to safeguard this equality and to correct it when it has been violated.

Instead of this form of justice, Rousseau prefers not to use that term. Rousseau prefers to muster the specter of the name of justice in his term 'the General Will'. The General Will shall represent the interests of 'the people', whatever that may mean. It certainly does not involve the relationship between human individuals, which is what all relations of justice ultimately reduce to. Instead, the General Will is a highly abstract category which preserves that ideology of natural right, whereby the individual is still isolated and solitary, the principal moral force in the state and the force that the General Will serves ultimately. Thus, it is not surprising to discover that Rousseau's General Will is a paralyzed entity. That it cannot possibly even function given the requirements that Rousseau fastens upon it; and even if it

could miraculously meet and manage to function for a moment, the rules which bind it would prevent any action still.

## NATURAL MAN VERSUS CIVIL MAN

The relationship between philosophy and public opinion is a fraught one in the modern period. Ever since Machiavelli, philosophy has been attempting to capture the definitions of political institutions in ways which expose the people to philosophical dominion. Machiavelli, when he defines all leaders as necessarily corrupt, casts venom and relentless tumult into civil politics, which renders deliberation exceedingly difficult. The philosophical coordination of these terms is not understood by the people. When the people hears that leaders are corrupt, they immediately suspect that some particular evil has been committed, and that it must be rooted out and the malefactors punished. To the degree that Machiavelli's political science sets the terms of public discourse, however, this accusation will be let fly on any and all occasions, let the leaders be howsoever pure and disinterested. Machiavelli's political science indirectly testifies to the fact that the people is *naturally* attached to justice, and that they regard justice as a true thing, not some convention.

Rousseau's account of natural man excludes this determination that justice shall prevail. Rousseau's account of natural man begins and ends with selfishness, and in this political philosophy as in all political philosophies what is regarded as natural is regarded as most real. Rousseau is therefore performing a highly manipulative feat in the way that he attempts to market the social contract. Rousseau argues that man, without the state, is bereft of all dignity. Man, in the natural state, is just a selfish and dumb animal, Rousseau argues. Now for Rousseau, this is all true but he prizes this selfishness and he prizes too an obliviousness to public affairs. This was what Rousseau loved best in the state of nature that he invented, the capacity of his natural man to live unperturbed in the moment. Rousseau knows that the people would never regard itself by nature as either irreversibly selfish or irrecoverably stupid. Thus Rousseau, when he separates the culture of virtue from nature, denigrates it philosophically speaking. He reduces it to mere trappings and words, to mere machinations and vapors, to conjurations and smoke and mirrors. It is not anything real; but yet the words will mesmerize the people.

The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces in man very remarkable changes, replacing instinct by justice in his behavior, and conferring on his actions the moral quality that they had lacked before. It is only now, as the voice of duty succeeds to physical impulse and right to appetite, that man, who had previously thought of nothing but himself, is compelled to

act on other principles, and to consult his reason before he attends to his inclinations.<sup>27</sup>

For Aristotle, virtue involves choice. There is no compulsion involved, and if there were, *it would not be virtue*, unless of course one is overcoming compulsion with one's choices. Yet in the design of the General Will, through the *Social Contract*, man is not contemplating any specific situation in which he has dealings with another member of the polity. He is not considering how he would interact with a fellow citizen if he had the opportunity to take advantage of a man in an economic transaction due to some accident or circumstance. He is not considering how he would react to a burglar on the street who had assailed someone, who sought to commit violence against a helpless person. He is not contemplating military service, in the case of the need of his country for self-defense against aggression. Instead, he is being summoned to the most abstract of all situations, one in which he cannot possibly see any particular circumstance in which he is involved, or in which he is pointed towards the choices between the competing powers of his soul, the rational versus the appetitive. Rousseau's General Will is rather a chimera. Rousseau fully belongs to that cult of modernity that seeks to do away with character development and to replace it with institutional controls. It is as Kant will argue for in his 'Perpetual Peace', that a 'race of devils' can satisfy the new requirements of social organization as well as a race of men might, provided the devils have prudence. Always we must keep in mind what Rousseau has put into the social contract: the individual always remains obeying just himself in the end, as if the code of justice is synonymous with self-service. 'To the acquisition of moral status could be added, on the basis of what has just been said, the acquisition of moral liberty, this being the only thing that makes man truly the master of himself; for to be driven by our appetites alone is slavery, while to obey a law that we have imposed on ourselves is freedom' (Ibid.). This fascination with the origin of law remains in effect in Kant. Yet this insistence that the authority of law depends on its being created by us, actually sustains the original argument that justice is simply a matter of convention, not a true and real thing in the relationships between human beings. It is dependent on the private individuals seeking their own self-interest from it, but justice involves precisely the rebuke of selfishness when it veers to inequality and unequal exchange.

It is no surprise that Rousseau is not a lover of educational culture. Emile is not provided with many books for sure. It is Machiavelli in his *Florentine Histories* who observes that liberal arts are a cause or even evidence of corruption. Rousseau is quick to repeat this observation. 'The taste for letters is born from idleness and nourishes it, so that among a people cultivation indicates a beginning of corruption and completes it very promptly.'<sup>28</sup>



The point that we have made above, as regards Rousseau's conviction that justice belongs to convention, needs to be developed a bit more. What Rousseau actually believes is that man is not truly a social being. In other words, in Rousseau's political science, the philosopher's designs must reach into the very heart of human beings themselves and perform some *alteration*. This has been the motif of modernity since Machiavelli. What it amounts to is committing violence against human beings, under the slogan that this is necessary for the cultivation of the common interest. What the modern philosophers truly believe is that man either lacks affinity for other human beings, or, more probably, that modern philosophy actually wants to destroy the true natural basis for sociality among human beings, to introduce in its place precisely this sort of regime which lifts selfishness to the truly highest rank. Rousseau writes: 'But although there is no natural and general society among men, although men become unhappy and wicked in becoming sociable, although the laws of justice and equality mean nothing to those who live both in the freedom of the state of nature and subject to the needs of social state, far from thinking that here is neither virtue nor happiness for us. . . . Let us attempt to draw from the ill the remedy that could cure it.' 'Let us use new associations to correct, if possible, the defect of general association.'<sup>29</sup>

In the *Geneva Manuscript*, Rousseau writes with a little more candor than is apparent in his *Social Contract*. The relationship that we are concerned about is the one between the individual and the General Will, or the state as Rousseau is recommending it to us. We have seen that Rousseau has denied that man is naturally social. The reader must bear this in mind. For all of the emotions that are natural to human beings, especially their indignation at injustice, are on the philosophical chopping block. Rousseau seeks to route them all: love, loyalty, the demand for justice, the contempt for injustice, affection, none of which emotions are any stranger to the vast majority of the population. The fact of the matter is that the wave of modern philosophy is seeking to dip the name of 'justice' into the poison ink of selfishness, to obliterate the distinction between the two of them. Rousseau can be seen to seek to do just such a thing. 'Which proves that equality of right, and the concept of justice that flows from it, are derived from each man's preference for himself, and consequently from the nature of man; that the general will, to be truly such, should be general in its object as well as in its essence; that it should come from all to return to all, and that it loses its natural rectitude as soon as it is applied to an individual, determinate subject.'<sup>30</sup>

Rousseau is arguing directly against the Socratic Greek definition of justice. 'Right' comes first for the Rousseauians. 'Right' is the mantra of the state of nature where the individual who does not care about anybody else beyond vague pity, and who certainly does not need anyone else, prevails. Justice, in Rousseau's argument, 'flows from' the concept of right. Thus

right is sustained as the highest moral principle. Plato and Aristotle reject that teaching based on factual observation more than on moral argumentation. A man is not self-sufficient, not even potentially, for Plato or Aristotle. Society is born to satisfy for human beings the many needs that they cannot satisfy for themselves. Society is therefore coeval with the division of labor. It is the dependence of human beings upon one another, not just for justice of property but (one must say this in the Machiavellian era) for justice of *reputation*, which makes justice so sacred a thing. Justice, as Plato's Socrates well knows, is deeply rooted in ordinary praise and blame. It is ordinary praise and blame that the modern theory of natural right is attempting to explode, or to out-argue. No wonder Rousseau does not want philosophy books and studies to characterize his special version of civil society.

In Aristotle's discussion of justice, as we have said, it is the virtue that is most social in origin. Justice is 'someone else's good'. In every quarrel, Aristotle argues, one party is right and the other party is wrong. Injustice is a defect of character in Aristotle's analysis, a viciousness that is bred by self-indulgence and insolence. Yet Rousseau's General Will is in no position to favor a just man against an unjust man in any particular transaction. The General Will must treat all people the same all the time, and the General Will is not allowed to judge in individual cases. What good is such a law that refuses to judge between the assailant and the victim, the cheat and the cheated? 'However one traces the principle, one always reaches the same conclusion, namely that the social compact establishes an equality of right between citizens such that they all engage themselves under the same conditions and should all benefit from the same core advantages. Thus, by the very nature of the social compact, every act of sovereignty, which is to say every authentic act of the General Will, obligates or favors all citizens equally, so that the sovereignty only knows the nation as a body and makes no distinctions between any of those who compose it.'<sup>31</sup>

The attempt to derive justice from 'right' is indeed going to involve a massive educational project. Whether or not it deserves the name of 'enlightenment' has yet to be determined. Based on Rousseau's analysis, justice cannot be different from the 'equality of right', or the equality of selfishness. This is, after all, what is natural for Rousseau, the solitary self. As Rousseau seeks to teach Emile, life is meaningless. People do not feel that way, however. They do not believe that justice is meaningless. Rousseau believes that justice is meaningless. Therefore Rousseau must undertake to break the people of its natural feeling. The great energy expended during the Enlightenment in the effort to discredit the accuracy of sense perception is the strongest evidence I know of to testify to the insincerity of Rousseau's claims. It has never been a problem in human society that people do not know what their sense perceptions tell them, or that their sense perceptions lead them into opposite determinations on matters of fact. It is only philosophers who

feel the need to attack the veracity of sense perception, and then only selectively. Whether they are Hobbes or Locke or Hume or Rousseau, they would never interfere with the way that people guide themselves in daily life based on their perceptions. It is only on general issues of morals and politics, truth and justice, where the modern philosophies erect themselves into so many unholy tribunals of false authority.

Rousseau writes: 'The one who thinks he is capable of forming a people should feel that he can, so to speak, change human nature. He must transform each individual who by himself is a perfect and solitary whole, into a part of a larger whole from which this individual receives, in a sense, his life and his being. He must in a sense make man's constitution in order to strengthen it.'<sup>32</sup> This has indeed been the road that modernity has taken.

### THE GENERAL WILL

We must investigate a bit more carefully the alchemy of the General Will in Rousseau, for this still bears upon the issue of justice that we are all concerned with, after all. Rousseau does not deign to provide us with a definition of justice. Aristotle did. Aristotle traces justice to its beginning. Man is a social being because man cannot survive without the help of his fellows, and this dependence is not originated by any conclave of phony or false needs. Man is helpless by himself, and hence the first rules of human life are social rules, rules of exchange, rules of just order. Rousseau refuses to dignify us with any definition of justice. He keeps harking back to the 'private', to the 'natural', which in Rousseau's account of the human race is man by himself, self-sufficient. 'The first and most important consequence of the principles established above is that the general will alone can guide the forces of the state according to the end for which it was instituted, which is the common good. For if the opposition of private interests made the establishment of societies necessary, it is the agreement of these same interests that made it possible.'<sup>33</sup> As we have argued, it was not disagreement between private interests that made the state necessary. It was and is interdependence. Yet when Rousseau anchors the General Will in the 'private', in the 'natural' which is alleged to be social, he obliterates the distinction between justice and injustice which is the true origin of *government*. In Plato's view, it is not the majority which is seeking to commit injustices, to steal the crops of others, or to unjustly invade the states of others. It is a few. And the establishment of justice does not involve equal agreement from the unjust, since the unjust must be subdued en route to the establishment of a just government.

Rousseau takes us further into the story of the General Will, which is supposed to be the great safeguard of the new sanctified citizenship that the

*Social Contract* has consecrated. Yet when it comes time to see how this General Will is going to operate, we run into all sorts of difficulties with Rousseau. For the General Will cannot itself govern. It cannot dispose of specific *cases*. Thus the General Will, while Rousseau has celebrated it as the moral foundation and spine of the political state, is *not the government*. Not only is the General Will not the government, but it is almost impossible for the General Will even ever to exist for a single moment, based upon the requirements that Rousseau besets it with.

The General Will may not delegate its authority to an actual government that is capable of dealing with specific cases of governing. ‘Thus just as a private will cannot represent the General Will, the general will in turn changes its nature when it has a particular object; and as a general will it cannot pass judgment on either a man or a fact.’<sup>34</sup> ‘What is the government then? ‘An intermediate body established between the subjects and the sovereign for their mutual communication, and charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of civil as well as political freedom. The members of this body are called magistrates or King, that is to say, governors; and the body as a whole bears the name Prince.’<sup>35</sup> Rousseau defines the government as an institution that can never possibly *be* the General Will. Hence, since the members of the government are all rights-bearing human beings, tending to their private interests, they cannot represent the alleged general will, which tends supposedly to the common interest. We recall that Rousseau has flattened out the very definition of justice, to indicate something to which absolutely every member must be compelled to agree through the institution of the General Will. As if any person can be compelled to will justice. What is certain is that Rousseau’s ‘Prince’ or government is not even obliged to pretend to be bound by the meager definition of justice that Rousseau’s Social Model enacts. ‘Just as the private will incessantly acts against the general will, so the government makes a continual effort against sovereignty. The greater this effort becomes, the more the constitution changes, and as there is here no other corporate will which, by resisting the will of the prince, would balance it, sooner or later the Prince must finally oppress the sovereign and break the social treaty.’<sup>36</sup>

The definition of a just government that Aristotle and Plato provide, i.e. that one that rules in the common interest, is therefore excluded by Rousseau in the a priori, as Kant would say. For the government is not eligible to be governed by the General Will, which is the slogan of justice in Rousseau’s state. In fact, Rousseau binds the government to the very definition of injustice, ruling in its own interest. The people, Rousseau makes it appear, have no choice but to endure the onslaught until things have deteriorated to such a degree that chaos reigns. At which point a new impotent General Will shall be constructed, to unleash yet another unjust government, and so on in perpetuity.

ALLAN BLOOM, ROUSSEAU AND  
THE BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUAL

Perception is the issue that I have focused on throughout my work on Western philosophy and political philosophy. Perception is where the ordinary human being gets his compass in the world. The world happens to be made by nature in kinds, and this is the first thing that the child truly learns after the naming of Mama and Dadda has been surpassed. The contradiction inherent in modern philosophy can be reduced to this single issue: For while the Early Moderns scream bloody murder against 'throne and altar' in their rhetorical exultation of the individual, this programmatic onslaught only follows, it never precedes, the disenfranchisement of sensory perception as the original fact finder in human experience.

In the way of learning, perception is the first true tutor. This is the original medium of experience. To the best of my knowledge, there are no cultural or ethnic or religious or sexual or gender distinctions that interfere with the human being's recognition that 'tree' is a kind of object; that 'human being' is a kind of object and that a person is not a tree; that neither a tree nor a person is a river. People do not learn about objects originally by comparing and contrasting them: they learn about them by their intelligible aspects, by their *forms*. One does not need to study every animal in the animal kingdom in order to know what a rat is. One does not have to be able to distinguish the rat from the horse, the bull, the alley cat, the cow. To come upon one rat is enough to learn what a rat is. The Early Moderns bitterly dispute what I have set forth here; but it is only their natural philosophy, their doctrine of what the true and real bodies in nature are, that enables their assault on perception, and their 'educational campaign' to counteract its power. This goes for morals as well. Hobbes, in his civil science, insists that in order for it (which he regarded as the true and only valid civil science ever) to succeed, that the people must cease to rely upon their own judgment as to what is right and what is wrong.

The sophisticated philosophical campaign waged against actual perception and the evidence it vouchsafes to human kind, is always coupled with an attack on the authoritative use of *names*. Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, and Kant all insist that they are free to use names after their own private fashion, a la Protagoras, a freedom which no community can surrender to any of its members if any discourse is to be possible at all. Aristotle said it well. If a word does not mean just one thing, then it can be employed in contradictory ways, and this renders true discourse impossible, because one cannot point out any object with a self-contradictory word. In any event, this is the most anti-democratic power that any political philosophy has ever cultivated; and in the modern world, this anti-democratic power has swaddled itself in the robes of moral authority. It is a truly lethal combination. It is why the

study of natural philosophy must be universally revived, in order that the first facts may be relearned.

Allan Bloom investigates Rousseau's employment of the name 'bourgeois'. This name, Bloom tells us, is despised in modern society. What it is thought to indicate is the unremarkable life of the human being basically engaged in getting a living: in buying and selling, those most ancient of human transactions. The bourgeois is Rousseau's name for the conventional human being, since most people indeed are concerned to earn a decent living, to achieve a respectable presentation in society, and to labor to be able to enjoy some measure of its good things and finer fruits. This bourgeois, Bloom tells us, is not heroic. He is not truly righteous. He is not out there fighting for a world revolution, to liberate all peoples. He is not laboring in isolation to effect some new human type with his own labor.

In essence, Rousseau's bourgeois is identical to Locke's rational and industrious man, the new kind of man whose concern with property was to provide a more sober and solid foundation in society. Rousseau sees him differently—from the vantage point of morality, citizenship, quality, freedom and compassion. The rational and industrious man might be an instrument of stability, but the cost of relying upon him is human dignity. This contrast between two ways of seeing the central actor in modernity summarizes the continuous political debate of the past two centuries.<sup>37</sup>

He lives for the people he loves and whom he seeks to make safe with his labor. The bourgeois as I have described him is the everyman. For everybody has to make a living. Everybody has to make compromises to make a living. Even the great Machiavelli had to make compromises to make a living in the world. He had to lie and lie and lie. Machiavelli excuses all of his faults and indecencies, by blaming the world. The world made him resort to such tactics, he professes in *Prince XV*. And yet, since he seeks a state for himself, or to be the lord of those who hold states, we can see that there is really an intemperate liberty operative in Machiavelli's soul. It is what enables Machiavelli to be so incontinent in *his* use of names. For it is Machiavelli, and nobody else, who bore the science of accusation to modern politics. 'Bourgeois' is a term of derision. It is an accusation. Rousseau therefore picked up something from Machiavelli. For both are unwilling that the generality of the human race lead quiet and peaceful lives. They cannot allow the people to have what their natures truly yearn for: true virtues, stable orders, preserved attachments, honored ancestors. No, the people must be put 'in motion' in accordance with the modern philosophy; they cannot be allowed to be what they would. They must rather be forced into the 'forms' of Machiavelli's artificial devising, the new theory of form that Bacon adumbrates with a view to launching a new era of science (which he certainly did). 'Bourgeois' is an accusation, and Bloom seeks to represent it as a measure of Rousseau's

commitment to the people., his love for them, that he does so. 'His concern for a higher, non-mercenary morality is the foundation of Kant's idealism. His critique of modern economics and his questions about the legitimacy of private property are at the root of socialism, particularly Marxism.'<sup>38</sup>

Through the eyes of Bloom, the bourgeois really is a despicable human being. He is not great. He does not fight for the left or the right. He does not seek to revolutionize human nature or subscribe to any great philosophy. He does not hurl himself against the established attachments and bastions of order that the people rely upon merely in order to survive at all. It needs to be said that such a term, which indicates the generality of the human race in effect, for simply doing the work that must always be done, and for suppressing any great appetites towards these allegedly mundane ends, is ruthless in the extreme. It is calculated cruelty. It is like Locke accusing the people of laziness in the early going of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, for lacking the time to pore over ancient texts and to learn every argument that there is to be learned in sophisticated literary and philosophical circles. No such accusation could emerge from the people themselves, for this is what they are and know themselves to need to be. They love their children and their parents; they have obligations in the world; and they do not gravitate towards the stories and mythical movements made popular by the Early Modern scribblers. Is it really such a sin to be narrowly focused on making a living? I have known of no evidence that suggests that such a 'lifestyle' renders a human being a less loyal member of the nation, so long as the interest in making a respectable living does not degenerate into blind greed. I do not think making transactions is an inherently ignoble enterprise, since human conditions will always require it. And thus one wonders at the origins of this blistering accusation against the 'bourgeois', the name of infamy, which is forever poised to puncture the reputations and hearts and souls of the people who would rather not be fodder for blind political processes (and given the number of entirely useless political processes that modernity has ushered into existence, they are not few). Moreover, there must always be a demos that is not itself fiercely engaged in ideology and partisan politics, simply in order that there may be a community which may evaluate the propositions brought to its stages; to evaluate them and judge them, and to finally chart or help chart the country's course. Yet for Bloom, no house cleaner, no banker, no at-home mother is safe from the withering accusation of the 'bourgeois' label, which infects the reputation of the afflicted with infamy, ostracism, and brutality.

Bloom tries to make the case that in Rousseau's version of Western culture, there are two great competing vectors: the self (allegedly the bourgeois) and 'duty', the province of a new holy politics, even though it has stricken all of the revered Gods from the equation. In the story Rousseau tells, in his *Social Contract*, and which Bloom hawks with all the fury of a

committed widget salesman, the birth of society requires the surrender of the selfish part of the soul, and the entering into something sacrosanct and allegedly ‘cooperative’. This is the dividing line between man and citizen. Bloom lauds Rousseau as the true father of modern politics on all sides. Yet this story is false.

Emile was not reared in a state of nature. He was taken away from his parents by the arts of the educator Jean Jacques, and removed effectively from civilization. Thus the organon of self-preservation is something that Rousseauian philosophy *creates* in some people. As we have seen in the case of Emile, Rousseau conditions him and invades his soul to the degree that almost all valuable human experience is preempted and crushed. This is the man for whom the new *Social Contract* is made by Rousseau. It is only for he who has been baptized on the altar of self-preservation, to the death, that the new ‘holy’ social contract of ‘duty’ is prepared. It is, the Social Contract, a weapon against the people. It is a means of organizing them in such forms as will effectively thwart their wills forever.

But let us simply repair to what the Social Contract *is*. What is the mantra? That a man surrenders all he owns to absolutely everyone else, and everyone else surrenders all that they own to him. The result is just what Rousseau promises: that by giving up everything he has, man remains just as he was before, having given up nothing.

Finally, each in giving himself to all gives himself to none, and since there are no associates over whom he does not acquire the same rights as he cedes, he gains the equivalent of all that he lost, and greater strength for the conservation of what he possesses.<sup>39</sup>

Yet the Social Contract does more than this. It sanctifies everything. It forgives every crime, no matter how large. It drapes the largest theft in legitimacy. This is therefore a social contract designed for the *worst* human beings, for the scoundrels and certainly not for the ‘bourgeois’. Those who have acquired in the Machiavellian fashion, now have a laundering agency to purify their ill-gotten gains. Yet the humdrum bourgeois, saving his money for his kids’ college, toiling away at a job that denies his faculties their full development, is shoved out onto the stage to serve as the prototype of the enemy of the people in Rousseauian politics.

Names matter a great deal. We cannot properly apportion names if we cannot be in charge of what shall count as a fact. The Early Modern philosophies cut that cord of independence from the generality of the human race, and the outcome has been a mayhem which modern politics is committed to enshrining. The people cannot be allowed to have their ‘bourgeois’ lives, i.e. lives of their own. They must be as matter for the great affairs of the politics that the Early Moderns have devised. Bloom is their cheerleader. It is certain-



ly true of him that he was no bourgeois. He had no ounce of decency, and that which is made to suffer and grunt under the label of the bourgeois certainly does have that.

### PATRICK RILEY ON ROUSSEAU'S GENERAL WILL

In our discussions of these secondary sources, we are trying to lean our arguments against the *strongest* principles that Rousseau developed, in the hope that this may shine a light through the fog. Patrick Riley, in his discussion of Rousseau's General Will, has recourse to the *Emile* on several occasions. For Riley, Rousseau's conception of a General Will indicates sobriety, public spirit, goodness, and above all the suppression of the base selfishness which Rousseau supposedly wants to remove from the modern revolution.

It is scarcely open to doubt, indeed, that the notions of *will* and *generality* are equally essential in Rousseau's moral and political philosophy. Without will there is no freedom, no self-determination, no 'moral causality' . . . no obligation; without generality the will may be capricious, egoistic, self-obsessed, willful.<sup>40</sup>

This is not an uncommon reading of Rousseau. Riley cites Shklar, who has affected a great many students of Rousseau along these lines.

In the *Emile*, Rousseau pounds home to his charge one central fact of life: suffering is always at man's doorstep. Suffering in life is a greater power than any other thing, Rousseau indicates. Man's happiness, therefore, consists in readiness: readiness to be able to do what is necessary to see to it that his personal suffering is *combated*. Suffering is the first fact for Rousseau, and this suffering must be *opposed*. Emile is schooled in human relationships in such a way that he is permanently closed off to them because they threaten to upset his sovereign *control* over his own capacities for suffering. *This* willfulness is a *philosophy*. It is in fact the philosophy of Epicurus, radicalized. Epicurus regards man as possibly divine if he can rise above his pain, by making opposition to pain his primary goal in life. In order to do this, Epicurus and Emile must both shake themselves free from all customary constraints, because of what the latter *enforce*: beginning with the family, one has duties for the general welfare thereof. It may be the assignment of the child to clean up the family room, or to take out the garbage or to do the dishes regularly. These are the sorts of constraints which impose a burden on the individual for the 'general' good, if we wish to use that name. This sacrifice is coeval with the parenting of a child. For the parents undergo the greatest sacrifice of personal freedom, in order to care for their young and their future potential development.

Let us remind the reader that Rousseau recognizes *no* duty in the condition of society before the establishment of the new General Will as political constitution. We may ask, why? When the human individual must suppress personal, purely personal impulses in order to serve a collective good with other members of his family, why is this not 'duty'? It may not be the most noble and heroic of duties, but who ever said that it was? It is nevertheless the formation of habit, appropriate to youth. Aristotle argued that this formation of such habits is what civilizations rise or fall by. Yet in any event, given the calculus of suffering avoidance which is Rousseau's obsession, it is plain to see that this is purely individualistic. Emile is raised, 'de-natured' if you like, precisely in order to enable him to deflect the obligations which would be pressed upon him through intimate bonds of all sorts. Such apparently trite obligations are the necessary stepping stool to larger forms of sacrifice for the common good, when they are indeed *necessary*. Yet we have shown that Rousseau's drilling of Emile unfits him for this sort of suppression of personal impulses. Emile has in fact received the *opposite* teaching. Self-preservation is the only thing that Emile really believes in once Rousseau is through with him. There is absolutely nothing noble, nothing 'general', nothing even minimally decent about this characterological feat that Rousseau's tutor has wrought.

In any event, let us come back to the simple language of the General Will. Riley sees fit to look for the roots of this phrase in theological controversies. Though it is certain that theologians chose to discuss the will of God in these terms during the seventeenth century, Rousseau makes no direct reference to it in his *Social Contract*. Yet the issues, of 'will' and the community or the 'general', are the perennial issues and vectors of political science. Is it not true that Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, and even Kant have attacked the notion that the human being has rational freedom of choice in life? Hobbes ridicules this very phrase, which is from Aristotle. If we recur to the equation that Rousseau taught Emile, that life is a permanent war against the possibility of suffering, (as we have presented it above), then all obligations emanating from alternative sources, such as the communities to which the child belongs, are *unwelcome*. If the philosopher tried to openly say that he *refuses* to be held to any community obligation, that he always put himself ahead of the community, he would be driven out, and his doctrine dismissed promptly. Yet if the philosopher argues that he is not at liberty to choose, that 'nature' compels or forces his actions in such a way as to leave him merely helplessly compliant, this is a way in which the Epicurean sort of philosopher can safely pursue his agenda.

Locke tried to teach that 'will' and 'freedom' have nothing to do with one another as *words*. Rousseau, in adopting the name of 'will' for his moral politics, seems to be following in Locke's footsteps. Why not call the central political organ the 'deliberated will'? For surely, this is what remotely free

human beings must do in order to become free. They must *deliberate*. In order to be able to deliberate, *they must know the facts*. They must be able to get at the truth of an issue, and there is no more important action involved when we are speaking of freedom. For the will is all about *execution*. The will is indeed often described as a power, a force. Yet surely, not every will is *rational and free*. If a man holds a gun to our head and instructs us in what to do, we certainly could decline to obey him. Thus it is voluntary to obey, even though we would never rationally and freely choose to obey him if he did not hold a gun to our head. For Aristotle, this distinction between the merely voluntary, and the rational free choice, involves the difference between no freedom and true and real politics. Rousseau has nothing to say about the deliberative. Indeed, his General Will cannot engage in any deliberation. It cannot form any specific policy, and it may not oversee the implementation of any policy by itself. If Rousseau's General Will is simply an educational model, as Shklar argues, why can it not implement general policies? Why can it *not* deliberate? Rousseau's General Will is defined by Rousseau in such a way, that it is incapable and ineligible for both of these functions. And thus the General Will itself is *impotent*, if one is a person who believes in surrendering some personal preferences in order to serve a common good. Yet this is not Rousseau's point of view. Rousseau needs a central authority that lacks the power to command him to suffer a pain for the public good. In nothing does Rousseau believe less than in putting the needs of any community over his own. Rousseau believes the *reverse*.

According to Jean Jacques, the 'private' sphere is to be represented as the total absence of personal sacrifice. We have seen that this is the opposite of the truth. What is the truth is that Rousseau's philosophy will not dignify those commonly made sacrifices by the 'bourgeois' citizens. Rousseau cannot afford to concede that the small communities that antedate the founding of his state have fully developed codes of well-regulated personal sacrifice. Rousseau cannot dignify them because he wishes to smash their reality. Rousseau wishes to be able to represent the individual who comes to the gates of the Social Contract, as a perfectly *selfish* being. Rousseau needs to be able to represent the ordinary person this way, though it completely flies in the face of the truth. Rousseau needs to be able to represent the common person this way, i.e. as endlessly selfish, because Rousseau's General Will wants to leave that apocryphal person 'as free as before' after all the sacred ceremonies of the phony General Will are enacted.

Riley wants to view Rousseau in the context of ancient Sparta.<sup>41</sup> Riley does not deign to discuss the ancient Spartan outlook on life. It is not the view of Lycurgus that the central truth of life is suffering. It is not the view of Lycurgus that the fundamental story of the human being is solitary in the fight against possible suffering. For the Spartans, they prided themselves on their toughness and fighting in order that they may have friendship when free

from the drudgery of war. There is simply no way to square Rousseau's Emile with the Spartans. Emile would have been driven out of Sparta, as would Rousseau himself. This because Rousseau's values are so perverted in their commitment to the uselessly selfish, and because frankly Rousseau surrenders all human hopes for happiness in this world. One cannot accuse the Spartans of *that*.

We do not wish to obfuscate the issues, any issues. Either Rousseau is an apostle of Epicurean selfishness or he is not. If he is, the whole fable of the General Will can be stored away in moth balls and forgotten. Rousseau's General Will is a diversionary tactic. It performs shamanic ceremonies intoning values for the public good, but at every step of the way Rousseau's design defeats and thwarts the mere possibility of such a General Will in *practice*. Those who truly were renegades from the duties and obligations of their local communities now are to rule the roost. For *their* freedom has now been consecrated. Everybody else has lost theirs. The General Will, impotent by design, abdicates governing to an institution that is not bound by the General Will in any way. To the contrary: this institution is called 'Prince' by Rousseau for short. My understanding of the name here is a reference to Machiavelli's new prince, since Rousseau expressed admiration for Machiavelli in the *Social Contract* number one; and number two, because this 'government' which is to do the actual ruling in Rousseau's system is committed, by design, only to its members' selfish impulses.

## NOTES

1. *Emile*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979.
2. *Discourses on Livy*, II 1.
3. *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press, 2010, 143.
4. *Republic* 369b.
5. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1130a3. 'Therefore justice is essentially something human..'1137a30.
6. *Republic* 413c.
7. *Emile*, book 1, 66.
8. *Emile*, book 2, 91.
9. *Emile*, book 2, 83.
10. *Emile* book 2, 97.
11. *Emile*, book 2, 105, note.
12. *Emile*, book IV, 211.
13. *Emile*, book IV, 223, 224.
14. *Emile*, book IV, 214. 'This is how the affectionate passions are born of self-love and how the harmful and irascible passions are born of amour propre.'
15. *Emile*, book IV, 236.
16. *Ibid*.
17. *Emile*, book IV, 253.
18. *Political Fragment* ix. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, editors. *The Collected Works of Rousseau*, volume 4. Hanover: Dartmouth University Press, 1994, 52. For Allan Bloom's contrary argument, see 'Rousseau's Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism', 159:

'Rousseau connects large size with despotism.' In Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov, editors. *The Legacy of Rousseau*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

19. *Emile*, book III, 203.

20. *Emile*, book IV, 336.

21. *Emile* book III:179.

22. *Emile* V:364.

23. *Emile* book V:444.

24. *Emile* book V:391.

25. Judith N. Shklar. *Men & Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory*. Cambridge: 1985. 'What is strikingly novel is his insistence that one must choose between the two models, between man and the citizen. This necessity for choice, moreover, is not a call for a decision, but a criticism. It contains the core of Rousseau's diagnosis of mankind's psychic ills. All our self-created miseries stem from our mixed condition, our half natural and half social state' (5). 'The growth of his faculties, responding to an infinity of stimulants, takes any number of directions, and none of them brings him the felicity he seeks. Association with other men breeds artificial emotional needs, dependence, weakness, vanity, competitiveness, inequality and an unlimited number of other ills' (10). 'For the Social Contract was not meant to be a plan for any future society, but a standard for judging existing institutions. It was a yardstick, not a program' (17).

26. *Social Contract*, vi, p. 54. A new translation by Christopher Betts. Oxford: 2008.

27. *Social Contract* viii.

28. *Political Fragment* 9. In *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, volume 4. Edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: Dartmouth, 1994.

29. *Geneva Manuscript*, book 1, chapter ii.

30. *Geneva Manuscript*, book 1, chapter vi.

31. *Geneva Manuscript*, book 1 chapter vi.

32. *Geneva Manuscript*, book 1 chapter vii.

33. *The Social Contract*, book 2, chapter i.

34. *Social Contract* book 2, chapter iii-iv.

35. *Social Contract* book 3, chapter i. Rousseau, when he bestows the name of 'Prince' on the government as a whole, makes a reference to Venice, but I think the evocation of Machiavelli is more salient. For this Prince cannot be directly governed by the holy General Will. Not only that: but it, the government, is obliged to govern for its own private interests, the definition of injustice for students of Aristotle and Plato.

36. The *Social Contract* book 3, chapter x.

37. Allan Bloom. 'Rousseau's Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism'. In Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov, editors. *The Legacy of Rousseau*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 147.

38. Bloom, 'Rousseau's Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism', 146.

39. Jean Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract*. A new translation by Christopher Betts. Oxford University Press, 2008, 55.

40. Patrick Riley. 'Rousseau's General Will'. In Riley, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*. Cambridge University Press, 2001, 127.

41. Riley, 'The General Will', 126.



## Chapter Six

# Kant's Anthropology

Rousseau's *Emile* is a very apt reference point for Kant's cultural anthropology. *Emile* is a different kind of Epicurean. He retains the Epicurean contempt for emotionally involved relationships. *Emile* retains Epicurus's conviction, one sustained by the asocial models across Early Modern philosophy—that the individual is an island. The individual is emotionally and psychologically self-sufficient for the Epicurean, or should be. Friends are valued for utility. The boundaries of his life are his own personal pleasure and pain; and these are the causes for his conflict with natural society. Natural society limits the individual: it forces him to forsake certain pleasures, compels him to undergo certain pains, which the modern Epicurean revolts against. He will not suffer a pain for anyone else. He will not forgo a pleasure for anyone else's sake, regardless of what it is. He may choose to suffer a pain and he may choose to forgo a pleasure, but only for his own sake.

The embargo upon sense perception that we have examined in Kant, and that characterizes the Early Moderns as a group, is directly related to the cultural conflict indicated above. Ordinary opinion will never equate the good with the pleasant; ordinary opinion will never define all pain as evil. Ordinary opinion remains focused on particulars; and that is where the assault on sense perception strikes. It is the individual's perception of particular facts which actuate his moral emotions: and modern philosophy has decided that it knows better.

The secondary literature on Kant does not raise an eyebrow at the moral implications of the attack on the credibility of sense perception that the *First Critique* advances with such Herculean strength. No doubt this is because the attack on sense perception that Locke, Hume and Kant did so much to consolidate, has remained a foundation for the sciences of the twenty-first century. Those tomes raise so much resistance to the defense of sense-perception,

that the sciences have long since adopted those arguments as unquestionable shibboleths of inquiry.

The relationship between Kant's anthropological writings and his moral writings, is controversial. In the anthropology, Kant writes after the manner of Rousseau. Man is an animal, in Kant's estimation, and his perceptual faculties are allocated to the category of sub-human status. 'Human beings can thus be considered two-fold, as animal and as intelligence. As animal they are capable of sensations, impressions, and representations.'<sup>1</sup> Man's moral emotions are driven into this same category of disrepute. For his natural man, Kant seeks after something very like Rousseau's concept of virtue, 'prudence'. For Rousseau, self-preservation is the truth of human nature. It regards human relationships as first of all a danger to the self, to the self which allegedly can be happy without anyone else. We have demonstrated how Rousseau's theory of self-preservation breeds a moral philosophy in Emile. Everything that Emile does in his relationships with other people is premeditated: he is careful, he has been schooled to be ever so careful, never to let his guard down, lest his emotions become ensnared in what he regards as necessarily a trap. Kant's anthropology prepares the same way: the classical virtues of courage and justice and temperance are reduced to categories of 'temperament' that are denied a human status. In Kantian terminology, temperament belongs to man's animality. 'We can give a worth to passions in and of themselves, however if he has passions, the human being has no honor from this, for they lie in animality.'<sup>2</sup>

Kant, in his anthropological writings does not even bat an eye when he asserts, with conviction, that evil is the cause of good. It is necessary that human beings be warlike and contumacious with one another in the 'state of nature', Kant argues; for this conflict is what spurs human beings to set aside laziness and also to set aside their aggressive natures. Human beings' desires, jealousy, mistrust, violence, and propensity for enmity against those outside the family: all these attributes have a reason, and a relation to a purpose. 'God wants human beings should populate the entire world' (125).<sup>3</sup> 'In the same way, just as moral evil is an incentive of the good, so also is physical evil a spur to activity, which is all the more necessary since the human being is by nature lazy.'<sup>4</sup>

Conflict will be the educator. The proposition that civilization emerges as a response to human need, and interdependence, as opposed to quarrelling individual satellites of vanity and pride, is never given consideration. Kant speaks blithely, calmly, about the goodness of war, its positive effects. The commentators on Kant's *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent* rarely even mention this as a problem, or as a defect.

The trouble with man in the state of nature is his passions, for Kant. His feelings become a problem when he is placed in a social context. For interaction with others gives rise to situations, and situations give rise to predicament.



ments that require action, which are susceptible to the judgment of other people in their praise or blame. This is the supposed bondage from which Rousseau fled, from which Spinoza fled, and against which they formed their most potent weapons of argument. Kant is very much a part of this movement. The fact that feelings may be a rational response to a situation that actually exists is not talked about as even possible by Kant. This is due to the fact that the situations that exist have been thrust into the fog of the 'intuitions' of Kantian philosophy that envelop all perceptual evidence. The spigot of truth, the facts against which feelings and thoughts ought to be measured, is shut off.

In the anthropology, therefore, Kant is sculpting a Rousseauian individualist, whose expertise is how to use other people for his own ends. This is what 'prudence' amounts to. In his formally moral writings, Kant begins by repudiating the effect of one's actions, whenever morality is the issue. As if morality had a purpose that did not depend upon action. As if action is not the purpose of morality in many situations. As if it did not matter whether a human being's actions are effective responses to a factual situation, as if this did not matter at all. Kant does not think that it matters at all. In the *Groundwork* Kant announces this clearly. Kant's moral philosophy is interested in the making of laws, in the making of universal rules. Kant is resolved to propagate either a ready-made moral philosophy to meet all situations, or one that prevents the moral actor from diagnosing the particular facts of the situation that he is confronted with.

Kant celebrates his moral philosophy as one of 'freedom'. I do not think that this is how non-philosophers regard morality. When a human being is praised or blamed for acting or refusing to act in a certain situation, people do not say, 'I honor your freedom'. For moral emotions enforce *expectation*. Like it or not, moral emotions, as induced by perceived facts, have a coercive element. This is surely what philosophers in the Epicurean tradition rebel against most powerfully. Kant insists in his moral philosophy that he will obey no law that he has not given to himself.

It is a bit too convenient to view the human being who has not yet been socialized by Enlightenment institutions as a savage. The reader cannot dodge the question: either man is a political animal, or he is not. Either human beings are beings whose happiness depends on the *quality* of their relationships, i.e. their justness, their integrity—or they are not. The Kantian philosophy sells out the happiness of the human being, and with no trace of remorse. Evil is the cause of good, Kant argues; war is the path to peace. 'All of these perfections emerged from the maliciousness of the human mind, which first produced civil constraint.' . . . 'If human beings were meek and good-natured by nature, no civil constitution would have emerged.'<sup>5</sup> Selfishness brings about a public good. These are extraordinary claims to make for

the man who denies that human beings can know objects as ‘things in themselves’, for what they are.

If it is really true that the human being is selfish and consciously amoral, that the virtues of justice and courage and temperance and wisdom are essentially nothing more than sub-human instincts, then we should agree to this on the merits, ought we not? We should not cloud the issue with arguments such as Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, and Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, to demolish the reputation of the human mind for being able to know particular truths of fact. If it were really true that human beings could not know true facts about perishable objects, then it would be reckless to proceed to talk about the usefulness of evil in politics.

The embargo on sense perception is the dominant modus operandi of Early Modern philosophy, however. And for that reason we must regard the relationship between philosophy and politics as the dominant issue. When Kant celebrates the natural wisdom of war, and even of the human appetite for domination, as part of a clandestine natural plan for human benefit, we ought to check ourselves.

Individual human beings and even whole nations think little about the fact since while each pursues its own end and its own way, and one often contrary to another, they are proceeding unnoticed, as by a guiding thread, according to the aim of nature, which is unknown to them.<sup>6</sup>

We know that Kant despises, as Rousseau despises, the emotional coercion that is implicit in natural community. Before we contemplate whether the human race is really warlike by nature, we must contemplate whether these philosophers by conviction are at war with the generality of the human race. I think that the philosophical assaults on the integrity of sense perception are enough evidence to sustain this claim.

Scholars of Kant’s anthropology are particularly interested in how the discussion of ‘natural man’, i.e. empirical psychology, can possibly be made to fit with the a priori law of the categorical imperative. In other words, how do the anthropological writings, on humankind, on race, on the sexes, and on the formation of states and civil constitutions, relate to the abstract moral philosophy that is developed in Kant’s expressly moral writings? Scholars tend to view Kant’s categorical imperative in the way Rousseau wanted readers to view his social contract: as a call to a more dignified and ‘ennobled’ existence. Yet there is no ennobling element in Kant’s cultural anthropology. The celebration of evil as the cause of good is an invitation to debasement, a flattering wink at viciousness, an excuse for every crime that has ever been committed against the human race and for all the ones to come.

Reading Kant's cultural writings, one can begin to see easily enough how Kant's categorical imperative and his supposedly idealistic moral philosophy square with the anthropology. If we return to *Emile*, we see that he views all social relationships as a struggle for power. The stronger has the victory. This is the point of view that *Emile* has been raised to expect. He is made to imagine that this is his own discovery. Deceit and fraud are available to him as ready means to overpower his fellows in exchange. Yet there is a rule. Every individual is free to use all of his powers to overcome and subdue his fellows, so long as he does not cross a certain line: he must get them to consent to his dominion. He must enlist their submission into his conquests.

For Kant, nature is only concerned about the human race as a 'species'. It is not concerned with the fate of individuals. 'The means nature employs in order to bring about the development of all predispositions is their antagonism in society, only insofar as the latter is in the end the cause of their lawful order.'<sup>7</sup> According to Kant in his anthropological writings, nature harbors a certain number of 'predispositions' or germs for the human race. Nature is anxious that all of the predispositions or germs are realized, i.e. have the chance to unfold or develop. 'Thanks be to nature, therefore, for the incompatibility, for the spiteful competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess or even to dominate. For without them all the excellent natural predispositions in humanity would eventually slumber undeveloped' (112). It doesn't make a difference to nature, Kant argues, what the fate of particular individuals is. In Aristotle's philosophy, there are no 'predispositions' or 'germs' to be realized. People may have aptitudes, but aptitudes do not develop by mere generation or reproduction. Determination and labor are necessary to lift any individuals' work into a craft or art. The moral character of the human being is also something that for Aristotle, is largely *up to individuals*. No 'predispositions' determine what sort of character a human being shall have.<sup>8</sup> Choice and struggle determine what sort of character an individual shall have. Thus for Plato and Aristotle one does not meet with this cavalier attitude that subtracts concern from the story of individual lives. For Kant it is the 'species' that matters, and by that logic one can see how easily Kant is reconciled to war as a casual instrument of progress.

The categorical imperative need not be viewed as some superhuman or 'a priori' moral code, a theory of equality which reaches for the stars. That would hardly square with the empirical anthropology that Kant repeatedly celebrates, which basically eliminates the development of human character as the true foundation for civil life. Instead of character, unbridled competition and 'spiteful' animosity between individuals in society is celebrated as the road nature has ordained to lead us all to civilization. Hobbes is the truest author of this kind of civil society. In Hobbes's civil society, the doctrine of equity is extinguished. Naked struggles for power are certified in the new economic order. Hobbes is honest enough to provide us with an amended

roster of virtues. Hobbes's virtues are all larded with selfishness and ignobility. Kant's categorical imperative trades in the same means, but it wants to provide the individual with a dignity that he cannot earn in the newly minted social order. It is as if Kant wants to proclaim that the human race is dignified, through his skill of argumentation, even as he justifies every criminal action out of the other side of his mouth.

Kant's writings on anthropology extend to essays on race, gender, and nationality. Kant, when he speaks of the human race, refers to nature's 'predispositions', or 'germs'. For Kant, nature simply has a certain bounty of germs or predispositions that it wants to bring to fruition. These germs do not need the mediation of the individual striving for character. To the contrary: simply stirring the pot of the human passions, in economic conflict as in outright war, serves the purpose. Kant does not accept Aristotle's distinction between the disposition of character that a human being must achieve in order to be happy and virtuous, and merely accidental traits and appetites. For Kant, there is no difference between the two.

Many scholars have found it difficult to square the categorical imperative, and its alleged a priori pedigree, with the cunning of nature found in Kant's anthropology. The categorical imperative, as most scholars observe, is a radically egalitarian philosophy.<sup>9</sup> However, it is not necessary that what is egalitarian is automatically good. If the true substance of the categorical imperative is Hobbesian selfishness, then nature itself in Kant could be seen to aim at the kind of social contract that Hobbes ascribes to natural reason (fear). Kant does make the argument that suffering leads from the state of war to the civil constitution, and it is not reckless to equate Kant's theory of the civil constitution with the categorical imperative. It would amount to a mutual non-aggression pact, a perfectly Epicurean institution.

Kant, in his writing on 'Perpetual Peace', indicates that a 'race of devils' is sufficient to reach the social order of Kant's imagination. 'As hard as it may sound, the problem of setting up a state can be solved by a nation of devils, (so long as they possess understanding).'<sup>10</sup> All that the devils will need is prudence, the prudence of Kant's anthropology, to prefer survival to open war. Kant makes no arguments about subduing passions, about the soul committing itself to truth instead of to blind ambition. Kant, like Hobbes, thinks that institutions can take the place of character. The institutions of the republican form of government that Kant idolizes amount to tempered selfishness. Nobody will be allowed to use his power to dominate anybody else. Yet the central government must be stronger than all others in order to enforce this will. What will make the central governor just, especially in Kant's society where character and virtue have been legislated out of existence? Scholars write that this form of republic will depend upon righteous politicians, but Hobbes is more honest. Even if the government turns out to be a den of thieves, its superior power would be the guarantee for the peace-

fulness of society. Even if the central power is arbitrary, Hobbes would argue, the people would have to put up with it based on their 'natural reason'.

Kant's 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent' is very Hobbesian. Nature wants the wars, in Kant's view. It is the only way that nature can shake free all of the predispositions and germs that are locked into the human species. These predispositions and germs are ready made. They are only liberated into existence by violent motion for Kant, and they seem to be the fruits of civilization. They involve skills, ambitions, selfishness, even the desire to dominate. The desire to tyrannize itself plays a useful role in Kant's theory of history. The difference between good and evil is erased. This would not be such an easy project if we were looking at specific individuals in history and their circumstances. Truth of fact would interfere with this somewhat reckless and romantic view of social convulsion. Yet the embargo upon perception remains in place. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a powerful lock on the door.

Kant does say, in the lectures, that anthropology is a kind of master science. It concerns 'prudence', i.e. how a man ought to use the knowledge that he has; and Kant enumerates both the speculative metaphysics of the *First Critique*, and the moral metaphysics of the writings noted above, as parts of that knowledge that the art of prudence must make use of.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, in the anthropological lectures, Kant makes it sound as if the art of prudence takes supreme place above the transcendental critiques of both kinds. Prudence, as Kant retails it in the anthropological writings, is an answer to Rousseau's question, the question that he forever confronts Emile with: 'what is it good for?' Rousseau doesn't want Emile to bother himself about any other sort of knowledge.

## OTHER ENLIGHTENMENT ANTHROPOLOGIES

Scholars argue that Kant is a pioneer in the field of anthropology. Perhaps in some technical disciplinary sense, this observation is correct. It is not true substantively. Plato and Aristotle have anthropologies of man. Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Rousseau all have anthropologies of man. Simply to indicate one, we can take Machiavelli as an example. Machiavelli's anthropology begins, in theory if not chronologically, with a metaphysical portrait of the human being. Nature, Machiavelli argues in two places in the *Discourses on Livy*, made man so that he is capable of desiring everything. However, nature has also made man in such a way that he is unable to obtain everything. Therefore, man's natural estate, for Machiavelli, is a disgust for what one has, and the feeling that one must obtain more in order to enjoy what one has.<sup>12</sup>

Machiavelli divides the human race up into two sectors: the few strong, and the many weak. The many weak wish to protect what they have, and they do not seek to rule others. The few strong wish to impose their will upon the others, and to acquire the things that belong to others for themselves. In Machiavelli's anthropology, though this is not what he calls it, the few alone have the initiative and executive skill needed to command. Government for Machiavelli is about command. Therefore human society will hinge upon the kind of leadership that it obtains, and the terms upon which leadership is obtained.

Machiavelli does not have much respect for the majority of the human race. He regards it as credulous and easily overpowered. 'For the vulgar are taken in by the appearance and the outcome of a thing, and in the world there is no one but the vulgar.'<sup>13</sup> It is true in Machiavelli's eyes that the ordinary human being will toss his life to the hazard if his pride or honor are assaulted. Yet the new prince whom Machiavelli seeks to educate can easily get around this danger. They can easily shield themselves from scrutiny and dispatch their hirelings or creatures to do the dirty work. It is the purpose of Machiavelli's political science to instruct new princes on how to make themselves indispensable to their subject peoples. For Machiavelli's political science, which departs slightly from his anthropology, the people must be driven into a condition of deranged passion as a more or less normal state of affairs, in order for the new prince to make of the state what he regards it to be: his personal property and security.

Machiavelli's anthropology resumes. The new princes seek to acquire, i.e. they seek to enforce a natural right to acquisition, which is justified by their 'need'. Machiavelli lays it down as a legitimate principle, that it is a common and natural need for people to acquire, to take what is not theirs.<sup>14</sup> In Machiavelli's cultural metaphysics, all objects of property, including governments, are originally acquired through fraud and force. Therefore suspicion is raised against those people who argue that the state ought to protect what people already have; the state should be put at the service of the opposite impulse, the desire to acquire. Machiavelli admits that he cannot provide effective reasons for this preference, so he decides to call the impulse of acquisition the more 'honorable' impulse, as compared to those who desire merely to preserve what they have.

The anthropology of Hobbes follows a similar pattern. There are some conceptual innovations, but the story of man is told in a similar way. In the beginning, Hobbes argues, all human beings are equal, in the state of nature. Man's experience of life is one of desperation: nature has forced him into the world, against his will, and he finds himself to be at the world's mercy. Other people are also seeking for their preservation, and this makes the state of nature a violent place. Hobbes does not seem to object so much to the clashing of wills in his state of nature. After all, if the weaker party simply

accepts that the stronger must rule, then there would be no state of war. Hobbes singles out for blame those individuals that Kant describes as 'cholerick', i.e. those who 'challenge honor and respect'.<sup>15</sup> These individuals are the true cause of the state of war in Hobbes's mind. Hobbes adapts Machiavelli's metaphysical principle about human nature in the *Leviathan*. All human beings in the state of nature, Hobbes argues, have the right to self-preservation. In the state of nature, each man is the sole judge as to what he needs in order to survive; and he is therefore the sole judge as to what he has a right to take in the state of nature, as he is the sole judge as to what means are necessary to realize his goals.

The crisis in Hobbes's state of nature is anthropological. Some of the people in the state of nature will not submit to stronger opponents. In fact, they will grow angry, and raise questions of 'honor', and great passions. These are the ones whom Hobbes blames for the state of war in the state of nature: the people who display pride and courage and who speak of honor. In Hobbes's state of nature, courage and anger have no place. These are regarded as delusions of grandeur, as disordered expectations as to how other men should treat one. Hobbes's state of nature has a natural regimen of virtues, and courage and justice do not make an appearance on the list. Honor, however, does make an appearance. That is honorable, Hobbes proclaims, which testifies to great strength, no matter how that strength is obtained or wielded. 'Nor does it alter the case of honor, whether than action (so it be great and difficult, and consequently a sign of much power) be just or unjust; for honor consisteth only in the opinion of power.'<sup>16</sup> Power is the crowning virtue in Hobbes's anthropology, his anthropology of 'equality'. Hobbes also makes it clear, that the only equality he is talking about in the state of nature is an equal power of body. Any man can kill any other man, if not by direct confrontation then by stealth. Yet in matters of the mind, especially science, Hobbes argues, equality does not play a role. Since Hobbes's entire anthropology and political science are such sciences of the mind, perched upon an inequality of power, the political culture is going to involve elements of Machiavelli's cunning and deceit. All is fair in war, Machiavelli argues, and all is honorable in war.

## METAPHYSICS IN KANT'S ANTHROPOLOGY

Scholars seem to be more or less agreed that there is no metaphysics in Kant's anthropological writings and lectures. This is mistaken. In both the lectures and in the *Pragmatic Anthropology*, Kant begins the presentations with reference to the human mind and what it is eligible to know. Sense perception, which for Plato and Aristotle is the original conduit of knowledge, is driven out of repute by Kant's anthropological writings. Sensibility

does not have the power to know objects for what they are in themselves, for Kant. The premises of the *First Critique* are therefore transferred to the anthropological work. In fact, in the lectures of the 1770s, one can see the development of Kant's *First Critique* in its discussion of sensible information, the understanding, and the faculty of judgment.

Human beings, if one is taking the Platonic point of view as regards sense perception, ought not to be confused with other orders of natural being. The human being, even the humblest minds among us, are intelligent for Plato. They discern *forms*, or kinds in nature. The human being remembers forms in his soul, and he therefore is capable of knowing his world in a much more powerful way than animals who are dependent on instincts. It will not do to categorize the human being as a mere creature of 'habit', for no habit informs the individual as to the difference between a bird and a crocodile, between a rock and a river, or enables the individual to recognize any one of the above. Perception is distinctly human for Plato, as it is for Aquinas; but for Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and Kant, this understanding of the human being is denied.

Rousseau's observations in the *Emile*, that life is essentially meaningless, that the world is a great ball of nothingness, is exactly where Kant picks up his anthropology. This is a radical disposition. 'In general, human life and its activities is a game.' 'If in society one presents subjects about which one is arguing, thoroughly and as settled, it is necessary that one then come up with an inspiration, and thereby put an end to the contentions and exhaustive investigation. They all start to laugh about it, the grave look ceases, and thereby one promotes the purpose of society, which is not at all that it settle important subjects, but to amuse oneself.'<sup>17</sup> It is the disposition of the Enlightenment. It has been in evidence since Epicurus promised to spit on the world at the time of his death, as if to deny that he had ever allowed himself to care for anything or anyone in it. All experiences for Epicurus are mere factoids to manage, to be appraised in terms of individual serenity and nothing more. No event, and no object shall be permitted to draw the human being, if he is a Kantian sage, out of his 'equanimity'. This is no different than Rousseau. It is also near enough to Machiavelli. Machiavelli's version of the Epicurean equation is slightly different: it would read more like, 'since life is meaningless, and since I have been thrust into this meaningless arena where all human hopes are empty, I assert the right to pursue any and all impulses which might give me diversion and pleasure, including political command.'

### PHILOSOPHY AS 'INVENTION'

Kant insists that philosophy is an art of 'invention'. In other words, the philosopher is a creator, a 'genius'.<sup>18</sup> He cannot teach his creations to others,



that they may know of them. In other words, Kant denies that his philosophy can be really taught. Kant even denies that the art of judgment can be really taught. This definition of philosophy could not be farther from Plato's. For Plato, philosophy is the pursuit of truth. For Aristotle's metaphysics, the pursuit of philosophy is the pursuit of knowing those things in the world that have the most *being*. For Plato, philosophy is called into being in the natural city, by human need, not by philosophical diversion or entertainment. For Aristotle, any knowledge can be taught, and to be able to teach it is the one true indication of the man who knows.

Kant prefigures the arguments of his critical period in the Friedlander anthropology. In other words, he makes a sketch of the human mind such as the *First Critique* will take up and accomplish with infinitely more power. The sense organs, in Kant's philosophy, are not capable of judging external objects. They do not have the power of judgment. Only the understanding has the power of judgment, but these powers of understanding are not taking their cue from the reports made by the senses. Kant describes the senses in this anthropology as possessed of an 'executive function'; in other words, they are carrying out directives from the understanding.<sup>19</sup> In reality, in truth, the understanding is dependent upon perception to learn what the beings *are*. Kant does not care what the beings are. He is not about to acknowledge a fact to which he would thereafter be subject, as an impediment to his action or argument. Perception in reality is both active and passive: it is open to what the objects are, but it is discriminating in that the soul recognizes the objects through the sense organs.

## KANT ON THE TELEOLOGY OF NATURE

Kant's lectures on anthropology prefigure the Copernican turn, as it were. The *First Critique* is certainly concerned with nature. The understanding or theory of the understanding presented by Kant presumes to actually 'give laws to nature', which indicates that the understanding and nature equal one another in content. 'It consists in this, that our fortune does not depend on outer things, rather things have the worth which we give them.'<sup>20</sup> If the mind gives laws to nature, then the definition of a substance in the mind must determine what a substance (truly real being) can be in nature. For Kant, in the *First Critique*, those substances are eternal: they may be created by God, but they are not subject to decay or destruction. If they are truly eternal, then they do not have the potentiality to *become* anything, or to cease to be anything. 'Telos' or patterns of development are thus ruled out of the *First Critique*.

The *Third Critique* is more directly about nature. Kant makes it clear, in the *Third Critique*, that the very employment of the language of teleology is

based on purely human assumptions which are ineligible to intrude on the province of the science laid down by the mind in the *First Critique*. Teleology is a way of thinking about nature that is helpful to human beings in their attempt to make use of nature; but that does not allow for the possibility that nature itself *really* has teleology. Kant in fact insists, that while the human mind is driven to assume teleology, for utilitarian or pragmatic purposes, that the mind is nevertheless obligated to demarcate this teleological view of nature apart from true science, which remains wedded to ‘mechanism’, i.e. *meaningless* nature.

Kant’s discussion of ‘predispositions’ and ‘germs’ in the human race certainly does not imply teleology. The human race does not need to reach for these predispositions, or to subject themselves to any serious discipline and learning in order to achieve them. They are already predetermined, and violent motion in society simply sifts them out, and allows them to be articulated. Kant’s analysis of the races indicates that there are many ignoble predispositions and germs as well. Since these predispositions of Kant’s analysis cannot be altered by any human effort or character, but simply emerge in the heat of social movement, the ignoble predispositions such as laziness and ignorance are permanent fates. Kant’s writings on race are a bit beyond our purpose here, but they well illustrate the point that I am making. Kant’s views on human beings with dark skin are appalling, but all the more so due to the fatalistic and supposedly scientific explanation that he drapes them in.

We can notice that, when the human context switches to the domain of ‘freedom’ where man is his own cause, things have not really changed for the Kantian philosopher: as a mere observer of nature, he is already assigning laws to nature. What has changed then, in the supposedly moral sphere, where Kant and his ilk are now giving laws to themselves? They are lawgivers in both contexts. Is there any reason to assume that the categorical imperative is involved with any telos? We have already indicated that according to Kant’s lights there is no telos in nature, and to the degree that man is embodied, he is part of nature. Kant has made it clear that human emotions too belong to ‘animality’, not to ‘freedom’. Therefore any emotions that are generated through the categorical imperative must also have a pragmatic aspect. For the domain of ‘freedom’ is in truth in Kant, nothing but a way to manage the emotions that he has consigned to the animalistic aspect, the alleged animalistic aspect of human beings (which includes sense perception).

## KANT'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL COSMOPOLITANISM

Robert Louden makes the argument that Kant has a serious commitment to virtue ethics, and that his anthropological work figures significantly into Kant's moral philosophy.<sup>21</sup> One of the major aspects of Kant's anthropology that Louden investigates is his cosmopolitan argument. Kant argues that nature itself propels the human race forward by a certain trajectory of development. First, nature imbues human beings with an anti-social nature which determines roughly half of their personalities. The anti-social impulses constitute the original state of nature and the condition of natural right. With each individual asserting natural right, a state of war exists. This leads savage man, in Kant's and Rousseau's formulations, towards civil constitutions. Kant simply extends the argument the next step of the way. There will be multiple civil constitutions in the world. Due to the anti-social impulses even of the human beings organized in a civil constitution, as regards other peoples, war will be nature's remedy for the lack of still larger international federations. In accordance with Kant's logic, nature would be stoking the fires of war within every human political organization that did not include the entirety of the human race. Louden does not raise one eyebrow at Kant's argument to the effect that nature and necessity are the causes of war, or that war is therefore a purifying element in international relations.

Rousseau regards passions, that nemesis of Kant's state of nature, as a positive enslavement for Emile. We have investigated the state of nature theory of Rousseau and Kant both above. We have enumerated the different temperaments that Kant finds in his state of nature, and we have enumerated the temperament that Kant regards as the most civilized and moral: the one that feels virtually nothing for the others. Kant writes:

Still further: if nature had placed little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if (otherwise honest) he were by temperament cold and indifferent to the suffering of others. If nature had not actually formed such a man (who would truly not be its worst product) to be a friend of humanity, would he still not find within himself a source from which to give himself a higher worth than that of a good-natured temperament may be? Certainly!<sup>22</sup>

Louden notes Rousseau's influence on Kant's anthropology, but he has not taken the lesson. When Kant argues that 'nature' imbues the human race with a warlike disposition towards one another, with a positive telos or goal, he is actually expressing his point of view as a phlegmatic philosopher who dreads the passions that relationships with other people may evoke in him. The definition of man's natural estate as a state of war provides the Kantian philosopher with that cover. It enables him to shift the responsibility for war onto the shoulders of the rest of the human race, when it is really the *philosophers'* contribution to society. It is the Kantian species of philosopher who

cannot live with the rest of the human race as it is: because the people take life too seriously, rather than as a meaningless game. Rousseau breeds pity in the breast of his Emile to immunize him against any affection or interaction with the other people; meanwhile, the pity that Rousseau has taught him to rely upon in his interactions with the others will indeed stoke resentment and perhaps war.

### ALIX COHEN, KANT AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

The secondary literature on Kant's anthropology is rather recent, as this is not an area of Kant studies that has long been developed. Scholars reading Kant's anthropology view it as posing something of a quandary for Kant. How does Kant's pragmatic anthropology, for example, fit together with the principles of freedom that hold in the moral writings, such as the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*? These latter works seem to delimit human freedom to a ground that is wholly liberated from natural impulses. Yet in the pragmatic anthropology human interests are discussed in terms of better and worse choices being made *within* the domain of natural impulses, at least partly.

This view of Kant's work insists that the domain of his moral philosophy is wholly unrelated to human natural impulses. Kant in this context is thought to be defining nature as the domain of bondage, or the radically unfree. As Alix Cohen notes, Kant is even unwilling to say that human actions, inspired by free deliberative thought, can possibly escape the vise of deterministic causes.

As is well known, Kant has often been described as defending problematic, if not implausible views on the relationship between natural freedom and determinism. He has even been portrayed as claiming that our free actions somehow occur outside of time, in an intelligible world, whilst their effects, in the empirical world, are completely determined by natural laws.<sup>23</sup>

The human being in Kant's portrait, Cohen argues, is sometimes thought to have freedom only in a domain beyond time. That is a pretty fitting estimation of Kant's quality of freedom. Yet this whole discussion is off the track. Kant's metaphysics of mind, which extends to the categorical imperative, is not aloof from natural impulses after all.

The issue is Kant's definition of human perception. Candidly, Kant takes away the legitimacy of human perception. Kant denies that we can know what objects are in themselves, and if we can't know what objects are in themselves it would be very hard to be able to make use of them correctly. Yet we reiterate. Kant takes away the authority from human perception. It is not a fact coeval with human sentience that the perceptual faculties are impo-

tent or deluded or simply ignorant. The generality of the human race would never accept this formulation if it were put to them on any referendum or ballot, simply because they would dismiss it as an absurd proposition. People trust their eyes and ears and the mind that employs these sensory faculties as the first rank of *original* evidence; and so too, for that matter, do Plato and Aristotle. That is not bad company to be in. My point is that Kant is taking the initiative in attacking the veracity of sense perception. He stands in the tradition of Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Hume. What all of these philosophers strenuously object to is not that the human being can correctly identify a fork and distinguish it correctly from a potato. What this genealogy of philosophers truly objects to is the moral opinions and customary convictions that people develop through their experience of the world, including the experience that is passed on in customary ways. Kant's attack on perception, in the Epicurean manner, is inspired by a *moral attitude*. Kant, very much like David Hume, despises those restraints and moral judgments that the community sets forth of its own powers and faculties.

To be liberated from those mores is the principal cause of Kant's entire philosophy. I do not see how one can call such a cause distinct from *natural desires*. Kant wants an excess of liberty for himself. The entire tilt of his categorical imperative, as we will examine below, and like Rousseau's General Will, is in favor of the individual who is individualistic against the established common norms which are beholden to ordinary *human judgment*. Thus, it is first of all wrong to set up a dichotomy between Kant's philosophy of mind, as a domain of lofty metaphysics, and natural impulses, when in fact Kant's entire attraction to the atomist philosophy is inspired by a contemptuous attitude towards ordinary moral opinions. Kant's desires are excessive, incontinent even, just as the Early Modern attack on the veracity of sense perception is morally motivated and incontinent.

Cohen thinks that she must find some way to reconcile Kant's anthropology with the allegedly lofty domain of freedom that he sets forth. 'The aim of this chapter is to address these issues in order to support the claim that Kant's anthropology is compatible with his account of freedom.'<sup>24</sup> We have already called attention to the peculiar drift of Kant's moral philosophy, in its emphasis on *autonomy*. Kant's insistence that the moral law is something that the individual gives to oneself is a page borrowed right out of Rousseau. Just as the individual conceived of by Rousseau at the gates of the Social Contract, full of undignified selfish habits, retains those habits easily inside the alleged sanctum and purification of the *Social Contract*—just as selfishness, and the great law of self-preservation, the true moral polestar of the Early Moderns, blends effortlessly with the seemingly majestic structures of Rousseau's Social Contract and Kant's Categorical Imperative, we still will see that in both instances the individual remains obedient only to himself and the moral law that he gives to himself. He does not accept any common bond with the

others as the source of the moral law. Kant rejects moral interdependence deep down the same way that Rousseau does.

The Social Contract and the Categorical Imperative are public relations instruments. Kant, as we will see, cannot produce one single example of its functioning, and we have already evaluated Rousseau's house of mirrors. The anthropology is not meant for public circulation. It reveals how little Kant cares for the human race, how easily he surrenders it to the most violent processes, even though he is quick to *credit* 'nature' for these processes. Hence in response to Cohen, we can say that there is indeed freedom for some in Kant's domain of nature. The entire metaphysics of nature, which Kant seeks to convert into a mandatory set of beliefs as to what human thinking can be, can be traced to Kant's determination to disenfranchise the faculties of judgment and perception native to the ordinary human being. The reason for this disenfranchisement is so that *Kant* may be free, in the Rousseauian sense. Therefore the point that we wish to make is that Kant's own quite empirical and *natural* imperative of freedom is conspicuous in every layer of his philosophy of mind and metaphysics. It is also relevant to note that the method that Kant employs in the domain of mind, i.e. the claim that there are a priori 'rules' which predetermine what can be thought, is the very same cradle that Kant's moral imperatives are rocking in. So there really is no conflict at all between Kant's anthropology and his moral philosophy of freedom. The truth of the matter is that the deepest philosophy of freedom in all of Kant's work is manifest in his categories of the *metaphysics of mind*. This is the point of leverage from which Kant can seek to pursue the culture within which he himself will be most comfortable.

#### PAUL GUYER ON KANT'S ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE INSTINCT FOR FREEDOM

Guyer is looking at Kant's anthropology in a very different context than Cohen. Cohen is worried about the ability of natural impulses (the anthropology) to mix as it were or be consistent with, the allegedly non-natural reason of the morality and freedom in the categorical imperative. Guyer shares some of Cohen's concern. Guyer, in other words, tries to measure whether the anthropology is compatible with the moral writings.

What I will argue is that while Kant asserted the existence of a powerful inclination to one's *own* freedom as the condition of the possibility of one's own *happiness* early in the series of anthropology lectures that have survived, it was why only later that he introduced the idea that freedom is more than this, but also something of intrinsic value suited to be an end in itself.<sup>25</sup>

To this degree they are in agreement. Yet Guyer's account of Kant's morality is more powerfully articulated as 'freedom' being the principal end of the human being. This is a seemingly odd formulation, to make freedom and not happiness the end of human existence. Aristotle recognizes happiness as the good that is the final end, and not a means to any other in his *Nichomachean Ethics*:

Now such a thing, happiness, is held to be; for this we choose always for itself and never for the sake of something else; but honor, pleasure, reason, and every excellence we choose for themselves . . . but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that through them we will be happy.<sup>26</sup>

Yet we are dealing with Kant here, and it is not off the mark to describe his 'summum bonum', as Guyer indeed documents, as being freedom. There is an American pop song from several decades ago that has a line in it: 'freedom is just another word for, nothing left to lose'. In fact, it is easily possible to construe freedom as a very impoverished final end or summum bonum. According to Guyer, Kant regards freedom as the ultimate end of the human being.

Kant does not explain why freedom makes us ends in themselves, but with the help of the lectures on ethics we can at least figure out what he means by saying that reason is the means to this end: reason is the faculty that allows us to formulate consistent rules, so it is reason that allows us to figure out how to make sure that freedom is consistently treated as an end in itself when we have the possibility of multiple exercises of freedom and multiple free agents before us, as we always do.<sup>27</sup>

This too Guyer supplies evidence for. Immediately, we think of Rousseau and Emile. Rousseau was willing to crush the freedom of his charge, Emile, to an extraordinary degree, in order to fit Emile's character for the kind of social interaction that Rousseau himself prefers. One where Rousseau is either in total command (of a helpless child denied all other sources of direction), or of a fully-grown man who has been trained to shun all human attachments, and to bound his deepest thoughts with the question: 'what is it good for?' Guyer states that Kant has definitely developed the imperative of human freedom in his anthropology lectures. Yet when it comes time to travel in our minds over to the moral writings, and the categorical imperative, how shall we reconcile that to the impulse of freedom as the fount of morality itself? Guyer has an answer. In the anthropology, man is only concerned with his own freedom. In the categorical imperative, man is concerned equally with the maximum amount of freedom for all people, himself included but not exclusively its possessor.<sup>28</sup>

Thus for Guyer the anthropology is important because Kant has made freedom the imperative or natural imperative of the human being; and even if Kant never fully develops how this instinct for freedom becomes the abstract theoretical, rational commitment to everyone's freedom, that does not mean that it cannot be done. The first thing that needs to be discussed is freedom as the summum bonum. I agree that this is Kant's summum bonum. I disagree with Guyer's indication that freedom is morality; that to espouse everyone's freedom is to espouse the rational use of everyone's most human faculties. We can point out that 'freedom' is not even numbered among the classical virtues. There is justice, there is wisdom, there is courage, and there is temperance. In three of these virtues, the individual faces obligations and duties which may well discount his 'freedom' if by freedom we mean liberty. To be just certainly does away with one's freedom to exploit others economically or politically. To be brave means that one must face pain, endure pain, for the sake of just goals. For Plato, the four virtues must either all exist together at the same time, or no one of them can be present. Temperance means self-denial of the appetites, where those appetites exceed what is good for the body, and threaten to interfere with the judgment that belongs to the soul alone. Wisdom is the insight that these are the foundations for a happy life. These virtues indicate the content of a happy and free life: above all justice. Yet Kant has chosen freedom as his highest good.

This is extremely modern. It follows in the light of Hobbes, who starts out with a boundless natural right to everything, indeed to the whole world. From this most radical freedom, individuals are organized to surrender parts of their natural liberty, but never all of it; and natural liberty or right remains the moral polestar for the individual in the whole moral political system. Hobbes's individuals, in the degree of freedom left to them inside the Leviathan state, are free to exploit one another with ruthless disdain, so long as no express law stands in the way. Contract in Hobbes emerges as a form of conquest in that economy. Hobbesian natural right subverts justice, utterly condemns courage as any sort of duty, and the very last thing it values is temperance. Individuals with modest wants, in Hobbes's view in the *Leviathan*, are dopes and feeble-minded people. It is no secret that Kant has followed Hobbes in his own *Metaphysics of Morals* as we will see in its place. Hobbes writes:

The passions that most of all cause the differences of wit, are principally the more or lesse desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honor. All of which may be reduced to the first, that is desire for power. For riches, knowledge and honor are but several sorts of power. And therefore a man who has no great passion for any of these things, though he may be so farre a good man, as to be free from giving offense; yet he cannot have either a great fancy, or much judgment.<sup>29</sup>



Why would freedom be the greatest good for the human being, the end which is not also a means? As we have said, there are an endless number of ways in which freedom can be employed which have nothing to do with being human. Rape, plunder, betrayal, treachery, 'acquisition' In the Machiavellian sense: even the betrayal of whole peoples into bondage with the art of one's pen. Where Guyer would have trouble is in demonstrating that Kant's commitment to freedom really does square with morality simpliciter. Kant's morality is another matter. Kant's morality is really 'autonomy', which is very like, we can almost say it is exactly like, Rousseau's ultimate imperative of self-preservation, the love he has for himself.

We must also say that Guyer has exaggerated the degree to which Kant is committed to human freedom in his anthropology lectures. Or rather, Guyer does not reveal what this 'freedom' actually amounts to. Kant makes it very clear that what is chaos and mayhem to human beings, actually reflects *nature's purposes* in the anthropology lectures. Greed, envy, hatred, conspiracy, even disease and invasion are experienced by human beings as ugly things, as founts of misery. But Kant's nature employs these and any other means merely in order to shake up the alleged gene pool in the human race, to shake free its latent energies and powers or 'germs'. It does not bother Kant in the least that this is how nature goes about improving the human race behind the backs of human beings as it were. We do not suppose that Kant himself will be at the mercy of these forces, or people schooled in his philosophy. They are drilled in the self-preservation which is their god. They have no attachments to other people, this class of individuals, which Kant identifies as a special group in his anthropology lectures. This group is bemused by human concerns. It stands aloof from them, much like Emile stands aloof from the suffering of the exploited workers he is led to observe.

Guyer tries to paint a dignified picture of freedom in Kant's anthropology lectures, but this is a fable. It is very easy to reconcile the helplessness of most people in Kant's anthropology with his moral writings then. Because Kant's categorical imperative, while it categorically dismisses every last human feeling and affect regarding the matters of fact with which sensory judgment makes us familiar, cannot itself prove that it functions in one single example, as a way to guide us through the most rudimentary sort of common problem involving freedom and dare we say it, justice.

#### HENRY ALLISON ON KANT'S 'IDEA FOR A UNIVERSAL HISTORY . . .'

The questions raised by the anthropology segue into Kant's philosophy of history. If anthropology is a study of the impulses and causes of human behavior, and instincts, the study of history is a subject that follows naturally

as a matter of course. Allison points this out by referring to Kant's obsession with the newly developed science of statistics, charting births, deaths, marriages, and so on and so forth. What Allison would like to examine, amid this discussion of alleged human 'asocial sociality', is the idea of 'telos' in history. In other words, Allison wants to examine the notion of ultimate goals and worthwhile and fulfilling goals at that in Kant's *Universal History*.

Prima facie, this seems an odd discussion to be having. For Kant originally started out with an Epicurean natural science; and the 'categories' of the *First Critique* sustain those principles. 'Phenomena' can only be bodies that do not come into being or pass away; these same bodies are obliged to exist in conditions of causal community with all other substances, i.e. they cannot exist *apart* or have their own individual careers. This all complements Kant's transcendental aesthetic which makes human beings lost wanderers in nature, bereft of accurate knowledge of the objects around them, limited to mere 'appearances' and 'representations'. Philosophical thought, in this model of Kant's, has the advantage of freedom, of spontaneity. This is, as we have discussed above, a worthless freedom which is not deserving of the name in a study of metaphysical principles, since in the area of knowledge, where true or false is the issue, 'spontaneity' is not relevant. True and false depend upon what the objects actually are, and Kant's a priori claims to knowledge are bereft of proof. Kant refuses to explain where his atomistic shibboleths come from, but he does insist that they cannot be refuted. In that he speaks incorrectly.

Allison makes a pivot briefly, to discussing Kant's *First Critique*; but this is quickly set aside as barely relevant. It is the *Third Critique*, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that is relevant for this discussion of teleology in Kant's theory of history. Allison wants to make the claim that Kant does in fact believe in a teleology of history, and that the evidence for it is in the *Third Critique*.

Inasmuch as Kant's approach to history is explicitly teleological, this requires a consideration of the central themes of the Critique of the Teleological Power of judgment, which is the second part of the Critique of the power of Judgment, commonly referred to as the Third Critique.<sup>30</sup>

The *Third Critique*, as readers will remember, is dominated by the contemplation of two ways of thinking about nature: the 'teleological', and the 'mechanistic'. Allison professes not quite to know what is meant by mechanism, as if this is a term that had been coined in the last couple of decades. 'To begin with, Kant is insistent that all genuine explanation in natural science is mechanistic. Although there is some controversy about what this means, I take the basic idea to be that the explanation of all physical wholes must be in terms of the causal and reciprocal interactions of their parts.'<sup>31</sup> I

cannot see what this definition has to do with 'mechanistic science' as Early Modern philosophy has expressly employed the term. What it means, in line with the atomist philosophy which bore it forth, is randomness at the core of natural process. The atoms have no purpose, no potential, no more than Kant's eternal substances have. They do not even have local motion properly speaking, but rather 'fall' through the void, reducing even its only motion to the equivalent of accident. From this stony soil the atomists developed a theory of generation, which works well enough if one agrees not to investigate it closely at all. If one investigates it closely, one discovers that the atoms are not eligible to become parts in any whole, as Plato argued in his *Parmenides*. The atoms cannot undergo any change. They remain separate. And thus the atomist or mechanistic attempt to derive 'secondary bodies' from the ultimate atoms is a mere pipe dream, a makeshift, and a poor one at that.

In the *Third Critique*, Allison professes to be unable to negotiate the mechanistic hypothesis there. This even though Kant dedicates all of natural science to the mechanistic thesis, ultimately. Natural science is given permission by Kant to regard 'teleology', or perceived order in natural objects, especially living organisms, as an aspect of its research; but when it comes time to telling the truth of such investigations, Kant insists to the death, science must revert back to the mechanistic language. Thus there is no teleology in Kant's *Third Critique* which is conceded any *reality*. Teleology is conceded some *utility* as a concession to the needs of researchers to organize and denominate their subject matter; but for Kant 'teleology' is only a pragmatic instrument of public relations otherwise. The people's views on nature square with teleology properly speaking, by the way; and in the *Third Critique* it becomes clear that the people's opinion mean less than nothing to Kant when the issue is probative value. This was already quite clear in the lectures on logic.

Allison wants to borrow the notion of teleology from Kant's *Third Critique* to be able to argue that Kant regards history as having a teleology too. But Allison glosses Kant's *Idea for a Universal History* in unpardonable ways. Allison notes that based on Kant's anthropology, human beings are antagonistic to one another; but that this is a 'splendid misery' from nature's point of view, because nature can give this antagonism a fruitful harvest. Once again we are back to the Socratic Greeks. For Plato, it is simply wrong to say that any good ever comes out of an evil. I agree with that proposition, as the law of identity developed by Aristotle likewise articulates it. The only cause of evil is evil; and the only cause of good is good. This allegedly trivial formulation, from Kant's point of view, is dismissed as meaningless; but we have already seen why it is not meaningless in the least.

Allison furthermore dissembles on the implications of Kant's *Idea for a Universal History*. Conflict is the driving motor of this theory of history; and

it is only through violent antagonism that social contract models are generated to reorder the relationships between individuals, ensuring maximum individual liberty for each (quite in line with Rousseauian postulates). Yet Allison insists that this does not culminate in a world government.<sup>32</sup> That would be an ultimate tyranny. But so long as there are states which are not bound together in a federation, they must and will attack one another based on Kant's ideology. The only way any belligerent actor migrates into confederation or federation is through actual conflict. That indeed means a world government. Yet anyone who has followed the argument thus far can understand why it is ludicrous to suggest that there is any teleology operative in Kant's philosophy. The Mechanist thesis dominates the *Third Critique*; and the disposition of the philosophic type in Kant's anthropology is bemusement with human concerns, even detachment. The question remains open, whether a whole historical period worth of conflict is not itself the project, the goal, of modern philosophy: the means to its cherished end of freedom, for which cause it is willing to do and even destroy anything.

#### MANFRED KUEHN ON KANT'S IDEA FOR A UNIVERSAL HISTORY

In addressing the scholarship on Kant, it is palpable how many revere the man and his philosophy. The same can be said of Rousseau. I think that this is because, at least in part, Kant has given voice to certain ambitions and hopes that lay deep in the human race. *The Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* certainly speaks to a deep and abiding hope of many people: for a human community that knows no borders, no barriers, no differentiation. However much human beings may hold these things dear to their heart, however, it does the human race no degree of good at all to sanctify a philosopher simply because he mouths the platitudes. If the human race has hope, it rests on *truth*. There is no hope that does not begin with the courage to know and to want to know. That this is going to bring disappointments goes without saying. But admirers of the goals that Kant outlines in the *Idea for a Universal History* ought not to subtract any dedication from the goals he touches on, if it proves to be the case that he, Kant, is not faithful to those goals. These words may strike the reader as harsh, but I think they are the truth. We should begin with the beginning.

A philosopher who cares about the truth is going to have to show some consideration to the rest of the human race at the outset of his inquiries. He is going to have to begin with the knowledge that is commonly possessed as his own. If the philosopher refuses to do this; if he refuses to concede that his peers know anything at all about anything, then we can reasonably say that he is not being reasonable. The philosopher, in order to have been eligible to

become a philosopher, must have been successfully raised from the day of his birth. He must have been fed and clothed and defended from predators. He must have been schooled in the more rudimentary ways which make the higher endeavors of philosophy possible to begin with. And in order to step back from the mundane world of common knowledge, to investigate such daunting prospects as whether the human race is being guided by nature towards progress, he must first possess that common knowledge, which enables him to be able to learn what a book is, and how it is not a rifle, nor a pear. Kant fails these most modest of tests all the way around. He absolutely refuses to concede to his peers that they have any knowledge of anything, that they *even have* judgment. Nor is this going too far in our analysis of Kant.

The human race learns through its senses. It does not seem a stretch to most people to concede that we were given our senses for our benefit. It enables us to learn about the objects that are external to us; as it enables us to avoid walking off cliffs. It is a very modest hope that our sense organs are provided to the employment of our mind's judgment for these ends of learning about the world, but Kant will have none of this. Kant wants to write about a natural moral progress that he thinks might be taking place in the world, but he won't give us this paltry faith which absolutely nobody but a certain type of philosopher would ever struggle with. Kant insists that we cannot know what the humdrum tree and banal stone are in themselves, as if the objects constituted some divine manna which we should not dare to presume that we could ever know. The philosopher whose doctrines of the *First Critique* would pluck our eyes out of our head, without proving that these perceptual judgments we have are bogus—and despite the overwhelming evidence that we all possess in the contrary direction, we should not look to this philosopher to speak candidly and frankly about what we can and cannot know, let alone what is or is not the hope of the human race.

Manfred Kuehn is all for giving Kant the benefit of the doubt. 'If there is a plan, there is also hope.'<sup>33</sup> Kuehn has pragmatic reasons. It is useful to employ the concept of a progressive human history for purposes of evaluation of the human record. It has 'heuristic' value. Yet it cannot have any heuristic value if the philosopher first discredits the *faculties* which give us information about what has taken place in the world to begin with. We have not avoided addressing Kant's demanding *Critique of Pure Reason* in this study. We have furthermore investigated the Logics, and the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. We have demonstrated that Kant does not know what he professes himself to know, to the infinite injury of the human race: that we must surrender ourselves to what this philosopher refers to as 'laws of the mind', which in his view need neither to be demonstrated or proved, before they are called into play as authorities for what we can even *dare* to think. Kant's insincere gestures towards the philosophies of Plato and

Aristotle are no token of goodwill. Kuehn is not being reasonable when he states that we must embrace Kant's discussion of the possible natural progress of the human race, if in fact we wish to be able to say that we harbor any hopes for that history at all ourselves. "Finally, Kant's argument for the adoption of universal history is also based on political considerations, since he hoped that this way of writing history would 'direct the ambitions of sovereigns and their agents to work toward the goal of world citizenship, a cosmopolitan state'."<sup>34</sup>

I cannot imagine a more atheistic statement than the one that Kant makes about how human progress is to be measured. The fates of human individuals is curtly dismissed by Kant as irrelevant to the supposed progress to be measured. As if there could be any progress in the race, if there is not progress in the individuals who make up the race! Nor am I splitting hairs here, or taking Kant in an unfair construction. For Kant has cast out of repute those human faculties of character which are the actual playing field for possible human improvements. In order for the human race to become better, the individual human beings must choose better. They will not choose better if the education they are getting smashes their hopes, subverts their very agency as thinking beings, and attacks the capacities for knowing which the humblest among us possess.

Kuehn would like us to embrace Kant's universal history because it has the courage to hope, but this is precisely where I must challenge him. Kant is as much of a misanthrope as Rousseau. In his early days of publication, Kant was notorious for his hostile response to people demanding that he explain his arguments better. He was after all making outlandish claims. Kant bristled like a porcupine, which is hardly anything that could be said about Plato's Socrates or Aristotle. Plato's Socrates spends more times addressing the arguments of his opponents and critics than anyone else. Yet in Kant we have not even the presentation of the other side of the story he proposes to tell about the human mind, or soul, or nature itself. It is not humble to claim as Kant does that he as a philosopher will agree to learn only those things that he himself can make or *cause* to exist. This is not hopefulness. This is not even good faith. But it is a premeditated reason for Kant's blistering assault on the human faculties of perceptual judgment.

Kant is like Stalin when he measures the human race by hecatombs and millions. He who does not regard the struggle of the human race as essentially a struggle that begins in individuals themselves, is an atheist of such dark complexion, such that only a fool would place any trust in him. Kuehn is off the mark. It is not a mark of those who have true hope for the human race, that they would therefore go along with Kant in his crude and brutal estimation of what constitutes human progress.

## NOTES

1. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 52.
2. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 168.
3. *Lectures on Anthropology* 215.
4. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 330.
5. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 216–17. ‘It pleased providence to draw good out of the root of evil’ (225).
6. *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, 108. In *Anthropology, History and Education*. Edited by Gunter Zoller and Robert Loudon. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
7. *Idea for a Universal History*, 111, 112.
8. *Nichomachean Ethics* 1106a3.
9. See Karl Ameriks. ‘The Purposeful Development of Human Capacities’, 66. Also Allen Wood. ‘Kant’s Fourth Proposition: The Unsocial Sociability of Human Nature.’ In Amelie Oksenberg Rorty and James Schmidt, editors. *Kant’s Idea for a Universal History With a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, passim.
10. ‘Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch’, 112. In *Kant’s Political Writings*. Edited by Hans Reiss. Cambridge University Press, 1985.
11. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 47. Edited by Allen Wood and Robert Loudon. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
12. *Discourses* II 1.
13. *Prince* XVIII.
14. *Prince* III.
15. Thomas Hobbes. *The Citizen*, 114. In *Man and Citizen*. Edited by Bernard Gert. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.
16. *Leviathan*, chapter 10, 142. Edited by Noel Malcolm. Volume 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014.
17. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 74, 86.
18. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 114–15. ‘However, genius is a talent that cannot be a product of instruction. . . . What belongs to genius is all innate. . . . Genius is free of rules, because it needs none. . . . Thus one cannot teach anyone philosophy, but one can arouse his genius for philosophy. . . . Philosophy is a science of genius.’
19. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 60.
20. *Lectures on Anthropology*, 66.
21. *Kant’s Human Being*. Oxford University Press, 2014, 15.
22. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
23. *Kant and the Human Sciences*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009, 1.
24. *Kant and the Human Sciences*, 1.
25. Paul Guyer. ‘The Inclination Toward Freedom’. In Alix Cohen, editor. *Kant’s Lectures on Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 2014, 115.
26. *Nichomachean Ethics* 1097a36.
27. ‘The Inclination Toward Freedom’, 116.
28. ‘The Inclination Toward Freedom’, 118.
29. *Leviathan*, p. 110. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes*, volume 2. Edited by Noel Malcolm. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014.
30. Henry E. Allison. ‘Teleology and History in Kant: The Critical Foundations of Kant’s Philosophy of History’. In Amelie Oksenberg Rorty and James Schmidt, editors. *Kant’s Idea for a Universal History With a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, 25.
31. ‘Teleology and History in Kant’, 32.
32. ‘Teleology and History in Kant’, 25.
33. ‘Reason Is a Species Characteristic’. In Rorty and Schmidt, *Kant’s Idea for a Universal History*, 69.
34. ‘Reason Is a Species Characteristic’, 69.





## Chapter Seven

# The Foundations of Kant's Moral Philosophy

### GROUNDWORK OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

The *Groundwork* is a slender volume. It is expressly dedicated to morals. Yet the taxonomy of human knowledge that Kant provides in the preface rates some comment. Kant's system is now reaching its full maturity. He harkens back to Greek philosophy for the three dominant categories of human thought: Physics, Logic, and Ethics. Metaphysics is not indicated in the original three categories of thought. Metaphysics, as Kant chooses to present it here, is rather a subset of both 'physics' and 'ethics'. It is important that we tell the reader that we do not accept the way Kant uses these words. It conceals more than it reveals. Yet since we are clear, and without mystery in our presentation, the reader can judge if our account of Kant's nomenclature is just.

For 'the Greeks', *if* by the Greeks we mean the Socratics Plato and Aristotle, all knowledge, and all quest for knowledge, *begins* with what Kant calls 'the empirical'. When Plato's Socrates asks his 'what is . . . ?' questions, he is summoning into discussion the empirical experience of the interlocutors, which experience itself has an admixture of the 'immaterial', the metaphysical, the forms. Thus for Plato, if we wish to investigate justice, we first of all ask what justice is. Speakers respond with examples of just actions that they have seen. A man should return to his neighbor that which he has borrowed. Yet for Plato's Socrates, the name 'just' applies to infinite actions and intentions in the human world. We use one name to indicate them all, because they all have the same immaterial *pattern*. The pattern, which is embodied in each case in that perishable particular deed or intention, cannot itself be limited to them; for it applies to other just actions and intentions, indeed to

many other such. Hence for Plato the ‘empirical’ is the *gateway* to all knowledge. Without experience we would know *none* of the forms. We have, I believe, supplied an ample amount of evidence for that claim in this book. Yet the reader must judge.

For Aristotle, metaphysics takes a step *forward*. Aristotle is not interested in merely the most compelling object of *knowledge*, as Plato is. For Plato, the forms are the most compelling object of knowledge, the objects of which we can be most certain and even absolutely certain. Aristotle, however, shifts the focus to existence *differently understood*. For Aristotle the question is, what are the most real beings in nature? Both Plato and Aristotle agree that immaterial forms are *part* of nature. Form, order, and intelligence are therefore natural for ‘the Greeks’, and the forms actually give order and shape to the matter, the material. To separate the material from the immaterial, as if to suggest that the material could possibly exist without the forms, would be to suppress truth and knowledge for *both* Plato and Aristotle. But whereas Plato is focused on the forms as the true objects of human intellect, and thus as possessing the most intense being—Aristotle is rather calling our attention to the *purpose* of nature itself, which is to *bring about* or *generate* the perishable, formed objects.

Thus for Plato, the apex of knowledge is the forms as isolated things in nature. The perishable objects are said to ‘participate’ in the forms, or to share in them, and this is a huge step forward for human knowledge, one which Early Modern philosophy tries to reverse with every ounce of its willpower and fighting ability. Yet it is the truth, so they can never win, unless the side of the Socratic Greeks is suppressed from view (as has largely been the case). For Aristotle, on the other hand, the isolated forms are not the most real things. It is rather the ‘formulae’ or role played by the forms in the respective *development* of each individual perishable object (each a certain kind of object) which is the key. Those perishable objects are nature’s deepest intention. Nature, not man, supplies the form for the natural objects for both Plato and Aristotle, and we here remind the reader of Kant’s vow at the outset of his *First Critique*: that human beings cannot know anything but that which they make, and they furthermore refuse to be subjected to nature’s ‘leading strings’ in the domain of the search for knowledge. Kant doesn’t care what objects are in themselves. This is not the object of his inquiry. It is Kant’s intention to force objects to conform with his philosophy, and in this he is merely one of a tribe of philosophers who have developed that ethos. Kant is no trailblazer, contrary to his imagination. He is simply pushing the project towards its logical conclusion: denying the formal reality of any object that man does not originate out of his own will. Thus Kant and ‘the Greeks’ are opposites. At least Kant is the opposite of the Socratic Greeks. He is very much in the lineage of the Eleatic Greeks however, as we have demonstrated now in several places ad nauseum.

Thus Kant *falsely* seeks to borrow the categories of the Socratics: Physics, Logic, Ethics. What truly comes first for Kant is a natural philosophy that denies the truth about the objects in nature. Kant revives Eleatic atomism, i.e. the doctrine that there are an infinite number of eternal bodies. For both Plato and Aristotle, this cosmology of Kant's is false. Kant, in his physics, denies to man the right and authority to recognize officially the forms which convey nature to us in its kinds and particulars. Kant asserts an embargo upon human perception with his categories of 'appearances', 'representations', 'apperception', and 'phenomena'.

Now Kant would like to represent his approach to nature as having a 'pure' part. This is the truly deluded part of Kant's argument. Kant's cosmology, i.e. the eternal substances, is transformed by Kant into 'laws of the mind', into the only way we are now eligible to think about *anything*. Those old Eleatic philosophers were not such purists; they appealed originally to truths *about* the perishable objects to locate their doctrine of eternal being. Parmenides, in order to reach the one great 'being', has to climb upon the stepping stool of the existence that belongs to each and every perishable object known to the people, which is the only being they know. Kant indicates that this cosmology is now innate to the human mind, or 'a priori' or 'pure' knowledge. It is Kant's effort to close the door forever upon the way back to knowledge about nature. Kant was not the first to move in this direction, as we have argued in a book upon Locke and Hume.<sup>1</sup>

For Kant, all of these categories of physics and logic and ethics are a priori, original compartments of the mind. No matter what object a citizen may point to in the public square—say a horse—for Kant, this reduces to purely *mental* 'matter'. The 'horse' is unknown to us, allegedly. All we know is certain sensations that we have in our brains, and which Kant calls appearances and representations. The mind itself will supply a one-size-fits-all form for any and all objects that the citizen may point to: for a horse, a snake, a brave action, a house. For Kant, the 'forms' are eternal object, subject only to alteration, not coming into being or destruction. This is the alleged 'form' of thought that Kant seeks to impress upon Western knowing. The common objects of physics vanish. So too do the common objects of *ethics*. And it is ethics that the *Groundwork* is dedicated to elaborating.

The boundary line between the 'empirical' and the 'formal', between the empirical and the 'pure' for Kant, is thus paramount in both areas of science and ethics. In science, Kant gives the lie to the forms that people learn *from* experience. Which is, frankly, *all of them*: human being and dog and courage and sorrow and beauty and trees. In the atomist cosmology, the universe is one object unto itself, a 'whole' that is *homogeneous*. That was the claim of Parmenides that Plato exposed and defeated. Kant is replicating that claim. The way that Kant seeks to apply the boundary line between the empirical

and the form *completely upends* Socratic Greek philosophy. Let's be clear about that.

In ethics, things are just as extreme with Kant. For ethics is about the empirical or it is about *nothing*. Ethics only exist because of human *need* and *potential*. Give Kant his physics and we have already lost the human being that can have any *use* for an ethics. Remember Emile's ethics! Self-preservation and *nothing* more. In real life, as in Socratic Greek philosophy, the empirical world brings to us our ethical imperatives, *which we cannot get from any other place*. There is no ethical principle which is not first of all a response to human need and obligation. The obligation is not to the principles, formally and properly speaking, but to the human beings we *live with*, and for whose sake ethics exists at all. Kant, however, proposes to stifle and suppress all of the origins of ethics that come from our experience, which is the entire kit and caboodle. For we do not reach ethical principles without ethical situations to deliberate upon. We cannot find the ethical truth if we do not have cause to search for it. Kant annihilates, formally, the very cause of our need for ethics, and the essence of that knowledge.

Subreption is a name that Kant scholars are always using, but rarely seem to understand. For Kant, subreption means that experience and the 'pure' domain of mind are being improperly mixed. We have said, and we say it again, that Kant's whole philosophy stands or falls based on where he draws this line. We say that he draws it falsely in a radical way. Just as there is no 'form of the understanding' per se; there is no meta-form of 'ethics' either. All ethics originate in particulars. For Aristotle this is why ethics can *never* be a science. Aristotle writes:

What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire; so that since moral excellence is a state concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the choice is to be good, and the latter must pursue just what the former asserts. Now this kind of intellect and truth is practical; of the intellect which is contemplative, not practical or productive, the good and the bad state are truth and falsity (for this is the foundation of everything intellectual); while in the part which is practical and intellectual the good state is truth in agreement with right desire.<sup>2</sup>

The empirical, in ethics, gives us both the issue to be resolved, *and the motive to resolve it*. It is only here, really, where the infamous 'knowledge how' of Ryle makes any sense at all. What practical reason amounts to, is how to act in such a way as to *bring out the right outcome*. This right outcome cannot be given to us independent of the practical situations that we find ourselves in, all of which are unique. Justice and courage would not even be words if not for our empirical existence and situations; and tradition, custom and memory are absolutely pivotal for this kind of knowledge. For

the injustice we witness is specific to this individual case, yes; but the form of injustice is something that we know from *past* experience. That ethical principle never originated in anybody's pure mind. Yet Kant is no innocent. He is not trying to strengthen justice, indeed it is not even a word that he likes to utter. We saw in the anthropology how Kant is only too glad to argue that nature acts behind our backs, and through our deviousness, to reach good ends.

'Empirical ethics' for Kant just is anthropological science: a science where human beings do not have conscious control of their actions *at all*. Anthropology, we can say, is the way Kant and Rousseau look out upon the human race, making light of its miseries, and even celebrating them for the personal service such a theory does to the great religion of self-preservation, which finally in its 'pure' form is only something philosophers believe in. Kant wants to absolutely liquidate every last ounce of true human experiential reference before he formulates his ethical imperatives. This is the new dark ages, the opening wide of the abyss.

### GROUNDWORK I

The title of the first section is revealing. Kant calls the first section the *transition from common to philosophical moral rational cognition*. Thus Kant insists that he is beginning with the community, where they begin. Yet this is not so. For what Kant initially discusses in *Groundwork I* is that which constitutes goodness. Kant talks about this goodness from a very severe angle. Kant talks about this goodness as something that belongs to the individual who would be a moral actor. It is *his* happiness, he who has the will in question, that Kant is concerned about.

A good will is good not because of what it effects, or accomplishes, nor because of its fitness to attain some intended end, but good just by its willing, i.e. in itself, and considered by itself, it is to be esteemed beyond compare much higher than anything that could ever be brought about by it in favor of some inclination and indeed if you will the sum of all inclinations.<sup>3</sup>

Yet this is already to depart wildly from ordinary praise and blame. We do not praise and blame each other preeminently because it either enhances or diminishes the actor's chances to be happy. To the contrary: ordinary praise and blame focuses on our duty, on our obligation, to *others*. We ourselves as moral actors are not the principal focus of moral actions therefore, not in the first instance. The occasion for moral action is some imperative circumstances which calls out for our intervention. Yet Kant is sealing himself off from this entire foundation of morality. For Kant, the issue is about the will, one's own will. What will make me happy or worthy of happiness? 'It is

impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be taken to be good without limitation, except a good will.’<sup>4</sup>

If this were the only attribute of morality that Kant calls attention to in the early pages of his *Groundwork*, it would perhaps not be a big deal. People obviously do care how they are evaluated by others. But there is the rub. Both in the imperative which originally gives rise and occasion to our existence as moral actors, and in the later judgment of our character by the community, we are *not in control*. We do not get to choose the situations that emerge which may require our intervention. We do not get to judge, either, how well or poorly we have responded to that situation. The community judges. At least, if we are talking about where the common people begin themselves in the dimension of morality, we are describing what that is.

What people will judge us for is our intentions as regards the facts of the matter before us, not some abstract moral law that we turn to, as we might turn away thereby from the situation at hand. Moral situations are always situations of some urgency. That is why we have moral emotions and passions, in Aristotle’s view: it is nature’s attempt to ‘push’ us to act in the ways that are necessary to protect one another in our perishable state. Yet as we have seen, Kant has laid the groundwork for his formally moral theory in his doctrine of so-called speculative philosophy. When Kant denies that we can know objects as they ‘are in themselves’; when Kant insists that the mind itself must invent, via its ‘apperception’, the very objects that it would deign to recognize and acknowledge in the world; this effectively obliterated the foundations of ordinary morality and its very possibility, as seen from this philosophical point of view. Kant is in fact savagely attacking the ‘grounds’ of public morals in his speculative philosophy. By encasing the cosmology of atomism in supposed a priori laws of the mind which nobody is free to so much as demand demonstration of or challenge, Kant is closing the door on the moral situations that confront us in the world: and this is what opens up the way for Kant’s predominant orientation in morals, *his own satisfaction*.

Kant makes a very telling point in the first paragraph of *Groundwork I*. In order for human beings to act morally, before they will even begin to consider the need to act morally, they must be *absolutely certain of something*. What is that something? We say that this something is the facts of the case that leap out at us, that constitute the call to action which sets our practical reason into motion to begin with. If we are afflicted by doubts as to the actuality of the situation before us; if we are uncertain as to where good or evil lay in a situation before us, our practical reason becomes paralyzed and inactive. Kant’s entire model of transcendental idealism, in its reduction of our experience to something synthetic, i.e. to that which *we* have caused, preempts our practical reason right out of the gate. In fact, formally and technically speaking, we are not eligible, from Kant’s point of view, to behold any situation that we have not ourselves created in our own minds.

This is what he has reduced the perceptual process to. Needless to say, this subverts ordinary morality at the root.

It is therefore, from the vantage point of ordinary opinion, and one shielded from the theoretical quagmire in which Kant seeks to embed it—a very strange point of view for Kant to uphold. To be concerned with his own happiness, as a baseline of what morality is about—this is to pull away violently from the actual situations that give rise to our moral emotions, and which call forth our concern in the first place. There is no wiggle room here, in our discussion of the first origins of morality. Either it is our obligation to others, *for the sake of those others*, or it is not. Kant's definition of the good will is in the latter disposition. Kant, in this context, almost seems to be directly channeling Rousseau. If we remember, Rousseau sought to breed in his *Emile* one abiding question, to guide all of his thoughts and actions: 'what is it good for?' When Rousseau instructs *Emile* in this disposition, he means for *Emile* to regard *himself*. What is in it for him, in the case of any proposed action? Self-preservation is here alleged to be the goodness, the original goodness of nature, and with Kant we find very much the same thing. The dreaded public domain is something from which Kant himself needs to be shielded, so that he can undertake to prove to the world that he is a good person regardless of what they might actually think of him or as to how they might judge him. Kant's obsession with the will, in the context of suppressed facts, and suppressed others, beholds the self as possessor and master of morality. This will ultimately be revealed in Kant's claim that the essence of morality, its 'dignity', resides in a law that we individually choose to give to ourselves. Nobody can *oblige* us to it.

There is quite a bit of movement in the secondary literature, as we will see below, attempting to link Kant to Aristotle in ethics. For Aristotle, as for Plato, the origin of morality resides in a certain ordering within the self. Intellect, or the quest for and fealty to truth, must subdue the passions and appetites. For Aristotle, of course, nobody becomes virtuous, i.e. just, or brave, or courageous, or in any way good or temperate, without wanting to do those things for their own sakes, in the contexts which call them forth.

That practical wisdom is not knowledge is evident; for it is, as has been said, concerned with the ultimate particular fact, since the thing to be done is of this nature. It is opposed, then, to comprehension, for comprehension is of the definitions for which no reason can be given, while practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object not of knowledge but perception.<sup>5</sup>

We want brave soldiers because courage is necessary to fight unjust enemies. We want justice because we want happiness for all, and fair dealing and amity between all. We want temperance because the appetites corrupt us. What category does the 'will' fall into? For surely, we will to be brave, if we

are to be brave; we will to be just, if we are to become just; we will to be temperate if we are to become temperate. What could it possibly mean to speak of the will *by itself*? Yet this is what Kant's whole morality has chosen to focus on, the 'will'. Not deliberation, not truth, not our decision to will the virtues: but the will itself. The worm is already turning. Because the will is something certainly that we control, whereas morality itself in truth is not something that we control. It is not something that we make or will into existence and it is not something that we are casually free to dismiss or choose as we list. People will blame us for such a cavalier attitude and they ought to. That is why Kant is representing his philosophy as if it was an account of the ordinary morality of the people, but his representation in no way comprehends its alleged object.

To remain with Aristotle for a moment, the development of character is the whole issue for him. In order to become just, we must become brave, because it is not easy to resist the injustice of others. In order to become brave enough to do this, we must be able to endure the fear, and overcome it. Thus we must struggle with and against our passions, our knowledge of what is right guiding our way. Character cannot be taught, Aristotle argues; we must desire it and fight for it, and that is why we value it so highly in ourselves and one another. Yet see how Kant regards character in his very first paragraph. Character, which we certainly do have control over, is dismissed by Kant as a matter of mere accidental inheritance.

It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or even beyond it, that could be taken to be good without limitation except a good will. Understanding, wit, judgment, and whatever else the talents of the human mind may be called, or confidence, resolve, and persistency of intent, as qualities of *temperament*, are no doubt in any respects good and desirable; but they can also be extremely evil and harmful if the will that is to make use of these gifts of nature, and whose distinctive constitution is therefore called *character*, is not good.<sup>6</sup>

Kant is making the suggestion here that will *is* character. This is not coherent. For surely what is willed is more consonant with character and what we mean by that term. Not merely what we will, but the purposes for which we will said things. To identify our concern for ourselves as the very object of our will, and therefore as the very goal of character, is to make bad character synonymous with character. For morals is not originally or principally concerned with our isolated selves *at all*. Kant dismisses character as of secondary importance. This is in part because Kant's will and his conception of the will is committed to freedom first: freedom for the self, *from* the obligations to the others.



## THE EPICUREAN KANT

Kant, in the *First Critique*, echoes Hume's apologia or defense of Epicurus.<sup>7</sup> According to Kant, Epicurus was a good man, and only self-aggrandizing types would consider him otherwise. It calls to mind Kant's very early espousal of Epicurean physics in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, but it also summons before our minds the issue of Epicurean convictions themselves. Epicurus, readers will discover, was not a modest man. He holds out to the human race, what he professes to be almost superhuman powers. If Jesus promised to conquer death, so does Epicurus. Jesus however promises to conquer death in a resurrection, i.e. after the physical death of the body. Epicurus promises his conquest of death in reference to destroying the fear of death in his charges, here on earth. The way to conquer the fear of dying, for Epicurus, is narrow enough. For it is an austere philosophy which he develops. For Epicurus, the terror of death lay in the same regions that make life daunting: the prospect of being judged. Epicurus dreads judgment. We can find in this disposition the very reason for his adoption of a superseded physics, atomism. For atomism is his shield against the community: by its lights and principles, he can deny the perishability of the real and true objects, and therefore, at least indirectly, of the vulnerability of the perishable objects themselves. By deflecting the principles of argument away from bodies and to their alleged eternal constituents, an illusion of dissipating the sting of injury can be disseminated.

The Epicurean, by his lights, depends already upon a certain bounty from nature. He must have a defect of feeling. In order to be able to undertake the Epicurean program, the initiate must be capable of blocking out his feelings for others, which in most human beings are simply too strong to chase away. Given this predisposition, though, Epicurus has a very logical program for approaching invulnerability in life. His sole and only goal is the minimization of pain.

For we are in need of pleasure only when we are in pain because of the absence of pleasure, and when we are not in pain, then we no longer need pleasure. And this is why we say that pleasure is the starting point of all living blessedly. . . . And we believe many pains to be better than pleasures when a greater pleasure follows for a long while if we endure the pains.<sup>8</sup>

In order to be able to do this, he must be free to renounce all of the obligations and duties that the community places upon him. For communities, beginning with the family, do not leave it up to their members' discretion whether they will fulfill their respective obligations and functions. The member is not at liberty to avow or disavow his obligations. This is the cultural principle Early Modern and modern philosophy has attacked with the most

direct force. It is the most remarkable intervention of philosophy in the affairs of organized human communities that we have records of. And it has been all for the worse.

The Epicurean therefore must regard himself as a world apart. Gone is Aristotle's political animal, and this is the only reason why Kant has adopted a physics that itself individualizes the account of what a fact could be. The dissolution of fact into phenomena and noumena provides just such a liberty to the individual of Epicurean disposition; except that as an Epicurean in the Machiavellian line, the imperative has been indirectly extended to the community as a whole. In Kant's moral ideology, the Epicurean obsession with the self is converted into a condemnation of ordinary morality simpliciter. That moral impulse which is fundamentally concerned and committed to resolving a factual situation, as its original and primary end, is perversion for Kant. It flies in the face of the commitments of his whole moral philosophy.

To resume with Epicurus: the individual resolves that opposition to the prospect of any and all pain is the proper disposition. Thus the Epicurean must argue that the individual exists independently from human society morally speaking. The self is the telos: the overriding goal (as is so visible in the case of Rousseau's *Emile*) is self-preservation from pain and discomfort. This is also very much a radical attitude, a subversive attitude: for the functioning of all social institutions depends upon the contrary disposition, i.e. a respect for the others and an equal regard for the claims that they make upon one at least in some circumstances. The Epicurean makes no exceptions and neither does Kant.

The Epicurean, then, has embraced a radical postulate for himself, and if it is discerned nakedly he will be known for the outlaw that he is. Yet it is hard to penetrate the philosophy of atoms, and the individualism of perception that this undergirds doctrinally. The community will never follow it. And thus the Epicurean is free to regard the world as his adversary: he will never, for any reason, undergo a pain for the sake of someone else. He will never undergo a pain for the sake of duty. He will only undergo a pain because it fits into his own personal calculus of pleasure, which hinges on the absolute minimization of pain. The renunciation of social bonds can be quieted, but it is always latent. It is the most radical form of incontinence, if we can borrow an Aristotelian moral term.

There is yet buried a great deal of import in this revolution wrought by Epicurus in philosophy. For the decision to regard the possibility of pain as the most important consideration in life, suffocates and chokes off the human desire for *fulfillment* and the development of human potential. Beauty, excellence, justice, courage, freedom to live with the others in relations which fulfill us, involve pain to acquire. Pain is required and so is sacrifice. In my own view, Aristotle was right that it is the desire for happiness which is the strongest principle and end or summum bonum in human nature. Epicurus

and Kant reverse this: for in their opposition to the possibility of pain, they turn away from the road to actual fulfillment. It is in this context that they have embraced their respective natural philosophies, ones dominated by bodies which *have* no potential for development. Just consider how Kant describes human character: 'the gift of nature', as if it could not be fought for and won by any individual no matter how humble her beginnings.

Epicurean communities of old lived apart from the larger community. Yet Kant belongs to the tradition established by Machiavelli. The link between Machiavelli and the Epicurean Lucretius is at this moment becoming more and more established as a scholarly focus. Machiavelli radicalized the Epicurean vow of invulnerability: he has added to it the willingness to risk everything for the sake of dominion over the others. The same physics will serve. In fact, now it becomes possible to conceive more and more of the human race as a mere matter of formless aspect, one for the new philosophers to 'make' in their own image. If Kant's *First Critique* is pledged to any other goal I do not know what it is.

We must think though of the implications for the human race at large, which will end up living under the new institutions including those shaped by Kant's morality. Kant comes right out and says that any morality which espouses the effect of one's actions on a situation as the ultimate goal of morality is simply perverse. Our purposes, when we act, in Kant's view, 'can bestow on actions no unconditional and moral worth'. The individual is advised to place her hopes merely in the 'principle of the will' itself, 'regardless of the ends that can be effected by such action'.<sup>9</sup>

Kant reverses the whole foundation of popular morality: and in so doing, Kant is suppressing and negating their very right to pursue happiness and fulfillment as they naturally would otherwise. The generality of the human race cannot live in the thin atmosphere of Epicurean morals, nor of that consonant with Machiavellian morality. Let us recall to mind how Machiavelli defines human nature: as that nature which is incapable of satisfaction, which is fated to always feel disgust with what it has, and a need to acquire more merely in order to be able to enjoy anything at all of what is possessed now. Or we may consider Hobbes's more developed formulation of what life is in and of itself; a ceaseless drive for power after power unto death. These are laws that human beings cannot only not fulfill, they cannot even want to live under terms such as these.

So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire for power after power that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this, is not always that man hopes for a more intense delight than he has already attained to, or that he cannot be content with a moderate power; but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.<sup>10</sup>

Kant goes so far as to say that it simply does not matter what the impact of one's 'will' is on the world and the situations that call out for our action. Kant is really wishing to develop the point that it is a mistake to regard those situations as actual moral situations at all. To the contrary: in order to perfect one's own will, in order to persuade oneself that one is a good person by turning away from the world and making oneself the entire object of one's morality, one withdraws in truth from the community. Except that Kant himself is doing a lot more than withdrawing. He is in the line of Hobbes and Spinoza and Locke and Rousseau. He is a prospective founder of states and models of culture.

It is also worth observing the way that Kant shamelessly shifts his technique of argument. In the *First Critique*, it is established by Kant that it is simply impossible to know objects for what they are in themselves. Here in *Groundwork I*, in order to pursue a narrow point, Kant assumes the opposite, in order to argue that experience teaches that our efforts to affect the world with reason only makes things worse. People who strive for happiness in this life, Kant argues, demonstrate by their failure that this is impossible. Those who make happiness an aim in life, Kant writes, 'stray from true contentment' more than they otherwise might have. The goal of happiness, Kant continues, if the interlocutor is sincere, is a 'hatred of reason'.<sup>11</sup>

Here is an atheism for the ages. Kant, who has embraced and enforced up to this point the premise that the true beings in nature are eternal, and hence incapable of developing potential through qualitative change, now argues that nature would have supplied us with an unerring instinct for moral goodness if she really intended for us to be able to effect moral goodness in the deeds we bring to the world.

This leads Kant to bend his entire natural philosophy, and he does so shamelessly. Based upon the proposition that nature is purposeful, Kant reasons, we are justified in denying that our wills should aim at good ends, because this is seen simply often to not occur. If nature had meant our wills to serve purposes and means external to the mere will (self-assertion) itself, this is the way things would always work out. Since this is evidently not the case, 'its true function must be to produce a will that is good, not for other purposes as a means, but good in itself—for which reason was absolutely necessary, since nature everywhere else goes to work purposively in distributing its predispositions'.<sup>12</sup>

This goes hand in hand with his dismissive allusion to character as a 'gift of nature'. One has to give Kant credit however for thoroughness. On the one hand, character is dismissed as an impossibility, as a mere gift of nature; on the other hand, Kant draws the most despairing portrait possible of every decent human action that any human being ever enacted for the sake of a good end. Such people are really the enemies of the human race, Kant indicates. They lead it into misery.

## 'INCLINATION' AND THE 'UNIVERSAL LAW'

For all of his clamoring for a 'good will', one need only consult Kant's logic to see the wherewithal of this claim. Kant lays down his 'logic' under the pretense that these are simply automatic laws of the mind, which cannot malfunction of themselves. They are said to reflect the 'form of the understanding itself', which is an object that no human being has ever been able to contemplate really as an external thing with his own inquiring mind. It is through the powers of the understanding that we know the objects in the world for what they are, but Kant precisely seeks to arrest and stunt that function. His principles of the understanding are not allowed to contemplate objects in their actual empirical reality. For the understanding is predicated upon the proposition that we cannot reach with our empirical faculties, and the mind that employs them, to those objects.

To resume with our discussion then, when Kant refers to the 'empirical' connections that human beings have to the world, and to ethical feelings, he denominates them 'inclinations'. From this vantage point, Kant's universal law becomes a substitute for actual morality. The individual is counseled to prostrate himself before the law no matter how strongly it cuts against the grain of his feelings, or perceptions as to the true ultimate facts of a case. 'Thus nothing remains for the will that could determine it except, objectively, the law.'<sup>13</sup>

This is a dismissive way to categorize our emotions and perceptions. A man may have an inclination, a whimsical desire, an impulse, for a can of soda, or a candy bar. Yet we do not say that a man has an 'inclination' to rescue a child from a burning building. This would strike us as a perverse use of language, trivializing that which is urgent and indeed sacred, innocent life put at risk. Yet it all counts as inclination for Kant. Opposition to the local drug dealer ruining the neighborhood, opposition to the local police who are engaging in racist practices, devotion to the plight of friends, or reacting to some emergency of the moment involving a total stranger: We do not denominate any of these things 'inclinations'; but because they are 'empirical', and because the individual is not in control of them, Kant subjects these feelings to his scathing pen and its lacerating power.

Yet Kant is even more notable when he undertakes to speak about his 'universal law', that we should not elect to do an action unless and until we have proved to ourselves that we can require this specific action of absolutely everybody else, or even of potential people who do not exist yet. What sort of disposition does the human being have, then, when he contemplates Kant's principle? Is he a severe moralist, deeply resolved upon the importance of moral integrity and the seriousness of human morals? To the contrary. Kant employs for his example someone who seems rather childlike. This person, Kant tells us, has little familiarity with the ways of the world. He is either

ignorant, an innocent, or he could not care less about the world external to him.

I do not, therefore, need any wide-ranging acuteness to see what I have to do for my willing to be morally good. Inexperienced with regard to course of the world, incapable of bracing myself for whatever might come to pass in it, I just ask myself: Can you also will that your maxim become a universal law?<sup>14</sup>

Nor does he have any strong motive or ‘inclination’ distracting him in that moment. It is almost as a casual, offhand thing then that Kant counsels this person to invoke the categorical imperative or universal law. It is as if to say, since you don’t know any better what to do or why to do it, here is this universal law you can consult which will prove to you that it is silly to even engage in these questions to begin with.

Kant does insist however on employing the language of legislation. In this sense alone the individual is urged to take the universal law seriously. It is as if one can partake of a most sacred exercise of choice without having to be overly interested in the situation that gave rise to the issue in the first place. But let us take a closer look at the universal law itself. For Aristotle, the essence, the very essence, of practical reason is *deliberation*. Aristotle writes: ‘Excellence, then, is a state concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while excellence both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the account which states its essence is a mean, with regard to what is best and right it is an extreme.’<sup>15</sup> Aristotle’s entire practical reason is in step with the moral convictions of the human race, that it is for the sake of practical and human purposes that we have morality at all.

The continent individual, for Aristotle, strives to understand the facts of the situation before her. If she is bathed in heavy appetites, she will not be able to discharge this public function. Thus there is a *prima facie* morality simply to ordering the soul properly and subjecting impulses to the mind’s inquiring after the truth. It is not given to human beings to enact legislation for all other human beings on any practical issue; and if we resume with our claim that the original cause of morality is the plight of perishable mortals, who stand in need of the good faith of their fellows to share some of their needs and concerns sincerely with an eye to resolving them, i.e. if we take the fact of our interdependence seriously, then we must pay attention to that narrow set of facts. Kant’s universal law transports us to another place mentally. It is a form of *abdication* actually. It is also an act of suppression. For

by narrowly constructing the individual moral situation as one girded by the question: 'what would everyone else do?' The individual is excused from the dire importance of learning *what are the facts of the case at hand*.

The issue before a human being in a moral situation is contained largely in that limited situation. The situation will vary as the relationships between the human beings implicated in the situation vary. There are infinite other issues, intervening issues, but because it is only one factual situation concerning perhaps two or three people, it is certainly not unknowable, what is required. Yet Kant, evoking Rousseau's General Will certainly, drags the individual to the deep end of the pool where it becomes impossible to feel or perceive the facts of the case at hand. Kant's universal law is thus a shield *against* moral involvement. For it is of the nature of moral imperatives that they have some urgency, and the urgency involves something to be preserved or saved from destruction or serious injury. Kant might as well be drugging the denizens of his moral philosophy. The prototype of the moral actor that he begins with is conspicuously disinterested in the concerns of others, as Kant makes clear. But the universal law is the ticket out of town on the next train. It has been determined in advance that it does not matter what the outcome of one's actions ultimately are, morally. *One's duty is to oneself*. And only to oneself. Kant sets these down as metaphysical principles of a priori reason, but he could never gain assent to these principles from any community of non-philosophers.

If we remember Rousseau's General Will, however, we will recall that Rousseau deprives it of presiding over *any particular case*. Kant's categorical imperative is virtually a copy of Rousseau's General Will in its built-in paralysis: it convokes the lofty, even sacred-sounding name of universal dignity, only in order to lead these emotions to a waiting room from which they will never depart. Their self-satisfaction, Kant promises them, is vouchsafed by their participation in this alleged 'reason'. As Machiavelli promised his readers, there are always going to be people available to the conquering philosopher politician who will prove credulous and willing to be deceived. Yet that does not mean that we are similarly obliged to Kant. Kant has tried to make the claim that his universal law is the true assumption inherent in every human moral deliberation and action. We say that this is false. Moral life begins with particulars. Moral events are particulars. They are not deduced from general principles; indeed, general principles themselves are only *learned* through experienced particulars.

The conclusion of *Groundwork I* however is foreboding. It reveals the strong hand that modern philosophy had already acquired in philosophy by this time, and in society itself via politics. Kant is setting up a 'dialectic', a struggle, between two opposing sides in the area of morality. On the one side are 'inclinations and needs', which means particular facts and the emotions (extremely diverse) to which they give rise, including moral emotions; and

on the other side Kant's universal law, which seeks to displace the particular experiences of the people as their reference point for what to think, what to feel, and how to behave. Kant vows that morality can be taught. To be sure, *his* account of morality can be taught. But if we are talking about morality the object as it is ordinarily understood, it is heavily dependent on individual character development and always upon truth of individual facts. These are not compatible, they are in opposition to Kant's model; and Kant, knowing this, forecasts a fight.

## GROUNDWORK II

The philosophers who do not take truth for their aim, and Kant certainly belongs in this camp, are always, by default if by nothing else, rhetoricians. Kant is a superb rhetorician, in the tradition of Gorgias and Protagoras. In *Groundwork II* Kant has begun to repeat his performance from the transcendental aesthetic in the *First Critique*, which he never proved: to continue to hammer away at asserting the proposition, never presenting any plausible evidence for it, and claiming the victory. Kant's moral principle is more than suspect. The prospect of a will which has effectively forsaken the world of perishable objects and its due to them, as its first principle, is the opposite of ordinary morality. Kant both claims ordinary morality for his principle, and prepares to attack the latter. Kant begins *Groundwork II* discussing how the human being just cannot be weaned away from 'subjective inclinations', where moral issues are concerned. This means that the individual cannot be torn away from factual contexts which reveal glaring human need, and at the very least is going to resist Kant's encroaching philosophy of 'a priori morality', which is only pure in the sense that it has nothing to do with any human experience that people respect. On the other hand, Kant's lofty pretensions ultimately conceal a theory that is all too familiar in human affairs, especially among less than stellar politicians: the mere mouthing of platitudes, and the method of excusing oneself from the slightest real obligation to others in the world.

All of a sudden, Kant's philosophy reveals a different facet, a new demeanor, if you will. This pure and alien doctrine, which has laid claim to the name of 'duty' and 'purity' also—which heralds itself as the sacrosanct moral principle, now reveals itself as a *command*. It is certainly not a command issued from human conscience, for Kant would dismiss that as subjective inclination. The human being who is 'tethered' to subjective inclination, as Kant disparagingly calls it, is now to be confronted by public educators with the new ethos as sledgehammer. Accusation, that thing that Machiavelli gave a new birth in western society—accusation immune to evidence, and aloof from all courts—here larded and oiled by philosophy, is geared and



aimed at those human emotions which stubbornly cling to *reality*. Reality is the factual situation that includes two people usually, whereby the facts indicate the extreme need of the one and reveal the duty of the other to help. It has nothing to do with airy philosophical protocols, but above all it is vulnerable to the wrecking ball of Kantian rhetoric. Hence Kant's categorical imperative or universal law now reveals itself as overbearing command. 'Finally, there is one imperative—without presupposing as its condition any other purpose to be attained by a certain course of conduct—commands this conduct immediately. This imperative is categorical, it concerns not the matter and the action or what is to result from it, but the form and principle from which it does itself follow; and the essential good in it consists in the disposition, let the result be what it may.'<sup>16</sup>

This brings into view another aspect to our discussion which we have not covered thus far. In the *First Critique*, human beings are instructed, directly or indirectly, that they cannot trust their perceptual faculties to inform them as to what the external objects finally are in the world. Kant's claim in the *First Critique* is *human incapacity*. Our human faculties are alleged to be perverted as Bacon said, in Kant's view, and to view things only from the vantage point of the human and therefore not objectively at all. They never do get around to explaining what it would be to regard a horse from the point of view of a tree, or of a tadpole, or of another horse. They do not say what other information they may have to include into the mix. They simply accuse the ordinary human beings of being biased. Yet we saw that both Bacon and Kant grant wild autonomy to experimental science, which is allocated radical subjective liberty to define any object in terms of the experiments which the particular researcher chooses to perform on said object.

Yet in the case of moral philosophy, Kant is not mentioning at all the phenomena and the principle of apperception and the role that imagination plays in his mental household as set up in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant seems to have forgotten those claims, or something else. Kant in 'speculative philosophy' really had no need to communicate with the community. He simply expects the community to fall in line behind the new definitions that philosophy has undertaken to impose upon science. In the case of morals, however, we are talking about life and death, about loyalty and love, and about human vulnerability. These emotions are far different from the subjective 'inclinations' that Kant represents them to be, and he full well knows it. To combat these emotions, he must accuse them of corruption; and that is exactly the new tack taken in Kant's *Groundwork II*. In the *Groundwork*, the people's subjective inclinations are to be revoked not because the people lack the faculties to know the objects in the world, but because their minds are alleged too weak to rise above petty and selfish inclinations. Even if Kant's own philosophy was not a supreme example of the most eccentric philosophy of morals, any attack on the moral judgment of the people is an attack on the

most modest sort of freedom that human beings are capable of. They might as well be formless clay from Kant's point of view. The fact of the matter here has been true throughout all of modernity: the people are far more moral, far more committed to ethical principles of substance and probity, than the philosophers who have undertaken to manage the show. Philosophy possesses weapons of cultural warfare that the people simply do not have access to. It is not a fair fight, but even if we could get Kant to view this particular through the prism of his categorical imperative, it would only dissolve the discussion point anyway, since that is its sole function.

### THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE AND THE COPERNICAN TURN

As Kant discusses his universal moral law in *Groundwork II*, some of the language of the *First Critique* begins to seep in. It happens slowly at first, but certainly. Kant had noted in the preface that ultimately the a priori laws of nature and the a priori laws of ethics must emanate from the same principles of reason, from the same source. What is that source? Kant in *Groundwork II* describes the categorical imperative as an apodictic, absolutely binding law because the individual is so instructed by the categorical imperative to *assign the law to nature*.<sup>17</sup>

Kant has thus impressed his Copernican revolution upon the people, acting (without invitation to be sure) as their surrogate. Kant's universal law propels the people forward to become lawgivers, to second and third the law of 'nature' that Kant is seeking to assign to the moral sphere of human life. It is not a law that can be found in nature. It is not a law that human beings can find in their moral experience. But this is what Kant's universal law is finally doing: it is assigning a law to 'nature', to human moral nature. Kant lays claim to the moral mantle of the people insofar as he is acting as their steward here; but Kant's account of duty in fact cannot arise from the sense of duty that people have in their ordinary lives.

In an earlier portion of *Groundwork II*, Kant had argued that all of nature is governed by laws. These laws are imminent in Kant's categories; and we have seen there that Kant insists that he is not about to expect the laws of nature that he recognizes to conform to the objects 'out there' in the physical world (which he professes himself unable to know anyway). Kant, when he talks about how everything in nature has a law, is reverting to his argument that in the Copernican revolution, the philosopher creates and determines the laws to which that which is out there in the world will be subject. The philosopher can only know that which he makes, Kant reiterates and that has been the mantra in Machiavelli and Bacon and Hobbes. Kant as we have said is no trailblazer, but he is extending the modern project.

In this discussion of the categorical imperative, Kant segues into a discussion of how moral will is like a natural law. If all objects in nature are administered in accordance with certain laws, and if the will of philosophy determines what those laws shall be, that objects will be forced to conform to: then the moral dimension of the human race can also be looked at as such an object in nature, and reduced to a principle which is itself available for this Copernican revolution. If we reduce the human being to 'will', bereft of knowledge, bereft of the capacity to deliberate, bereft of character and the striving for character in action, we are left with something that the philosopher can also *give a law to*. Speaking in the name of the human race, then, Kant sets himself up as supreme legislator; and why would he not, seeing as how he has set himself up as the master of nature, assigning laws *to it*? Thus Kant professes to be speaking in the name of the people; nay he all but represents himself as giving voice to the people in his universal law, whereby they allegedly but he really, invent a new morality in accordance with ideas that he has in his mind, and which owes not the slightest fealty to the facts of the particular cases or events that human beings confront in the world.

Kant does reach, in *Groundwork II*, his discussion of happiness. Kant attacks it every which way. In the first place, Kant argues, the only possible happiness that there is to talk about is an eternal happiness, which is beyond human capacities. If a man cannot speak of being happy now and for all time, Kant decides, in a very legislative mood, that the quest for happiness must be consigned to the imagination (the same fate shared by perception in the *First Critique*). As far as more limited conceptions of happiness that people may have, Kant insists that they must observe the universal law, or be true in every single case. If a man says good health is what makes him happy, Kant says that there is at least one person in the world who would rather die than live a life of long misery. Thus the categorical imperative invalidates the claim. Kant considers whether the desire for knowledge is a cause for limited happiness that could pass muster as a test; he says that at least one human being in the world, now or later, will discover ugly truths that he wishes he had rather never learned, and so once again the categorical imperative explodes and steamrolls the individual concern with happiness. Kant silences the human race.

Kant furthermore reveals himself to be almost a true fanatic. He boasts about how his universal law is not derived from any human experiences. He boasts that the universal law is an imperative command; and that the one who is giving the law to nature, in this case to the wills of human beings, is decimating every effort to attach one of those wills to some plan for happiness. It is not that Kant really doesn't care what outcome eventuates when his categorical law is applied to the humble aspirations of the human race in the rank and file. It is that he is scattering them to the winds like a Jove, like a god; he ferociously disapproves of the quest for happiness in life, as a good

Epicurean would. Except that Epicurus lacked the philosophical technology to actually deprive the people of their very claims to happiness.

## ENDS AND MEANS

For ends, we are talking about goods. Kant does not engage in this formulation, but it is the proper one. Human beings seek goods, i.e. objects that serve some good or simply are good. To quote Aristotle, the good which human beings choose that is not a means to some other end, but which is the end, is happiness. We have quoted the passage above. Kant, however, as we have seen, rejects happiness as the summum bonum. Kant wants rather what he calls dignity, by which he means that he wishes to delegate all of his moral decision making to a law, which he regards as an infallible ethical command: that one's proposed action should be such that one could legislate it for everyone else, and not merely human beings but all rational beings. We have not commented thus far on this aspect of Kant's teaching, but now is a good time. How are we perishable beings, who have the power of choice if we would fight for it (against forces which seek to coordinate our thinking for us), to evaluate and liken ourselves to angels or even to God? Upon what basis are we to suspect that there is a morality among non-mortal beings?

Kant is unwilling to concede that the soul is immortal, as readers of his paralogisms recall. There Kant very firmly swatted down the argument that the soul must be immortal. Whereupon does Kant now insist that when we engage with his categorical law, that we must legislate our own actions, but at the same time actions that will apply to angels and the Divinity too? Either Kant is engaging in some savage satire here, or he is simply being Kant. Just as the human being cannot possibly be reconciled to the categorical imperative without having her entire power of moral choice dashed to pieces, Kant further expands the difficulty and circumference of this circle by adding in spirits which in his own view, we are not entitled to claim that we know to exist.

Given that the nature of human morality is entirely contingent upon the perishable nature of human beings, and our potential for both great calamity and destruction, as well as for superior achievement and fulfillment—to thus attempt to hitch our moral wagon to beings that are not mortal, is yet another commentary on what Kant is actually trying to do with his categorical imperative: arrest decision making, thwart choice, stifle character development, and forsake obligations that exist in real life. Kant started out the *Groundwork* talking about how the will all by itself is the good thing, and that merely making our will good is independently of all other considerations the summum bonum. We have asked what this amounts to, expropriating morality from the context in which we find it in our lives, in our human interac-

tions, and relocating it into this private possession whereby the goals of morality are radically reversed. For ordinary praise and blame expects us to adhere to the conception of right and wrong that is commonly shared, and which Kant himself is forever seeking to rename as merely subjective preferences or inclinations. Yet praising and blaming suggest just the opposite: that there is law and binding expectation in ordinary interactions, in the empirical, itself. So we reject Kant's claim that he is speaking for the human race in general with his theory of the 'good will' as the true and only end in itself of morality. We frankly regard his conception of the good will as distinctly immoral, as deliberately attacking the very foundations of human relationships and the moral integrity that binds them together. The ordinary human obligation to legislate for angels and God will have to wait for another treatise, another occasion, another subject matter.

We are struck though by one construction that Kant puts upon morality as he has defined it for the human race. Where the end is imperative, the means (whatever they may be) are authorized. First of all, we have not authorized Kant's end of the 'good will'. We do not recognize it to be any kind of morality at all, aside from an Epicurean trope. Yet let us continue to examine what Kant must mean by the construction. For Kant, the right to dedicate his moral energies entirely and preeminently, and exclusively, to seeing to it that his will meets with his criteria of goodness, as divorced from all experiential realities such as are the actual swaddling clothes of human morals—this is his end. What means therefore is he compelled, in his own view, to pursue in order to gain the end that he has outlined? I think we have seen also what that means consists in: in the philosophical overpowering of the community's morals, of the blazing accusation of every 'subjective inclination' or empirical experience that seeks to rivet and focus and commit our moral emotions. In order for Kant's end to prevail, the moral experience and conviction of the human race proper must give way in a struggle, in a new mode of command that Kant is fashioning in his moral rhetoric. In other words, Kant must dominate us. That is the only means that will give him his end, i.e. enable him to divorce us from the intense moral convictions that we feel in the context of our lived experiences.

Kant's next move needs to be evaluated and followed. For Kant claims, that in his categorical imperative, actually every human being is treated as an end in herself. Yet we have seen that this is not the case at all. The generality of the human race does not share Kant's conception of morality or duty. The generality of the human race does not even believe in Kant's conception of duty, and would find it incomprehensible if it ever was presented to them in language which did not seek to insinuate it into the common beliefs themselves. For this reason, Kant is obliged, and entitled as we have seen he thinks, to compel the public to undergo a transformation, a transvaluation of morals so to speak. The public must be converted to Kant's conception of the

good will, even though it cuts entirely against the grain of the most deeply rooted human nature to do so.

Kant claims that he is treating everyone as an end in herself. Yet this supposes and must suppose that Kant's definition of morality and goodness is the true and right one. This is not supposed, and it is not granted, by the generality of the people and it never will be. Therefore, we will have to amend what Kant says about the whole human race being an end unto itself in the context of his categorical imperative. Every human being is an end in herself only insofar as she has submitted to Kant's version of what the good will and what true duty are. Kant himself admits that this will never be freely given in consent, ever. And therefore, Kant must regard the other human beings effectually speaking as mere means to realizing his own version of morals and duty.

The proper way to formulate Kant's theory that all human beings are ends in themselves in the context of his theory, is to say that everybody is treated with identical and mutual respect in Kant's theory. If we state the proposition in this more accurate language, it is plain that this is not true. Kant does not respect what most human beings actually value. He rejects what they actually value. And what most human beings regard as silly vanity and even perverse self-absorption, Kant regards as the highest of the holies. There is no mathematics that can balance this equation. Kant does not respect the people, either as ends in themselves, or even as people worthy of arguing with. Since argument is impossible without common evidence, and since that common evidence must be empirical; and since Kant outlaws the empirical from both his speculative (so called) and moral domains, there is just no way for Kant to treat the people in any other way than as mere footstools to his own glory.

## AUTONOMY AS THE PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

In our discussions of the *First Critique*, we frequently found it necessary to remind the reader of what the subject matter of the discussion actually is, as a means to proceed. For Kant runs so roughshod over the human language and how names are commonly used, as to make it most unlikely that the reader can otherwise beat back the onslaught. We are experiencing a similar moment here.

At the apex of Kant's moral philosophy is something he wishes to baptize into the realm of the most holy objects known to human beings. Kant has called this principle of morality 'unconditional', part of a 'Kingdom of Ends'; he has characterized it as a domain whereby nobody is treated as a mere means or with any lack of respect. Yet it is the name of 'purity' that Kant most likes to employ, and 'dignity'. These words cannot simply be torn out of the human vocabulary and attached to whatever object the philosopher

pleases. Kant has enumerated what this substance is that he is referring to, and we will remind the reader of *what it is*. We behold a human being in the world. It is a world which our human being shares with other human beings in close community. In the course of daily events, occasions arise whereby certain members of the community are cast into harm's way, and the circumstances are such that it falls to us to either play a role in deflecting the damage, or otherwise affect the situation, or else fold our hands and do nothing. The community, depending on the situation of course, may blame the individual fiercely for being indifferent to the plight of the human being who is facing jeopardy. The community, local, may of course (again, depending on the factual circumstances) praise very highly, and even revere, certain actions undertaken to protect and defend other social members from unnecessary and inappropriate harm. Kant's object of unconditional morality, his 'pure' moral impulse, Kant's most revered moral disposition, is to adamantly turn away from the importuning empirical facts of the situation, and to repair to a purely private domain of concern for *oneself*.

Kant is not here attempting to protect the individual from physical harm. For that is usually provided for by ordinary praise and blame themselves. People do not expect others to surrender their very lives in attempting to enact a moral duty. There may be circumstances where this is not so, but we speak as the subject matter requires us to speak, for the most part. Because it is never appropriate to speak of morality as if it is a homogeneous entity. It is not. What Kant is concerned about here, is the Epicurean turn. He wishes to fashion a morality that absolutely exempts him from the pressure that the community would place upon him to endure certain pains, or to forgo certain pleasures. The Epicurean, as we have explained, seeks to make himself opposed to the very possibility of all pain; and therefore, it is not surprising, that Kant drapes this flowery language over that which is demonstrably self-ish, shallow, and crass. The Epicurean places himself above the common community *by far*. He refuses to abide by the interdependent morality of the community. He will only contemplate obligations where formal contracts have been made with express persons. Otherwise, not at all. This is what Kant is exalting as the unconditional, the pure, the end in itself.

The reader may ask us at this point can we prove that Kant is an Epicurean. We certainly have proved that Kant's natural philosophy, implicit in his so-called a priori postulates or categories, enacts eternal substances. These substances cannot have the parts of coming into being and passing out of being; therefore they can only have the parts of homogeneous disposition, i.e. simple bodies or atoms. We have discussed this more at length earlier but we could pursue this discussion further if need be. Kant spent quite a lot of time in his earlier years writing about monads and even expressly about Epicurean atoms as *his own* physical theory. In moral terms, scholars seem agreed that Rousseau is the decisive moral influence on Kant. I think the relationship

between Rousseau's General Will and Kant's categorical imperative is virtually one of cause and effect. Rousseau's conception of self-preservation simply is the Epicurean philosophy, and we have traced its distinct emergence and dominance in Kant's moral attitudes thus far.

The enumeration of autonomy as the decisive attribute of Kant's moral summum bonum, however, should close the deal. Autonomy means, for Kant, that the individual shall not be pressured to any conviction or action or even attitude by any empirical fact calling out for moral attention. Kant's whole moral attitude is therefore compressed into rejecting the other in his own right. He deflects the reality of interdependence, and has the temerity to name this transgression interdependence of a high holy order. The human race knows well enough that to convert the object of reverence, into an object that one obeys for no other reason except that one has decreed to oneself, as one's own authority, that this shall constitute the moral code, is an abomination upon morality in truth. It is impossible to reconcile these two things: an object distinct from oneself, of high reverence or even the highest reverence; but that which one obeys solely because one has autonomously, on one's own initiative, decided to make this a law for oneself.

Kant is working a variation of the social contract tradition here. The human beings seem to dissolve into the new categories, and that is the danger when one submits or 'consents' to voluntary social arrangements when a philosophy is broker which speaks with its own vocabulary that is not the common one. It is never going to turn out well. If the principle of moral value to which the individual submits does not contain within itself the gravitas, the dignity, the compelling authority to exact obedience, then it is no law, no obedience at all, in the common sense of these names. We do not obey justice because we have autonomously chosen to do so. We obey justice because it is right and because not to do so is a disgrace and because human happiness depends on it. We are obliged to justice, regardless of what language games we play. Yet Kant in his principle of autonomy is driving a wedge in between the community, its very natural emotions and the truths that it knows on the one hand, and the abstract, virtually unintelligible 'law' or imperative of Kant on the other.

In Kant's analysis, those moral judgments or actions which have been characterized by autonomy, as he calls it, or the universal law, are 'permissible'. Those actions or judgments or even merely feelings and emotions which are caused by empirical facts, i.e. by actual truth, are 'impermissible'.<sup>18</sup> This is a mighty ambitious moral program that Kant is enacting. He has decreed, though no more than Hobbes or Locke or Rousseau, that the moral emotions felt by the people are depraved and wicked and unredeemable. Now they are not even allowed. It strikes me as quite ironic that in our passion—tossed present-day lives, scholars sigh for the reign of 'reason' promised by Kant. It is the invasion of popular morality by mercenary philos-



phies which has given rise to the tumults. The truth of the matter is that Kant has no claim to the title of 'reason', as his positions are highly irrational. It is right and proper for people's moral emotions to be caused and evoked by empirical facts; and while people have always derived some moral emotions from beliefs including philosophy, the attempt to rebuild the morals of the public through philosophic initiative is breathtaking in a bad way. Yet philosophy did not possess the concepts necessary to combat the rebellion from within its own ranks.

### GROUNDWORK III

Kant changes his language significantly in the opening pages of *Groundwork III*. Kant admits, for one thing, that he has not proved the reality of the categorical imperative. Kant claims at this point that he has only sought to prove one thing: that the will is autonomous. Kant makes the argument that every rational being must have a will that is free. Kant goes farther. A will that is subject to the categorical imperative, which compels the human being to shun all 'heteronomous', or 'empirical', or 'subjective inclinations', i.e. any true facts of his or her life, cannot help but be free even though it is mandatory. We have protested in an earlier place that this jingling of words about is not argument. Let us go back to Kant's first assumption, that which he claims that he has proved: that the will is autonomous, that all rational wills are autonomous. Kant claims that this is the assumption of everyone, and it is not.

Let us recur to an example employed by Aristotle. Suppose a man out in his boat. He happens to have on board some very valuable objects. The boat develops a leak, and is heavily taking on water. The man, in order to stay afloat for a longer time, and give himself a chance to be saved, decides to throw his valuable objects overboard. Aristotle raises the question: is this tossing of the valuable objects overboard *voluntary*? Aristotle admits that it is a voluntary action. The man after all could have chosen to simply sink with the boat. That was a possible decision. Yet, nonetheless, many readers are going to bristle at the notion that this was a *free* action.

We do say that the man who tossed his valuable objects overboard was acting voluntarily. Yet the category of the voluntary is very large. The category of freedom is much smaller. The two overlap, but not in all cases. What is free is certainly voluntary, but what is voluntary need not be free. Now if our man had decided, before getting into his boat, that he wanted to get rid of his valuable objects, and to cast them into the sea—then this would be a free rational choice. He was not pressured by circumstances to do this. We can say that the man, and not the external circumstance, is the moving principle of his action. In the case of the man who tossed his valuables overboard

because the boat was sinking, and who had no premeditated intention to throw away his valuables, this was not in fact a free rational action, *one he deliberated about for its own sake*. This distinction may seem trifling to some, but in fact it is the difference between freedom and servitude. For the slave too has options. He can refuse to submit to his overseer, and he can face isolation, desperation, or ruin by running away. It should not be the aspiration of a civilization to lift the voluntary options of slaves to the first rank of freedom.

So Kant speaks falsely when he says that all wills are autonomous. A man who has a gun pointed at his head may turn over his wallet, and this may be voluntary; yet it is far from being autonomous in the sense in which ordinary people use the name. The autonomy that Kant imposes upon us, by the force and power of his extraordinary mind, plays us false. For by the words that Kant keeps trotting out to adorn his theory, he keeps invoking objects that the reader is going to feel familiar with, but which objects do not square with Kant's definition of the will *to begin with*. That original definition of the will that Kant provided dashed it on the rocks forever for us, when he says that the truest and most natural object of our will is ourselves, our independence from external pressures which include all of the objects we care about and all of the people we care about, and all of the bonds which attach us to other human beings.

Few make that concession except under duress of argument; and this brings us to the instrument of deceit in rhetorical philosophy. That freedom which is dressed up and painted in such a manner as to garner the appearance of freedom, when in truth it is as Kant has resolved, limited to the most impoverished of objects, and forces us to be torn away from what we most deeply cherish and care about—this is a bondage far worse than any circumstances on a sinking boat.

So we do not share Kant's definition of will, just as we do not share Kant's definition of autonomy. Thus when Kant in *Groundwork III* takes the next step and calls his autonomous will necessarily free, and claims to be speaking only the assumptions of the whole human race, we reject what he says, because we have proved that it is false what he says. Yet Kant, wriggling and bobbing and weaving, with his special definitions of propositions, and his special theory of perceptions, and his indemonstrable claims about the 'laws of the mind', has finally finagled his way to be able to push together the two words, 'will', and 'freedom'. Kant has up until this point been making very strange sounds, to the effect that the will is free; as if the will could be separated from the deliberative process which determines the content of that will; and as if the process which determines the direction of the employment of the will could not be invaded, manipulated, short circuited or otherwise brutalized and rendered unlike itself. Yet now we have reached the essence of the Epicurean position, really. It is to be free from all

external forces, and the Epicurean does seek this radical, incontinent liberty—in order to be able to regard oneself as the sole object of importance. It is Kant's embrace of the right to throw off all expectation and obligation to others that is now being articulated more directly.

Aristotle argues that happiness is the ultimate end of all of our actions, and that all of our actions aim at some good. Yet the Kantians separate themselves out from the rest of the human race, claiming that they do not know what the real external objects in the world are; and they single themselves out from the rest of the world, claiming that they have discovered secret laws of the mind that only genius, but not demonstration, can uncover; and in so doing they have laid the foundation for repudiating those concerns which the generality of human beings live and die *for*, with full and free heart.

### HENRY ALLISON ON THE KANTIAN WILL

Henry Allison prefers to view the Kantian issue of freedom through the lens of transcendental idealism. This is not unreasonable, but Allison is reluctant to give us a straightforward interpretation of what transcendental idealism is. The philosopher and the scholar of philosophy is obliged, when discussing moral matters, to at least begin his discussion with reference to that which the non-philosopher can understand. Philosophers, after all, are subject to the praise and blame of ordinary people, at least potentially. It will not do to simply argue in the *a priori* that the objects of people's moral censure and approbation are inaccessible to human faculties of comprehension and ways of knowing. Kant however happens to do this. He does it frankly in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and he does it indirectly in the *Groundwork*. Allison for his part does not think that we can limit Kant to any one set of contexts for this discussion. Allison in other words, at least in the essay under consideration, refuses to give a verdict on Kant's moral philosophy. Yet we think that Allison fails to ultimately characterize the problem correctly. We do not think that the issue is vague or opaque, and so let us get on with it.

Considered as a whole, Kant's account may be seen as an attempt to reconcile two apparently conflicting principles: 1) the deterministic principle of the Second Analogy, which holds that every occurrence . . . has an antecedent condition from which it follows according to a rule; and 2) the thesis that the conception of ourselves as genuine agents to whom actions are imputed requires the attribution to the will of freedom in a strong (indeterminist) sense.<sup>19</sup>

In the *First Critique*, and in the *Prolegomena* we may add, Kant confronts us with an antinomy, or contradictory issue. Is the human will free? Kant sets forth two possible positions that he claims are contradictory to one another

from the ordinary point of view. Only transcendental idealism is thought to be able to resolve the quandary. On one side of the issue, Kant allows, all objects in nature are ‘necessary’ and predetermined to behavior in accordance with what are called ‘laws’. Human beings, to the degree that they are bodies, are of course a part of nature so construed. Therefore human actions, since actions are dependent on body, as even a look in the eyes can be a causal factor in certain moral situations—are determined. From this vantage point it would be silly to say that the human will is free, from the vantage point of a human being as body. The body is encased in the infinite chain of causes and effects that is ‘nature’ in Kant’s view.

On the other side of the ‘antinomy’ is the claim that the human will is free, even though the body is enslaved to determinism. This can be considered in the following manner. In the first place, Kant argues that we must separate the will from nature in order to claim that it is even eligible to be free. Anybody who would regard spirit, or the immaterial as part of nature, Kant argues, would be condemning the human race to necessary servitude. Kant argues in just such terms. From Kant’s point of view, then, the individual can as will, as mind, step back from the determinism that is nature and become a first cause to itself. Kant describes this methodology in two ways: in one formulation, he calls it ‘spontaneity’. In the other formulation, he calls it ‘autonomy’. In both constructions, Kant argues that the mind is capable of being the first cause of its own moral ideas. Yet this is not tenable. Neither wing of this antinomy is tenable in the context of Kantian philosophy.

In the first place, we must remember the Copernican revolution. This is the entire foundation of Kant’s transcendental idealism. Instead of the human mind having to conform itself to the objects in nature, as they are out there—the Kantian philosopher insists that he is not able to reflect upon any object whatsoever that he does not first *make*. Thus from the vantage point of transcendental idealism, every single object in nature that the Kantian philosopher contemplates is something that he has *refused* to consider as an object in itself. Now while it is true that in some places in the *First Critique* Kant presents our human faculties as incapable of knowing objects as they are in themselves, he never does prove that. In fact, if we had to rely upon the overwhelming evidence of the ordinary point of view, as both Plato and Aristotle would argue we must in this starting off point, Kant would be unable to stand by his entire transcendental aesthetic. Kant would be compelled, in such a context, to rebut the evidence from ordinary opinions. For this Kant would turn to his categories, which he also refuses to *prove*. Yet we have supplied the proofs for Kant’s categories, as the theory of eternal body, *which we have refuted*. Thus the way is not open to Kant to claim that we are not in fact eligible to know external bodies as they are in themselves. Kant is limited to the argumentative strategy that it is preferable to refuse to recognize external objects for what they are in themselves, in the Cartesian sense:

and Descartes argues, as Kant argues, that human metaphysics has not been able to 'advance' as a science based upon the 'old' view that we can indeed know objects for what they are in themselves.

To resume then, on the first wing of Kant's antinomy, that all bodies in nature are encased in an infinite series of causes and effects, such that we cannot locate their original cause—this claim, in Kant, is ultimately reducible to his Copernican revolution. Which is to say that Kant refuses to consider or contemplate objects for what they are in themselves, even if he could, because he thinks it more profitable to rather assign laws to nature, based upon the premise that we cannot know them for what they are. One really cannot have it both ways. One cannot know for a fact that the objects in nature as they are in themselves are unknowable to us, because they are subject to a chain of deterministic causes that is infinite; and on the other hand refuse to comment on how objects are in themselves because one has decided instead to determine for oneself what those objects are through the Copernican revolution. Kant repeatedly refers to himself as 'legislator' of nature, as giving the law *to* nature; and so now the claim that nature is deterministic and thus that our will cannot be free, collapses of itself. For we have seen that the very characterization of nature as unfree is rather something that Kant has produced through his own agency as Copernican revolutionary, rather than any proven demonstration as to what the objects in nature are or must be in themselves.

This clears away all distractions then. The issue is whether the will is deterministic, and the other leg of the antinomy states that the will is free even though all of the human body itself is implicated in the unfree deterministic nature. We have seen to the contrary that Kant's Copernican revolution itself is an act of will; that it is an act of will which has led to the 'law' of determinism which nature is saddled with in Kant's theory; and that from this point of view even the first leg of the antinomy is an example of free will. For Kant was not obliged to prefer to make objects conform to the ideas of them that they have in his head; he could have chosen to make his ideas rather conform to the objects as they are in themselves. It is a matter of *will* for Kant that he did not so choose.

Nor does the discussion end there. For now we are just looking at Kant's discussion of the will. Kant insists that the will is free; but yet he describes this will in such terms, that it does not look free to us. Kant makes the argument, in the *Groundwork*, that in order to be free, the will is absolutely forbidden to take its objectives from any inspiration external to it. The objects in the world, including the human beings we share the world with, are not eligible to be causes of our will in Kant's formulation. A request from another, cannot bend our will in Kant's theory of what a free will is. A need of another, cannot shape our will in such a way as to be compatible with Kant's formulation of what a moral will, a 'good' will, can be. This is in fact

the true nature of the issue that Kant is raising morally, maybe with his entire theory (because it is not of much use to science properly speaking to refuse to contemplate what objects in nature are in themselves—it would be very difficult to subject those objects to experimental change if one did not first mine them and plumb their depths as to their natures and such, merely in order to be eligible to know how to overpower those objects in time). What is revealed, once we roll back the myth of deterministic nature from the Copernican point of view in Kant, is his determination to arrest the possibility of the human will from acting in the contexts where people feel most free, and towards such objects as they care the most about. *Kant's whole discussion of free will bars us at the gate from taking into account the motives that we have any interest in*: which is not, however, to say, that Kant shares those interests. In fact he does not.

#### ALLEN WOOD ON A SUPREME PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY IN KANT

Every undergraduate who has been exposed to Kant's moral philosophy can recall the 'universal law', otherwise known as the categorical imperative. Allen Wood gives it a trenchant and efficient interpretation in his essay: 'what if everybody else did that?' Wood thinks that it has been much overblown, the very expectation that we can find in Kant any one supreme moral principle to which all others must be subordinated. Now Wood allows that there must in fact be some ultimate 'ground' of morality, for otherwise all of our moral calculations would lack a rudder, and we would simply not know what to do. What Wood would like to argue for is almost a commonsense version of Kant's argument. There are a plurality of moral principles, Wood argues, that even Kant himself gives recognition to in his *Metaphysics of Morals*. A reader of that book, Wood argues, could never trace all of the moral principles articulated there to a single root. What is desired then is a more tempered appreciation of Kant's moral principle: one which can better square it with ordinary decision making as we are all aware of it, and our relationship to it.

Kant's theory takes us to be agents who are self-directing in the sense that we bear the capacity to step back from our natural desires, reflect on them, consider whether and how we should satisfy them, and be moved by them only on the basis of such reflections. An inclination (or habitual desire we find in ourselves empirically) moves us to act only when we set its object as an end for ourselves, and this choice then sets us the task of devising a means to that end.<sup>20</sup>

Wood's ambition is however misplaced. For Kant does indeed have a single moral principle to which he subordinates all others. Wood is right to indicate that the 'formulation of a universal law' that is related to the categorical imperative is not that principle however. For the categorical imperative is more like a toll booth, except that there is no place to put in any money, and no way to get the barrier to rise and allow us to pass through. The categorical imperative is a principle of arrested moral deliberation. It confronts us with a question or obligation that we cannot ever fulfill or even fully comprehend. It is not possible for us to know if every single human being in the world, who is now or has ever been or ever will be, should do the action that we propose to do if they were in the same shoes as us. And on that point: are we to suspect that everybody is exactly in our position, i.e. that they would in effect be us, or are we just supposed to suppose that everybody must be able to refer their own relevant situations to ours and make use of the action that we propose in a generalizable way? Kant is silent upon this matter, and hence we must take him for the more severe interpretation. We cannot possibly know what everyone else in the world should do in their comparable circumstances, precisely because specific facts are the true determinants of moral oughts in the vast majority of cases; and that as the facts vary, so do the imperatives vary. Aristotle, who is often talked about these days as being in some sense relevant to Kantian ethics, believed that morality could never be a science for this reason: that moral issues are all unique, at the root, and that is why the human individual must be free to deliberate about what to do. It is clear that Kant is not interested in such deliberation: that is why all of Kant's emphasis, but almost none of Aristotle's, is on 'will'.

Wood is not able to see the supreme moral principle in Kant, precisely because he is squinting at it, rather than allowing himself to see it for what it is. When Wood describes the 'good will', it simply does not match up with Kant's definition at all. "He begins by focusing on 'the good will', which, he claims, we recognize as good in itself and as having a special place among goods in that it is the only thing good in itself whose goodness cannot be augmented or diminished by its combination with other good or bad things."<sup>21</sup> For Wood, the good will contemplates a variety of issues and situations, and varies in how it is applied. When the Kantian will is set before empirical considerations, such as the facts of any case, as Aristotle (and the ordinary human experience) is used to, Wood thinks that Kant urges us to simply step back from those pressures or 'inclinations' or even 'desires' in order to reflect upon them and see whether we should in fact follow them for moral reasons. This may be Wood's principle, and it is a respectable principle; but it is not Kant's.

Kant makes a very important distinction right off the bat in the *Groundwork*. This distinction is between those people who consider intention to be the only important thing, and those who consider the outcome of our inten-

tions to be also important *at all*. Kant simply throws over ordinary morality when he claims for the human race, that morality belongs only to the first interpretation: it is only our wills that matter, not what they ultimately bring about in the context of worldly actions, *at all*. This is the argument of the *Groundwork*, and it is simply irreconcilable with ordinary morality. Put in on any ballot in plain English or simply subject it to a public opinion poll and take the measure. The prospect, if any politician ever openly ran on such a profession would be immediate political extinction. Morality is very much about outcomes. Intention matters, and is indeed indispensable to any decent and praiseworthy action; for we never respect perverted impulses or wicked intentions even if it happens to result in some not terrible consequence.

Yet this is the rub for Kantian morality. It is not just that the moral philosophy of Kant exalts intention above all else, and to the degree that it forswears any interest in the result of any actions that could or do result from our intentions. We recall to mind that ‘antinomy’ that we have just finished examining. Kant made the argument that our wills can be free while our bodies are not free, for a purpose: *to insulate us from judgment about what we will*. To resume, then, we have stated that Kant does have a single moral supreme principle, and that it is revealed in part by his definition of the good will. Kant’s definition of the good will cannot be squared with the ordinary conception of the good will, in any place or time.

Yet we have only examined half of the equation. Once Kant has established that the will by itself is the only important thing, the subject of what the will wills, becomes decisive. And for Kant, we can say that this is manifest in a negative formulation: what the individual is not eligible to will, is any action evoked by any external circumstance. The individual must originate his causes of action out of himself alone, without reference to any external situation. Wood fudges this aspect of Kant’s teaching, which is again perfectly clear in the *Groundwork*. Kant limits external causes to ‘subjective desires and inclinations’, which all sound like vices. The fact of the matter, the truth, is that this external source of moral emotions and things which are to be done is *usually* given to us by circumstances, for the most part. Kant is a rebel against ordinary morality, and his supreme moral principle is selfishness.

### JENS TIMMERMAN ON KANT’S MORAL LAW

One thing in the context of morality needs to be said at the outset: what the origins of morality are. This is not difficult to think about when one is contemplating a neo-Eleatic philosopher. For the Eleatic or neo-Eleatic philosopher, the most real bodies in nature are eternal. The atomists, who are neo-Eleatic philosophers, argue that the atoms, indestructible and ungener-



ated, underlie the supposed 'compound' bodies that ordinary human beings both perceive and are. Parmenides and Epicurus both are vehemently contemptuous of ordinary morality.

Human morality would not exist, obviously, if we were imperishable beings. Were there no possibility of catastrophic injury, such as being mortal always presupposes, there would *be* no ought or should. This observation is of great moment in the case of Kant, because when Kant argues that the real objects in nature (including ourselves) cannot truly be known; when Kant argues, in his categories, that even the possible objects of human experience must be regarded as eternal and subject only to alteration: this is the neo-Eleatic wave of argument, and it falls with a heavy hand on morals. Jens Timmerman is very concerned about the distinction that Kant makes between duty, or one (or several) purely rational principles on the one hand, and 'inclination' on the other. Kant, Timmerman argues, is against 'inclination' as a moral cause; and he is in favor of changeless rational principles or 'duty' so described, as the proper remedy for moral issues.

“This radical distinction between action from duty and action from inclusion, as introduced in section I, thus reappears throughout the *Groundwork*. All action involves both an object of volition and a law. As regards moral value, the decisive question is whether the formal or material element takes precedence in the process of decision and subsequent execution of a 'dutiful' act, i.e. an act that, on the face of it, conforms or coincides with duty.<sup>22</sup>

Timmerman is not paying enough attention to the specifics of the one principle that Kant enumerates. By 'inclination', Kant has indiscriminately placed any and all empirical causes of our feelings and our actions. 'Inclinations' is a disparaging term. It suggests a predisposition on our part to feel one way or the other. It almost suggests or does suggest *appetites*, self-serving appetites, as the subjective cause of our moral involvements in the world. Kant's cruel and unusual classification of our moral emotions into ones subject to our control or 'autonomy' on the one hand, versus everything else crudely lumped together as morally irrelevant distractions, gives voice to the neo-Eleatic in Kantian philosophy. It makes a great deal of difference, in Kant's schema, that we cannot know what the objects are in themselves. How could anybody act morally if he did not know the objects for what they are in themselves? This precondition of moral discourse for Kant excludes what almost all human beings both are by nature and care about: perishable, fragile beings, who happen to care deeply about the rights and wrongs which beset human interaction in the context of their vulnerability.

That Kant seeks to rigidly separate impulsiveness from principle is only the apparent issue. For Kant has imposed a blanket ignorance on human beings, insofar as they would be moral actors, in the context of our ability to even know the facts, any truth of fact, ever. It drives us inward, it drives us

apart from our communities, this formulation of our sensory faculties does. Thus I am suggesting first of all that Kant's account of our perceptions as 'inclinations' is defamatory, but defamatory with a purpose, a very carefully thought out purpose: for this makes the only possible concern for us, morally speaking, ourselves, which we indisputably feel, and on which Kant sets out to build his whole morality. We remind the reader once more of Rousseau, and the principle of self-preservation which is the polestar of his philosophy.

It is in the context of his loaded indictment of the possibility of our perceiving true facts about other people, and our lives, where Kant is suborning the development of his own true moral philosophy. For the very first characteristic of the moral law that Kant develops, that of the good will, is only good insofar as it has turned away from our relationships with the others; the moral will is good only insofar as it forswears any concern with the impact of its deliberations on the other people in the world. This is, from any common standpoint, a most perverse attribute.

Timmerman spends a lot of time talking about the examples that Kant employs to illustrate his moral philosophy. One wonders: of what value can examples be in a theory which has forsworn all perceived facts as belonging to the 'subjective' category of 'inclination'? One must at least *prima facie* cast a stern eye towards Kant's examples, since he is precisely depriving, or seeking to deprive the human race of having recourse to our experience as the basis for our moral judgments and actions. Let us take the case of the philanthropist. What is a philanthropist? Someone, usually very wealthy, who has decided to make a business or profession of doing good deeds to others. This is simply not an example that has any relevance to a discussion of what morality *is*. If the philanthropist, who ordinarily takes great pleasure in writing checks to needy cases in society, should suddenly be afflicted with cancer, and still continue to write checks to the needy, this in Kant would be the only context in which the check writing would be a morally credible affair. This cannot be an accurate assessment of Kant's philosophy, however, unless we acknowledge that the philanthropist is not engaged in ordinary morals. The philanthropist is not called into action by ordinary praise and blame and perception of fact and the feelings that are attendant to the facts given rise by *occasions*. We do not denounce people who stop writing checks to the needy out of a loss of interest. We did not think they were obliged to this behavior in the first place.

## NOTES

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5. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a25.
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7. Hume's apology for Epicurus can be found in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Revised by Peter H. Nidditch. 3rd edition. Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1995, pages 132–48.
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## Chapter Eight

# Kant's Critique of Practical Reason

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant is engaged in a process of system building. The *First Critique* was in the business of imposing limits on the human mind, directives. The *Critique of Practical Reason* is no less bent on imposing governing principles. The difference is the subject matter. In the *First Critique*, the subject matter is external bodies. Our ability to know them is something that we take for granted, but Kant's philosophy has aggressively rebuked us for overstepping the mind's 'limits' allegedly. Here in the *Second Critique* the issue is morality. Once again, the ordinary person takes herself to be familiar with what morality is. Not so fast, Kant argues. The ordinary person is in the habit of regarding as moral intentions and actions that which do not meet his criteria for moral willing and intention. In both Critiques, then, philosophy is constituting itself as either an inventor of great magnitude, or a discoverer the likes of which none has ever been.

In the *First Critique*, Kant argues, through the representation of 'phenomena', that the mind absolutely knows, in the a priori, that these objects are not only eternal, but that they are locked into a system of interacting substances in nature, which makes it impossible to discover what is a cause and what is an effect. Nature, in Kant's far from original claim, and still clinging to this posture of dealing with the common 'appearances', is a mechanistic thing, utterly bereft of freedom, but determined by the motions of the infinite machine.

It makes all the difference in the world to represent nature as itself beyond the domain of potential, including those aspects of coming into being and passing out of being. Aristotle's conception of a substance, and Plato's, know of no iron laws of nature which forever repel the discussion of freedom from its context. For the Socratic Greeks, the most real natural objects or substances are perishable, and therefore naturally involved in mortal careers, in

which each object of natural origin may reach for a full development of its native potential, or be diverted in the opposite direction. Kant, having suppressed the reality of coming into being in his account of natural objects, effectively suspends the very recognition of the mortal careers of human beings, who are foremost among those natural objects. Kant does, in his lectures on logic, deny that we can know for a certain fact that man is mortal. We may only know that all the people we have been familiar with, or have records of, are mortal.

Kant's larger theoretical system depends upon the facts that he assigns to nature: infinite, eternal, effectively homogeneous, wholly separated from all potential for either good or ill destiny. Kant has anchored his system in natural philosophy, no doubt, in mimicry of his predecessors in the Early Modern period, all of whom have done the same, and employed the same natural philosophy to boot. Now that Kant has saddled us with this account of nature, which is so foreign to our experience as to be unrecognizable, he has obtained for himself a definition of what freedom *is not*. Whatever is natural is unfree, in Kant's argument. The whole nature of human beings which is involved with freedom and the need for it, the fight for it, is thereby erased from the memory banks of Western philosophy by Kant.

### SELF-LOVE AND EMPIRICAL OBJECTS

As we have stated, Kant has laid the foundation down that nature and everything anchored in nature is unfree. He refers to nature as 'mechanism' or 'natural mechanism'.

I ask instead where our cognition of the unconditionally practical starts, whether from freedom or from the practical law. It cannot start from freedom, for we cannot be immediately conscious of this, since the first concept is negative, nor can we conclude to it from experience, since experience lets us organize only the law of appearances and hence the mechanism of nature, the direct opposite of freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Objects incapable of coming into being are incapable of potential. Objects incapable of passing out of being are ineligible to truly suffer harm. With this leverage in his conception of nature advanced, Kant proceeds to assign classifications to ordinary human experiences in the moral domain. All experiences that human beings have that involve bodies, other bodies, including human bodies, and our feelings with regard to them, are *de facto* declared by Kant to be eligible for only one classification, and this classification fits every single sort of interaction of which a human being is capable in his 'empirical' reality. That classification is wholly restricted to one's uses for the object, narrowly, very narrowly construed. The entire universe of pos-

sible experiences between two human beings is reduced, by Kant, on the empirical level, to experiences for each isolated individual, which concern only his pleasure, his pain, or his indifference. On the empirical level, there are no freedoms possible, Kant argues. There are no relationships between empirical human beings which have even the potential of freedom. How pregnant is this proposition for the subject matter of politics? Not a little pregnant only, we may suppose. Yet Kant indicates a blanket classification, that our entire domain of empirical experience is nothing more and nothing less than measures of self-love.

All practical principles that presuppose an object (matter) of the faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will are, without exception, empirical and can furnish no practical laws. . . . All material practical principles as such are, without exception, of one and the same kind and come under the general principle of self-love or one's own happiness.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with Kant's terminology, perceptual experience is allowed to consist in nothing else than this manner in which an external object (phenomena) affects our bodies and minds. There is no other medium of experience for Kant when we encounter some external body. Kant is not making that clear here, as he plays upon the public distinction between self-love and concern for others, which is universally admitted. The public would not accept that Kant is speaking in its name if it understood that Kant means, by 'the empirical' and 'self-love', the entirety of perceptual experience per se. From staring at a stone to being loyal to a friend, from naming a rabbit what it is and from feeling indignation at an injustice, this is all 'empirical', and no experience whatsoever escapes Kant's tarring brush of self-love. It is the domain of ordinary experience itself which Kant is equating with the immoral; and to this end his definition of freedom will entail entirely suppressing the naming practices and distinctions that are made in ordinary speech. This evidently the public would never justify.

Between ordinary human beings, 'selfishness' is a scathing accusation. It provokes severe rebuke, as it indicates a pattern of the grotesque preference of the self over and against every other human being with whom one has to deal. It departs rather widely from that which we consider to be fellowship, or the bonds of community, or *equality properly understood*. Kant, leaning on his philosophy of nature for a foundation, uses that foundation here to taint all empirical or natural human interactions as forsaken into the hive of radical *unfreedom*. 'All material practical rules put the determining ground of the will in the lower faculty of desire, and were there no merely formal laws of the will sufficient to determine it, then neither could any higher faculty of desire be admitted.'<sup>3</sup>

What the public understands is that one can be disposed towards individual perishable objects and other human beings in radically different ways. In the context of a certain relationship, a man may be guilty of poisonous self-love. This the public would understand. In the context of the same relationship, the man could enact a disposition of a radically different kind, a disposition of justice and decent concern for his fellow. This is the distinction that makes sense in reality. Yet the reader will note that Kant collapses both into the category of self-love. The principle of freedom requires first of all the evacuation of the empirical domain in its entirety; and the mysterious location of Kant's universal law can be originally explained by the fact that it cannot be enacted empirically.

### KANT'S DOMAIN OF 'LOWER DESIRES'

Kant is making the same sort of claims here in the *Second Critique* that he did in the *Groundwork*, but his method has shifted. The *Groundwork* did not partake much of the *First Critique* or its systematic ambitions. In the *Groundwork*, Kant simply defines what the good will is; and when Kant defines what the good will is, *it only indirectly involves other people*. The individual in Kant's *Groundwork* is severely rebuked for caring about the impact that her willing may have on any other person or persons. In the *Groundwork* Kant argues that this whole consideration is simply irrelevant. What the individual ought to care about is not other people, and how her will may affect them; she must concern herself solely with her own willing, to the exclusion of any empirical object, because it simply does not matter what the will's objects might otherwise be to Kant. He has departed from that line of argument here in the *Second Critique*.

Now Kant is arguing that all involvements of the empirical realm which human beings are capable of undergoing are simply limited to rank pleasure and pain. They are, whether people or places or things, all simply objects for her in Kant's domain of empirical experience. Since she is not eligible either to do other than feel pleasure, or displeasure, or indifference, she is at the mercy of these objects and what we may call her own random preferences or tastes. Kant has closed the door on human relationships in their many and varied possibilities. Are relationships founded on justice and virtue supposed to be equated with the agreeableness of a new shirt, or with the displeasure at a certain confection? Kant is pledged to define empirical experience as bondage again, and furthermore as one leading to conflict between people, because their pleasures and displeasures are not going to match up with one another. People have different preferences after all, and if that is what we are forced to talk about, then certainly it is not going to be possible to organize a society of practical reason based on preferences.



Kant is engaging in this form of argument to try to set it before the reader that there is no possibility of choice, of a truly free will whenever these 'lower desires' of the human being are involved. 'Lower' and 'empirical' are one and the same thing for Kant. Thus in order for the will to have a chance at freedom, it must be entirely purged, entirely segregated apart from and radically isolated from everything empirical. To which we say that we are not interested in a definition of free will that leaves our bodies to deterministic fate. We are not interested in a definition of free will that does not recognize and depend upon an awareness of the possible forms of human interaction which do involve choice, free choice, namely justice. It would be ludicrous to talk about justice if one has closed the door on the 'empirical'. Yet that is what Kant is proposing to do with his definition of the free will. The free will must emanate from the human mind itself, another a priori mystery, something that could be assigned to all objects as if a god were to undertake the project, regarding its own judgment as the true 'form' of everything, and refusing to acknowledge the forms that are embedded in every natural object that exists (and very different forms at that).

Then only, insofar as reason of itself (not in the service of the inclinations) determines the will, is reasoning a true higher faculty of desire, to which the pathologically determinable is subordinate, and then only as reason really and indeed specifically distinct from the latter, so that even to the least admixture of the latter's impulses infringes upon its strength and superiority.<sup>34</sup>

Kant refers to the free will as belonging to a 'higher order of desire'. It is interesting that he still employs the *name* of desire. Can a disembodied soul desire? Have we any experience of such, have we any the slightest reason to suspect that there may be such a thing as a disembodied mental power which yet desires? What would it desire? Why is the desiring faculty, which yearns for higher things, deflected by Kant so severely from the domain of empirical relationships, i.e. of politics, where the possibility of freedom really and actually exists? Unless Kant is not interested in justice. The sort of freedom that Kant is interested in involves being free from politics altogether, in the sense of a shared endeavor. Kant very much wants to be a lawgiver, and one of the laws that he presumes to give is a definition of freedom that will not dignify concerns about one's empirical life as anything other than instances of petty self-love.

## THE FREE WILL

It is very clear that Kant is relying, as we have said, very urgently upon his work in the *First Critique*. To briefly recapitulate, it was held in the *First Critique* that nature itself, and all objects in nature, are 'determined'. Which

is to say that to the degree that we are human beings who are in nature and part of nature, we are unfree. Kant in the *Second Critique* is leaning very heavily upon this concept. All of our sense perceptions, Kant has argued, can have no possible object except that which is not eligible to be free and therefore our only possible relationship to said objects is self-love, i.e. self-interest, either appropriating the object for our own uses, or driving it away because it displeases us. Thus Kant has severed the possibility that freedom and the empirical can coincide. In truth, either the empirical coincides with freedom, or there is no freedom to speak of. Even a human being struggling with conscience is embodied and must be struggling over situations that are inseparable from empirical concerns.

The pivot in the *Second Critique* however is dramatic. Gone, overtly, is the *First Critique* and its ‘phenomena’ which are simply limited to Kant’s representation of human appearances, and distinguished from the real and true noumena. What is rolled into place instead is a searing and systematic accusation by Kant against ordinary praise and blame. The accusation, by focusing on the ‘empirical’ as the basis for self-love, so expands the latter concept, as to make it embrace virtually the whole of human experience. Kant does not have the honesty to approach individual human beings in specific moral situations to rebuke them for improper motives. He rather fashions a target for his accusation that nobody could possibly defend against or effectively rebut. We are all guilty for being empirical. That is, we are all guilty for being what human beings are. At least this is the thrust of Kant’s bellicose characterization of the human race. The people must be hounded into surrendering its own moral judgment, but this is no different from what the philistine Hobbes requires.

If a will is going to be free, Kant makes the argument, *it must be in rebellion against nature*. The human soul must empty its empirical contents on the ground, indict all things natural and sensible or capable of appearing, and then construct of her own freedom a ‘law’ that can then serve as a moral guide for not just her, but for everyone. This has some obvious problems however. If the human body is ineluctably part of natural mechanism; and if all of the experiences that the human body is capable of are reduced to mere ‘matter’ in this equation—and if the individual must oppose these empirical elements in herself and in her awareness merely in order to reach to some possibility of a free exercise of mind—for what reason does this exercise go forward? For not only is everybody else’s body left behind in this vanishing into the a priori of the soul as the ‘form of thought’, but her own empirical dimensions are no longer accessible to her *either*.

Like most of the Early Modern philosophers, however, Kant’s taste for the physics of eternal bodies is not meant to forever forestall a reckoning with material aspects of human existence. Kant is determined, rather, to prevent people from getting their moral *bearings* in actual reference to the

facts of their experience and lives. That which Kant professes to discover aloof from empirical being, his universal law, will ultimately make its way down to the people and their ways of life. What will be its impact? This is not too different from the experimental method of Early Modern science since Bacon. Perception is barred from qualifying as a giver of evidence initially, when the people are candidates to testify; but once the authorized experimenter's have taken control of the official account of perception, the embargo thereupon is vacated. Something rather like this is occurring in Kant's account of the 'higher desires'.

One thing that must strike the reader, after Kant's tireless classification of nature as 'determined' and 'mechanistic' and unfree, is the fact that the definition of the *free* will and universal law that Kant then turns to is all about 'submission' and 'necessity' and 'command'. It is a most glaring and illuminating discovery. After indicting nature for unfreedom, due to its being 'determined'—we are introduced by Kant to its counterpart in 'freedom', which for some mysterious reason can only be spoken of in terms of submission and command and 'necessary' decisions. There does not appear to be a serious difference between these two domains of nature and freedom for Kant after all. Or this is as much as to say that if we suspend our analysis of Kant's view of nature for a moment, we can simply focus more narrowly upon the reality that Kant is mobilized to impose a morality on the people which their natures do not fit them for. Kant's definition of freedom as effectively submission to command or 'necessity' is indistinguishable from Aristotle's definition of *violent* movement. For to be compelled to act against one's nature is violent indeed.

As always with Kant, the reader is at the mercy of his vocabulary. In this case, the name is 'self-love'. We have traced Kant's definition of it. Everything 'empirical', absolutely everything involving a human body, is cast by Kant into the category of appearances and 'lower desire'. It makes a great difference that two human beings, in one relationship, experience a great many things that may not involve self-love at all. The human vocabulary was developed to demarcate different objects. If these objects did not have place in common but only in individual experience, they would not exist at all.

Thus loyalty, obedience, reverence, affection, friendship, equality, respect, justice: all of these things are forms of 'empirical' relationships; and if they were not the words would be meaningless jabber. What we see here in Kant's fourth theorem, in the *Second Critique*, is once again his effective declaration of war upon our judgment of factual situations and our ability to know them. The factual situation is for Kant as daylight is to a vampire. If Kant does not banish this from our mind's eye with classifications of natural science, he openly attacks the same factuality on moral grounds. What Kant is struggling against is the possibility of being seen, of having his argument revealed. All moral issues come to balance in factual situations ultimately.

Kant will never let us get there. The reader would not frankly find it hard to locate, among empirical human actions, some that deserve to be placed in a moral pantheon of such goodness that they ought not to be regarded as ordinarily human. Yet Kant's need to locate the entire moral domain in dislocation from the actual facts of life is a very different proposition.

Supposing that a will is free: to find the law that alone is competent to determine it necessarily. But how is consciousness of that moral law possible? We can become aware of pure practical laws just as we are aware of pure theoretical principles, by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us, and to the setting aside of all such empirical conditions to which reason directs us.<sup>5</sup>

When we examine the passage, we have to locate the issue in Kant's employment of the name of 'necessity'. Exactly why will 'reason' prescribe to us as 'necessary', that which can be otherwise? Kant is far from thinking that the human race is generally in touch with its 'higher desires'. Kant, as will become clearer in our discussion, seems to take it for granted that the human race is almost enslaved to self-love as he defines it. Why would reason then be beckoning the human being to a land of commands, and 'laws', and 'submissions'? Is there any place where Kant will allow the human being the true vicissitudes of freedom?

If we can disentangle our minds from the labyrinth of Kant's argument, what we ought to be paying attention to is what he is accusing the human race of here in theorem 4. Kant is making the argument that inside of limited, interpersonal relationships, one can develop maxims for oneself that lead to actions. Yet these maxims cannot be of use for the whole human race at the same time and in the same way. What we would like to ask Kant, is who does he know who actually relies on a universal maxim when he decides what is the right thing to do in his interaction with a merchant, or a son, or a dear friend, or a deadly foe? Where does a human being learn the imperatives of action except for in the empirical domain of fact in the context that is under review? I am unable to agree with Kant that there is any secret dimension of the mind to which we can repair, or that there is anything remotely appropriate to substitute for accurate *assessment of the facts before one*. Of course, Kant's entire *First Critique* is invested in the effort to argue that we are incapable of any such accurate assessment. Kant does not allow what the entire human race excepting certain philosophers takes for granted: that we can and do know the external objects that we deal with in our lives, including one another and even including ourselves. We are not so much a mystery to ourselves as Kant would have us believe, in the ways that he wishes for us to believe.

Here Kant is arguing a couple of things that once again ought to give the reader pause. When the name of 'free will' is brought up, in the first instance,

we ought to be careful to insist that the issue is one of free rational choice. We would insist upon being the moving principle, as Aristotle likes to refer to it, of the actions that we undertake. Aristotle argues that 'The same thing is deliberated upon and is chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since it is that which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation that is the object of choice. For everyone ceases to inquire how he is to act when he has brought the moving principle back to himself and the ruling part of himself: for this is what chooses'.<sup>6</sup>

We do not want to be determined by 'nature' to our actions. But we also do not wish to be determined by Kant's 'law' to our actions. How much freer would we really be? Kant can make the claim that his universal law or categorical imperative actually underlies every single human moral action. But this is playing with words. There is indeed a conception of justice which is not limited to any particular case, which we can and do talk about. Yet all issues of judgment that do not involve scientific definition do indeed take place in limited quarters between few human beings. That is the nature of our existence. Our concerns are bound up with limited engagements, because it is not really possible for us to be in two places at once, or engaged with everybody in practical deliberations all at once, in those matters which most directly and intimately touch upon our individual lives.

Kant, after having performed great feats of struggle merely in order to bring forth this conception of autonomy, hardly misses a second before he begins defining the moral law as 'necessary', as a 'command', as all those things which *we do not associate with freedom of choice*. It is a most odd construction. 'For the a priori thought of possible giving of universal law, which is this merely problematic, is unconditionally commanded as a law without borrowing anything from experience or from some external will.'<sup>7</sup> Once we set the physics issues to the side, and admit that the true and real bodies are perishable and that we can know them; once we reject and dismiss the false notion that freedom has no natural aspect; that objects in nature are themselves wholly divorced from both time and fate and destiny, the ground underneath our feet on the contemplation of moral issues shakes and changes. We are back again in recognizable reality.

#### THE ANALYTIC OF THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON

Here Kant is setting up to instruct us in how a pure practical reason must function, and how it may not function. We may as well begin with the beginning. According to Kant, in a *Critique of Practical Reason*, we may not begin our thought process with a good deed, or intention. We may not begin, that is to say, with an object that is good. Such an object, whether it be an

intention or a deed, would naturally involve human beings in their ‘empirical’ relationships. The true good, for Kant, cannot be seen in the context of the empirical. In any empirical interaction that you like, as Kant has enumerated for us, the human being is allegedly enslaved to self-love, the lower desires. In all empirical relationships, i.e. in relationships between human beings, we are obviously involved: we feel the emotions that a situation evokes in us, whether it be joy, or mistrust, or the feeling of the imperative of justice, or feelings of resistance to injustice. In all of these cases we are involved in the actual relationships whereby good and evil are both ascertained and acted upon. This is the subject matter that Kant wants to drive out of moral philosophy entirely: anything that human beings care about due to the facts of a particular case, no matter who the specific individuals happen to be.

We are thus introduced anew to Kant’s conception of the ‘higher desires’. We should at this point wonder if this locution is at all appropriate to refer to Kant’s moral law as any kind of desire whatsoever. For Aristotle moral action is *deliberated desire*. ‘It seems then, as has been said, that man is a moving principle of actions; now deliberation is about the things to be done by the agent himself, and actions are for the sake of things other than themselves. For the end cannot be a subject of deliberation, but only what contributes to the ends.’<sup>8</sup> Rational, deliberated desire is the basis for practical reason in Aristotle’s philosophy. Needless to say, in Kant’s table representing the variety of possible moral systems that philosophers have invented, Aristotle the founder of the theory of practical reason is omitted. Not only is he omitted, but Kant refers to his list, which consists entirely of modern philosophers, as exhaustively complete.

In order to know the true good, the higher desires, Kant argues, the human being must consult the a priori reason, which constitutes, not a good object, but the form of anything that is eligible to be a good object. The a priori reason, this alleged ‘form’ of the good, what is it? One thing Kant now reveals to us, is that this a priori form of good makes us *disinterested*. Now that is a significant statement of Kant’s. In Aristotle’s moral theory, reason is involved in a deliberative struggle with passions. The situation may well contain nothing good in it, but the action of the individual who deliberates will be good or bad, virtuous or vicious. A part of the moral action of the individual will be the feeling of the individual who engages in the action. For Aristotle this feeling must be proportioned not to disinterest, but to the truth of the facts of the case. Anger may be appropriate to the facts; and to fail to feel anger at certain facts, in Aristotle’s view, would be a vicious defect. Likewise, it is possible to feel too much in relation to what the facts allow for, and that would be vicious too. Yet Kant claims to be taking us to a moral domain where there is no feeling: no feeling at all except for the independence one is enjoying by *abstracting* from the facts in front of one.

Let us recur briefly then yet again to Kant's 'form of goodness', the universal law, whereby one contemplates an action, or even an intention, from the vantage point of whether this individual is able to agree that his intention, his action, shall be made into a universal law. This is what Kant means by the 'form' of the good, in the 'a priori'. And yet we must make some comments about this 'form of the good'. Kant has made the argument that the individual can become a moral actor by stepping apart from the domain of determined nature, and becoming in that moment and in that context spontaneous. This refers to the individual's forming moral emotions within himself, 'autonomously', i.e. free from all sorts and types of determinism. Yet let us look at the relationship between our human being, and the other human beings who must all partake of this universal law, if it is to be a real thing in the world. Kant has limited our ability to be 'noumena', i.e. to be real things in ourselves, only insofar as we *step apart* from our embodied selves, our natures. We are in our own heads, as it were, when we contemplate the universal law. At which point, and by what rights, is Kant then entitled to claim that the individual may really envision himself setting a universal law that will apply to himself and to all other people? Does Kant's human being even have a self, that is substantial enough to *count* as a human being alone? And upon what grounds shall we be able to contemplate other beings whose minds we cannot know in this model, and whose existence as bodies we likewise *cannot know*.

In the paralogisms of Pure Reason, Kant presented us with such a reduced conception of the self, that it is not even conceded to be aware of its own existence. Which is to say, that the human being in the context of Kant's psychology is not able to deduce, from 'I think', that 'I exist'. Kant tries to claim that the two things are 'analytic', or one. But obviously it is not the same thing to exist and to think. For there are many other ways of existing that do not involve thinking. Therefore one cannot reduce them to synonyms. In any event in the paralogisms, one can barely bleed out the most modest husk of a self. And this is in the a priori domain of the understanding. Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason* would seem to like us to forget about this. Yet the question also remains how we are to ever think, merely to think, of suggesting a universal law that will be valid for all human beings. What conception of a human being does Kant finally allow us to have? He does not allow us to directly perceive other human beings for what they are. This is stricken out as the delusion of mere appearances, as 'phenomena'. Would we not therefore have to say that Kant's universal law needs to be reformulated as such: that one wills that all other phenomena shall take for a law, that action or intention that one is preparing to will. If we insert the name 'phenomena' into the equation, this would certainly be the accurate thing to do as regards objects in our external world, which Kant forbids us the powers to know. The only thing we can know is appearances; yet Kant defines those

appearances as eternal substances. And thus we must further revise Kant's universal law to read: 'I will that the intention I am contemplating, and the action that I contemplate, become a law to the eternally existing substances and phenomena which is the most that any of us could know about other human beings'. Upon what grounds, we ask again, does an eternal being care about things that afflict perishable beings? Yet more to the point, not even one's self can constitute a perishable being for Kant. We can't deny in Kant's eyes that our own bodies are eternal or composed of eternal bodies which are indestructible; why then is it even a question of how to act for the good, when an eternal body has no need of good?

Let us return to the domain of the 'lower desires' that Kant has spoken of. This is where the human being is bound up with the 'empirical'. Kant is really a surgeon when it comes to use of speech. What Kant really means, in 'empirical' involvements, as based upon the *First Critique*, is that we cannot know what those other objects external to us are, not even whether they are human beings or not. For we are only empowered by the principles of our supposed understanding to be able to know that all objects external to us that really exist can only be known as appearances; but also that all appearances are eternal substances and part of the automatic determinism of nature, that un-free domain. Is this what is really happening in Kant's categorical imperative? What one is reminded of here, is that one can't know any being in nature except those which are appearances, number one; and second, that these appearances are all eternal substances, for which good and bad matter not at all, not in the least. All of which would be to say that when the human being begins with empirical information, Kant attacks what can be known in that context to such a degree, as to overpower and render moot all ordinary morality. The 'form' of goodness in the universal law, if it is unpacked as we think it must be unpacked, likewise issues in the inference that it is absurd to even apply morality to such objects as can only be known as appearances.

Kant claims that Epicurus fully takes into account the domain of 'lower desires', which addresses everything empirical. Yet Epicurus, in Kant's view, does not possess the domain of the moral law and the dignity that it can provide. And yet we have seen that there is reason to suspect that the moral law itself is but smoke and mirrors. For since it is not applicable to human beings, because they are not knowable insofar as they are embodied, and because the attitude prized by Kant is one of disinterest, this seems to square in fact very well with Epicurean doctrine all the way down the line. What Kant possesses, that Epicurus does not possess, is an instrument for attacking ordinary praise and blame, for indicting it, for driving it out of the public sphere as a force unto itself. It brings us back to Kant the maker: the one who denies that he can know anything that he did not himself cause and originate. Whatever other qualities these objects that he himself makes may have,



dignity does not seem to be a possible candidate. Not if we rely at all upon the ordinary conception of dignity, which Kant over and over professes to do.

### RICHARD VELKLEY'S KANT

There are basically two sorts of philosophers in contemporary scholarship. There are those who have been wound up in the very powerful mind of a dominant contemporary thinker, which supplies the foundations for all of their outlooks; and there are the scholars who concentrate on a small segment of modernity, in a very insular literature which eschews the making of synoptic and far-reaching interpretations about the history of philosophy. Richard Velkley clearly belongs to the former variety of scholar. I will not here undertake to enumerate the scholar to whom Velkley is indebted, but only to summarize the prototypical viewpoints of scholars who dwell in a certain intellectual orbit.

Velkley has a rather dogmatic reading of the ancients. He does not make any distinctions, first of all, between the major schools of antiquity. The Eleatic Greeks, upon whom we have had much to say in this work, are not demarcated by name and separated from the Socratic line of philosophers, who were their rivals and their betters. Velkley, when he speaks of the ancients, refers to Plato and Aristotle as if they were merely characteristic of the generic breed. These ancient Greeks, Velkley argues, were 'aporetics'. 'The emphasis in Kant on a dialectic of reason and on a natural waywardness of self-forgetting in human reason, may well remind us of the "aporetic" beginnings of philosophy to which Plato and Aristotle make constant reference.'<sup>9</sup> By this term, Velkley means that these Socratic philosophers expressed an inability to know anything for certain. This is a very feeble reading of Plato's Socrates, and anyone who reads the principal texts for herself will be able to see why. Nobody fought against 'aporetic' philosophers more than Plato's Socrates; and he did so by dismantling the formidable arguments of thinkers such as Parmenides and Zeno, Protagoras and Gorgias, Heraclitus and Thrasymachus. The reader needs to be confident enough to go back to those texts to read them for herself. Those texts can take care of themselves, and they are the best antidote to superficial and misleading 'readings' of these texts which have become powerful currency in the contemporary academe.

Velkley has another reading of the 'ancients': that they were dedicated to the sacred and holy customary beliefs. This is another reading which has a kernel of truth, but which is so easy to twist into the direction of falsehood. The issue is not any sect of philosophers and the subject matter of the sacred. The issue is the human being and whether there is a domain in our experience which we recognize as sacred, and for which we have developed language to

indicate it. In Velkley's argument, modern philosophy has achieved a knowledge that these sacred and holy realities to which human beings across all natural communities pay tribute are false and insupportable.

The element of custom and primary attachment to the sacred, upon which all Healthy moral and political life must rest, is inherently vulnerable to the progress of reason. . . . But the modern development of reason has altered the character of the customary basis so radically as to render questionable the possibility of any future periods of sound moral and political life. . . . More precisely, the development of reason has torn away the veil of illusion that until recently surrounded and protected the foundations of human social existence. Scientific reason has arrived at a certain peak of self-consciousness wherein man's true nature as primordially individualistic and self-interested has been exposed to the glaring light of day. This revolution in human self-understanding cannot be reversed.<sup>10</sup>

Velkley uncritically subscribes to the belief foisted upon us by modern philosophy that their account of the human being is the true account. The modern philosophers do not prove it. It is needless to say almost, that all of the major Early Modern philosophers who have sought to discredit the sacred and the holy, have had to take up arms against—not human opinions first of all—but against human perception and human language themselves, the very organs through which realities are discerned, and the very mediums in which such objects are communicated. Modern philosophy cannot endure to stand in with the ordinary opinions as true equals before facts. All of this is papered over by Velkley's reading.

The third shibboleth of this reading of ancient and modern philosophy that we are alluding to here, involves the alleged goals of the ancients and the goals of the moderns. The ancients, it is alleged, sought for too 'high' an ambition for human beings. The ancients, certainly the Socratic ancients, sought for the realization of virtues which are indeed very strenuous and difficult to achieve. The moderns by contrast set their goals low to the ground, as it were; they husband crass and unavoidable human appetites and impulses to be the vehicles of order in modern society. In a very superficial way there is something to be said for this reading, but only in a superficial way.

First of all, neither Plato nor Aristotle claim to be inventors of the classical virtues: justice, courage, moderation, wisdom. These are the values espoused by Greek civilization, with deep roots in the daily experiences and feelings of the people. Plato and Aristotle devise political sciences which seek to lift these virtues into a governing role, which is certainly a contribution; but the suggestion that the Socratic philosophers were true rebels against the populace of Greece in so theorizing is false. Those classical virtues can be related to today by any undergraduate class that is reasonably

free from counter-indoctrination. The popular culture celebrates these classical virtues in many ways, despite the enormous countervailing pressure of modern philosophy, and its steward the modern sciences.

Nor is it accurate to suggest that the ancients did not care about the 'relief of man's estate', i.e. practical wealth and convenience. Plato, in the first two books of his *Republic*, acknowledges that philosophy itself is only made possible by a society that has passed the subsistence level and moved on to the production of what is not truly needed. Plato therefore concedes that this eclipse of the natural city is inevitable; and there is *nothing inherent* in the pursuit of technological development that *requires* that an indictment of classical values accompany this development. The truth of the matter is that modern philosophy did not emerge principally as an attempt to relieve man's estate. It emerged principally as a way to overpower human beings.

When Velkley talks about Rousseau and Kant, he sticks to the story line of his teachers. The original Early Modern philosophers, it is alleged, preferred selfishness and other low values such as vulgar self-interest as the building blocks of society. Yet this is a radical distortion, for the people rarely, and never in great numbers, truly espouse such a philosophy or can even tolerate such values. The modern philosophy forces man into a position of submission in which he has no choice but to swallow the impoverished values with which he is forced to live. That is a very different portrait of modernity than the seemingly humane 'relief of man's estate'. Either it is modern philosophy's goal to truly relieve man's estate, all of it, or not. I say it is not. Which by itself is no indictment of the technological power of modern society or any need to roll it back. It suggests that the battle over values and virtues is always what government is truly about, and that philosophy has been doing the lion's share of the fighting in the modern period and justice is not a name that it likes to utter.

## VELKLEY ON KANT AND ROUSSEAU

Rousseau, in Velkley's reading, is supposed to represent a revulsion against the lowbred morals of the modern period. Rousseau is also supposed to favor the diminution of the role that science plays directly in the formation of public opinion. Rousseau is supposed to represent, in this philosophical genealogy I am referring to, a revival of the respect for the sacred and the holy in human culture. Kant, it is alleged, was deeply affected by Rousseau in his early pre-critical period. Kant too, therefore, must represent this development on the modern side of the ledger, tilting popular culture back towards the more demanding duties that allegedly were the constructions of ancient philosophy. 'As we shall see, Kant's account of the end of reason in terms of freedom is above all aiming to reconcile the modern emancipatory goal with

a new grounding of the sacred and the noble.’<sup>11</sup> The thrust of this argument made by Velkley, of course, is that ‘reason’ is to be the architectonic of the new morality: as if morals were deduced by some disembodied mind, in any sensible person’s opinion. There could not be a claim more counter to the teaching of Plato’s Socrates and Aristotle to say the least.

This ‘reason’ to which Velkley and certainly Kant allude is a strange beast of itself. For some reason, it is alleged that this reason is fated to have to know the truth about ‘the whole’. By ‘the whole’ is meant the truth of the entire universe. Certain philosophers not prone to humility have been the only ones to truly claim to know with any certainty about such ‘wholes’, or to even believe that there is something such as nature that deserves to be *referred* to as ‘a whole’. For Plato and Aristotle the realities are the forms, which are not ‘parts’ of any larger whole. The forms are indivisible for both of these thinkers, and the logics which the respective forms consist in, based upon the intelligibility that they embody, could not be more radically diverse. The form of a human being, for example, has nothing to do with the form of a goat. The form of a human being has nothing whatsoever to do with the form of a caterpillar. It is only modern philosophy, reviving the defeated natural philosophies of antiquity, such as that of Parmenides and his satellites, who have stirred up the claim that nature must be regarded as one thing, or as Kant likes to say, determined entirely by one principle. That one principle for Kant happens to be ‘mechanism’, lifeless and meaningless mechanism. This is not a learning that is reached from any verifiable foundations, to be sure. Which leads us back to the relentless war against the power and accuracy of perceptual judgment which truly characterizes the so-called aporia of modern philosophy.

This brings us to a fourth shibboleth in the storyline of philosophic genealogy that Velkley relies upon: that reason itself is kissing cousin to Eros, or just Eros itself.

The human rational will knows no object that, within the natural order, satisfies its relentless striving. Thus it is doubtful that one can reasonably look for a happiness, at least earthly happiness, that corresponds to the just claims of a moral will for confirmation of its own worth. IT seems that the natural whole as we know it is incapable of containing or supporting the moral order.<sup>12</sup>

This view of reason has been absurdly ascribed to Plato, which can be discovered by anyone who reads Plato’s discussion of the soul in the *Republic*, and moreover book ix of that work for Plato’s thoughts on Eros proper. Eros is not intellect, for Plato. For Plato, intellect gravitates towards *truth*. It possesses no appetite of itself, but must struggle with insubordinate appetites within the soul that they share. For Plato, courage and spirit fortify intellect against the appetites in the healthy mental household, but the fact remains

that all desiring and yearning have nothing to do with intellect, the goal of which is not dominion but *truth*.

Now the phrase 'master of himself' is an absurdity, is it not? For he who is Master of himself would also be subject to himself, and he who is subject to Himself would be master. For the same person is spoken of in all these Expressions. . . . But, said I, the intended meaning of this way of speaking appears to be that the soul of a man within him has a better part and a worse part, and The expression of self-mastery means the control of the worse by the naturally Better part. IT is, at any rate, a term of praise. But when because of bad breeding Or some association, the better part, which is the smaller, is dominated by the Multitude of the worse, I think that our speech censures this as a reproach, and Calls the man in this plight unself-controlled and licentious.<sup>13</sup>

Consult the *Phaedo*, where the soon to be executed Socrates, talking about the possible immortality of the soul, advises himself not to think competitively, with a view towards winning the argument principally—but only to try to get at the real truth of the issue as best he could.<sup>14</sup> The 'reason' which Velkley identifies in Rousseau and Kant is very much erotic: it is like Hobbes's desire for 'power after power'; it is like Machiavelli's metaphysics of the appetites, which forever seek to acquire and are never even potentially satiable. Velkley talks about the reason of Rousseau and Kant as if it were just like this erotic acquisitiveness, in substance, but yet committed to the supposedly sacred and holy traditional virtues that the people never can surrender entirely. Velkley claims that the true task of 'reason' in the alleged second wave of modernity is 'self-legislation', as if these words really could mean anything. What is this reason that would govern itself? Kant cannot manage to give a coherent account of it. What in the world does holy duty have to do with autonomy and spontaneity, those qualities that Kant always stands by at the end of every moral discourse? To the sober-minded observer, autonomy and spontaneity seem the opposite of such weighty and mighty virtues as duty and justice and courage and temperance. They seem positively frivolous, and not a little bit selfish. Rousseau comes out and reveals his god of self-preservation nakedly enough; Kant is more intransigent, but the fact of the matter is that he cannot prove any of his claims. Kant himself does not enact anything holy in his writings; he does not behave with any great dutifulness, but he exudes an arrogance and a conceit which give him and the other 'geniuses' away at every turn.

We certainly agree that Rousseau and Kant constitute a turning point of sorts in modern philosophy. We do not agree with Velkley, as to what this turning point finally entails. Rousseau, in the last analysis, is incapable of duty. Duty can never be built upon rights, that is the truth of the matter. Duty is the opposite of right. It is *duty*. Nor is the modification of the modern project by Rousseau and Kant the last twist in the story. Utilitarianism, a

consumption and consequentialist based morality which eschews the sometimes troublesome language of rights, followed the so-called romantic development in continental thought with surprising rapidity. And that is the one that has led us into the science of our day.

## ON THE INCENTIVES OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

In our discussion of the *Groundwork* above, we noted that Kant envisaged for his practical philosophy a severe rendezvous with ordinary praising and blaming, i.e. the moral expression and action of the community which knows nothing of his higher law of reason, as he calls it. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that suggestion is unfolded with deliberateness and sharpness. For there is evidently no other way for Kant's moral impulse to reveal itself, that is not 'negative': i.e. which is not attacking other forms of morality. Kant insists that there can be no incentive for the moral will that is 'empirical' in the sense we have been discussing. Thus any moral imperative that individuals discover in the course of their lives and interactions, rather than in the hallowed precincts of Kant's universal law of disinterest, is to this degree not merely immoral, but an enemy to all morality as such. This is the way that Kant has conceived of it. The motive of morality is not allowed to emanate from anywhere but in the supposedly sacred place where Kant would locate it: and that moral law alternately constituted by autonomy and spontaneity on the hand, and subject on the other hand to command and 'necessity', has no object at all so far as we can see.

This is just the clothing, the 'command' and the 'law', for that intention of the will, the good will, that Kant has developed in the *Groundwork*. In Kant's philosophy after all let us speak plainly. In the *Groundwork* Kant has not merely defined the outcome of our actions as less important to the nature of the will itself of the individual; he has in fact made the very object of the will reflexive. It is *its own* object. It is the purpose of the moral will to will morally in Kantian terminology, and the translation of this into effectual truth is that Kant's moral will involves rejecting moral duty to other people in all quarters where he may actually have to act on facts that exist and which would otherwise compel him.

The decisive issue as Kant says, is the 'incentive' of the moral action.

Pure practical reason merely infringes upon self-love, inasmuch as it only restricts it, as natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, to the condition of agreement with this law, and then it is called rational self-love. But it strikes down self-conceit altogether, since all claims to esteem for oneself that precede accord with the law are null and quite unwarranted because certainty of a disposition in accord with this law is the first condition of any

worth of a person. . . . And any presumption prior to this is false and opposed to the law.<sup>15</sup>

This is indeed part of the issue. If in a moral situation an individual has absented himself from the facts of the case to the degree that his moral feeling is not determined by his reaction to the facts of that case, then he is immoral, vicious, even a beast. This would be Aristotle's formulation of the issue. Yet for Kant, it is the reverse. That individual who has his moral emotions evoked by facts that he has perceived in the interactions of his life is by Kant commanded to 'infringe' upon these feelings, literally to displace them with Kant's moral law. Since those empirically generated moral emotions are the ones relevant to the true moral object of the case, Kant's attempt to banish that awareness from the public in his educational campaign is a vicious educational movement, one designed to destroy the only morality that there is in truth.

Readers will say that human beings are affected by a wide variety of moral educations, especially from religious authorities. Yet that parents are moral teachers, friends are moral teachers, and the community itself is a moral teacher. All of this is true but none of this interferes with our argument. For religious institutions, and family and friends—none of them undertake to banish from our minds the actual moral objects that we come across in our lives. Those sources of moral knowledge do not possess such an ideology as to render the actual objects of our moral concerns into illusory or 'degrading' focus. Yet Kant in his moral philosophy does precisely this.

When Kant argues that the human being who would act morally must make war upon the forces which would compel him to face factual situations demanding a moral response, he is prefiguring the relationship between the new morality and the true morality of the community. It is the morality of factual situations where the rubber meets the road, so to speak; and if the individual is driven away from perceptions and feelings that are rooted in the case of the facts before him, he is being negated as a moral actor, not perfected. It is important that we not pretend that Kant is a trailblazer in any of this form of argument. Thomas Hobbes perhaps more than any other philosopher, laid the most detailed prototype down in his *The Citizen*. There Hobbes makes the argument that it is the people's relying upon their own moral judgment which leads to war in society, civil war. Therefore in Hobbes's social contract model, the individuals at the moment of deal-making must surrender their right to judge with their own eyes and ears. It is the prototype of which Kant's philosophy is but a derivation. The irreducible unit of human morality is the individual who judges; and the full weight of modern philosophy is brought down upon those would-be judges with a scorched earth educational campaign. It is just not the case that Rousseau and Kant constitute a serious departure from the earlier Enlightenment philosophies. It is not

a matter of preferring the past either, when we recur to the work of Aristotle and Plato. The issue is *what is real*. This is what we always care about the most.

### THE POLITICS OF ACCUSATION AND KANT'S 'RESPECT' FOR THE MORAL LAW

Of all the discoveries that Machiavelli made, the one most profound was how badly people can be hurt by accusation. Fear of death takes second place to the rage incited by impugned reputations. Machiavelli's political science actually trades upon something commonly observable: that if offended and insulted, people will in great numbers leave self-preservation to the side and undertake to repair the damage that has been done to their good name. Yet Machiavelli is a man bent on dominion. He has calculated too, that it will be very hard for a person to sustain his fury very long, especially if the true object of his fury is not immediately revealed to him. Machiavelli's seeming scientific observations themselves carry venomous attacks upon the character of the people; and yet people, as Kant observes, concentrate on the facts before them. Thus philosophy as educational agenda can become an almost insurmountable moral force, or immoral force that is, by raking through the people's inmost emotions with searing indictments of the purity of its motives and the correctness of its character.

Machiavelli initiated the era of terror, and that terror consists in one's name being vulnerable to accusation for no intention, for no deed, that the human being is even aware that he has committed. This is a very bold political tactic, and it has unfortunately been woven deep into the fabric of modern civilization especially as the size and scope of our media is now almost beyond comprehension. Machiavelli's methodology is not qualitatively distinct from that which Kant is preparing to unleash in his *Critique of Practical Reason*.

Kant argues that the only way really that the moral law can make itself felt, by the ordinary human being, is by defaming as 'self-conceit' every motive, every impulse, every feeling and intention that is generated, not by malevolence, but by the simply empirical or *real*. 'Now what in our judgment infringes upon our own self-conceit humiliates. Hence the moral law unavoidably humiliates every human being when he compares it with the sensible property of his nature.<sup>16</sup> This is a brutality that the people could never defend itself against; first owing to the nature in which it is indiscriminately applied with fusillades of indictment and defamation, what Kant calls 'humiliation'.

By exhortations to actions as noble, sublime, and magnanimous, minds are attuned to nothing but moral enthusiasm and self-conceit; by such exhortations



they are led into the delusion that it is not duty—that is, respect for the law whose yoke . . . they must bear, even if reluctantly, which constitutes the determining ground of their actions, and which always humbles them.<sup>17</sup>

Kant's moral philosophy makes pride impossible. The good feeling that accompanies right action for the right reason in the right measure with proportionately accurate degrees of feeling is the object of Kant's relentless attack. In Kant's morality, people are always made to feel *bad*. In order to *properly* feel badly, the people would need to be measuring their own morals against some superior moral force, which they *understand* and respect. One can twist and turn the facts seven ways to Sunday: the truth of the matter is that Kant cannot produce that *good*. His categorical imperative perplexes people, as it is indeed intended to do. Thus the content of Kant's morality will consist essentially in his accusations and dismissal of the judgments that the people are both eligible and inclined by nature to make.

It is also human nature to expect that an accusation is going to have some recognizable motive behind it, so the individuals will at least suspect that somebody has misinterpreted their character when a false accusation is launched. Yet that will not be possible in the context of Kant's moral law, for the simple reason that the people will never be able to figure out, any better than philosophers have ever been able to figure out, what this moral law is. Suffice it to say that to speak of the 'holy will' and the sacred 'universal laws of morality' is to speak in platitudes that sound well enough, but any true student of Kant's moral philosophy will find that there is nothing holy, nothing sacred, nothing even remotely dignified in the core of his 'good will', as we have discussed above.

Kant argues here that the humiliation doled out by the educational campaign of his moral law is not merely a negative articulation of the moral law itself; but that this humiliation, which both murderers and their victims' kin will be made to feel equally in this equation, is effectively a positive quantity, i.e. a recognizable force. 'For human beings, and all created rational beings moral necessity is necessitation, that is, obligation, and every action based upon it is to be represented as duty, not as a kind of conduct which we already favor of our own accord or could come to favor.'<sup>18</sup> Morality in Kant's argument will consist in delivering punishing blows methodically and broadly across the culture; but it is the nature of accusation and indictment, let it be contrived in howsoever broad and seemingly indeterminate a manner, to fall upon particular individuals who share some characteristic named in the indictment with as full force as if it was made against them personally. What we will have is a public smashed to pieces morally, terrified to judge either way. For they in fact will be on constant trial, in a trial where there is no presentation of evidence allowed. For if a case was brought on behalf of any individual, and Kant's philosophy was put in the dock as defendant, we could

there cross-examine it and discover what he is really subjecting to accusation: human morality itself.

It must inevitably become something of a sad comedy to watch Kant unfold his argument for the humiliation of the people through his public wielding of the 'moral law'. We have still remarked that this concept is beyond vague, in Kantian terminology. We have concluded that it is the null set: a lofty defense of the most insipid self-love. That is what Kant's 'good will' finally amounts to. Yet the divergence between Kantian philosophers and the community becomes very palpable in these sections of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. For the language of 'autonomy' has not vanished. Somebody there must be who is going to exercise his freedom by *giving such a law to himself* as the very apex of his dignity. Yet this is not the populace. The populace is to be treated like criminals, effectively, in this highly political moral rhetoric. They will not be acquainted with any moral law through 'autonomy', or through any such innocuous proceeding as assigning the law to themselves as the display of their dignity. That is only for the philosophers who have every interest in excusing themselves from the morals of the community whose judgment they hold in contempt. For the people, the only sense in which they can be said to 'respect' the 'moral law' is to the degree that this public articulation of the reputation of the moral law sears into their souls the accusation against the whole of their faculties of judgment.

For Kant, 'respect' for the law on the part of the people can never be left to their own self-examination. It can never be left to the moral educators which civilization has thus far furnished to them. That is because Kant does not agree with the moral codes of, say, the Sermon on the Mount. Kant does not agree with the codes of ordinary praise and blame either, and we have enumerated the reasons why Kant does not agree with, or even find himself able to tolerate, these sources of morality. For they offend *him*. I have made the argument, and I see no reason to alter it, that Kant is exemplar of that modern version of the Epicurean. Above all he is concerned with himself, his own liberty. The modern Epicurean is concerned not merely to escape from the customary judgment of the community, in order to be able to 'give the law to oneself', a law which remains murky enough to be just about anything the philosopher wishes for it to be, except for what is commonly thought to be dutiful and just. We repair again to the deterioration of the language, the smelting process by which meanings are separated from names, and which make true discourse all but impossible. Kant is abducting names here on a mass scale. His employment of the names of 'respect' and 'duty' and 'holy' fly in the face of the common usages of these terms, and though Kant does not ever enumerate arguments from Plato or Aristotle much less dare to try to refute them (a comment on his own feeble character), those philosophies alone possess the depth of examination to make possible a recovery of a common vocabulary, through first an investigation, and secondly a struggle

to protect the signification of words from those such as Kant who would be so promiscuous and shameless in his use thereof.

For all of Kant's prattling about the moral law, the sacred law, the holy law, and duty, duty, duty—we need to take a step back from his rhetoric and examine the facts. Kant fully intends to unleash his indictment against all of the people. For they are all guilty of what he calls 'self-love'; and in abusing the language, Kant means by 'self-love' just those individuals who rely upon their sense perceptions to tell them what is true or false in a situation, one with moral implications. Kant's crusade falls indiscriminately upon the heads of the best and the worst. The worst of course, knowing themselves to be such, and having no aspiration to moral dignity in any degree anyway, will be the only ones unaffected. But the generality of the human race, the great majority which not only aspires to decency but is decent, will be met with fusillade after fusillade of this rhetoric, and Kant full well knows from his own education as an Early Modern philosopher that such campaigns can bend and twist cultures beyond recognition quite easily. Once the people have lost the public authority to ascertain truth of fact, and that began with Machiavelli—the public has lost its only defense against false accusation.

Kant states that this is effectively duty, when the public is hammered into 'submission'. It is the strangest religion one ever heard of. Souls are only involved peripherally. What is dutifulness ultimately going to consist in, except for a persecution of any and all who bring before the common mind an actual moral issue, one that admits of sensibility and perception, and hence actual judgment? I cannot see any other content for this duty that Kant talks about where the people is concerned. They will suffer the humiliation and degradation that they are meant to feel from Kant's theory and its deployment: and thus it is Kant who is a vengeful God, except Moses' God at least had the decency to deliver to Moses a set of commandments that people could easily learn and thus live by. Kant's commandments are subject to the shadowy boundaries of phenomena and noumena, of appearances and representations, of a mind which insists that it will and can know nothing except for that which it itself makes. In the case of Kant of course this is not evidence of a god delivering commandments; it is an example of a conscienceless man meting out great harms to undisclosed numbers of people, for ends very much his own which have not the least divinity about them.

## ON MERITORIOUS MORAL ACTIONS

Kant makes an interesting and revealing argument as regards the prospect of merit in human character. The first thing that is to be noted is that Kant refers to 'duty', 'holy' duty, as the 'only truly moral emotion'. 'This feeling (under the name of moral feeling) is therefore produced solely by reason. It does not

serve for appraising actions and certainly not for the grounding of the objective moral law itself, but only is an incentive to make this law its maxim.<sup>19</sup> Plato and Aristotle recognized four distinct moral qualities—the classical justice, courage, moderation and wisdom—but Aristotle recognized a great many more virtues and vices both. This reveals perhaps why Kant does not like the name of virtue, why he even wants to do away with it. To be just is one thing; to be temperate is quite another. Why would we be offended if anyone thought these hard-won attributes of character are praiseworthy, and fit to be recognized? The answer may be one of two things. We are dealing with a god before us, for whom even the admission that it is difficult and praiseworthy to be virtuous is an embarrassing flaw; or we are dealing with someone who has contempt for actual virtue. I think it is clear by now that Kant, who has excused his morality from all of the difficult *parts*—is not the former.

Kant, after all, in his philosophy of what duty is, subordinates this conception of duty to attributes which nobody regards as meritorious: autonomy, ‘spontaneity’. To the best of my knowledge we do not give out awards for either of these two qualities. This is because they are not difficult in any respect, or in any admirable respect. Yet Kant has subordinated his whole theory of ‘duty’ to something quite vicious: the denial that it even matters whether the ‘good will’ enacts something good. We can go farther. Kant’s good will is not a will of goodness, because a will of goodness cares about other people a great deal more than Kant’s conception of the good will even permits one to do.

Kant makes claims to the effect that his conception of holy duty is so holy that merely to contemplate it is to have to obey it—it is such an irresistible ‘command’. ‘The majesty of duty has nothing to do with the enjoyment of life; it has its own law and also its own court, and even though one might want to shake both of them together thoroughly, so as to give them like medicine to the sick soul, they soon separated themselves.’<sup>20</sup> Yet there is the rub: Kant does not allow that we choose virtue. Aristotle makes it quite clear that virtue is not natural. It does not arise by nature, for otherwise we would not have vicious people. Aristotle uses the example of the man who throws a stone up into the air a thousand times. A thousand times the stone comes back down to earth, because it is heavy, and heavy things fall to the middle. Yet human character can easily be perverted. This is why character education is so important. It is indeed why Kant has singled it out for so much attention.

We are left then with the issue to unpack. For Kant gets offended by virtue, especially virtue that is praised. He wants to seize the whole field of morality for his theory of ‘duty’, defined as we have enumerated. This is not a theory of goodness that more than a handful of people would admire. Yet the issue that comes leaping out at us is Kant’s lapsing into the accusation against self-love, for anybody who would dare to seek praise for his courage

or his justice or his wisdom. To be sure: seeking praise or honor is not a bad human attribute, so long as these things are pursued in an honorable way. The mere love of adulation is no virtue. But the true love for the brave and the honorable certainly is. Kant indicates that the individual who would dare to think of himself as meritorious for so much as acting on virtue, because this would somehow degrade the human race—as if it was perverse to seek praise for great things—or to feel proud for having these qualities—sounds more than a little ‘off’. In the very moment when Kant attacks the character of the person who would either think well of himself for being virtuous, or accept praise from somebody else who is recognizing a virtue in us, in the very same breath almost Kant tears into the theory that duty is chosen at all. For it is a command, and the theory of Kant is supposed to acquaint us with the command in such a way as to eliminate the aspect of virtue which involves choosing it. But there is no way to virtue that doesn’t hinge upon choice. That is why they are difficult, and that is why they are rare—because the price for virtue is high.

Kant’s contempt for the notion that virtue is praiseworthy is something that he would like to justify by appealing to the sacred nature of virtue. It is so sacred, that we must automatically bend our knee before it, without so much as a second thought, it is so virtuous a virtue. We owe the virtue to duty. We are effectively dissolved as people who deliberate and choose, who even have this experience. Yet we have just finished examining how Kant evaluates the human race in general. They are all victims in his view of self-love, because they are affected by empirical things, namely other people and our relationships with them. Kant thinks so lowly of the human race that he is prepared to unleash a permanent accusation against it to ‘infringe’ upon the allegedly perverted obsession with the empirical, i.e. the real flesh and blood human beings with whom morality actually has to do. It is hard to square this view of the human race, evident in Kant’s ‘humiliating’ duty, with the flipside that Kant has now revealed to us, that we would be engaging in a ludicrous behavior to recognize and reward virtue. Why would we not recognize and reward virtue if it is so hard a thing for people to achieve? Again Kant will repair to his profession that the duty he outlines is so sacred, so ‘pure’ that we would be profaning duty by taking any credit for it. Yet we have investigated Kant’s theory of what duty is and we simply cannot find anything *virtuous* in it.

Kant lashes out at educators who seek to inspire people to virtue by encouragement or speeches. This is a most strange way for a moral educator to act. Once again Kant is either himself a god or he is but a man. I do not see any evidence that he is a god. What is clear is that Kant wants to associate the name of duty only with submission, and only with what almost seems to be embarrassment. Yet since Kant’s whole moral philosophy in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is organized to humiliate the people, to subject them to a

scorched earth rhetoric which indicts their whole capacity for morality—even if he did husband himself an admirable morality (which is in no way clear), we would regard such behavior as obtuse, even perverse.

Kant in fact needs to be remembered from the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, where he argues that the human race is characterized by ‘pre-dispositions’, which do not require to be developed by human exertion or effort, but rather just shaken up by social tumult (and even war serves the purpose well). Not the part of war which calls forth heroism and courage, for these are not virtues that Kant recognizes or would even tolerate our commenting on in a positive light. It is there in the *Idea for a Universal History* and in his anthropology lectures where Kant claims that the species is the subject in moral matters, not individuals. The species is meant by nature to achieve certain goods and ‘germs’ brought to fruition. Choice has nothing to do with it. It is just like putting the frying pan of popcorn over the fire for Kant, that is all that is needed to raise the ‘germs’ into realities. Character is absent from the equation there and it is absent from the equation *here*. We have no way to avoid submitting to duty because in Kant’s view we cannot ever be in a position to choose it. His universal law indeed forestalls choice forever. It arrests the formation of intentions and it wholly arrests moral action.

#### THE DOMAIN OF THE SENSIBLE IN THE CRITIQUES OF PURE AND PRACTICAL REASON

It is notable for the reader in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that Kant’s disposition towards the sensible has remained oppositional. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant begins with the unproved transcendental aesthetic, which argues that the human sensory organs, through the ‘pure forms’ of time and space, remanufacture raw sensible data to make it suitable for human beings. Kant vehemently denies in the *First Critique* that we can have anything like an acquaintance with the ‘object in itself’, and this rests there on an evaluation of natural bodies and sensory faculties. Despite these limitations, Kant professes to be able to give a coherent account of the ‘appearances’ to which human beings are subject. We saw in that part of our discussion that the essential component of Kant’s categories of judgment through the understanding are proto-atomistic. Nobody, but nobody has appearances to the effect that objects in nature are eternal. There, Kant argued that the a priori powers of the mind are something mysterious, that only ‘genius’ can learn this; and furthermore Kant argues in his *Logics* that only the genius again is capable of judging correctly. Kant reverses the classical definition of knowledge by renouncing the possibility of demonstration. It is quite a performance.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason* however the domain of the sensible has been indicted on *new grounds*. The domain of the sensible is now prohibited because it is allegedly *impure*, rather than unintelligible. Kant douses the entire category of empirical existence in the accusation of self-love, in the *Second Critique*; and this provides a stark contrast to the indictment of our ability to know the perishable world of natural objects in the *First Critique*. What is certain is that Kant is quite hostile to our knowledge of the objects in the world as it is. When Kant undertakes to claim that he is only elaborating the implications of the ordinary human point of view in the *Second Critique*, we reject that claim. Kant has admitted that he can only acquaint the human race with his conception of 'duty' by accusing it, repeatedly and methodically; and that this pain suffered through accusation finally just *is* the morality, its positive content as well.

Kant picks up here a thread of discussion that he has mentioned in both the *Prolegomena* and in the antinomies of the *First Critique*. Here Kant is arguing that our bodies, our limbs, and therefore our sensory organs which are at least in part bodily (even though they are the instruments of the mind or soul or whatever you wish to call it, which is certainly something immaterial) is trapped by nature in an infinite time series. Every 'event' in nature, Kant argues, is part of a series of events. It had a prior event, and it will have a subsequent event. Events for Kant follow as a rule the prior event. Kant would be liberated from this argument if he learned the critique of eternal body, which itself I have never seen refuted. I do not believe it can be. When it is recognized that time is a part of bodies, and not the only part, and that the parts of time themselves are not homogeneous but different—this makes a difference. Yet perishability makes all the difference really to physics, because the truest natural bodies indeed are perishable; and their existence is not necessary in any respect. They are fragile and mortal beings, and in the case of human beings, this is very much the reason why the pursuit of excellence can never be a 'command' or severed from merit. It is hard for perishable human beings to subject themselves to risk. Kant suggests that the 'duty' of his advertising is so holy and so sublime that it would be offended and degraded by any intimation of human merit being involved with it. Yet this morality of Kant's remains cowardly, refusing to face up to the mortal constraints of human existence in his natural science, and likewise refusing to move his morality into the careers of those mortal and perishable bodies that he finds so many ways to deny.

## NOTES

1. *Critique of Practical Reason*. Edited by Mary Gregor. Cambridge University Press, 2001, 27.
2. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 19.

3. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 20.
4. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 22.
5. *Critique of Practical Reason* 27.
6. *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1113a3.
7. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 28.
8. *Nichomachean Ethics* 1112b31.
9. Richard Velkley. *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundations of Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014, 25.
10. *Freedom and the End of Reason*, 34–35.
11. *Freedom and the End of Reason*, 33.
12. *Freedom and the End of Reason*, 31.
13. *Republic* 431 ab.
14. *Phaedo* 91a.
15. *Critique of Practical Reason* 63.
16. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 64.
17. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 72.
18. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 70.
19. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 65.
20. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 75.



## Chapter Nine

# Conclusion

### *Kant's Political Philosophy*

Kant, in the contemporary world, is usually regarded as the founder of a set of moral principles that reverse the commitment to selfishness and force that characterize the Machiavellian, Hobbesian, and Spinozistic systems. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant is a political theorist. He is setting forth the origins of civil society, and the state of human beings before there is a civil society. Kant talks in terms of the state of nature. The reader may be surprised that the original state of nature for Kant is Hobbesian. Readers of Kant's other political writings, however, will not be so astonished. Those moral principles of Kant, based upon the way we have interpreted them, turn out to be little more than Hobbesian self-interest, represented as an a priori principle not unlike Hobbes's 'law of nature'. In this more concretely political work, the politics of self-interest become Kant's clearer and clearer commitment.

The first thing to be observed is that Kant fully anchors his presentation in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Ironically 'right', assertion of power, is the original moral particle of the pre-civil condition of humanity for Kant. 'For the doctrine of right, the first part of the doctrine of morals, there is required a system derived from reason which could be called the metaphysics of right.'<sup>1</sup> For Plato and Aristotle both, the original principle of social organization is interdependence: each person needs more than he can supply himself with, and so the principle of society is need that a person has for the others, and vice versa. Kant does not even mention the Platonic or Aristotelian principles of society, since they are anchored in an *empirical* equality. Each person's need is a pretty empirical thing. Kant, however, insists that 'right' is the first operative moral category in human existence.

Even when human beings are living in association, the issue for Kant is how one human being can assert his right, and get others to respect it, as regards some piece of land or other object.

Kant is fully committed to fusing his discussion of the origins of political society with the a priori laws of pure practical reason. In this case, as we have seen above, the 'object' of pure practical reason can never be a piece of land, or another man's horse, or indeed another man's life. These objects are mere 'appearances', lesser in dignity for Kant than the 'pure reason' of self-given 'duties'. The difficulty Kant has in representing natural right as an abstract, a priori entity is an amusing thing to observe. It takes Kant over sixty pages to discuss how a man may finally take possession of a piece of land.

Hobbes would say that nature has simply abandoned the human race to harsh conditions, which vouchsafes desperation as the trigger for 'natural right'. In Hobbes's system too, the world is given to all people in common at the beginning. Everybody has a right to everything. Kant bobs and weaves, insisting on every other page that the foundation of his (Kant's) doctrine of right must be the transcendental universal law, and *not* anything empirical.

This brings us back to the arguments in Kant's anthropological writings, including the *Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*. In the state of nature, human beings have the right of nature for Kant. These rights of nature, individualistic, soon lead to conflict. Kant has argued that the conflict in the supposed state of nature is a necessary evil, an evil which is the cause of goodness to follow. The human being, prodded by the misery of injury and fear, will come to the conclusion that he must restrain his own right of nature, in order to avoid colliding with the right of nature of the other person. This is the argument that Kant seeks to imbed in the 'a priori' of practical reason. This is the essence of the categorical imperative. For Kant, as for Hobbes, the categorical imperative must be institutionalized in a civil constitution. The law of self-preservation, Rousseau's great virtue, will be the backbone of all law. People really don't have any common truths. Each person's security is her own affair.

The categorical imperative does not accentuate human interdependence. It arises from an extreme form of individualistic liberty, 'natural right'. Unrestricted right leads to violence. Freedom is defined in terms of this natural right, too, necessarily. The categorical imperative compels the individual to assure as much natural right to others as he does to himself. All must restrain natural right, or abdicate natural right to the government's authority. In this way order can prevail. Yet the political animal cannot emerge in this arrangement, for the political animal *shares* things with his fellows. Justice is a relationship of equality that is different from the equality of 'right'. Justice governs equality in exchange, whether of material goods or of injury and punishment. The regime of right remains obligated to the independent moral

universes of the individuals except for this mutual non-aggression pact, an Epicurean convention.

For the *Critique of Practical Reason*, it is the flesh and blood needs of human beings that offend Kant as rank. Relationships that are founded upon interdependence of *need* mortally offend Kant. For these needs bind a man to the others, subject him to the need he has for the others; and for Kant this would be a condition of bondage, of brute 'animal' impulses. Kant banishes this entire realm of feeling to the category of anthropological science, where nature, not free noumenal reasoning, has the dominant hand. Where human beings are needy, in need of one another, interdependent, this offends against Kant's insistence upon independence for himself. If we remember, Kant regards the ideal human estate in society to be one of *self-sufficiency*, and in order to approximate this state, the Kantian must unleash his categorical imperative against all of the 'lower' impulses and needs of bodies and psyches.

The doctrine of 'right' therefore is the origin of Kant's political philosophy, but it must be pledged by Kant to the principle of 'noumena', of 'pure reason'. This is necessary, as we have stated, so that the object of reverence is *never* one's obligation to another person or persons. One must rather be obligated to the 'law', the law must be the thing one cares about, if one is to have 'dignity'. To care about the other people principally, and one's own welfare, this is all dismissed with contempt by Kant as heteronomy. Kant dislocates, in his moral theory, the human feeling involved in moral transactions from the other people with whom one has the moral involvement. In the context of the noumena, man creates these objects for himself, and therefore he is alone in his noumenal contracts, in his noumenal 'rights'. He is 'giving a law to himself', not binding himself into a relationship with other human beings directly. War leads the individual to choose to curb his right. Yet nobody can make him do it. He must 'choose' it himself.

If the state of nature theory of the right of nature philosophy is correct, then it is doubtless a good thing for a man to have the power to consent to the limitation of his powers. Yet the Hobbesian state of nature unleashes acquisitive appetites that cut against the grain of the majority of the people. When Machiavelli identified two 'humors' in the composition of his political state, he defined them by moral impulses: those who want to preserve what they have, versus those who want to acquire what they do not have. Machiavelli sides with the latter, and dismisses the impulse of preservation as corrupt. Hobbes agrees with this philosophy. In order to enjoy anything that one possesses, Hobbes argues, one must be acquiring more to ensure the replacement of that object. Kant's civil constitution follows the Hobbesian path and insofar as it does, it justifies the impulse to acquire, while placing a new halo over that impulse. For conflict is always good for Kant. It always leads to new federations between the warring parties. Yet the federations never have

the authority to prefer the principle of preserving one's possessions against those who seek to acquire them.

Thus we are in the state of nature, the whole world is given to everybody in common, and nobody knows where Kant got that principle from. It can only be *homo noumena*. By experience, it must be the case that in the earliest stages of any civilization, different parts of the world belong to different people, if only by usage. Otherwise nobody could survive. Kant himself admits as much grudgingly; for nature deposits a human being on a certain piece of land, and a person has the right to occupy that piece of land where nature has, as Heidegger would say, 'thrown' him. Kant's point, however, is that in the pre-civil state, man does not have a 'right' to stay in that place. In other words, he can be driven out of that place, unless he is strong enough to lay claim to it *by force*.

Right and authorization to use coercion therefore mean one and the same things. The question arises: how far does authorization to take possession of a piece of land extend? As far as the capacity for controlling it extends, that is, as far as whoever wants to appropriate it can defend it—as if the land were to say, if you cannot protect me you cannot command me.<sup>2</sup>

Kant begins his discussion of right in the state of nature with a tip of the cap to the right of the first occupant. He quickly however surrenders this claim. If a man is the first occupant of an acre of land, and even if he works it very hard and raises crops on it, he has yet no 'right' to it, because that land still belongs to everyone in common. A stronger man can force him off the land and enjoy it as his own, and hence *force* is the origin of acquisition in Kant's state of nature. Why not just say violence? Kant would reject that however, as he would agree with Hobbes that there is no mine and thine in the state of nature, except as it is agreed to by all; and what all will agree to, Kant insists, is that the stronger should have it.

Kant wants to talk about 'right' as a noumenal thing. In other words, Kant wants to argue that nobody owns a dog, or a farmhouse, or a well *per se*. What one owns, or can own, is the ability to oblige other people to respect one's assertion of his own will to take possession of some things, which involves reciprocity. Kant defers the reciprocity until *after* property is distributed in accordance with the force, the 'canon range'. For Plato and Aristotle both, equality is coeval with exchange: that which is exchanged must be equal, nobody must get more than what he has *given*. Kant forfeits the domain of original acquisition to brute power, and then introduces reciprocity as an abstract, deflected from concrete object's principle, which can only take place after civil society itself is governed by laws.

## KANT'S HOBBSIAN ETHOS

Kant's characterizations in his state of nature theory is Hobbesian right down the line. Kant has great trouble, however, essaying a transition from the state of nature to the civil condition. For Hobbes, the state of nature is a condition of violence, and the fear of violent death terrifies the people into surrendering their rights. Kant, clinging to the veil of his a priori principles, insists that people in the state of nature do not learn about violent injustice in the proclivities of their neighbors from experience. Kant will go to any lengths to hold onto his argument. People, Kant insists, rather learn about the violent pretensions of their associates from a priori laws. 'It is not experience from which we learn human beings' maxim of violence and of their malevolent tendency to attack one another before external legislation with power appears. It is therefore not some fact that makes coercion through public law necessary.'<sup>3</sup> For Kant cannot rest his state in *homo phenomenon*: this would open the way to people making their bonds to the state run through one another directly. Kant must insist that each individual is part of the state solely as *homo noumenon*, as contemplator of the abstract a priori principles of the categorical imperative, where *one gives the law to oneself*. Submission, not autonomy, is the principle of the Hobbesian founding. It is the principle of Kant's as well, although he will not admit to it.

In the state of nature, Kant simply cannot conceive of actual human relationships that are more than the sum of their parts. Kant cannot contemplate this in the case of couples to be joined in conjugal relations; he cannot contemplate this in the case of parent and child, and he cannot contemplate it either in the case of the relationship between ruler and ruled in the civil state when it arrives through 'noumenal' corridors. For Kant, the conjugal relationship itself is a variant of the state of nature individualism. Kant cannot bear to admit the principle or reality of love, not even for a moment, for that would indicate associations of ethical value outside of the 'noumenal' sphere. For the same reason Kant cannot really contemplate friendship, or loyalty, or courage, or justice. The man and woman, in Kant's savage state, are still unilateral actors. They seek a sexual property in one another.<sup>4</sup> In exchange, one man promises to do something, and another man promises to follow that performance with one of his own. To transfer a piece of property, Kant goes to incredible lengths to veil the exchange in abstraction. If I sell you a horse, in Kantian terms, I simply lay down my right to the horse, and the other man extends his unilateral right to take, which the other man is now obliged not to attempt to resist. This in fact is the political relationship that Hobbes specifies between the conqueror and the conquered. The sovereign preserves his natural right in the state of nature, even as the people surrender theirs into his hands.

A man, similarly who wants to have a sexual relationship with a woman must have a contractual exchange. Yet there is no real communion that is allowed to take place. Each acquires a sexual property in the organs of the other person, a right of enjoyment of the other. There can be no mention of the soul, or of affections, but solely sexual interest, unilateral interest. If perchance the husband cannot perform sexually, and this is concealed, then the union is void. For it is sexual usage that Kant focuses on in the conjugal relationship.

It is quite interesting when Kant gets around to discussing the uses of oaths by judges in civil courts. Kant has not by this time discussed the transition to civil society, a thing that he really intends to brush past very lightly. The Hobbesian portrait of people surrendering their dignity in terror, does not square well with Kant's promise of a state in which the dignity of all is the crowning jewel of the Kingdom of Ends. Kant believes that he can lay the groundwork for that divine state on Hobbesian principles.

Oaths are an infringement on the freedom of the individual, Kant claims. One would expect this from Hobbes, but from Kant? The man of duties? The man of the holiest of holies? To blanch at the prospect of a vow of honesty? Kant comes right out and says that nobody can know of the existence of any supreme being well enough to more than 'bet on it'; to profess to actually have a sincere faith in God, would be the act of superstition in Kant's conviction. 'But the legislative authority acts in a way that is fundamentally wrong in conferring authorization to do this on the judicial authority, since even in the civil condition coercion to take oaths is contrary to human freedom, which must not be lost.'<sup>5</sup> It would also be the act of a moron, in his view, since homo phenomenon cannot know anything for certain. What the reader should imagine is Kant being subject to an oath, as regards the supposed holiness of his categorical imperative; or his claim that there is no judgment involved in sense perception; or in his claim that a human being can never know 'the thing in itself'. Kant would not like at all to have to bite that bullet. The judge who exacted any kind of an oath from an individual, Kant feels, would be dealing him a strict injustice. What he would be doing, as Kant knows full well, is making him profess his honor upon his claims: and nobody knows better than Kant how much it hurts to be discovered to be a liar. His whole gospel of practical reason relentlessly subjects the whole population to this sort of interrogation every time it raises the specter of human feelings and relationships as the actual content of ethics.

As for the founding of the state, this is simply glossed over by Kant. People learn that violence and injustice is the province of the state of nature through a priori, noumenal insights, allegedly; and so they simply slide over into a civil association, where government and judges appear, apparently without the benefit of a social contract. To focus on the social contract, each individual with the state, and each individual with other individuals, would

reveal the more than humbling realities of the state that Kant is actually committed to. Kant's sovereign is not bound to the people by any contract. He does not owe his power to them. There is no contractual relationship between them, the people and the sovereign.

### KANT'S DISCUSSION OF HONOR

Now arises a pivotal issue. It cannot be understood, in the case of Kant, unless the reader has first familiarized himself with Kant's First and Second Critiques, along with the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Kant has labored mightily to set forth the foundations of the *Metaphysics of Morals* in line with the prior works. Two whole books of moral philosophy have preceded this tract on political morality. We have seen that, in Kant's prior works, the individual and his entire freedom consist in his liberating himself from any 'obligation' or 'impulse' or 'stimulus' from the domain of perishable objects, namely other people. The holy of holies for Kant is the law of autonomy that a man gives to himself: and it is to the law that he is faithful. Kant never provides a proof of the categorical imperative. Yet here he is in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, in the first part on the Metaphysics of Right, setting forth a battery of situations within which a human being is summoned to defend his honor, in the political and cultural life of the state.<sup>6</sup>

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, when Kant himself comes out dramatically in favor of a death penalty for those who have murdered—and when he beseeches that any and all who have committed treason against the state should also be put to death—he is arguing from the foundation of phenomena which his own philosophy fatefully subverts at every turn. Kant, in other words, is playing a role here, a kind of propaedeutic role in the culture. Kant wants to inject into the public debates a supposed reverence for honor which flies in the face of his First and Second Critiques at every turn. This makes special sense, given that Kant's whole political philosophy is dedicated to Hobbesian principles. The men and women in Kant's state of nature, as other moral writings of Kant will illustrate, are to be dismissed as prone, nay even obligated to evil; the state of nature is described as a 'wild and lawless' state, much more Hobbesian than Rousseauian, despite some similarities that exist between those two theories. It is clear that Kant's entire project with his practical law of reason, his categorical imperative, lives and dies by the respect it can summon for itself; and a philosophy strictly in accord with Hobbesian morals could never justify that sort of respect.

For Hobbes, the desire for honor is the very cause of civil war. The destruction of the impulse to pride and honor as ordinarily understood, for Hobbes, therefore is the very foundation of the new civil state. The 'equality' to which Hobbes pays obeisance involves humiliation and prostration even

for the stronger: for the stronger (the men and women of science and philosophy) must nevertheless walk under the same yoke with the others, in order not to upset their expectation that everybody is truly being regarded as an equal in the same degree. Hobbes does not require of his subjects that each *believe* that he is equal to the others; he only requires of his subjects that they *profess* that they are equal to the others; and in Hobbes's state, this equality is one of forfeit pride, of forfeit submission. This is not to say that Hobbes seeks to drive honor and reputation out of his state. It indicates that Hobbes is attempting to anchor a new regime of honor in different ways and means: namely in self-enrichment, in the making of exploitive and profitable contracts. He who obtains more power than others will indirectly be the beneficiary of honor in Hobbes's civil state, even though the means employed be the most base.

Hobbes, contrary to Kant, vehemently insists that no individual is obliged by the right of nature to accept any mortal punishment from the sovereign. Indeed, to the contrary: each individual is bound by the right of nature to do what he can to escape punishment from the sovereign, even if that means killing the palace guard and his captors en route to the gallows. The moral impulse of natural right, and it is Kant who has chosen to embrace this natural right—for Hobbes, is for the preservation of one's members, and thumbs its nose at any public code of honor. Hobbes is firmly in the Machiavellian tradition, but Kant could never bear to endure that appearance, even if in reality he is part of it. For the reverence which he seeks to summon for his categorical imperative could never survive a public association with such low bred morals.

Thus, Kant insists on *lex talionis*, retributive justice. Hobbes insists on the opposite. It is a law of nature for Hobbes that the individual must forfeit his right to vengeance upon entering into the new civil society. For this vengeance is his alone, not the feeling of the united will of all. It is certainly not part of the one who committed the murder of the man's family member, and the categorical imperative requires absolute unanimity. Moreover, Kant makes a great show about being absolutely appalled by out of wedlock births. He justifies the woman who, out of shame and defense of her honor, kills her own baby. Kant insists that this motive must be protected from punishment by death, in order to defend the public's respect for the principle of honor. And yet this is a strange place to seek for it. For the infant is innocent, whatever else one interprets from the situation. Kant regards the child born-out-of-wedlock as all but an enemy of the state.

Kant provides another example. If a rich man insults a poor man, it should not be enough for the rich man merely to repay the poor man. He must apologize in a suitable way, such as by kissing the beggar's hand in public. This entire portrait is so outrageously at variance with Kant's seminal principle of practical reason—that the 'I think' is the only thing we can truly know;



and all phenomena are reduced to the status of *mere appearances*—over and over again Kant has hammered this principle into our minds. That the philosopher Kant would even for a moment acknowledge the true existence of a ‘rich man’, or a woman giving birth out of wedlock, ignores the whole teaching of the first two Critiques, and the *Groundwork* of the *MM* as well. For this is precisely the point of view, these moralistic principles based upon emotions evoked by facts—against which Kant rails and fights with all his might in the *Second Critique*. To be or feel obliged to any sort of moral action due to one’s feelings for other people, stimulated by other people, is to so insult the majesty and dignity of the categorical imperative as to threaten to destroy it, in Kant’s terminology.

Kant, in other words, through regulative reason, can defend the employment of a death penalty, of some sort of honor code, for practical reasons: i.e. Precisely to magnify the grandeur of the moral principle to which Kant is pledged—the categorical imperative—*which principle is entirely a priori, and an object apart from all empirical data*. Hobbes wants fear to be the capstone of his state, while Kant wants reverence to be the cultural capstone of his. Yet Kant cannot hope to attain to any real reverence. He can only attempt to conjure up the *trappings* of it. In which case the persons to be visited with these harsh penalties by Kant’s jurisprudence would be, alas, *mere means* to him, for ends that the people truly cannot share in.

For death, by execution, would certainly involve the bringing to an end of the time of the human body and personality so sentenced. None of us have forgotten what Kant’s convictions are as regards time itself; that it is a mere condition of our sensibility and no true part of any real *substance at all*. Time and space, inner and outer sense for Kant, exist only for the human mind as regards external bodies which it insists it *cannot* know. If time is not really a part of bodies that are perishable, then what would the death penalty even possibly mean to a thinker like Kant, unless it is a mere cunning of his practical interest of reason?

Where would the hanging take place? Space, for Kant, is a mere condition of our outer sensations. The mind manufactures the raw sensible materials, which we allegedly cannot know, by imposing the sensibilities of time and space upon them. In what ‘space’ shall the man be hung? Would Kant strictly speaking be able to come up with an answer for the philosophers who understand his writings? Yet no, these elements in the *Metaphysics of Morals* are a kind of propaganda for popular consumption, to enshrine the Kantian argument in a kind of honor code of incorruptible honesty and integrity. If only it was either one of those things.

THE DOCTRINE OF VIRTUE (PART 2)  
IN THE *METAPHYSICS OF MORALS*

In the second part of the *MM*, the doctrine of virtue, Kant once more sets before the reader the categorical imperative. One must act in such a way, that one's actions can serve as a universal law or rule for everyone.<sup>7</sup> In the doctrine of right, the first part of the *MM*, the individuals are portrayed as Hobbesian actors, where the law of force is trump. This state of nature, in Kant's view, and he follows Hobbes here, is barbarism. The individuals are obligated to move into the moral state. That is, individuals are obligated by duty to leave the state of nature, and to enter into a civil society governed by laws.

We have seen that Kant has some difficulties accepting all of the Hobbesian realities. For Hobbes, the state of nature consists in terror of violent death. This most extreme of all passions, however, constitutes for Hobbes something very like universal reason: since the freedom of anyone poses the threat of violent death to anyone else, people turn towards one another in their terror, and confess their weakness. In this movement, the individuals elect to surrender their natural freedom, or a goodly portion of it: just so far as is compatible with preserving them from the terror of violent death, or perhaps just violent death itself. The line between passion and reason for Hobbes is razor thin. It may almost be regarded as a technical phraseology. Indeed, terror seems for Hobbes to actually be the nerve of natural reason. The result, however, is that individuals surrender their right to choose what is moral and immoral for themselves, at all. They must rather accept from the appointed government, a non-deliberative and wholly executive organ, its edicts on what to feel, think, opine, and perform.

Kant cannot accept this. Yet Kant shares with Hobbes the foundation of his philosophical system. Both Hobbes and Kant fully indict the empirical. This is to say, that both of these philosophers indict the capacity of the sense perceptions to know anything true. Hobbes helped to set the tone for this line of argument. In Hobbes, it is regarded, first of all, as a physiological impossibility that the individual can know true facts about real bodies in nature through perception. Hobbes's definition of the perceptual process does not allow for this. Neither, however, does Kant's. We have sufficiently discussed Kant's enumeration of 'transcendental aesthetics', and the category of 'phenomena' more generally.

THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

The most important thing to contemplate in Kant's analysis is the content of the categorical imperative. In Kant's view, the individual must eliminate all

empirical content from his deliberations. He is not eligible to see any particular moral or immoral actors; nor is he able to judge of any particular actors from this vantage point. He is pursuing a law that he gives to himself, and any set of facts which exercise compulsion upon his point of view (evidence!) would affront this moral theory. The way Kant describes the categorical imperative is telling in the second part of the *MM*.

Duty, for Kant, must consist in an experience of compulsion. Yet this compulsion of the categorical imperative, which the individual resists naturally, in Kant's argument, is suspect. For Kant does not distinguish between evidence that is set before us on a particular individual in some particular case, and the compulsion that truth would have upon our moral judgment—and derelict appetites or pleasures that would distract us from our obligations on the other hand. For Kant, these two things are one and the same. Both are 'natural impulses', the 'empirical'. Within the distinction that I have just made, the vast majority of the human race locates the difference between right and wrong. Yet for Kant, both of these dispositions are equally wrong and immoral. This is the crisis that Kant's theory confronts us with. Kant, in his categorical imperative, is as hostile, perhaps more hostile, to the individual who is guided by truth of evidence and judgment of particulars, as he is to individuals who ignore evidence, and arrive at judgments based upon pure whimsy, personal dislike of the family of the person involved, economic rivalry, or some other bias.

What Kant makes clear again in the second part of his *MM*, is that the categorical imperative makes the one who judges the object of judgment. The categorical imperative is concerned with the alleged pristine purity of the soul of the one who judges in this attitude of mind. So long as he sweeps all direct evidence out of his mind and thinks only of the universal law, he is pursuing his own innocence, or 'perfection' as Kant calls it. Virtue, Kant argues, is not finally about the deed that is obligatory, and the people for whom it is relevant; it is all about the individual who cultivates the virtue. Virtue is 'for its own sake', i.e. it is for the good reputation of the one who judges, and the facts of the circumstances be damned. Kant does not care about those facts. 'Virtue is not of this world. God made the world with such and such an admixture of evil in it as he felt necessary.'

For the doubtful reader, let me point out that Kant clings to his theory of 'phenomena', and appearances, those shibboleths of the *First Critique*, even here in the second part of the *MM*. For it is not possible for any individual, insofar as he is an *actor*, Kant argues, to know to any degree what motives have truly impelled his *own* behavior. They are as likely to be as guilty as innocent, no matter what maxims the person has before his mind. As homo phenomena, as moral actor, virtue is not possible therefore. It is only as climbing towards theoretical perfection, in the a priori pushing away of all practical, concrete imperatives of individual action, that the human being

attains to virtue for Kant. He is virtuous precisely insofar as he has turned his back upon the *human reality* as moral actor. Kant's individual, insofar as he invokes the universal law, is averting his eyes from any truth that he could know about particular cases.

### KANT ON THE DUTY OF APATHY

In the moral sphere, it is not going too far, I think, to say that Kant is opposed to any moral feeling that is not generated by the categorical imperative itself. The categorical imperative has no room for 'subjective' experience, for 'affect' that is generated by that which Kant continually refuses to acknowledge in his discourse: truth of fact. One can see Kant recurring to his categorical imperative as a weapon against moral affect, which would be generated by *perception*. This perception, however, Kant has already totally defamed in his transcendental aesthetic of the *First Critique*.

Kant coins the phrase of 'moral aesthetics' to deal and indicate those feelings that people have in moral situations that are guided by 'natural impulses'. Kant, following Hume, pretends that the origin of such moral feelings is 'inscrutable'. If we witness a man murder a person, nevertheless, for Hume and Kant, our indignation is merely a feature of our minds, not a reaction to a reality inherent in the deed that we have witnessed. This is to say that for Kant, the categorical imperative is an instrument of obfuscation. This is to say that Kant wields the categorical imperative as an instrument of obfuscation.

Kant roundly denies that human beings have any moral 'duty' to feel things. Kant insists that it is impossible to contemplate a true moral tug of war between selfish impulses and perceived facts, or facts that summon one's emotions away from one's selfish impulses. For Kant, all 'affect' is selfish: except and unless as it is generated by the universal law. It is not surprising then, that Kant collapses the distinction between courage and justice and moderation and wisdom. Kant collapses all of these virtues into one name: that of 'will'. Kant states that it is almost incorrect to say that a man possesses virtue; that it would be more correct to state that virtue possesses a man. What emerges in Kant's commentary is the image of a man who rebels against any fact which would oblige him against his will. Kant insists on being 'master' of his emotions, but not in the way that ordinary people mean when they say 'get hold of yourself'. For ordinary people, getting hold of your emotions means curbing the excess, i.e. the emotions should fit the facts and not go beyond them. For Kant, on the other hand, an entire moral philosophy is crystallizing which is in rebellion precisely against the truly moral aspects of human nature.

Kant disdains the very idea that there is a 'duty to have a conscience'. 'There are certain moral endowments such that anyone lacking them could have no duty to acquire them. They are moral feeling, conscience, love of one's neighbor, and respect for oneself. There is no obligation to have these because they lie at the basis of morality, as subjective conditions.'<sup>8</sup> Kant wants to make the point that every individual has a conscience and that there is no possible struggle that could go on in an individual between, say, appetites and perception of truth or facts. Being sunken into one's own private reverie of impulses is not allowed by Kant to contrast with sensitivity to facts external to oneself, one's body. This struggle, which is the whole foundation of Aristotle's practical reason, is ridiculed by Kant. Kant keeps returning to the image of the individual as up in arms against any and all specific perceptions and feelings that may inhabit his mind: he consults the categorical imperative as his shield, and the truth of the matter is that for Kant, in Kant's philosophy, this categorical imperative actually functions as an instrument, a tool.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting to note that for Kant, truly moral laws cannot be 'externally given'. In other words, if the government enacts a law that murder shall be punished by death, this law of itself is not binding on the individual ethical 'personality' for Kant. 'External' laws, or laws that are promulgated by a government for a people, do not allow the individual, in Kant's opinion, to be the truly virtuous person. For laws are, inevitably, things that must be perceived. They therefore concern 'phenomena', or 'homo phenomena'. This can explain Kant's positions on the issues discussed above. They would be Kant's recommendations as regards external lawgiving; yet obedience to these laws cannot concern true moral obligation, or at least they cannot concern or involve Kantian duty. For Kantian duty one must have the dignity of the self-given law.

Homo phenomena, Kant argues, or the human being insofar as he or she is percipient, does not involve true obligation or virtue at all. Such 'external laws' only involve the transition from the state of nature to civil society; and what we see is that Kant's categorical imperative is not the instrument of this movement. Kant is therefore consonant with Hobbesian theory on the sovereign. If the sovereign laid down the edict that murder must be rewarded, Kant would insist that this too must be obeyed. For the only difference between the state of nature for Hobbes and Kant, and civil society on the other hand, is that there is some judge. In the state of nature every person is his own judge, and that is the cause of violence. Hobbes's remedy is that the means of violence be gathered into one person's hands (or one government's hands). The right of the people to dissent from this is disputed equally by both philosophers.

## KANT ON COMPASSION

The implications of Kant's science of understanding for his moral philosophy cannot be overestimated. The place where Kant parts company with the rest of the human race—i.e. in his withholding of belief in the reality of the external bodies that the sense perceptions tell us of, trickle down into every nook and cranny of his moral doctrine. Here we can enumerate some of these effects.

This becomes clear in the *MM* yet again when Kant is talking about the duty of feeling for others. In his proposition of the universal imperative of the law of equality in practical reason, Kant is bursting with apparent solicitation for the welfare of all others, their feelings and their humanity. However, when it comes time to talking about the human being next to one, and their conditions of facticity, and perhaps need, Kant is as cold as a stone. Kant quotes the Stoic philosophers to the effect of, 'why should I care? What is his suffering to me?' My point is that Kant's categorical imperative, since it never can or does issue forth in action, is already cold and selfish detachment, ruthless detachment. Man has no duty whatsoever of compassion, Kant argues. It would only multiply the degree of suffering in the world, and what good is that?

We need to be clearer. It is not recommended here that every human being must walk out into the world espousing enthusiastic compassion for each and every human being he meets. Yet this is not the way ordinary people live anyway. For ordinary people, the nature of our interactions with others are highly complex and varied. There are different degrees of intimacy, different degrees of responsibility, different contexts and different circumstances. These are all the materials, by the way, of Aristotle's practical reason, which are not invented, such as Kant's universal law, but rather an effort to understand the way ordinary praise and blame operates. It is the entire domain of human relationships as anchored in facticity which Kant rejects or dismisses coldly. The fact that Kant recommends any number of severe moral attitudes for cultural probity does not change the fact that Kant carefully separates all of these attitudes (say towards beggary, the death penalty, and honor in society) from the categorical imperative. Kant is forever cultivating the appearance of wanting to elevate the people; and yet in his mere estimation of their flesh and blood existence, he is always looking down upon them.

## NOTES

1. *Metaphysics of Morals* 3.
2. *Metaphysics of Morals* 52.
3. *Metaphysics of Morals* 89.

4. *Metaphysics of Morals* 61–62.

5. *Metaphysics of Morals* 84.

6. Allen Wood. 'The Final Form of Kant's Practical Philosophy'. In Mark Timmons, editor. *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*. Oxford: 2004. 'Juridical duties, in other words, are those whose concept contains no specific incentive for doing them, while ethical duties are those connected in their concept with the objective incentive of duty or rational lawfulness' (8). 'But the doctrine of ends in the Doctrine of Virtue is such that one should not say that Kant is opposed to an ethical theory oriented to the pursuit of ends. His position is rather that such theories cannot be grounded on rational principle, which must in turn be grounded on an end in itself, or a value possessing objective worth for reason' (13). 'When people criticize Kant for not having an ethics of virtue, the thought they probably most often have in mind is that Kant fails to recognize the moral importance of having feelings, emotions, or desires that are spontaneously in harmony with morality. Probably nothing in Kant's ethical writings has earned him more hostility than his attempt to appeal to the moral common sense on behalf of the claim that the man whose sympathetic feelings have been eclipsed by the weight of his own sorrows displays a good will and performs acts with moral worth when he is beneficent from duty, even though his earlier beneficent acts performed from sympathy had no such worth. Many peoples' hostility to Kantian ethics seems to resemble an allergic reaction, and for most of them it was probably this passage in the *Groundwork* that occasioned their first sneeze' (15). 'Even in the case Kant describes, there is no opposing motive (no desire not to help those in need), but only an absence of an inclination to act—out of which, however, the agent is moved by the thought of duty, which makes him want to help' (16). 'This means that, according to Kant's theory, the sorrowful man who acts from duty is not moved merely by the stony thought "it is my duty to help"; he acts instead out of a recognition that those in need of his help are ends in themselves. Their dignity gives him a reason to care about them and give them a claim on his help, whether or not he feels like helping them. This will make him more and not less sensitive both to their own needs and to the dangers his helping may present to their self-respect than he would be if his motive were smooth or some other contingent liking' (16).

Wood is trying to make a couple of points here. He is above all trying to argue that Kant's morality, his ethical philosophy, does indeed translate into ethical action. Wood is not very good as a political philosopher though, and the *Metaphysics of Morals* is founded in political discussion, the state of nature theory. Kant's state of nature theory is expressly *Hobbesian*. Human nature, as phenomena, as rooted in the nature of fleshly existence, seeks for dominion, and as Kant will later argue in his *Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, man is fundamentally 'asocial by nature'. Human beings in Kant's state of nature are driven out of the same state of nature by 'reciprocity', i.e. fear of one another. And the government set up by the Kantian state of nature is to be obeyed regardless of what it is. Thus the *Metaphysics of Morals* does not concern noumenal morality at all. Noumenal morality, the categorical imperative, rises above all natural feelings. If what I say is correct, then Wood's attempt to argue that Kant's ethical philosophy of action in the *Metaphysics of Morals* is related hierarchically to the categorical imperative cannot be right.

What I do not see is two things. I do not see that a human being, based on Kant's categorical imperative or any human law anchored in it, can act. The ethical foundation set forth in the *Groundwork* makes the individuals' will, not the other's suffering, his true object. To put it more bluntly, the individual appealing to Kant's categorical imperative in any way shape, or form, regards other human beings as *particulars*, as obstacles to goodness and freedom. 'Spontaneity' and 'autonomy' regard the mere appearance of another human being and his suffering as heteronomous and oppressive. I do not think there is any way any law vaguely related to Kant's categorical imperative, not even in a political state but especially not in a political state founded in Hobbesian principles, could ever cross over into the domain of action. Action in the state cannot occur under the tutelage of the moral law in any of its guises. Thus the Kantian man does not help the suffering individual out of any sense of duty or moral obligation to him. The laws of the state have Hobbesian precedence, the individual is to obey these for fear of his life. The state of nature is a state of war, and for Kant it is the cradle of the free state. It is only the state of war that drives human beings out of the state of nature into

submission to political authority. None of this moral reasoning has *anything* to do with freedom for Kant.

Just consider Kant's attitude towards the child born out of wedlock. Kant's hostility to this illegal alien is unremitting. The marriage contract is certainly not born out of any categorical imperative or sense of humanity. Indeed, Kant follows Locke and Hobbes in making conjugal relations the basis of marriage. Those who engage in sexual pursuits outside of this legalization of conjugal relations are viewed as an enemy of nature. Kant will sympathize with the woman who kills her baby out of wedlock, in order to safeguard her own good name, to attempt to salvage something of her honor; but Kant abandons the child entirely to its fate. Here is where some stony dutifulness would have been useful, but for Kant it is not to be. It is necessary to bring to mind the Hobbesian roots of the state, for in it Kant unites the founding of civilization. The state is repressive of the latter, but in the Hobbesian formula, oppression and violence are the true *moral tutors* of politics. There is no place for Kant's ethical self in any of this political morality. The laws and customs of society are for Kant in the political domain, heteronomy right down the line. There is indeed no authority too terrible to justify individuals in resistance thereto in this political science. Strict Hobbesianism. Thus the law of reciprocity insofar as it has to do with 'right' is just Hobbes's 'natural reason', the reason of terror, which Kant happens to hold out high hopes for. I do not see a single instance that Kant draws up, where subjugation in the political realm fails to preempt the freedom found in the categorical imperative. The object for the individual in the categorical imperative is not allowed to be his body or his passions, or his practical condition at all; and thus no action can come from the ethical imperative at all, not even duty for duty's sake.

7. Paul Guyer. 'Kant's Deductions of the Principles of Right'. In Mark Timmons, editor. *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals*. Oxford: 2004. 'Surely this means that the Categorical Imperative, the form in which the supreme principle of morality presents itself to creatures such as ourselves, whose power of choice can also be tempted by inclination, is both the means by which we know of our freedom and also the principle by means of which we must restrict our freedom in order to determine our legally enforceable rights against one another as well as our ethical duties to ourselves and to one another' (24–25). 'The foundational assumption of Kantian morality is that human freedom has unconditional value, and both for the Categorical Imperative and the universal principle of right flow directly from this fundamental normative claim: the Categorical Imperative tells us what form our maxims must take if they are always to be compatible with the fundamental value of freedom, and the universal principle of right tells us what form our actions must take if they are to be compatible with the universal value of freedom, regardless of our maxims and motivations' (26). Guyer, and not just Guyer, are resolved to reverse Kant's logic in his moral writings. Kant wrote not one, but two propaedeutic moral works of philosophy, including the crucial *Critique of Practical Reason*. The *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant makes it abundantly clear, is to be understood in the light of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* at the very least. Guyer however is insistent that we ought to interpret the *Groundwork* in terms of the *Metaphysics of Morals*. This reasoning is more than a little bit desperate. Yet this is the dominant moral impulse in Kant's thought, even into the *Groundwork* and the *Second Critique*. For in these two works Kant *absolutely insists* that any concrete practical situation, by which other human beings or bodies conjure up any sort of felt obligation on our parts, is *heteronomy*, unfreedom. Kant spends two books hammering this out, and it is certain that the *Metaphysics of Morals* is to be interpreted through this lens.

In terms of Kant's discussion of 'right' in the *MM*, he clearly demarcates this dimension apart from the a priori moral law. Kant chooses to make his argument about a state of nature, which is somewhat surprising. Yet it also makes a great deal of sense. For the state of nature theory in modern philosophy begins with Hobbes; and Hobbes led the way in attacking the authority of sense perception to know true facts about the world. This preemptive attack upon the authority of sense perception opens up the way for the Early Modern philosopher to move into position with his own artificial moral code. For Hobbes, right consists in power to acquire. There is a law of nature in the state of nature, which gives everyone the equal right to rely upon his or her strength to acquire. For Hobbes, this equality of right is a metaphysical moral phenomenon. It does not lead to civil society smoothly and directly. Rather, it leads to *war* first. People, for Hobbes, find themselves in disputes about property; and especially Hobbes has it in



for people who display pride and honor about what is theirs. In other words, it is the people with a sense of justice who are blamed for the war in the state of nature, rather than intemperate people or incontinent people who calmly seek to seize as much as they possibly can. Hobbes makes this distinction between moral types very clear in his state of nature; and it is the moral emotions attendant to fairness, or justice, which Hobbes castigates and persecutes as the very cause of the ultimate injustice, the state of open war. In order to escape this state of open war, Hobbes ordains that the state itself must be composed out of these desires to acquire, all transferred to some artificial king. The king himself may be a despot, and is fully entitled to keep his own title to acquire as much as he pleases in the 'civil state'.

Kant really isn't different from Hobbes. For Kant, in the state of nature, one only has a right to expect that others will respect one's own possessions, tenuous though they be, if one is strong enough to hold them against invasion. Only the expectation that the state of nature will lead to a civil society, where for Kant all possessions are assigned anew technically, graces Kant's state of nature with a patina of civility. It proves hollow. For it is not only Kant's tendency to rejoice in war, as a moral educator, but to calmly embrace it as a panacea for almost all social ills in the so-called 'state of nature'. Not only does Kant regard this state of war as hospitable in the state of nature for individual societies; but he can hardly wait or restrain himself from aspiring to a global state of war so that the whole world is tamed by similar brutalization. Kant is only to be congratulated for managing to find Hobbes's dystopia palatable. It is by no means an indication of virtue, much less of sanity. It recalls very much the 'totality' which Kantian logic insists is the only thing that can truly be known by the understanding: the view that any substance is merely part of a universe of substances, to be understood as part of one and only one universal 'system', all of which is subsumed under the rubric of nature, which happens, for Kant, to be meaningless. The ordinary people, it is true, might not be able to understand the boundaries of Kantian oppression, but they will surely feel it in proportion as it gains practical application.

#### 8. *Metaphysics of Morals* 159.

9. Richard Dean. *The Value of Humanity in Kant's Moral Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2006. 'Most contemporary readers will feel that this way of expressing the Categorical Imperative captures a plausible and important moral intuition, that there is something special about persons which makes them deserving of at least some basic moral consideration' (3). 'Humanity, in the sense of the humanity formulation, is indeed equivalent to some feature possessed by rational beings, but not by all minimally rational beings. Instead, 'humanity' is Kant's name for the more fully rational nature that is only possessed by a being who actually accepts moral principles as providing sufficient reasons for action. The humanity that should be treated as an end in itself is a properly ordered will, which gives priority to moral considerations over self-interest. To employ Kant's terminology, the end in itself is a good will' (6). 'The good will reading also explains why one should never choose to act immorally, because by choosing to act immorally, one is also choosing to sacrifice one's most valuable possession 'a good will' (8). 'But this commitment is fragile in human beings, because they have what Kant calls a 'natural propensity of the human being to evil'. This propensity can take the form of giving priority to the principle of self-love, ignoring the commands of the Categorical Imperative' (21).

Every human being has an interest in morality. Since we live in the Machiavellian era, it is worthwhile to note that Machiavelli thought this as well. For people are vulnerable. Nobody likes to be insulted, not even as a 'joke', Machiavelli wrote in his *Discourses on Livy*. In fact, people, when they are insulted, feel it to the very marrow of their souls. They will even be willing to die to defend their good name. Machiavelli, since he was writing in a world that had yet to be converted to his principles, was forced to rely upon ordinary conceptions of morality as he spoke. Machiavelli could not speak, as Dean does, of 'the good will' as a private possession. Nobody would know what it meant. Your good will is not of much use to you, if you are being treated with contempt in public by another. Aristotle argued that such treatment is equivalent to slavery, and his definition of slavery is the person who cannot formulate his own goals. Machiavelli, in the foreword to his *Mandragola*, informs the reader that his 'first art was speaking ill'. It is the weapon he husbands, and deploys in his assignment of scientific names to political things. Machiavelli sees to it that casual conversation cannot help but accuse,

even when it does not seek to—because of the definitions of words that his science has put into circulation. Anyway, reading Machiavelli at the outset of the modern period reminds the reader that morality has nothing to do with ‘possession’. A good name cannot be possessed against slander and calumny simply by turning the other cheek. Slavery does indeed follow. That is the first point to make to Dean.

The second point to make to Dean is that this ‘natural propensity of the human being to evil’, in Kantian terms, is perfectly compatible with moral progress for civilization in Kant’s view. Dean does not contemplate this. In the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, Kant regales us with his utmost confidence that ‘nature’ works its secret ways advantageously for humans, even when they have no conscious purposes at all worth talking about and are mere pawns of blind warfare. Why really struggle so hard for ‘moral principles’ when willing evil gets the job done? Kant owns both positions, and they are not inconsistent. Yet we must explain.

Dean goes along for the ride with Kant. When Kant dismisses courage as mere ‘temperament’, i.e. accident, he is not speaking a language that he could dare to utter even at the corner grocery. Dean is willing also to follow Kant in regarding ‘moderation’ and wisdom as possibly evil. That is three of the four classical virtues impugned by the Kantians and their good will. Only justice, does Kant fear to speak out against directly. Yet he does not speak for it either. Nor does Dean.

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