Chapter 4 Faith Seeking to Understand

1. Seeking Within

The title of this chapter is taken from the motto of Anselm of Canterbury. He wrote,

> For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I might understand. For I believe this also, that 'unless I believe, I shall not understand'. [Anselm (1059)]

In the last sentence, Anselm is possibly making a reference by analogy to what God says to Isaiah in Isaiah 7:9. In the Latin Vulgate Bible[1] this reads,

> si non credideritis non permanebitis ("If you do not have firm faith, you will not remain steady"). [Weber & Gryson (2007), Isaiah 7:9] [2]

In starting from the position of Critical agnosticism discussed in chapter 3, this exploration of theology, like Anselm's, has no choice but to begin with faith or, at least, with a provisional willingness to accept a fundamental article of faith ("God exists") as a starting point, and to do so with an open mind. In chapter 3, I referenced Kant's poetic metaphor of human understanding as "an island surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean," and said theology must "venture out onto this stormy ocean" in its search for answers. The question this immediately brings up is: Where is the seaport? Where does one go to begin looking for answers?

Critical epistemology clearly tells us that we cannot "go outward" to an ontology of nature for answers because we know that direction inevitably carries us into speculations beyond the possibility of human experience, and we already know what these ontological speculations bring about. They bring about a splintering of religions into many doctrinally different faiths whose common grounds – if, indeed, we can find some – are submerged under towering waves of clashing doctrinal disagreements and controversies. Who, then, is to say which doctrine one should follow, or if indeed *any* of them should *altogether* be followed? Of course, you can seek truths that might lie *within* these divers doctrines for, as Kant said,

> Every error into which human understanding can fall is, however, only *partial* and in every erroneous judgment there must always be something true. For a *total* error would be a complete *opposition* to the laws of understanding and reason. [Kant (1800) 9: 54]

The trick is to figure out how to separate truths that lie within judgments from the errors they may also contain. It is the individual person who recognizes truths and who also makes the errors. It is also the individual person who makes his own cognitions of noumena. Is it not then reasonable to think Kant's "stormy ocean" lies *within each individual*? If this is so, then *it is to within ourselves* each of us must turn to as the place to look for theological understandings.

The idea of such an epistemological turn is not an idea unique to, nor even original with, the treatise you

[1] The Latin Vulgate was the Bible in use by the Roman Catholic Church when Anselm lived.

[2] An important and on-going issue in making use of Biblical references is the issue of what *translation* of the Bible the person being cited would have been using. In America, I find, chest-thumping scolds who aggressively assert that one must interpret the Bible "literally as written" are often ignorant of the fact that the Bible was not written in English. In order to "interpret the Bible literally as written," one would have to read the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic and the New Testament in Greek. Otherwise, you are reading someone's *interpretation* of it, and *all* such interpretations are colored by that someone's theological education and background. There are dozens of different translations of Scriptures in use today, so to hold that one must "interpret the Bible literally as written" is a hogwash imperative unless you are reading it in Hebrew, Aramaic, or 1st and 2nd century AD Greek. Otherwise you are in jeopardy of ending up worshipping an idol of paper and ink instead of God.

are reading. It would not be unfair or inaccurate to say Buddhism embraces an idea like this at its very foundations. Eckel writes,

> An essential prerequisite for the attainment of *nirvana*[3] is the facility to calm the mind and allow its passions to cool. In the Mahayana tradition, this "mindfulness" is often viewed as an essential prerequisite for compassion as well: as the mind becomes focused and calm, it is more possible to be attentive to the suffering of others. . . . At its most basic level, this practice is meant to cultivate clarity of mind: for one to be become aware of the thoughts and feelings that flood the mind in the process of everyday experience. But mindfulness also allows the mind to become calm, just as a lake becomes calm when there is no longer any wind to stir up its waters into waves, or as a fire begins to cool and go out when it is no longer stoked by fuel. [Eckel (2005), pg. 169]

Although Christianity does not take an "inner turning" to "mindfulness" to nearly the same degree or depth Buddhism does, it does on occasion call for persons of faith to turn inward or back to their simpler, more innocent selves. We find an important example of this in the Gospel of Luke:

> The kingdom of God is within you. [Luke 17:21][4]

In this context, it is interesting and worthwhile to set this against the apparent solipsism of a newborn infant. What shall we say of the "inner world" of the infant's initial solipsism? In chapter 3, I quoted Piaget's finding that

> In general it may be said that during the first months of life, as long as assimilation remains centered on the organic activity of the subject, the universe presents neither permanent objects, nor objective space, nor time interconnecting events as such, nor causality external to the personal actions. [Piaget (1954), pp. xii-xiii]

Yet the infant also comes equipped with innate sensorimotor reflexes and exhibits rather obvious *affective* preferences. These are cognitively non-objective, but they are all the baby needs to set to work in his slow constructing of objective experience. Piaget's finding is still a controversial one among psychologists at this time, but scientific evidence in favor of it has continued to build up over the past 30+ years [Wells (2007)]. More to the immediate point, "affectivity drives objectivity in the phenomenon of mind" is a *theorem* in the Critical epistemology of the phenomenon of mind [Wells (2006)].

The child's understanding of permanent objects, objective space and time, and causality is constructed for *practical* purposes – specifically, *to accommodate himself to the world of his experience*. This sets up a new interesting speculation worth mentioning now as a sort of preview of things to come, even though, by mentioning it now, I am letting the treatise get ahead of itself a bit. For the present, perhaps it is not too unacceptable to look upon this particular speculation as "food for thought" if I promise to bring this treatise back to it time and time again and so deal with it more fully? The speculation is this:

Positing the *Dasein* of an undetermined cause of a natural effect as the noumenon of a principal quantity

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[3] *Nirvana* literally means to "blow out" the fire of ignorance and desire, which Buddhists regard as the source of suffering. When one achieves final *nirvana* one's *karma* (moral retribution for misdeeds and harmful actions in life) is exhausted and the person is released from the doom of "wandering" (*samsara*) through endless cycles of reincarnation and the continuation of moral retributions. In a manner of speaking, Buddhists hold that a person must, as an athletics coach might say, "just keep running that play (life) until you get it right."

[4] This is the literal translation from the Greek ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν and is the rendering found in the King James Bible. For a number of years now, it has become the practice of translators to render it as "the kingdom of God is in your midst" but the Greek word ἐντὸς means "inside, within", not "midst." Such "new" translations are motivated by theological considerations or biases such as "it *couldn't* actually mean 'within' a person; that doesn't make sense!" Well, all I can say is, yes, it *could* mean 'within' and I don't find it too hard to 'make sense' out of it. There is no connotation of the word ἐντὸς that comes anywhere close to meaning "midst."

is objectively valid in Critical epistemology. It is only when one takes the next step and moves further into the territory of secondary quantities, to speculate about the *Existenz* of a cause, that we find ourselves on Kant's stormy ocean. Most theological speculations – not all of them, but the majority of them – bring the chain of ever more remote causes to one unifying *final* cause. I suspect you already know that to which I am referring here: the final cause of God as the creator of what we know of the phenomenal world of nature and everything in it. That "everything" includes you and includes me. Unless one chooses to regard capriciousness as part of the makeup of God's *Existenz* (as the Greeks did in their speculations about Zeus and the other Olympians), it is but a short additional step to also suppose God carried out this creative action for some kind of purpose[5]. Because *you* are part of this world of nature, it logically follows from the argument that God put you here and did so for some purpose.

But if we follow this line of reasoning to this point, does it make any kind of sense to say God put you here *totally unprepared to enter into and deal with this world*? You did not arrive preloaded with innate concepts of objects; epistemology-based developmental psychology tells us that. Yet you did arrive with the capacity to slowly construct object concepts and build a manifold of concepts. You did not obtain this capacity *here*[6], so how or where did you get it? If God made it a part of you in *your* beginning as a human infant, it doesn't seem to be too great a leap to think mental aspects of the nature of infancy are likely to be something we can search for clues in speculating upon other aspects of theology.

Not *too* great a leap – or so I feel – but it *is* nevertheless a leap. What is interesting about it, though, is that some New Testament quotations of Jesus seem quite congruent with it. I refer here specifically to the Gospels of Matthew (18:3), of Mark (10:15), and of Luke (18:17)[7]:

> Truly I say to you, unless you change and become like the children, you will never enter the realm of heaven [Matthew 18:3];
>
> Truly I say to you, who does not receive the realm of God like a little child, he will not enter into it [Mark 10:15];
>
> Truly I say to you, who does not receive the realm of God like a little child, he will not enter into it [Luke 18:17].

There is no shortage of different bible interpretations provided by scholars and serious bible students offering to explain what these passages mean. A more or less casual Internet search will turn up quite a few, and most of them are quite reasonable speculations. Many point to the charms of a little child's innocence, dependency on its parents, lack of guile, and simple, trusting nature. These are good points.

What this treatise is offering is an additional speculation that perhaps one should consider taking these quotations in a much more literal way, i.e., less ontologically and more "spiritually" in the sense of how affectivity in reflective judgment and appetition in practical Reason guide and direct one's speculative understanding in determining judgment. Returning to the line of argumentation, if God put you here and equipped you with preparations for living here, does it make sense to suppose there is nothing in the *nature* of these preparations put there to preserve some possibility of your reconnecting with God's *super*-nature? Shall we suppose that God, like some 18th century pirate, marooned us on Kant's island? If you think that, then what use could you have for any theology at all? No major religion claps a pirate's hat on God's head or perches a parrot on God's shoulder. I know of no minor ones who do so either.

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[5] If you're keeping score, this is one of the classic lead-ins to a teleological argument approach (discussed in chapter 1). We already know a teleological argument cannot *prove* the existence of God and I'm not trying to sneak one in.

[6] Some scientists will say this capacity is "latent in your DNA," as if this could pass for an explanation. DNA is an object of the physical world and nothing we actually *know* about DNA endows it with mentality or mental powers. Biologists and physicians today use "genetics" the same way the 19th century and earlier vitalists used "life": as a greater darkness put up to explain darkness. See Bernard (1865), pg. 201.

[7] The translations provided here are literal translations from Greek.

No, it makes far more sense to suppose that, lying within the nature of the phenomenon of mind, there is some, albeit obscure, attribute or facet providing for the possibility of one's reconnection with the creator. If one presumes no such possibility exists, then theology can serve no useful purpose whatsoever.

Author Aldous Huxley seemed to agree, at least in part, with the notion of such a general connectivity. In his book, *The Perennial Philosophy*, he wrote,

> [*Philosophia Perennis*] – the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being – the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the Perennial Philosophy may be found among the traditionary lore of primitive people in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions. [Huxley (1944a), pg. vii]

Really? Is this so? Huxley (1944a) doesn't conveniently summarize what these "rudiments" are, but he speaks more directly to this in an introduction he wrote for a translation of Hinduism's *Bhagavad-Gita*:

> At the core of the Perennial Philosophy we find four fundamental doctrines.
>
> First, the phenomenal world of matter and individualized consciousness – the world of things and animals and men and even gods – is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be nonexistent.
>
> Second: human beings are capable not merely of knowing *about* the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.
>
> Third: man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.
>
> Fourth: man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground. [Huxley (1944b)]

The first two of these "doctrines" have their points of congruity with the connectivity speculation above. It is not my intention to offer an endorsement of Huxley's "perennial philosophy," nor to embrace its mysticisms, nor to endorse his ontology-centered presuppositions. But, as Kant said, "in every erroneous judgment there must always be something true." The tricky part, always, is identifying it.

Rather than make a quick departure into mysticism, let us instead inquire into what we might learn from epistemology-centered psychology and appreciate about Piaget's remark quoted before in chapter 3:

> If we examine the intellectual development of the individual or of the whole of humanity, we shall find that the human spirit goes through a certain number of stages, each different from the other, but such that during each, the mind believes itself to be apprehending an external reality that is independent of the thinking subject. The content of this reality varies according to the stages: for the young child it is alive and permeated with finality, intentions, etc., whereas for the scientist reality is characterized by its physical determinism. But the ontological function, so to speak, remains identical: each in his own way thinks that he has found the outer world in himself. [Piaget (1930), pg. 237]

In short, let our course be set, at least initially, to seek answers within our *subjective* selves. Because we know *any* approach we could undertake will be speculative and will be attended by vexing unanswered questions (the "mysteries" of religion), and because so many gifted but ontology-centered theologians and other scholars have sailed so many other sea lanes yet contentious differences in doctrines still exist, why

not try this "inner person" sea lane upon Kant's stormy ocean to see where it takes us? Perhaps we too might find only another fogbank; but perhaps, too, we might find that, as the poet Robert Frost wrote,

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference. [Frost (1915)]

2. Perennial Questions

Anselm of Canterbury (AD 1033-1109) was one of the four founders of Scholasticism in Dark Age Europe[8]. What was it Anselm was seeking to understand? The general but somewhat too pat answer is "God and the truths of Christian doctrine." But *why*? What were the "questions behind the question" that motivated him? Anselm himself provides us with a clue as to what moved him:

> What have I undertaken? What have I actually done? Where was I going? Where have I come to? To what was I aspiring? For what do I yearn? 'I sought goodness' and, lo, 'there is confusion'. I yearned for God and I was in my own way. I sought peace within myself and 'I have found tribulation and sadness' in my heart of hearts. I wished to laugh from the happiness of my soul, and 'the sobbing of my heart' makes me cry out. I hoped for gladness and, lo, my sighs come thick and fast. [Anselm (1059), pg. 86]

One thing that seems to stand out here is how very *personal*, perhaps even egocentric, are both the questions and the frustrations Anselm expresses. Only "I yearned for God and I was in my own way" hints at an abstract motivating factor. One of them, " 'I sought goodness' and, lo, 'there is confusion'," seems to express moral longing. The others quite plainly speak to his desire for happiness or, at least, for tranquility. To call these motivators "egocentric" is not a criticism of Anselm's character because what he expresses here are desires and longings a great many of us feel. If egocentrism is a flaw in Anselm's character, then it is a flaw all of us share with him because all of us begin life in what Piaget called the "radical egocentrism" of the infant. And there is no reason to think any of us ever fully grow entirely "selfless" in either a social or a moral sense. Not even an ascetic denies himself comforts and luxuries for selfless reasons.

If we dig a little deeper, peel back the outermost layer of the motivators Anselm expresses here, and compare them a little more abstractly with frequently encountered expressions of others, it soon becomes clear that Anselm's expressions fit within a larger set of questions asked by a great many people going far back into history. These questions seem to recur again and again in every age and era, and for this reason such questions are loosely termed "perennial questions." Lists of perennial questions compiled by various authors differ from one to another but can be organized into a rough taxonomy such as the following:

> Questions of origins and destinations, e.g.: Where do we come from? Where are we going? Is there a heaven or a hell?
>
> Questions of meaning, e.g.: Is there any meaning to life? If so, what is the meaning of life? Is there an ultimate meaning behind the universe? Does *my* life have some greater purpose? or is human existence ultimately empty, futile, and meaningless?
>
> Questions of fear and anxiety, e.g.: Is there some basic fear driving human lives? Is there a way to find inner or spiritual peace? Does religion offer an escape from fear or anxiety?
>
> Questions about death, e.g.: Is there life after death or is death the end of personal existence?

[8] The others were Johannes Scotus Eriugena (AD 815-877), Peter Abelard (AD 1079-1142), and Lanfranc of Canterbury (*c.* AD 1005-1089).

What happens after death? or does nothing happen at all? Does the inevitability of death make our lives meaningless? or do our lives have a meaning that transcends death?

Questions of morality and guilt, e.g.: Is there any such thing as absolute right or absolute wrong? Is there any such thing as absolute good or absolute evil? Why do we feel guilty? When ought we to feel guilty? Are good and evil really real?

This is by no means a complete list of perennial questions but perhaps it can serve to adequately provide examples of them. We find them being asked across all major religions. Theologies try to answer them.

Most people most of the time are not fixated on such questions while they conduct the daily commerce of their lives. It wouldn't even be very surprising if it never occurs to many people to spontaneously ask questions like these, or if they think of them only because they hear or read of other people asking them. Perennial questions can tend to be unsettling and type-α compensation, as discussed earlier in this treatise, provides a swift and easy way to "put them out of one's mind" quickly before they disturb one's equilibrium. I wonder from time to time if it isn't the ease of ignórance in regard to issues of morality and sin that underlies much of the thundering from the pulpit one hears from so many ministers. Ease of ignórance is essential to human cognition but this phenomenon of mind also presents some very thorny theological problems that this treatise is obligated to eventually bring up and try to answer.

It is clear that Anselm, like many others, turned to religion as a way to seek answers. Scholasticism was not a theology but, rather, a method of learning. Kant wrote that the interests of human reason – that is, the anticipations of satisfactions to be gained from reasoning – are classified in just three questions:

1. What can I know? (the theoretical interest)
2. What should I do? (the practical interest)
3. What might I hope? (the subjective interest). [Kant (1787) B: 832-833]

The Objects inquired after by perennial questions obviously lie far beyond the horizon of possible human experience and so, as was discussed in the previous chapter, the questions have no possibility of being answered as apodictically categorical *knowledge*. They can be sought *hypothetically* only as opinions of faith. However, this does not mean we can't find *practical* answers – in particular, *moral* answers – and it does not mean we can't find subjectively sufficient reasons for our *hopes* because both of these interests of reason lie within ourselves. Indeed, it is easy enough to discern that religion is in large measure a very frequent way people choose to seek to satisfy the latter two interests.

Human beings are not automatically driven to ask or ponder perennial questions. If there was an innate drive of this sort, we would all feel compelled to become theologians. Turnbull's BaMbuti anthropology [Turnbull (1962)] presents nothing to suggest these people are ever troubled by perennial questions. The BaMbuti *believe* in the thorough-going goodness of their forest[9] and find satisfaction for any vexing questions in their complete trust in the goodness of the forest. Neither do little children spontaneously raise perennial questions, and, if some circumstance brings one to their attention, they are very quick to believe whatever answer (as they understand it) that an adult provides to them. Indeed, there is reason to think children are incapable of reasoning about perennial questions until around the ages of twelve to fifteen years, which is the age range when children develop what Piaget called "formal operations" of logico-mathematical reasoning skills [Piaget (1953), pp. 8-22].

But, by and large, the doctrines of every major religion are, in part, attempts to provide answers to some or all of at least the most "popular" perennial questions. A person's decision to embrace a particular religion depends in part on how satisfactory he finds the answers it provides to be; his decision to reject a

[9] It wouldn't be correct to say the BaMbuti "have faith" in the forest because "faith" implies consciousness of a possibility that it might not be so. Turnbull did not report one single incident where such a doubt was admitted to. Belief is unquestioned holding-to-be-true, and that appears to describe how the BaMbuti regard their forest.

particular religion depends, again in part, on how unsatisfactory he feels these answers are. It is because of this that perennial questions are *made* important to theology. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction are adjudicated by a person's process of reflective judgment, and this mental capacity is the one that underlies the "what might I hope?" interest of human reason.

This does not mean the other two interests of reason set up independently of this one. Quite to the contrary, the three powers of human judgment (determining, reflective, and practical) thoroughly interact with each other such that each type of judgment is *co*determined with the others in an overall synthesis of representations. This overall synthesis is called the synthesis of **judgmentation** (an English rendering of Kant's word *Beurtheilung*) [Wells (2009), chap. 2]. Each of the three interests of reason is *primarily* adjudicated through one of the three special powers of judgment, *viz.*:

1. What can I know? (the theoretical interest primarily adjudicated by determining judgment);
2. What should I do? (the practical interest primarily adjudicated by practical judgment);
3. What might I hope? (the subjective interest primarily adjudicated by reflective judgment).

3. Standpoints and Judgmentation

When we look at the higher capacities of the phenomenon of mind, we can do so from three distinct global synthetic perspectives called **Standpoints** [*ibid.*]. These are: the theoretical Standpoint; the practical Standpoint; and the judicial Standpoint. Each Standpoint is primarily adjudicated by one of the aforementioned powers of judgment (determining judgment for the theoretical Standpoint, practical judgment for the practical Standpoint, and reflective judgment for the judicial Standpoint). The *overall* synthesis of judgmentation co-produces one's representations of understanding (theoretical Standpoint), actions (practical Standpoint), and judgments of subjective expediency (what Kant called *Zweckmäßigkeit* [Kant (1790)], a word that means appropriateness, expediency, or suitability for some purpose or end).

The interplay among these processes of human judgment is, of course, quite complicated and I am again compelled to refer you to the prior sources [Wells (2006); (2009)] for its detailed explanation. However, it is possible for me to provide a logical overview of it here. This overview begins with figure 1 below.

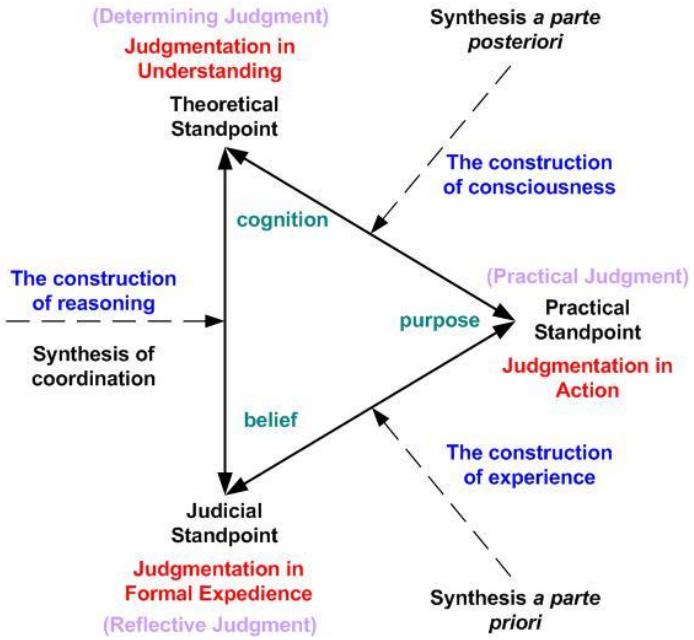

Figure 1: The logical organization of the synthesis of judgmentation in terms of Kantian Standpoints and judgment.

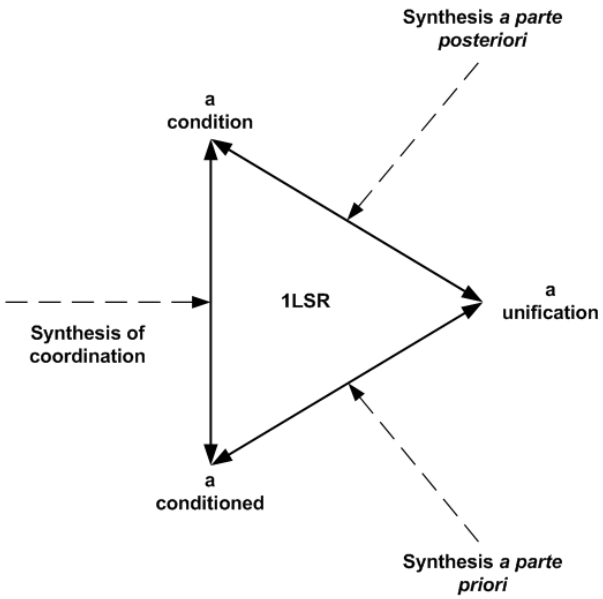

Figure 2: 1st level synthetic representation (1LSR) of a synthesis

This is quite a "busy" diagram (that can't be helped) and requires some explaining. A professional philosopher might look at figure 1 and call it a "Hegelian Triangle" or "Triad" [Joad (1936), pp. 402-407] but there is much more to it than Hegel's ontology-centered dialectic can ever deal with[10]. There are three inequivalent ways to carry out a synthesis: a synthesis of coordination; a synthesis *a parte posteriori*; or a synthesis *a parte priori* [Kant (1790) 5: 197], [Kant (1800) 9: 93]. This is illustrated by figure 2, which is called a "first level synthetic representation" diagram or 1LSR [Palmquist (1993), pp. 84-87]. Figure 1 "adds content" to the logical representation of figure 2 by placing the specific processes of judgment at the corners of the triangle and explaining just *what* is being synthesized in each case (reasoning, consciousness, and experience, respectively). The diagram illustrates *functionally* how these three *mental* operations are co-organized.

Synthesis always involves three terms, two of which are combined to produce the third. These terms are represented in figures 1 and 2 at the corners of the triangle. If we call the three terms *A*, *B*, and *C* then the three possible ways of synthesizing them are:

1) $A + B \rightarrow C$ ("*A* combined with *B* produces *C*");
2) $B + C \rightarrow A$ ("*B* combined with *C* produces *A*");
3) $C + A \rightarrow B$ ("*C* combined with *A* produces *B*").

In terms of figure 1, these correspond to

synthesis of coordination: a cognition + a belief → a purpose (theoretical + judicial → practical)
synthesis *a parte posteriori*: a cognition + a purpose → a belief (theoretical + practical → judicial)
synthesis *a parte priori*: a purpose + a belief → a cognition (practical + judicial → theoretical).

These three syntheses produce, respectively, the construction of reasoning, construction of consciousness, and construction of experience. The first leads to actions, the second to affective feelings of belief (i.e., unquestioned holding-to-be-true), and the third to concepts of experience [Wells (2009), chap. 2, §4].

There is, of course, much more to say about all this with regard to what I like to call the "physics" of

[10] See Seelye & Smith (1886), pp. 397-427.

mental processes (the "mental physics" of the phenomenon of mind), but this topic involves a great many technical details and for these I must refer you to the source just cited and *its* parent source, Wells (2006). When I describe this theory as "physics" I do not refer to the science of physics taught in schools today but, rather, I use "physics" in the connotation used by the ancient Greeks and especially Aristotle – i.e., φύσις, the "nature" of something [Aristotle (4th cent. BC)]. This connotation takes in the modern day physical-sciences of physics, chemistry, biology, and their offspring; but it also takes in "social-natural" sciences of, e.g., economics, sociology, political science, psychology, education, etc. – topics of study and inquiry about which today's science called physics contributes and can contribute nothing whatsoever. This is the connotation of "physics" needed to address Bloom's criticism of American education:

> But where natural science[11] ends, trouble begins. It ends at man, the one being outside of its purview, or to be exact, it ends at that part or aspect of man that is not body . . . All that is human, all that is of concern to us, lies outside of natural science. That should be a problem for natural science, but it is not. It is certainly a problem for us that we do not know what this thing is, that we cannot even agree on a name for this irreducible bit of man that is not body. Somehow this fugitive thing or aspect is the cause of science and society and culture and politics and economics and poetry and music. [Bloom (1987), pp. 356-357]

The three processes of judgment (determining, reflective, and practical) interact and co-determine each other during every act of synthesis. Again, the mathematical explanation of this is quite complicated because the structure of thinking, judgmentation, and action is what engineers call a "feedback system" in which information and representations adjudicated by one of these processes "flow" (in a manner of speaking) to the others either immediately or mediately in cycles of judgmentation regulated (by practical Reason under the categorical imperative) to bring one's mental state into equilibrium. The dynamical form of this was exhibited by figure 1 of chapter 3, which is repeated below as figure 3. The structural form of this organization is exhibited below by figure 4 [Wells (2009)]. I present these figures here in order to try to provide you with a way to visualize this very complicated process in a qualitative way. A quantitative explanation is outside the scope of this treatise but is presented in Wells (2006) and Wells (2009). My hope is that these exhibitions will provide you with some aids to understanding here.

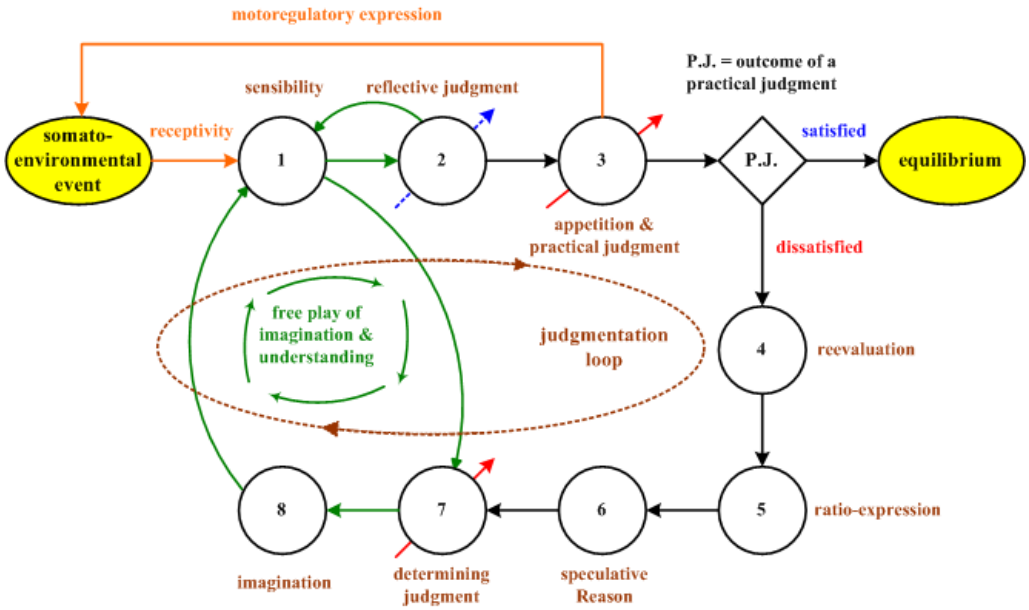

Figure 3: The dynamical form of synthesis in judgmentation. *Soma* refers to physical effects in the body.

[11] By "natural science" Bloom meant physics, chemistry, biology, and their offspring.

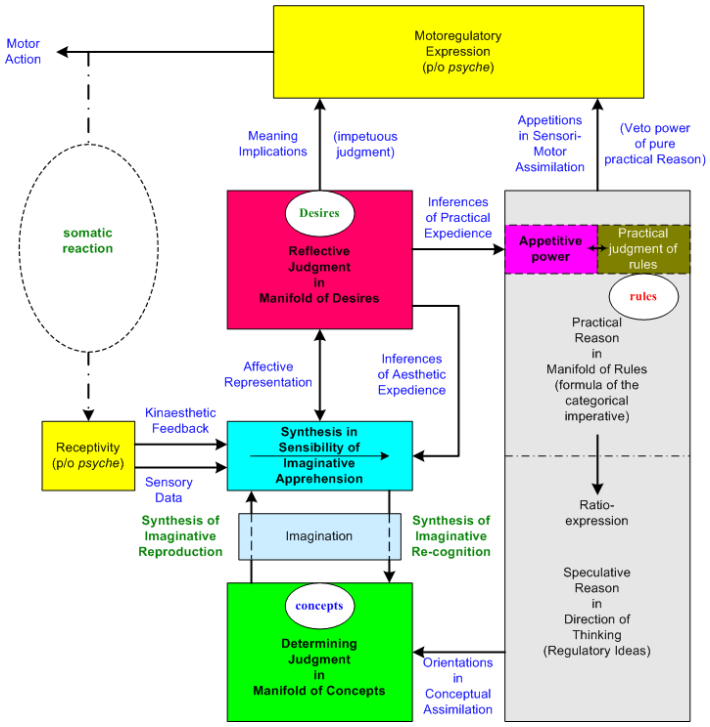

Figure 4: The structure of thinking, judgmentation, and Reason in the phenomenon of mind.

One thing I think cannot be stressed too much is that reflective judgment – the affective "emotional" and "impetuous" part of the system – is quite central to how human beings think and reason. A human being is not a "thinking and reasoning" being; we are "thinking-feeling-appetitious-reasoning" beings who build our own understandings of things and set goals and take actions on the basis of these constructs. Between your logical and cognitive power (determining judgment) and the objectively dark and affectively cold power that is the process of pure Reason lies your sensibility and subjective powers (apprehension, apperception, and imagination). It is the role of the process of reflective judgment to be a bridge between determining judgment and pure Reason. The affective, emotive, subjective part of the character of being-a-human-being is an essential part of who we are, and it is likewise an essential aspect of inner person needed to understand theology. I think theologians of all faiths have always known this, e.g.,

> And now remains faith, hope, and love; these three. And the greatest of these is love. [1 Corinthians 13:13].

Someone once said that the ministry profession has a thousand platitudes of comfort. But I also think they have often under-appraised and thus undervalued the importance of affectivity, occasionally even to the point of misusing it. Of course, psychology can be accused of the same thing; it has only been in recent decades that theories of emotion and "emotional intelligence" have carved out a respected place in the science of psychology. One of the more important criticisms of Piaget's work is that it doesn't go far enough in treating emotional and affective child development – a criticism I regard as accurate.

Philosophers, dating back to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, have known that affectivity is important but, in many cases, philosophers have treated it more as an inconvenience or even as a human shortcoming than as a vital part of human intelligence. Even Kant, while recognizing that affectivity does play a role in human behavior [Kant (1790)], made what I do regard as an insufficient effort to treat it. One philosopher who did champion the importance of affectivity and aesthetics, and argued against its domination by intellectualist philosophy, was George Santayana. He wrote,

> Preference is ultimately irrational. We may therefore at once assert this axiom, important for all moral philosophy and fatal to certain stubborn incoherences of thought, that there is no value apart from some appreciation of it, and no good apart from some preference of it before its absence or its opposite. In appreciation, in preference, lies the root and essence of all excellence. Or, as Spinoza clearly expresses it, we desire nothing because it is good, but it is good only because we desire it.
>
> It is true that in the absence of an instinctive reaction we can still apply these epithets by an appeal to usage. We may agree that an action is bad, or a building good, because we recognize in them a character which we have learned to designate by that adjective; but unless there is in us some trace of passionate reprobation or of sensible delight, there is no moral or aesthetic judgment. . . . Insensibility is very quick in the conventional use of words. If we appealed more often to actual feeling, our judgments would be more diverse but they would be more legitimate and instructive. Verbal judgments are often useful instruments of thought, but it is not by them that worth can ultimately be determined.
>
> Values spring from the immediate and inexplicable reaction of vital impulse, and from the irrational part of our nature. The rational part is by its essence relative; it leads us from data to conclusions, or from parts to wholes; it never furnishes the data with which it works. If any preference or precept were declared to be ultimate and primitive, it would thereby be declared to be irrational, since mediation, inference, and synthesis are the essence of rationality. The ideal of rationality is itself as arbitrary, as much dependent on the needs of a finite organization, as any other ideal. Only as ultimately securing tranquility of mind, which the philosopher instinctively pursues, has it for him any necessity. In spite of the verbal propriety of saying that reason demands rationality, what really demands rationality, what makes it a good and indispensable thing and gives it all its authority, is not its own nature, but our need of it both in safe and economical action and in the pleasure of comprehension. . . .
>
> We learn to value truth more and more as our love and knowledge of nature increase. But fidelity is a merit only because it is in this way a factor in our pleasure. It stands on a level with all other ingredients of effect. When a man raises it to a solitary preeminence and becomes incapable of appreciating anything else, he betrays the decay of aesthetic capacity. The scientific habit in him inhibits the artistic.
>
> That facts have a value of their own at once complicates and explains this question. We are naturally pleased by every perception, and recognition and surprise are particularly acute sensations. When we see a striking truth in any imitation, we are therefore delighted, and this kind of pleasure is very legitimate, and enters into the best of all representative arts. Truth and realism are therefore aesthetically good, but they are not all-sufficient since the representation of everything is not equally pleasing and effective. The fact that resemblance is a source of satisfaction justifies the critic in demanding it, while the aesthetic insufficiency of such veracity shows the different value of truth in science and in art. Science is the response to the demand for information, and in it we ask for the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Art is the response to the demand for entertainment, for the stimulation of our senses and imagination, and truth enters into it only as it subserves these ends.
>
> Even the scientific value of truth is not, however, ultimate or absolute. It rests partly on practical, partly on aesthetic interests. As our ideas are gradually brought into conformity with the facts by the painful process of selection – for intuition runs equally into truth and into error, and can settle nothing if not controlled by experience – we gain vastly in our command over our environment. This is the fundamental value of natural science and the fruit it is yielding in our day. . . .
>
> Aesthetic and moral judgments are accordingly to be classed together in contrast to judgments intellectual; they are both judgments of value, while intellectual judgments are judgments of fact. If the latter have any value, it is only derivative, and our whole intellectual life has its only satisfaction in its connexion with our pleasures and pains. [Santayana (1896), pp. 13-16]

As I will bring out in more detail later, aesthetical judgments are the work of the process of reflective judgment while moral judgments belong to practical judgment in pure practical Reason (figure 4). For the moment, let us focus on reflective judgment's role in making the distinction between *belief* and *faith*. I

call your attention to figure 4 and the presence there of lines of interaction running, on one side, to and from reflective judgment and the synthesis in sensibility and, on the other side, from reflective judgment to the process of practical Reason and to motoregulatory expression of physical actions (body actions) due to the agency of mental actions[12]. Like the Roman god Janus, reflective judgment has two "faces" – one face turned toward sensibility, intuition, and imagination; and the other toward appetition[13] and practical judgment. Because of this Janus-like character of reflective judgment, Kant distinguished this by making a logical division of reflective judgment into what he called *aesthetical* reflective judgment and *teleological* reflective judgment [Kant (c. 1789) 20: 221-226, 232-237].

Judging belief belongs to the process of aesthetical reflective judgment. When reflective judgment *first* marks an objective representation of sensibility as an intuition, and that intuition is then transformed into a concept through the synthesis of re-cognition in imagination, the concept is held-to-be-true and the intuition is held-to-be-binding *absolutely*. To say this is the same as saying this holding-to-be-true is *unquestioned*. That is what "belief" *means*. However, like all mental representations, the making of the intuition and the making of the concept are always subject to rules governing judgments. The rule of immediate interest to us in the present discussion is this: *the making of the representation cannot be in conflict with the categorical imperative of pure practical Reason*. The process of Reason is the master regulator of all non-autonomic human acts and actions, and the categorical imperative is the master regulation of all regulations. If the intuition or the concept was in conflict with the formula of the categorical imperative *its representation could never become a perception* – which is in effect the same as saying it could never be apprehended at all.

However, here there arises an important subtlety. How, in a manner of speaking, can Reason "know" *a priori* that some representation *A* is or is not in conflict with the categorical imperative? If Reason had a capacity to "know" this *a priori* that would necessarily imply that Reason was in possession of some sort of innate *objective* knowledge, and this supposition is soundly refuted by the facts of human development uncovered by extensive research. Pure Reason has the peculiarity that while it *can* judge representations *to be in conflict* with the categorical imperative *a posteriori*, it can never do so prior to experience (*a priori*). The best it can do *a priori* is judge that a representation is *not-inexpedient* for the categorical imperative (so far as experience has so far taught), and "not-inexpedient" is not the same as "expedient." The former falls under the category of limitation in its Quality (recall the "Fred is not-German" example given earlier), while the latter carries the logical Quality of the assertive. So long as representation *A* is judged not-inexpedient under the formula of the categorical imperative, its representation is unchallenged by practical Reason and, so, the representation is *unquestioned*.

But this unquestioned standing is contingent upon the developing construction of experience. It can happen that some later circumstance brings representation *A* into contradiction with practical Reason's constructed manifold of rules. If it does, then representation *A* will be judged (*a posteriori*) as *inexpedient* for the categorical imperative by reflective judgment. In effect, this is the same as to say *the belief is questioned*. To question a belief means, among other things, that its concept's integration into the manifold of concepts is *re-organized*; additional connections to additional conditions are made until the new concept *structure* (and its corresponding representation in intuition) are *brought into conformity* with the formula of the categorical imperative *insofar as the present state of experience is able to determine*. If the *concept* is still held-to-be-true then it is no longer a concept of *belief* but rather of *faith*. However, the newly re-organized *structure* of the manifold of concepts – which is itself a "larger" concept because all rules for the reproduction of intuitions are concepts – is still held-to-be-binding in intuition. In other

[12] Note too that practical Reason holds a veto power over motoregulatory action expressions of representations of reflective judgment. It exercises this veto when practical judgment judges that the expressions of desiration by reflective judgment are in conflict with the practical manifold of rules and, therefore, contradict the formula of the categorical imperative of pure practical Reason. Later, when the discussion turns to the topic of morality and moral judgment, you will see that this is the part of the organization of the phenomenon of mind responsible for these.
[13] Appetition is the homologue in practical Reason to sensibility in imaginative apprehension.

words, the initially questioned *particular* concept is held-to-be-true as faith but the concept *structure* is still a belief. We can say belief *grounds* faith but this grounding is found in the *manifold* rather than the special Objects of any of the concepts *in* the manifold. It wouldn't be too-incorrect to say belief is *simple* (because it is found in the *unity* of understanding) but faith is *complicated* (because it involves a *plurality* of concepts in the manifold)[14].

Practical Reason has this fundamental peculiarity: namely, that its power over impetuous expressions of reflective judgment is entirely negative, i.e., a *veto*, not a confirmation. Kant had a habit of referring to the categorical imperative as "the moral law" (which is not an accurate label for it although, as I discuss later, a person's moral judgments and self-constructed moral code *are* consequences of it). If we substitute "categorical imperative" where Kant said "moral law" in the following quotation, Kant's explanation of the negative character of practical Reason's regulatory power is the following:

> What is essential in every determination of will by [the categorical imperative] is that, as a free will – and so not only without the cooperation of sensuous impulses but even with the rejection of all of them and with discontinuance of all inclinations so far as they could be opposed to that law – it is determined solely by the law. So far, then, the effect of [the categorical imperative] as mainspring is only negative, and as such this mainspring can be known *a priori*. For all inclination and every sensuous impulse is based on feeling, and the negative effect on feeling (by discontinuance of inclinations that takes place) is itself feeling. [Kant (1788) 5: 72-73]

No direct and immediate feedback from practical Reason to reflective judgment (like there is between reflective judgment and sensibility) is depicted in figure 4. Neither is such a feedback path depicted in figure 3. Instead, veto acts of practical judgment affect the person via *two* pathways. One of these is the judgmentation loop by means of reevaluation and ratio-expression (figure 3). This pathway summons the process of determining judgment and thinking into action in response to the disturbance of equilibrium produced by the veto of impetuous act of teleological reflective judgment [Wells (2016)].

The other pathway is by means of somatic effects (changes in the person's physical body state) by motoregulatory expression. Recall that earlier in this treatise I said that no *real* mind-body division is objectively valid. Rather, the Critical theory requires (as a theorem) thorough-going mind-body reciprocity: mental acts codetermine body states and body states codetermine mental states. The veto act of practical judgment causes (as Kant put it) the "discontinuance" of some impetuous "inclinations" of teleological reflective judgment – i.e., it causes full emotivity of an inclination[15] to be partially or fully inhibited in *soma* (the logical division of the person's physical body). Kinaesthetic feedback of this body state (figure 4) is presented (via receptivity) to sensibility, and this feedback is how the person becomes conscious of the conflict between acts of impetuous reflective judgment and the formula of the categorical imperative – what Kant meant when he referred to "the negative effect on feeling (by discontinuance of inclinations that takes place) is itself feeling."

This representation of kinaesthetic feedback in sensibility falls under the adjudication of the process of aesthetical reflective judgment. The judgments it renders on this *affective* matter also has consequences for the synthesis of intuitions and re-cognition of concepts – i.e., it also affects *objective* perceptions. If one says (as I do) that impetuous expressions of *teleological* reflective judgments reflect beliefs, then one

[14] As a person ages and gathers more experience, accommodations to the manifold of concepts are more difficult to make because the changes can "ripple through" its structure and produce additional disturbances to equilibrium. Achieving a re-equilibration requires that all of these disturbances be dealt with. This is why many people have great difficulty in changing "the way they view the world" from being ontology-centered to being epistemology-centered; too many beliefs are simultaneously challenged. Practical Reason's "quick and easy out" to escape this psychological trauma is type-α compensation (ignórance).

[15] In Critical terminology, an inclination is a sensuous appetite, the matter of which is a Desire, represented in the manifold of Desires in reflective judgment, and the form of which is a practical rule represented in the manifold of rules in practical judgment.

must also say that these consequent *aesthetical* judgments reflect the *questioning* of beliefs. And a belief once questioned but still problematically held-to-be-true is no longer a belief but rather a *faith*.

It is interesting, both scientifically and historically, to note that a rudimentary outline – albeit a hazy one – of this Critical theory appeared in psychology's first theory of "emotions" – the James-Lange theory. William James was America's first psychologist (and also a philosopher; his philosophy is known as American pragmatism). James' thesis was that "emotion follows upon the bodily expression in the coarser emotions at least." Although the term "emotion" is almost hopelessly vague in psychology, its most basic connotation is that it is somehow or other a presentation of *affective* perception. James wrote,

> My theory . . . is that *the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of these same changes as they occur* **is** *the emotion*. Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be. Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colorless, destitute of emotional warmth. We might then see the bear and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike, but we should not actually *feel* afraid or angry. . . . I now proceed to urge the vital point of my whole theory, which is this: *If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind*, no 'mind-stuff' out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains. [James (1890), vol. II, pp.. 449-451]

That James came to his theory is in some ways a bit ironic in hindsight because, as a philosopher, he was opposed to and critical of Kant's theory (as he understood – or better, *mis*understood – it).

At the time, there were other psychological facts that appeared to be contradictory to the James-Lange theory and the theory itself fell short in its ability to describe and explain a great variety of phenomena in all their complexity. Consequently, for a period of many years, the theory was discarded and ignored in favor of other theories. However, it (or parts of it) have seen a resurgence in the past quarter century as the result of findings in not only psychology but neuroscience as well. For a discussion of this accessible to a person who is not a psychologist or a neuroscientist, I can recommend Damasio (1994) and Damasio (1999).

4. The Priority of Faith over Belief in Critical Theology

The preceding section has been a lengthy and admittedly technical digression (for which I apologize to the reader), but a necessary one in the quest to seek theological answers from within our subjective selves. Let us now try to summarize what implications the foregoing has for theology as faith seeking to understand perennial questions.

If there is one point that stands out in section 3, it is this: Human mental nature is such that *first* we form beliefs but later, under the influence of growing experience, we *question* those beliefs. This questioning does not *necessarily* change one's holding-to-be-true to holding-to-be-false (although it often does). But it does open up some degree of *uncertainty* in the concept of the belief. It brings consciousness of the modality of the concept's connections to other concepts. One might express this by using the proposition "I might be wrong about this but *I don't think so*."

Let us set this facet of the nature of being-a-human-being alongside the hypothesis that God created each of us and presumably did so for some purpose. Could there *be* some purpose served by making it a fundamental part of our nature to naively and innocently grasp onto a *belief* but set us in an environment

that inevitably brings about subsequent *questioning* of this same belief? And why set us in an environment where we can never establish the objective validity of noumena beyond the limited horizon of our experience (much less establish any absolute *Truth* for our noumenal ideas of secondary quantities)?

One can, of course, fabricate many speculations about what such a purpose might be. Some of these are congruent with Christianity's view of God as an all-benevolent father. Some cast God in the role of a stern "lord of hosts," a sort of dictator or, at best, a benevolent despot whose displeasure and wrath are to be feared. Still others present the image of a creator who is indifferent to his creations. Antinomies abound in all of these, and these are vexations for theology.

Let us consider an important first fact: *belief is essential for our capacity to learn*. Without the capacity for naive belief formation, representations of sensibility could provide no basis for unity of understanding in the manifold of concepts because there would then be nothing that could *bind* the concepts to sensorimotor actions when those concepts are reproduced as intuitions following the synthesis of reproductive imagination. Put another way, a concept could contain no *meaning implication*. Critical metaphysics teaches us that *all meanings are at root practical*, by which I mean that the *root* meaning of any object is defined by *what can be done* with that object [Wells (2006), chap. 16, pp. 1522-1536]. This is not only a requirement of Critical epistemology, but is also empirically confirmed by findings of the psychology of child development [Piaget (1952)], [Piaget & Garcia (1987)]. Meanings provide *coherence in the context of life* [*op. cit*. Wells (2006), pg. 1522]. Without such coherence it would never be possible for any of us to be able to accommodate ourselves to the *real* environment in which we live, i.e., to nature.

In the transcendental perspective of Critical epistemology [Wells (2006), chap. 8, pp. 713-742], Kant's categories of Modality in determinant judgments are the rules that connect concepts to meanings. From this perspective, concepts *symbolize* meanings. All the subjective *and* objective elements of representation are brought together in an intuition, and meanings subsist in this coalition. But it is not the process of determining judgment that imputes this meaning. Determining judgment merely makes concepts *symbols* of meanings. It is the process of teleological reflective judgment that makes meaning implications.

Transcendental Meaning is one of four transcendental synthetic functions necessary for the possibility of establishing the thorough-going reciprocity between mind (*nous*) and body (*soma*). Epistemology-centered metaphysics requires this for our understanding of human nature to be objectively valid. The logical division of *psyche* in the theory of the phenomenon of mind is the division of necessary animating principles for this reciprocity. The synthesis of Meaning is the function synthesizing noetic (mental) organization reciprocally with somatic (physical) organization. This synthesis, along with the other three fundamental functions necessary for objectively valid mind-body reciprocity, is a synthesis between the process of reflective judgment and animating principles of *psyche*. Taken together, these four functions are called *the synthesis in continuity*. Figure 5 illustrates the synthesis in continuity.

It is not strictly necessary for our present purpose to delve into two of these four functions, *viz*., the aesthetic Idea and the judicial Idea. The reader interested in understanding these should refer to Wells (2006) and Wells (2009) for these details. What I do wish to point out about figure 5 are the following points. First, it is the process of *reflective* judgment – the subjective and affective judicial process – that stands on the mental side of the synthesis in which our physical and mental natures are combined in the unity of *human* nature. Second, the synthesis of ***objectivity*** is one of these four functions and, furthermore, objectivity arises in our mental nature from *aesthetical* reflective judgment (whereas Meaning arises from *teleological* reflective judgment). I find this to be a wondrous consequence of Critical epistemology – that our knowledge of objects *fundamentally* exists to serve us *subjectively*. But this is a relationship consistent with the priority of epistemology over ontology in Critical metaphysics. It is also a relationship strikingly consistent with the earlier quote from Luke 17:21. It is also a relationship consistent with some other religions, e.g., the idea of the atman (human soul) in Hinduism [Narayanan (2005), pp. 29-30].

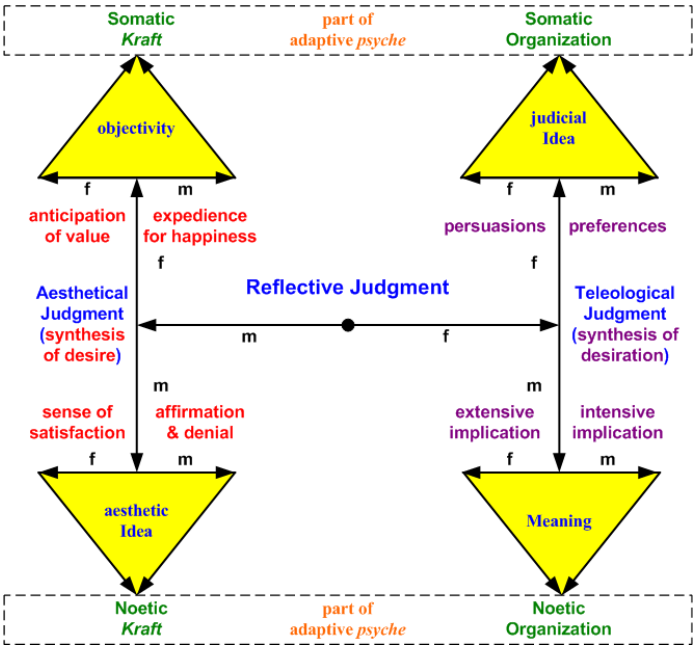

Figure 5: The synthesis in continuity for mind-body reciprocity [Wells (2006), chap. 16].

The capacity for naive belief, then, is essential for the possibility of human *Existenz* in nature. It cannot be regarded as some kind of divine joke God has played upon humankind – which is one possible way to make a conjecture about the belief vs. faith conundrum I raised at the beginning of this section. But what of the *questioning* of beliefs? It seems obvious that some questioning leads to improvements in human understanding – for example, when a child begins to "lose faith" in the animism that children display in their youngest years and replaces it with ideas of physical determinism and causality. Questioning of beliefs with subsequent *loss* of faith in *some* of them is a means by which human intelligence is made more perfect through experience. It is a mode by which the radical egocentrism of the infant slowly gives way to decentration of a person's thinking and a growth in communion with other people. Humankind as we know it would not survive for very long if we could not develop relationships of sharing and mutual support with one another. Thus, this "negative" connotation of questioning beliefs and loss of faith in some beliefs can be seen as a benefit; and if God created you and put you here, it can even be seen as a "gift" to humankind.

But what about questioning of belief when one's holding-to-be-true is *not* changed and belief is turned into faith (the "positive" connotation of questioning beliefs)? After all, if God wanted you to *believe* in him rather than "merely" have *faith* in him, wouldn't it be "easier" to simply manifest himself directly to your *objective* experience and so remove all possibility of doubt that there is a God? If he did, you would have no need for faith because you would then have an *objectively sufficient* reason for holding-it-to-be-true that God exists. And wouldn't that be "better" than "mere" reliance upon faith?

I suggest that it would not. First, there is nothing "mere" about faith. As I commented earlier, *belief* is simple, *faith* is complicated. Faith requires effort. It requires you to extend yourself beyond the confines of egocentricity. Holding-to-be-true with consciousness of the lack of objectively sufficient grounds requires what we commonly call a "leap of faith." But a leap of faith requires trust and commitment from a person, and without these a person can have no *fidelity* – no allegiance to or moral communion with the Object of faith. Could one *truly* come to love God or be devoted to God if these required no effort? Could one truly *love* that which he does not trust? Thomas Paine did not seem to think so:

> What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value.

> Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods [Paine (1776), pg. 7].

Of course, this line of reasoning *presumes* God would value receiving our love and devotion. But why should this be so? This is one of the most vexing of the vexing features of perennial questions; they tend to be "Why?" questions and, as most children discover at a very young age, any answer proposed for a "Why?" question almost automatically leads to yet another "Why?" question. Children discover and make a game of this sort of infinite regression early in life, e.g.,

> Mother: "Timmy, it's time to come in the house."
> Timmy: "Why?"
> Mother: "Because it's getting dark."
> Timmy: "Why?"
> Mother: "Because the sun is going down."
> Timmy: "Why?"
> Mother: "Now you're just being silly."
> Timmy: "Why?" . . .

It isn't very unusual for this sort of "Why?" game to terminate only when an exasperated parent replies with something like, "Because I said so!" and intimidates Timmy into quitting this game.

If it is true that this transformative belief-questioning-faith characteristic of human understanding has some divine purpose, *whatever* that might be, it does seem to reasonably imply God places a higher value on faith than on belief. When the two are weighed in the logical balance, belief seems to have only the characteristics of a means to some end, whereas faith seems to have more of the characteristics of an end. Aristotle wrote,

> Now there do appear to be several ends at which our actions aim; but as we choose some of them . . . as a means to something else, it is clear that not all of them are final ends; whereas the supreme good seems to be something final. [Aristotle (date unknown), pp. 26-27]

To complete something, to make it final, i.e., to perfect it, obviously requires more effort than to leave it incomplete, imperfect. It is in this sense that faith seems to be more important than belief. And if faith is not more important than belief for a *divine* purpose, it is, *at the least*, teleologically more important for *us* because acts of faith have consequences for people. All by itself this is enough of an objectively sufficient reason to justify a tenet of method for Critical theology: ***Faith takes priority over belief***. The questions of consequence which remain are: where to place one's faith? and for what reason?

5. Transcendent Hypotheticals

I am confident you didn't fail to notice that, along the way of getting to this tenet, your author has seen fit to hypothetically impute a few specific guesses about God. These speculations went to exploring some sorts of attributes about the *Existenz* of God one might choose to impute. Critical epistemology calls an attribution of this sort an ***elater animi*** or "driver of mind." The term means "a ground of determination or a source of the possibility for producing represented, determining, or impelling causes." It is one of the functions in the *synthesis of objectivity* – specifically, the function of hypothetical Relation (figure 6, the second function of Relation). As such, an *elater animi* always originates from *aesthetical* judgment.

In making a representation of any object (whether the object is the object of a phenomenon or the object of a noumenon), any idea of that object *as a cause* involves hypothetical positing of at least one *elater animi*. Some idea of God as causal agent or causal agency (whether in the form of a personified God or in the form of a "Way of things") is found in every religion. If one says something is "the will of God," one is positing willpower to God as an *elater animi* and a part of the idea of God's *Existenz*. If one says, "that is the Way of things," one is positing a causal agency to "the universe itself" or to "the laws of nature."

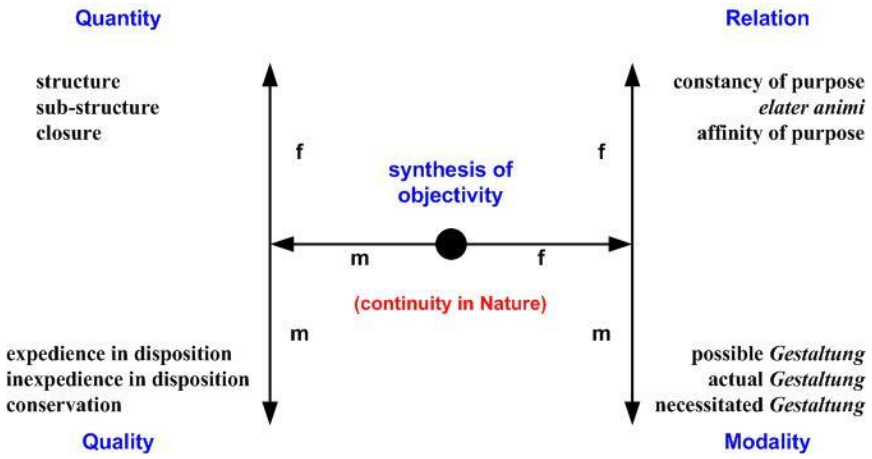

Figure 6: The structure of the synthesis of objectivity as the function of continuity in Nature [Wells (2009), chap. 7, pp. 256-260]. This synthesis arises from forms of aesthetical reflective judgment (figure 5) and serves to provide a unity of concepts in a concept in which meanings are vested [Wells (2006), chap. 16, pp. 1432-1447, 1462-1469].

To go no further than to state God exists or there is a Tao or etc. is to leave religion at the doorway of mysticism. The BaMbuti Pygmies do this when they credit their forest as the agent of everything good. There is nothing wrong with this but it does have the effect of abolishing any attempt to formulate a theology or to examine perennial questions. In a treatise about theology, on the other hand, a theologian has no practical alternative to positing characteristics of the *Existenz* of the divine Object, whether this Object is a personified God, a Tao, or something else. When any kind of divine agent or agency is postulated, this postulate will always, of necessity, require at least one *elater animi* – and oftentimes more than one. That is the human nature of objectivity. The postulate is a speculative effort to *connect* humankind and the physical universe *to* supernature in a continuity of a whole of *Existenz*.

There will be more speculations of this kind found throughout this treatise. None of them are intended by your author to "push for" superiority of one religion over another. It happens that your author's up-bringing was in a Christian culture; consequently his presentations tend to be disproportionately Abrahamic simply because he is more familiar with more ideas that are promoted in the Abrahamic religions. But there are other ideas from other religions meriting an equal place here. I say this so as to allay suspicion that this treatise is some sort of attempt to convert anyone or to endorse one religious community over others. The aim of this treatise is find out what can be learned by making a sort of "Copernican revolution" from ontology-centered theology to an epistemology-centered one.

There is a very old proverb that captures the spirit of this methodology. It is thought to go back to at least 1400 BC and the ancient Egyptian Luxor Temple. It has been attributed by various ancient authors to one or another of the Greek Seven Sages of the 6th century BC, and we are told it was inscribed over the entrance to the Temple of Delphi. From the Greeks it passed into medieval Europe, and I wouldn't be surprised if you have already heard it at one time or another. In Greek it is γνῶθι σευτόν; in Latin it is *temet nosce*; and in English it is, "Know yourself." The inscription at the Luxor Temple reads, "Man, know yourself and you are going to know the gods." Plato and the Greek historian Xenophon both tell us this proverb was frequently used by their teacher, Socrates. With Plato it is often hard to tell when he is genuinely quoting Socrates and when he is putting his own words into Socrates' mouth, but Xenophon is a more reliable source for Socrates' own words. From him we have Socrates saying to Euthydemus,

> And what do you suppose a man must know to know himself? [Xenophon (aft. 371 BC), IV. II. 25]

Plato typically interpreted this proverb to mean "know your place," but I use it here much more literally. In the Abrahamic religions Man was made in the image of God; in the ancient Shinto ("Way of the gods")

religion of Japan, the emperor was held to be a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu; in Hinduism we have the idea of the atman (human soul) being inseparable from brahman (the supreme being); the Budda is held to be a human manifestation of a divine being. We have many, many examples from the religions of the world in which to know yourself is tantamount to knowing the divine. In this treatise, to "know yourself" means to understand the mental aspects of being-a-human-being, and then to apply this understanding in speculating on any putative divine *elater animi* using the postulate that human mental nature *can* be regarded as a reflection or image of divine supernature. This approach has much of the "flavor" of the Abrahamic religions,

> And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness' [Genesis 1:26],

but also some of the "flavor" of other religions, e.g., the Hindu dictum, "*Tat tvam asi*," ("You are that").

In one sense, it can fairly enough be said that theology finds its topical subject matter in the perennial questions for which answers are often sought by human beings. As the treatise proceeds from here, we will find ourselves trying to come to grips with a number of perennial questions. The approach here will try to do so in such a way as might lead to a consistent unity in a theological system. It seeks this unity from what we know about ourselves and deduce about the human nature of the phenomenon of mind. With this methodological note in mind, let us proceed on to additional issues and questions.

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