Chapter 5 The Theological Archetype

1. What Is Meant By "God"?

We have seen already that the different religions of the world seem to have some pretty different ideas of the divine Object. In all cases, these are ontological representations, by which I mean they are entity descriptions. Whether the divine Object is called God or the Tao or the BaMbuti's forest, it is some *thing* that is being described, however vaguely or mystically the description is. In Abrahamic religions God is regarded as sort of a superman or *Übermensch* – a being like a man but incomparably greater. The Nordic pantheon of gods (Oden, Thor, etc.) presented them as beings like men only much more powerful but still riddled with human frailties and shortcomings. The Roman pantheon (Jupiter, Mars, etc.), Greek pantheon (Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, etc.), and other pagan religions of ancient civilizations presented the gods as superhuman personifications of physical-natural, social-natural, and psychological phenomena. Greek and Roman theologies were broadly divided into Epicureanism and Stoicism – both of which were properly philosophies rather than theologies and both of which placed theology under that branch of philosophy called physics. In Epicureanism the gods were regarded as material beings (clusters of atoms) who had no concerns about humankind or with upholding or guiding the universe; the universe itself was the divine Object, similar to Taoism, and the gods were its products (rather than the other way around) [Cicero (45 BC), pp. 18-55]. Taoism says of the Tao, "The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth." Stoicism held that the universe was controlled by God and in the last resort was God [*ibid*., pp. 124-285]. And so it goes for other religions past and present.

Let us pretend for a moment that you are walking in the park and encounter God. Would you know it? Would you recognize him? and, if so, by what characteristics or marks would you know the divine presence? This is not an impractical question because differences of opinions among the divers religions of humankind – differences often enshrined in religious doctrines – sometimes have appalling consequences: pogroms; persecutions; social inequities; injustices of all varieties. How one *thinks* he knows divinity can and often does make an enormous difference in human affairs.

We are therefore bound to ask: Is there to be found among all these enormous differences of opinion anything they all seem to have in common? If we choose to seek theological answers epistemologically – that is, from within ourselves – the answer to this question must logically be, "yes, there must be." This is because we, as human beings, share the same mental nature. A person who is ethnically Chinese exhibits no innate mental difference from a person who is ethnically Caucasian, Semitic, or Aryan. Raise them all in the same culture at the same time and no innate mental differences between them are found. The only differences, inasmuch as any can be identified, are differences developed through their experiences[1].

When we examine this question rationally and from the epistemological viewpoint, what we find is that one prominent feature of all theological descriptions and attributions of divinity is some notion of *perfection*. Kant taught,

> Human reason has need of an Idea of highest perfection to serve it as a measure according to which it can make determinations. . . . A concept of this kind, which is needed as a measure of lesser or greater degrees in this or that case, apart from seeing the same reality, is called an Idea. . . . For such an Idea three points are required:
>
> 1. Completeness in the determination of the subject with respect to all its predicates (for instance, in the concept of God all realities are encountered);

[1] For the sake of brevity in this discussion, I am ignoring psychological differences that result from some kind of pathology such as neurological birth defect, disease, or traumatic brain injury. These are not *innate* properties of human mental nature. Critical epistemology teaches, as a theorem, that such physical conditions are accompanied by and necessarily codetermined with mental conditions.

2. Completeness in the derivation of the *Dasein* of things (for instance, the concept of a highest essence which cannot be derived from any other, but which is rather that from which everything else must be derived);

3. Completeness of community, or the thoroughgoing determination of community and connection of the whole.

The world depends on an utmost essence, but the things in the world, on the contrary, all depend mutually on one another. Taken together, this makes a complete whole. Understanding seeks to form a unity in all things, and to proceed to the maximum. [Kant (1783-84) 28: 993]

These three requirements are direct consequences of regulating principles of pure speculative Reason – principles by which Reason directs and controls the employment of the process of determining judgment in thinking [Wells (2009), chap. 11, pp. 423-426]. To seek perfection – that is, the process of making understanding and practical rules more complete – is the basic standard gauge of pure Reason for effecting the formula of its categorical imperative [*ibid*., chap. 12].

Kant goes on to discuss how this quest for perfection of understanding pertains to understanding God. He tells us,

This leads us to the Idea of the highest essence[2]. We set before ourselves:

1. an essence which *rejects every deficiency*. . . .

2. an essence which contains all realities in itself; only in this way will the concept be precisely determined. This concept at the same time can be thought of as the most perfect nature, where all is combined with one another which belongs to the most perfect nature . . .

3. one can regard it as the highest good, to which wisdom and morality belong. – the first of these [three points] is called transcendental, the second physical, the third practical perfection.

What is theology? It is the system of our cognition of the highest essence. How is common cognition distinguished from theology? Common cognition is an aggregate, in which one [thing] is placed next to another without looking to combination and unity. System is where the Idea of the whole dominates throughout. The system of cognition of God signifies the sum total not of all possible cognitions of God but of what human reason encounters about God. The cognizance of everything in God is what we call *theologia archetypa* . . . The system of cognition of that part of God which lies in human nature is called *theologica ectypa*, and it can be very deficient. [Kant (1783-84) 28: 994-995]

Kant's three bullet points above do not broadly apply to religions that are still in the stage before they begin to develop a specific theology. If a religion has a fundamental authoritative scripture, this scripture generally appears first, a theology later. This is natural enough; before one can try to make a religion systematic that religion must first come into existence. For example, Islam began in the 7th century AD with Muhammad; the first school of Islamic theology did not appear until the mid 8th century. Judaism went through a period of polytheism (inasmuch as the Hebrews recognized the gods of other peoples as gods; their god was "the god of Abraham") before it evolved into the monotheistic religion of today. Christianity begins with Jesus of Nazareth but a few more centuries elapsed before evidence of Christian theology appears. Religions which are still in a broad state of mysticism have yet to make a beginning of a theology.

The great Eastern religions pose something of a definition problem for Westerners when it comes to deciding whether or not they have developed theological systems properly so-called. Part of the problem comes from over-broad labeling. For example, it has been said that "Hinduism" is "more a League of Religions than a single religion with a definite creed." This is a characterization that can be equally well applied to Protestant Christianity with its multitude of diverse sects. The same remark can be applied to

[2] Kant used the word *Wesen* here. This word can mean "being" (as in highest being) or "essence" (as of an entity).

Chinese folk religion inasmuch as it, too, has divers branches: Confucianism; New Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, and many different denominations of Taoism. All of them share some elements of a more or less common basis in ontology-centered metaphysics but a metaphysic is not a theology properly so-called. Among the major religions of the world, Buddhism stands apart in that whether or not there is any such thing as Buddhist theology is a topic of disagreement and debate – and even these tend to be arguments among *Westerners* who follow Buddhism. The main view among Buddhist Easterners assigns little to no importance to theology. The concept of *dharma* is important in Buddhism, but to Buddhists *dharma* only means "cosmic law and order" and is sometimes used to mean "phenomenon." Again, this should be called an ontology-centered metaphysic rather than a theology.

Islam, too, has undergone a splintering similar to that which Christianity underwent during the Protestant Revolution. Its main divisions are the Sunni and Shia schools of theology, and within these divisions one finds additional subdivisions. Being one of the three Abrahamic religions, and sharing its roots with Christianity and Judaism, Islamic theologies present less of a puzzle to Westerners.

Christianity exhibits theological splintering roughly divisible into Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, and Calvinist theologies. Even this, however, understates the many differences in doctrines and creeds found under the label of Protestantism. For example, some Baptists disavow that Baptism is a Protestant religion. The Latter Day Saint movement (a collection of independent Christian church groups, the largest of which is widely known as the Mormons) is a movement that can in some sense be called a "second Protestant movement" from the point of view that it arose in protest of the other American Christian doctrines, Protestant and Catholic both. The LDS movement began with the aim of "restoring Christianity" along lines of what is known about the early apostolic Christian church. An uneasy truce of sorts currently is maintained among the divers Christian religions inasmuch as for about a century now leaders of different Christian denominations have refrained from publicly declaring other Christian sects to be "false religions" and declaring their own to be "the one True religion" – both of which were pretty common occurrences in the 19th century. However, it is not difficult to find members of "the faithful" in any Christian denomination who exhibit an easy willingness to continue to make such declarations, or to declare that members some other sect (e.g., Mormon, Catholic, you-name-it) "are not Christians." This sort of bigotry is even more readily elicited if the other religion is Islamic, Jewish, or Eastern, although, in fairness, some members of the non-Christian religions are equally swift to do the same thing. The two major divisions of Islam (Sunni and Shia) have members equally prone to attack each other.

On the whole, all of this splintering and dividing of the world's major religions makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between what is theology and what is merely creed. By creed I mean "authoritative formulae of religious faith." The distinction is philologically important because creeds exhibit as *ad hoc* collections of doctrinal articles for which little or no close examination or justification is given and not much effort seems to be made to establish logical unity or self-consistency in the doctrine. Under the definition of theology used in this treatise, a creed is not a theology.

Once a theology proper does begin to take shape and develop, we see Kant's three bullet points start to come clearly into focus. This, too, is natural because his three points are consequences of syntheses of basic regulatory principles governing the employment of judgmentation by the process of Reason. Kant called these basic regulatory principles *transcendental Ideas* [Wells (2006), chap. 4]. A noumenal entity in which these Ideas of perfection are all contained is called a ***transcendental Ideal*** [*ibid.*].

An idea of absolute perfection, like those of absolute Truth or mathematical infinity, is an idea of a transcendent (and transcendentally sublime) noumenon. Human beings do not possess a positive idea of such a thing; we can recognize the absence of perfection but not its actuality. However, the nature of the process of human Reason *does* include a "standard gauge" for judging *im*perfection and determining a direction for judgmentation to act in order to bring about *more* perfect accord with the law of the categorical imperative of pure Reason [Wells (2009), chap. 12]. To pursue an understanding of the theological archetype we must examine this standard gauge of human nature.

2. Perfection

Once upon a time, the topic of "perfection" was one of the central subject matters of philosophy and of theology as well. In contemporary times it has nearly vanished from sight insofar as explicit discussions and theorizing are concerned, but influences of human longing for perfection still leave fingerprints on many contemporary issues. It can be found in concerns raised about human rights, in contentions over moral issues, and the presence of its shadow can even be discerned in differing opinions about the proper roles of institutions of politics, education, and justice. It subtly drives and justifies the aims of the practice of scientific research. And it certainly underlies a great many pronouncements from the pulpit in religion.

But, curiously, in contemporary times it has also become a sort of semi-taboo subject. To be called a "perfectionist" is sometimes praise but also sometimes censure. The idea of perfection is sometimes lauded, sometimes lamented. Without grabbing headlines or standing in the spotlight, perfection intrudes upon so many different aspects of daily life that it has blended into the undiscerned background of human affairs and presuppositions. Silence on the topic of perfection does not mean its issues are settled.

Are human beings perfectionists or are they not? The answer one gives to this question depends on how one understands this idea. "Nobody's perfect" is a cliché phrase in our times – and a useful one in terms of type-α compensation behavior – and in many ways it is true. But in one very fundamental way, it is not.

How are we to understand the idea of perfection from an epistemology-centered way of looking at the world and ourselves? This question was examined in detail in chapter 12 of Wells (2009), and the answer arrived at there is central to understanding Critical theology. I will state the theorem now; the rest of this section is devoted to explaining what this theorem means: ***All human beings are perfectionists***. But what is meant by this?

The verb "to perfect" means to finish or complete something so as to leave *nothing lacking or wanting* in it. "Perfection" used as a noun means the act or process of perfecting something. Now, the transcendental Ideas are regulative principles for organizing, orienting, and regulating mental acts. Furthermore, they are all, in one way or another, Ideas of completeness in one or another specific context of making something complete according to the scope of each particular regulative principle. This puts perfection in an active but *mediate* role, namely that of a *direction* set by the transcendental Ideas' collective regulation of a person's acts. A perfectionist is one who strives for perfection; the transcendental Ideas make all of us perfectionists *at least insofar as mental Self-structuring* under the categorical imperative is concerned because Reason's regulation to achieve equilibrium is *absolute*.

Historically, philosophers have used "perfection" in three distinct contexts: physical; transcendental, and metaphysical. Physical perfection means complete sufficiency of empirical representations. Metaphysical perfection means completeness with regard to the highest degree of Reality. Transcendental perfection means completeness of the whole and mutual harmony and connection of the whole. Of these three ideas, only the third has objectively valid usage. All empirical representations are contingent and so there is no ground for presuming any real *knowledge* of physical perfection is attainable. We possess no meaningful concept of a highest degree of Reality and so we have no standard by which metaphysical perfection can be gauged and judged. Thus, these two contexts both lack objective validity.

Transcendental perfection, in contrast, is the statement of the definition of an Ideal of pure Reason, i.e., it is an idea (not Idea) of "something to aim for" underlying all acts of pure Reason. Human beings have no innate idea of such a thing as an object *per se*, but mental capacities can, one and all, be regarded as capacities for *acting to perfect* in such a way that the organization of the structures of the manifold of concepts and the manifold of rules are gradually driven in the direction of attaining transcendental perfection overall. Seen in this way, transcendental perfection is the essence of a person's self-structuring. However, the objective validity of this idea is a *practical* objective validity; in other words, objective validity is vested solely and entirely in the *use* made of this idea. Its objective validity is *functional*, and therefore it is valid only in regard to *transformations* in a person's acts of Self-structuring.

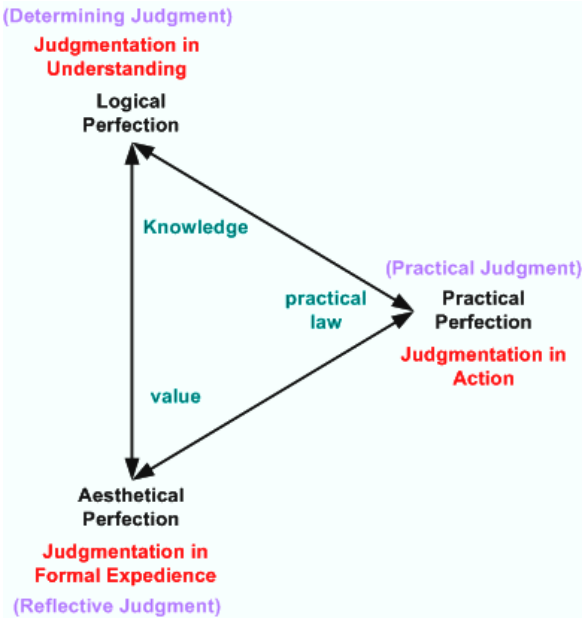

Figure 1: Transcendental perfection regarded functionally as synthesis of judgmentation.

All such Self-structuring transformations are products of the synthesis in judgmentation, and this means the idea of transcendental perfection has three synthetic divisions. Figure 1 depicts these three divisions: ***aesthetical perfection***, adjudicated by the process of reflective judgment in judgmentation of expedience for the formula of the categorical imperative; ***logical perfection***, adjudicated by determining judgment for understanding; and ***practical perfection***, adjudicated by practical judgment in judgmentation of actions. Each of these divisions has its special *object of judgment*. These objects are practical outcomes of the laws governing these three judicial capacities of mind. For the discussion that follows you might wish to refer to figure 2 below to review the mathematical organization of human mental processes.

The special object of reflective judgment is **value**. In Critical metaphysics value is the form of an affective perception of a desire presented in aesthetical reflective judgment (matter of aesthetic expedience) and referenced to the appetitive power of practical Reason mediately through the synthesis of desiration in an act of teleological reflective judgment (form of practical expedience). The Critical term "Aesthetic" refers to the Critical science of the laws of human sensibility, and reflective judgment is the capacity of judgment for sensibility.

This is, of course, different from how ontology-centered philosophers traditionally think of "aesthetics." Their traditional description of "aesthetics" is "the study of the feelings, concepts, and judgments arising from our appreciation of the arts or of the wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime." I think every person can think of something he or she has called "beautiful" at one time or another: perhaps a beautiful child, a beautiful piece of music, an inspiring poem – the list is almost endless. But Critical *value* underlies and subjectively grounds all such judgments. Santayana wrote,

> Beauty is a value, that is, it is not a perception of a matter of fact or of a relation: it is an emotion, an affection of our volitional and appreciative nature. An object cannot be beautiful if it can give pleasure to nobody . . . In the second place, this value is positive, it is the sense of the presence of something good, or (in the case of ugliness) of its absence. It is never the perception of a positive evil, it is never a negative value. . . . Further, this pleasure must not be in consequence of the utility of the object or event, but in its immediate perception; in other words, beauty is an ultimate good, something that gives satisfaction to a natural function, to some fundamental need or capacity of our minds. Beauty is a positive value that is intrinsic [Santayana (1896), pp. 31-32].

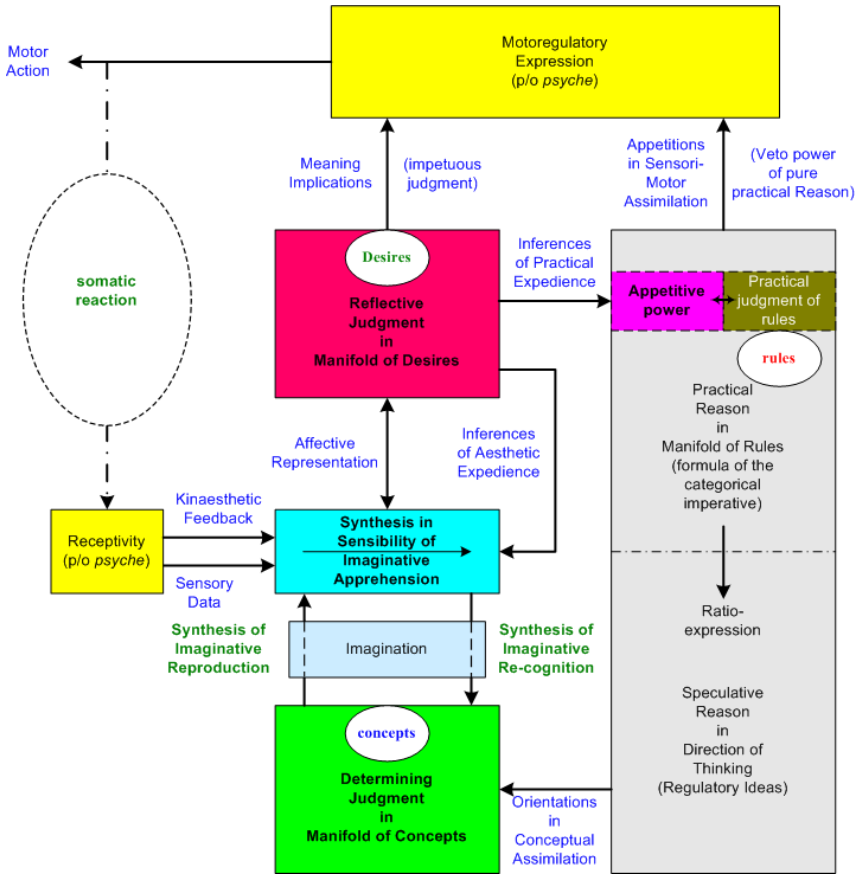

Figure 2: The overall organization of mental processes and information flows in the phenomenon of mind.

Although Santayana was not a Kantian philosopher, his philosophy of beauty as a value is in striking agreement with the Critical theory of the phenomenon of mind. An aesthetic judgment of beauty is a judgment of an aesthetic perfection.

The special object of determining judgment is **Knowledge** (in German, *Wissen*). Knowledge is systematic and inalterable assertion of truth with consciousness that holding-to-be-true is grounded in judgments that have apodictic Modality with both objectively and subjectively sufficient grounds of understanding. The connotation of this term is that of an Object representing an Ideal. To seek to understand the theological archetype is to seek to logically perfect understanding of a religious Ideal. That this archetype is an Object beyond the horizon of human experience – and therefore objectively sufficient grounds for this understanding cannot be discovered through experience – does not alter the *effort* to find and perfect one's Knowledge of God[3]. Apodictic Modality is merely *logical*, not *metaphysical*, certainty. Its holding-to-be-true is *necessitated* (*made* necessary) holding-to-be-true, not *necessary* holding-to-be-true. Piaget explains this psychological distinction in the following way:

> In short, necessity does not emanate from objective facts, which are by their nature merely real and of variable generality and therefore subject to necessary laws to a greater or lesser extent. They only become necessary when integrated within deductive models constructed by the subject. The necessity of *p* can thus not be characterized only as the impossibility of not-*p*, since new possibilities can

[3] I use "God" as the *label* for the Object represented by one's systematic concept of the theological archetype without prejudice to how one chooses to represent the *Existenz* this Object. Whether your understanding takes shape as the Abrahamic Jehovah or Allah, Lao Tzu's Tao, or whatever other image of the Ideal you choose, take "God" to mean the same thing that *you* mean as you perfect *your* Ideal for *your* understanding.

> always emerge, but must be characterized in Leibniz's manner as the contradiction of not-*p*, and this relative to a specific, limited model. . . . But why do there have to be necessities? It is because without them thinking would constantly contradict itself, if it retained all prior assertions, or would get lost in a Heraclitean flux, if it forgot or neglected them. And since thinking is always in development it cannot do otherwise, if it is to avoid these two problems, than to integrate the past within the current state. Such integration, once complete, is the source of necessity. . . . Being closely allied to integration, necessity thus consists in an auto-organization *causa sui* [4]. It is not an observable datum in the real world. It is a product of systematic compositions that involves a dynamic of necessitating processes rather than being limited to states. [Piaget (1983), vol. 2, pp. 136-137]

We make our own necessities. This is part of the essential mental nature of being-a-human-being. The necessities we make are not absolute because we make them so that *our* understandings of empirical experience (which are always *contingent* holdings-to-be-true) can be *made systematic*. However, there is a theological implication found in this. *If* human nature is a reflection of God's supernature, then it follows that *if there actually is* any such thing as *absolute* necessity in nature, such necessity exists because God *made* it necessary. This hypothetical conclusion thusly is made **an article of faith**. The process of seeking logical perfection of one's understanding of the theological archetype is, at the same time, a process of seeking one's own logical perfection of faith.

In my opinion, a teacher of religion makes an error if he resorts to intimidation or tries to coerce faith. A true commitment to faith comes only when you arrive at a conclusion of faith through a reasoned and systematic series of judgments about your theological archetype and *feel the value* of that commitment. A command "convert or die" or "believe or risking suffering eternal damnation" might provoke a prudent decision to submit to the command, but it does nothing to produce an *actual* holding-to-be-true that defines real faith. I think this is what Paul meant when he wrote,

> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. [Romans 12:2]

Teaching that intimidates or coerces takes only a weak hold on the person coerced. Let credibility of the threat weaken for only a moment, and a coerced pseudo-faith vanishes like morning mist. A good teacher remembers always that *he* cannot commit or oblige *another* person to *anything*. Commitment and obligation are both made exclusively by the person who commits or obliges *himself*.

The special object of practical judgment is **practical law**. Practical perfection is the Ideal of practical judgment in terms of perfection of determinations of the purposes of human actions. These determinations are structured as the manifold of practical rules, the structuring of which is adjudicated by the process of practical judgment according to the formula of the categorical imperative (figure 2). Practical rules are *unconscious* know-how by which a human being carries out specific actions.

One of the peculiarities of human mental nature is that the rules specifically governing every learned physical motion and every rational mental act are representations that are never perceived by the person. Lift your foot, scratch your head, read a book: try as you might, you can never discover in any intuition any representation of motor impulses cascading down to your muscles from your brain, no feeling of energy innervating your muscles to produce motion. You can, of course, sense the *effects* of muscle movement *after the fact*; but this is kinaesthetic feedback (figure 2), not the perception of the signals that *caused* your muscles to move. William James wrote,

> There is no introspective evidence of the feeling of innervations. Wherever we look for it and think we have grasped it, we find we have really got a peripheral feeling or image instead – an image of the way in which we feel when the innervation is over and the movement is in process of doing or is done. . . . Whoever says that in raising his arm he is ignorant of how many muscles he contracts, in

[4] *causa sui*: "that which produces itself."

> what order of sequence, and in what degrees of intensity, expressly avows a colossal amount of unconsciousness of the processes of motor discharge. [James (1890), vol. II, pg. 499]

There is no direct connection between the impetuous emotivity of reflective judgment or motoregulatory expression and the imaginative synthesis in sensibility. Practical Reason has no process of imagination. What it does have is a homologous function called the appetitive power[5] of practical Reason (figure 2). But the representation of appetites by a person's appetitive power is never a conscious representation. For this reason, one can properly say pure Reason is an objectively dark and affectively cold process.

A second peculiarity of human mental nature is that the person develops his practical rules before – often long before – he develops any cognizance of how he carries out his actions [Piaget (1974)]. Piaget found,

> In addition to enabling us to analyze how a child gains cognizance as such, this research has shown us that action in itself constitutes autonomous and already powerful knowledge. Even if this knowledge (just knowing how to do something) is not conscious in the sense of conceptualized understanding, it nevertheless constitutes the latter's source, since on almost every point the cognizance lags, and often markedly so, behind this initial knowledge, which is thus of remarkable efficacy despite the lack of understanding. [Piaget (1974), pp. 346-347]

The rules in the manifold of rules are representations that are homologous to concept representations in the manifold of concepts (hence, Logic diagrams for each of these structures look the same). The striking difference is that rules are always unconscious representations whereas concepts (and also the affective representations adjudicated by reflective judgment) can be brought to consciousness[6]. The practical rule structure has higher rules standing over lower ones, coordinations between rules, and, in general, all the other mathematical features of the manifold of concepts.

The number of rules in the manifold of rules becomes enormous during the course of a person's life but it is still a finite number at any given point in a person's life. This means that, at any given time, the manifold of rules contains some number of rules which stand under no higher rule. Such rules are said to be *practically unconditioned*. They are also called *practically hypothetical imperatives* of practical Reason because they *are* always subject to the formula of *the* categorical imperative of practical Reason. If experience eventually leads to a disturbance of equilibrium when the rule is invoked, the process of practical judgment will – in conformity with the categorical imperative – accommodate the practical rule *structure* in such a way as to place the rule under the condition of a *new* (and higher) rule. Until this happens, however, a practically hypothetical imperative *is* a *practical law*.

In a manner of speaking, all the practical laws in the manifold of rules "stand on equal footing" with one another. One has a totality of practical rules but, because no practical law is subordinate to another one, the *rule structure* is not that of a true *unity* except insofar as all practical laws are subordinate to the categorical imperative – which is a law and a formula only for the *construction* of rules. The process of practical perfection is a process which aims to unify *all* practical rules under one "master rule" governing them all. Such a putative "master rule" can properly be called a ***practical ideal***, i.e., a constitution of laws that exhibits in its representation *in concreto* the most perfect instantiation of the manifold or rules. A rule is practically perfect when: (1) it is a practically universal law (Quantity); (2) when it is a *practical* value, i.e., when it is distinctly valuable[7] (Quality); (3) when it is a practical imperative (Relation); and, (4) when apodictic necessitation according to the rule is absolute (Modality). If a rule has this Modality, it is

[5] Kant's term for this power of Reason was Reason's *Begehrungsvermögen*.
[6] Consciousness *per se* is "the representation that a representation is in me and is to be attended to." We might call consciousness a "representation of the second order."
[7] In relationship with reflective judgment, the manifold of rules is a ***value structure***. A value structure is a system of self-organizing transformations, in relationship to which values constitute conditions for the assertion of rules.

called a rule of ***Self-respect***.

Of course, there is no guarantee that a human being will ever achieve the state of practical perfection the practical ideal describes. A person can only become aware of *imperfection* in his manifold of rules, and experiencing a disturbance to equilibrium is *how* a person gains this awareness. I think it is not too incorrect to liken practical perfection to what Hinduism means by the idea of *dharma*.

Although they are definitely not the same thing, the effects of the manifold of rules are describable in a number of ways very much like Freud's description of his idea of the super-ego. Freud's super-ego is an idea associated with ethical and moral conduct and regarded as being responsible for self-imposed standards of behavior. The super-ego is frequently characterized as an internalized moral code or a kind of conscience. One of the important consequences of acting to perfect the manifold of rules is that, out of this rule structure, individuals come to develop and exhibit what can properly be called *personal* moral codes and moral judgments. And this brings us to our next topic.

3. The Phenomenon of Morality

All religions include some presentment of moral teachings. The root meaning of the adjective "moral" is "pertaining to maxims for judging right vs. wrong or good vs. evil." This meaning is straightforward and simple enough; all of us constantly make decisions that something is right or wrong even if the decision is made in the context of merely whether something is correct or incorrect. In mild contexts of the word "good," we constantly make judgments that "this is bad" or "that is good." Difficulties with the word "moral" only arise when this adjective is converted to a noun and we attempt to idealize "*the* moral" as a special Object *per se* identified as (or as the essence of) some final or ultimate Good. Ontology-centered philosophers and ontology-centered theologians are almost always drawn into this objectification of "the moral," and when they are they quickly run headlong into the problem of people's subjectivity in making their judgments of right vs. wrong and good vs. evil. According to Xenophon, Socrates was wary about trying to objectify "the" good:

> Aristippus asked [Socrates] if he knew of anything good, in order that if Socrates mentioned some good thing, such as food, drink, money, health, strength, or daring, he might show that it is sometimes bad. But [Socrates], knowing that when anything troubles us we need what will put an end to the trouble, gave the best answer: "Are you asking me," he said, "whether I know of anything good for a fever?"
>
> "No, not that."
>
> "For ophthalmia?"
>
> "No, not that."
>
> "For hunger?"
>
> "No, not for hunger either."
>
> "Well, if you are asking me whether I know of anything good for nothing, I neither know it nor want to know it." [Xenophon (*aft*. 371 BC), III. VIII. 2-3]

Shakespeare also exhibited a precautionary prudence in this regard when he had Hamlet say, "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" [*Hamlet*, Act II Scene II].

Objectification of the idea of "moral" is what confounds the simplicity and straightforwardness of the definition above. The greater majority of the decisions each of us makes daily in regard to "this is right" or "that is wrong" have nothing to do with what most *adults* call "moral" judgments. They fall instead under the milder terms of "correct vs. incorrect." If someone tells you, "The capitol of Idaho is Des Moines," and you correct them by saying, "No, that isn't right. The capitol of Idaho is Boise," you usually wouldn't consider that other person's mistake to be a moral fault. However, it is interesting to note that a young child *is* likely to see it that way. This is one of many fascinating findings Piaget made in his study of children's development of moral judgment. Here are two, out of many, examples:

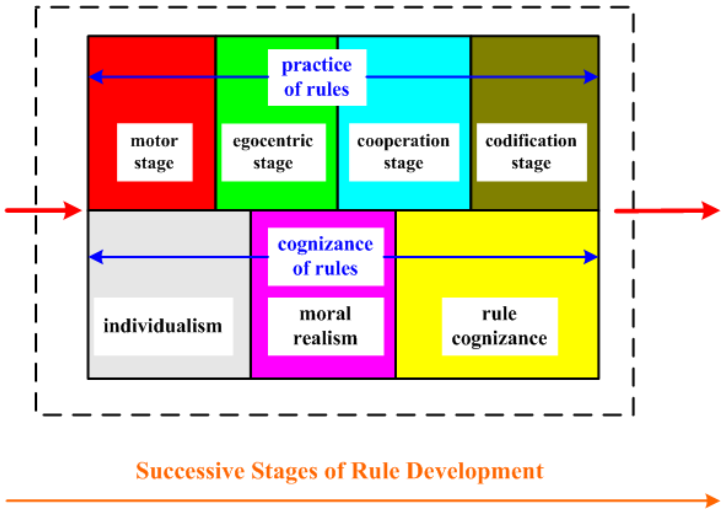

Figure 3: Successive stages in rule development and moral judgment in children.

> Mab (age 6): "What is a lie? – *When you talk nonsense.* – You tell me about something that is a lie. – *A boy once said he was a little angel, and it wasn't true*. – Why did he say that? – *For a joke*. – Are we allowed to tell lies? – *No*. – Why not? – *Because it's a sin and God doesn't want us to sin*. – A boy told me that 2 + 2 = 5. Is it true? – *No, it makes 4*. – Was it a lie or did he make a mistake? – *He made a mistake*. – Is making a mistake the same thing as telling a lie or different? – *The same*. – Look at me. I'm 30. A boy told me I was 60. Was it a lie or did he make a mistake? – *It was a lie*. – Why? – *Because what he said was a sin*. – Which is naughtiest, to make a mistake or to tell a lie? – *Both the same*." [Piaget (1932), pg. 144]

> Chap (age 7): "What is a lie? – *What isn't true, what they say that they haven't done*. – Guess how old I am. – *Twenty*. – No, I'm thirty. Was it a lie what you told me? – *I didn't do it on purpose*. – I know. But is it a lie all the same, or not? – *Yes, it is all the same, because I didn't say how old you really are.* – Is it a lie? – *Yes, because I didn't speak the truth*. – Ought you to be punished? – *No.* – Was it naughty or not naughty? – *Not so very naughty.* – Why? – *Because I spoke the truth afterwards!*" [*ibid*.]

Piaget was able to analyze children's moral judgment as having two components: the practice of rules and the cognizance of rules. These two components co-develop side by side, and he found that children all go through the same identifiable stages in their development of moral judgment. Figure 3 illustrates his findings. Mab and Chap, the children in the examples above, were both in the late egocentric/beginning cooperation stages of rule practice, and both of them were in the stage of moral realism in the cognizance of rules.

One might be tempted to dismiss this finding as not relevant to our present topic in this treatise, but it turns out this is not so. The reason is because *adults* first encountering specific situations in which what we call "moral dilemmas" arise *repeat the staging process* Piaget found in young children. I call this the ***restaging of moral judgments***. Figure 4 is an illustration of this. Of course, the situations encountered by adults are more complicated than those faced by children, adults have richer concept and rule structures, and adults can "get through" these stages faster than children do – although they don't always do so, especially in matters of religion. I have met a number of people subscribing to "fundamentalist" views of religion whose moral judgments on religious matters seem to be communally stuck at the stage of moral realism even though their moral realism has disappeared in regard to other matters. Piaget remarked,

> We see, therefore, how the spontaneous moral realism of the early years, while it dwindles progressively with regard to the subject's own conduct, may very well develop elsewhere, first in the

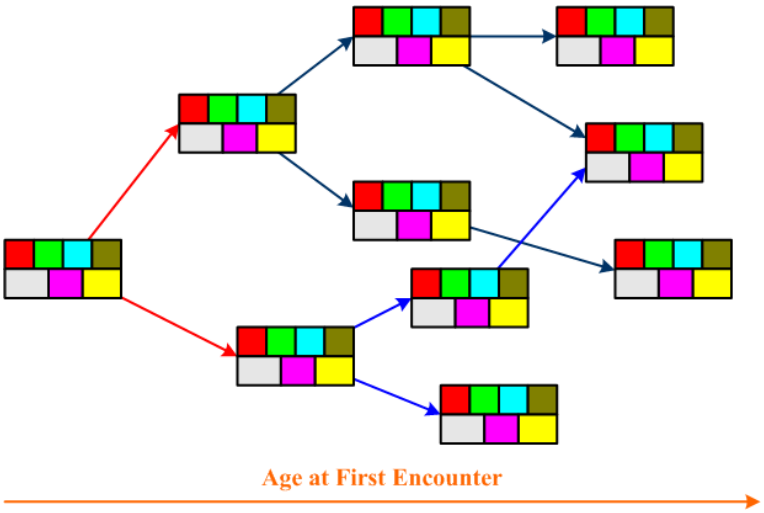

Figure 4: Restaging of moral judgments. The color coding of the boxes in this figure corresponds to figure 3.

> evaluation of other people's actions, and finally in reflection concerning purely theoretical cases involved in stories, in histories, and in social myths in general. If we were dealing with so-called primitive societies, we should have to add that these final products of moral realism, once they are consolidated by the social constraint of the group as a whole . . . are capable of reacting upon the actual minds of individuals by a repercussion that will be readily understood. [Piaget (1932), pg. 185]

Restaging makes moral realism an idea meriting special attention. What does "moral realism" mean? Because he was the author of the term, we turn to Piaget for its explanation:

> We shall therefore call moral realism the tendency which the child has to regard duty and the value attaching to it as self-subsistent and independent of the mind, as imposing itself regardless of the circumstances in which the individual may find himself.
>
> Moral realism thus possesses at least three features. In the first place, duty, as viewed by moral realism, is essentially heteronomous. Any act that shows obedience to a rule or even to an adult, regardless of what he may command, is good; any act that does not conform to rules is bad. A rule is therefore not in any way something elaborated, or even judged and interpreted by the mind; it is given as such, ready made and external to the mind. It is also conceived of as revealed by the adult and imposed by him. The good, therefore, is rigidly defined by obedience.
>
> In the second place, moral realism demands that the letter rather than the spirit of the law shall be observed. This feature derives from the first. . . .
>
> In the third place, moral realism induces an objective conception of responsibility. We can even use this as a criterion of realism, for such an attitude towards responsibility is easier to detect than the two that precede it. For since he takes rules literally and thinks of good only in terms of obedience, the child will at first evaluate acts not in accordance with the motive that has prompted them but in terms of their exact conformity with established rules. Hence this objective responsibility of which we shall see the clearest manifestations in the moral judgment of the child. [*ibid.*, pp. 111-112]

Lest one is tempted to doubt that restaged moral realism appears in adult behaviors, it is instructive to look at a documented example from American history of what adult moral realism can look like. From 1675 to 1677 a brutal war was fought between the Wampanoag Indians and the Puritan colonies of New England. It was called King Philip's War, named after the Wampanoag leader. He was the son of Massasoit, the man whose assistance had rescued the Plymouth Colony from starvation in its earliest years. In 1676, Philip's wife and nine-year-old son were captured and held prisoners in Plymouth, where the clergy debated whether or not the Bible required them to have the little boy beheaded:

> The Rev. John Cotton of Plymouth and the Rev. Samuel Arnold of Marshfield quoted Deuteronomy 24:16 as authority for sparing the boy's life but the "scripture instances of Saul, Achan, Haman, the children of whom were cut off, by the sword of Justice for the transgressions of their parents," as deciding their vote for death to the child of him who had dared to attack the "whole nation, yea the whole Israel of God." The Rev. Increase Mather of Boston also voted for death, quoting the instance of "Hadad, who was a little child when his father (the chief sachem of the Edomites) was killed by Joab; and had not others fled away with him, I am apt to think, that David would have taken a course, that Hadad should never have proved a scourge to the next generation . . ." The Rev. James Keith of Bridgewater urged milder treatment, writing, "I know there is some difficulty in that Psalms 137, 8, 9 . . ." but, "That law, Deut. 24:16, compared with the commended example of Amasias, 2 Chron. 25:4 doth sway much with me. . . ." Mildness prevailed, and Philip's wife and the grandson of the noble Massasoit were sold as slaves to the West Indies. [Brandon (1961), pp. 177-178]

Personally, I really can't think of *anything* I would hold to be more morally reprehensible than even *discussing* beheading a little nine-year-old boy (other than actually doing it) *even if* he was the son of an enemy; but such can be the power of adult moral realism. I don't think well of selling him as a slave in the West Indies either. It should be noted that the clergymen involved in this incident were among the most eminent and respected men in the Puritan colonies at that time.

The fact that all children develop their moral judgments through the same stages in the same order, as depicted in figure 3, and that adults exhibit restaging of this process when confronted with new moral dilemmas, both bespeak of the difficulties an individual experiences when the dictate of the categorical imperative requires major accommodation of the manifold of rules to produce conditioning rules to place over already existing practically hypothetical imperatives. How do we know accommodation of the manifold of rules is involved in this? Recall Kant's second 'interest of Reason' question: "What should I do?" In chapter 4, I said this interest of Reason is the practical interest adjudicated primarily by the process of practical judgment. But practical judgment judges the manifold of rules and does so by the single criterion of the compatibility of this rule structure with the formula of the categorical imperative. A disturbance to equilibrium resolved by a person having to take action of some kind or another clearly falls under Kant's "what should I do?" question. Moral dilemmas force a person to resolve "what should I do?" into a "what I will do" decision. And this is the challenge of what is properly called *moral judgmentation*.

A person never acts "in the general." All actions are actions undertaken *in concreto* and involve more than just the manifold of rules. Desires and cognitions also enter in to any action that goes beyond a simple sensorimotor reflex action and involves either learned habits or deliberated choices. Thus, moral actions implicate the full synthesis of judgmentation (figures 1 and 3 from chapter 4). "Acting on moral principles" means acting from the basis of a systematic *theoretical* understanding (in the manifold of *concepts*) of Duties and moral principles we generally call ***ethics***. Moral issues debated by people holding *differing* ethical concepts prove a person's "ethics" are developed *from experience*. A little child whose cognizance of rules is in the "individualism" stage and whose practice of rules is in the motor stage in figure 3 cannot be said to "have" any ethics at all. This is why children must be *taught* ethical right and wrong; we call this process the *socialization* of the child. Aristotle wrote,

> Excellence . . . is distinguished into two kinds with this difference; for we say that some excellences are intellectual and others moral . . . Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit . . . From this it is also plain that none of the moral excellences arise in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. . . . Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do excellences arise in us; rather, we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit. . . . Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every excellence is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art . . . For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. This, then, is the case with excellences also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just

> or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. . . . It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference. [Aristotle (date unknown), $1103^{a}4$-$1103^{b}25$ (pp. 66-74)] [8]

The intense debate among the Puritan clergymen who had to decide the fate of Philip's son *required* debate because these men were facing a real situation for which they had no ethical principle and had to *make* one. (Beheading nine-year-old boys doesn't come up a lot). The *maxim* each of them followed was to consult scripture to find what in a legal system is called a *precedent*.

Why are human beings challenged by ethical questions? The root cause lies in the human nature of the process of practical Reason. Reason, as I mentioned before, is a cognitively dark and affectively cold process. Reason knows no objects, feels no feelings. The manifold of rules is not a moral code *per se*, but it does lie at the root of the experience-driven development of a person's moral code. The categorical imperative of practical Reason is not a moral law, but the regulation it enforces leads to conceptualization of moral laws[9]. It is in this very restricted sense that one can call the manifold of rules a person's *private moral code*, but this description must *always* be understood in this quite limited connotation. What people call a "moral principle" is always conceptualized in understanding and is, therefore, something quite different from the practical manifold of rules. The *theoretical* concept of a categorical imperative is *not* categorical in the practical Standpoint of the phenomenon of mind; it can never be anything more than a *hypothetical* imperative when viewed *practically*.[10] There is no categorical imperative in the theoretical Standpoint that cannot be challenged by empirical circumstances. Indeed, many moral dilemmas are nothing else than such challenges.

Every person's conceptualization of moral principles is a private moral code forged and formed through personal experience. Therefore, every person's moral code is a unique product of the circumstances of his own experience and, therefore, is likewise a *subjective* code. Moral *objectivity* is the product of social cooperation (socialization), and this is why one can find differences between the morality of one culture in comparison to another. What people tend to identify as "morality" is really moral *custom* (*Sittlichkeit*), i.e., the established *mores* of their own culture. If you and I are neighbors and we mutually agree that I must not kill you and you must not kill me, then "You do not murder" becomes, for our little two-person society, a moral imperative. If we agree not to steal from each other, "You do not steal" likewise is made a moral imperative[11]. Such imperatives, formally codified *and comprehended*, are not possible for a child prior to the final stages of his or her development of moral judgment in figure 3.

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[8] The translation from Greek quoted here is due to W.D. Ross as revised by J.O. Urman. Theirs is a superior (more literal) translation than the one given in the cited reference.

[9] It is at precisely this point where Kant made a fundamental error in his theory of morals. By equating the categorical imperative with "the moral law," Kant made an ontological presupposition in direct opposition to the pains he went to in *Critique of Pure Reason* to warn people not to do precisely this same thing. Personally, I think this is a great irony. It is my opinion that this is the point where Kant's theocentric orientation in philosophy misled him into *not* carrying through with the same full development of a theory of pure practical Reason that he gave to the theory of understanding and speculative Reason in his first *Critique*. He himself tells us that he *deliberately* chose not to undertake this effort in the opening paragraph of the preface to his second *Critique* [Kant (1788) 5: 3]. It is a short-coming that Wells (2006) corrects.

[10] When I read Kant's writings on morals, I think I am seeing the effort of a deeply religious man trying as hard as he could to overturn his own proof that God's existence can never be proved by any argument of a rational theology. I think he was hoping to establish certainty for the actual *Dasein* of God through the phenomenon of morality. He never succeeded in this, but one can see him still working hard at it in his unfinished last work [Kant (1804 a, b)]. For a religious person, there is simply no getting around the need for *faith*. To think otherwise is a self-deception.

[11] These are the literal translations of the 6th and 8th Commandments [Exodus 20:2-17]

The mental nature of the development of *objective* moral codes is a synthesis of practical perfection (practical laws) and aesthetical perfection (values), as depicted in figure 1. This is why moral issues are both *passionate* issues (process of reflective judgment) and provocative issues (process of practical judgment). That they are the products of a synthesis is also why conflicts between personal Desires and moral Duties arise to discomfort the individual. Santayana wrote,

> The relation between aesthetic and moral judgments, between the spheres of the beautiful and the good, is close, but the distinction between them is important. One factor in this distinction is that while aesthetic judgments are mainly positive, that is, perceptions of good, moral judgments are mainly and fundamentally negative, or perceptions of evil. Another factor of the distinction is that whereas, in the perception of beauty, our judgment is necessarily intrinsic and based on the character of our immediate experience and never consciously on the idea of an eventual utility in the object, judgments about moral worth, on the contrary, are always based, when they are positive, upon the consciousness of benefits probably involved. . . .
>
> Hedonistic ethics have always had to struggle against the moral sense of mankind. Earnest minds, that feel the weight and dignity of life, rebel against the assertion that the aim of right conduct is enjoyment. Pleasure appears to them as a temptation, and they sometimes go so far as to make avoidance of it a virtue. The truth is that morality is not mainly concerned with the attainment of pleasure; it is rather concerned, in all its deeper and more authoritative maxims, with the prevention of suffering. . . .
>
> The sad business of life is rather to escape certain dreadful evils to which our nature exposes us – death, hunger, disease, weariness, isolation, and contempt. By the awful authority of these things, which stand like specters behind every moral injunction, conscience in reality speaks, and a mind which they have duly impressed cannot but feel, by contrast, the hopeless triviality of the search for pleasure. It cannot but feel that a life abandoned to amusements and to changing impulses must run unawares into fatal dangers. The moment, however, that society emerges from the early pressure of the environment and is tolerably secure against primary evils, morality grows lax. The forms that life will farther assume are not to be imposed by moral authority, but are determined by the genius of the race, the opportunities of the moment, and the tastes and resources of individual minds. The reign of duty gives place to the reign of freedom, and the law and the covenant to the dispensation of grace. [Santayana (1896), pp. 16-17]

That which adults recognize as moral maxims and moral lines of reasoning do not emerge in children's behaviors and expressions until the child has entered the cooperation stage of his practice of rules (figure 3); his cognizance of moral rules slightly lags the beginning of cooperation – something to be expected because it is only through his cooperative practices that he gains experience with *social* rules. Piaget found,

> After the age of 10 on the average, i.e., from the second half of the cooperation stage and during the whole of the stage when the rules are codified, consciousness of rules undergoes a complete transformation. Autonomy follows upon heteronomy; the rules of a game appears to the child no longer as an external law, sacred in so far as it has been laid down by adults; but the outcome of a free decision and worthy of respect in the measure that it has enlisted mutual consent.
>
> This change can be seen by three concordant symptoms. In the first place, the child allows a change in the rules so long as it enlists the votes of all. Anything is possible, so long as, and to the extent that you undertake to respect the new decisions. . . . All opinions are tolerated so long as their protagonists urge their acceptance by legal methods. . . . He no longer relies, as do the little ones, upon an all-wise tradition. He no longer thinks that everything has been arranged for the best in the past and that the only way of avoiding trouble is by religiously respecting the established order. He believes in the value of experiment in so far as it is sanctioned by collective opinion.
>
> In the second place, the child ceases *ipso facto* to look upon rules as eternal and as having been handed down unchanged from one generation to another. Thirdly and finally, his ideas on the origin of

> the rules and of the game do not differ from ours [adults] [Piaget (1932), pg. 65].

He goes on to report,

> [The] peculiar function of cooperation is to lead the child to the practice of reciprocity, hence of moral universality and generosity in his relations with his playmates.
>
> This last point introduces us to yet another sign of the bond between autonomy and true respect for the law. By modifying rules, i.e., by becoming a sovereign and legislator in the democracy which towards the age of 10-11 follows upon the earlier gerontocracy, the child takes cognizance of the *raison d'être* of laws. A rule becomes the necessary condition for agreement. *"So as not to be always quarrelling,"* says Ross [age 11], *"you must have rules and then play properly* [= stick to them]." The fairest rule, Gros [age 13] maintains, is that which unites the collective opinion of the players, *"because* [then] *they can't cheat."* [*ibid*., pg. 71]

There is no transcendent and mystic factor involved in the ideas of morality and morals. Indeed, the English word "moral" derives from the Latin word *mos* (plural, *mores*), which in Latin had the following dictionary definitions [Oxford Latin Dictionary]:

1. an established practice, custom, or usage.
2. the practices prevailing in a place; custom; inherited custom, tradition; civilized customs.
3. in the customary or traditional way; to be usual or customary.
4. (a) habits (of a community, generation, etc.) in respect of right and wrong; (b) such habits as a subject for study, ethics; (c) virtuous habits.
5. habitual conduct (of an individual or group); character; disposition; ways.
6. to regulate one's conduct in accordance with another's wishes, humor, indulge, or gratify (a person; also a feeling).
7. (a) manner of doing something, fashion, style; (b) in the manner of, like.

The modern-English word "moral" emphasizes the notion of "right and wrong" more heavily than the Latin root did. This reflects a split in modern English between the idea of "moral" and a broader context in the English word "mores" – which means "folkways that are considered conducive to the welfare of society and so, through general observation, develop the force of law, often becoming part of the legal code." The German word *Sittlichkeit* that Kant frequently used means "moral custom." It is notable that nowhere in any of this is found any reference to religion. Morals and morality are non-religious terms.

Religion does enter in to their connotations, in at least some circumstances, when the ideas of "good" and "evil" are made part of the context. How shall we understand these ideas? There is, again, no need or call for any transcendent or mystical interpretation of either in an epistemology-centered metaphysic.

Critical "good" is, deontologically, the Object of practical Reason by which an object, called an objective good, is represented as a *necessary* object of appetitive power. "Necessary" here means that contradiction of the object violates the equilibrium conditions represented in the manifold of rules and, therefore, contradicts the categorical imperative. Good is a practical representation of the power of Reason and refers to the choice to effect or maintain the actuality of an object of representation in judgment. The notion of good is contained in the act of practical determination of appetitive power according to a practical maxim (in the manifold of rules) and not by an outcome of the action.

Critical evil, its opposite, is the Object of practical Reason by which an object is represented as a *negative* and necessary object of appetitive power. "Negative and necessary" here means that the actual *Existenz* of the object would violate the equilibrium conditions represented in the manifold of rules and, therefore, contradict the categorical imperative. Evil is a practical representation of the power of Reason and refers to the choice to effect or maintain the *non*-actuality of an object of representation in judgment. The notion of evil is contained in the act of practical determination of appetitive power according to a

practical maxim (again, in the manifold of rules) and not in the outcome of the action. It turns out that Shakespeare's Hamlet didn't quite get it right; the correct expression is "there is nothing either good or bad but *Reason* makes it so."

Deontological morality is thus part of the mental nature of being-a-human-being and therefore is at root a subjective and practical factor in being human. *Objective* morality is the outcome of *social* convention, cooperation, and mutual consensus. Settled moral customs bring domestic tranquility to a community of people and bind them together in an alliance for common defense, public safety, and promotion of their general welfare. That societies everywhere share so many common moral customs is a consequence of the fact that people everywhere face many of the same "dreadful evils to which our nature exposes us" (as Santayana put it). Murder, for example, is forbidden in every society because people could not possibly live together in peaceful community if every person had to be constantly on guard against being killed by a neighbor. Concepts of Duties, along with expectations that every member of the community will *do* his Duties, are a necessary part of what is called the community's *social contract* [Wells (2012)].

Can morality be successfully legislated and imposed on a people by a ruling authority without gaining their consent? Certainly throughout the history of civilization kings, legislators, and religious leaders have tried to do so again and again. But the fact is that any legislated or dictated attempt to do so must *codify* "moral laws" – and this requires that such a code, if it is to be made universal within the society, must presume to anticipate *all* the contingencies of experience that might arise. Such omniscience is far beyond the power of anyone to achieve. There is a very practical reason why "case law" is a necessity for legal systems. Montesquieu wrote,

> We have said that the laws were the particular and precise institutions of a legislator, and manners and customs the institution of a nation in general. Hence it follows that when these manners and customs are to be changed, it ought not to be done by laws; this would have too much the air of tyranny: it would be better to change them by introducing other manners and other customs. [Montesquieu (1748), pg. 298]

> Manners and customs are those habits which are not established by legislators, either because they were not able or were not willing to establish them. There is this difference between laws and manners, that the laws are most adapted to regulate the actions of the subject, and manners to regulate the actions of the man. There is this difference between manners and customs, that the former principally relate to the interior conduct, the latter to the exterior. [*ibid*., pg. 300]

When one's "way of looking at the world" is ontology-centered, an ultimate resort to understanding the phenomenon of morality inevitably leads to attributing it to a deity of some kind. It then naturally follows that many religious leaders throughout history adopt the course of trying to impose, by threats of divine retribution rather than by reconciliation, religious laws intended to legislate morality. Sometimes this works for awhile; it has never worked permanently, and when public *tolerance* of the law-giving authority entrusted to the legislator eventually breaks down, it usually has done so violently and murderously, often leaving hypocrisies in its wake. Christianity makes the Old Testament part of its doctrine, but nowhere do Christians actually enforce, or even try to enforce, *all* the religious laws presented in it. For example:

> If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they chastise him, will not give heed to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, "This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard." Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall purge the evil from your midst. [Deuteronomy 21:18-21]

In every majority-Christian nation on earth, not only is this law not followed; if anyone actually carried it out he or they would be charged with and convicted of murder. Are we to say, then, that all Christian nations are apostate? I don't think so. I think to say so is to speak hogwash.

And, still, every person has the capacity to make judgments of right vs. wrong, good vs. evil. Every person exercises this capacity continually. It is an essential part of human mental nature; and if we are reflections or images of God, might this teach us something about the theological archetype?

4. Perfection and the Theological Archetype

Moral perfection is a special phenomenon arising out of a general process of acting to perfect. But it is obvious from the diversity of opinions humankind holds regarding what is moral and what is not that morality is a *subjective* phenomenon. Moral judgments and moral principles are *outcomes* of an underlying practical process responding to circumstances of individual experience. Because the culture and society in which a person is raised contribute heavily to such circumstances, it is not strange to find *local* commonalities in the moral customs of societies. Indeed, it would be strange *not* to find them.

Every person makes his own decisions concerning what is right, what is wrong, what is good, what is evil. Society is a great normalizer of moral opinion. It is the same with other examples *in concreto* of striving to perfect. The one general law governing every human being's acting-to-perfect is the categorical imperative of the process of pure practical Reason, and the categorical imperative regulates *only* for the achievement and maintenance of a state of personal equilibrium. Actions judged not-inexpedient for equilibrium are allowed by practical Reason; those judged inexpedient are, by this judgment, made *practical*, not conceptual, Objects of evil. *Objective* judgments that *this* object is good and *that* one is evil develop and evolve as the individual's manifold of concepts develops and evolves; and it is by such objective judgments that concrete maxims of morality are teachable to the young and become transmitted from generation to generation within societies. And even here, individual differences develop and some individuals' behaviors come to be deemed, according to the norms of those individuals' societies, *antisocial* behaviors [Wells (2012), chap. 4].

Yet and at the same time, it is undeniable that morality is a principal concern of religions everywhere. Morality is an idea representing as its object, in the manifold of concepts, a *system* of moral laws; and religions variously strive to codify and enforce their concepts of morality. Kant wrote:

> Religion is the contemplation of moral law as divine precept. [Kant (1776-95), 18: 515]

One way to look at Kant's remark is to assume he was merely describing or characterizing what people in religious institutions do. If this was all he was doing then there is no objective basis in it for trying to tie morality to the theological archetype or regard moral law as *divine* precept. But there is good reason to think Kant actually meant this more literally, that his own personal faith was bound up in it. In the handwritten remains of his last and unfinished work is found,

> God and the world are the two Objects of transcendental philosophy; thinking *man* is the subject, predicate and copula. The subject who combines them in one proposition. These are logical relationships in a proposition, not dealing with the *Existenz* of Objects but merely bringing what is formal in their relationships of these Objects to synthetic unity: God, the world, and I, man, a world-being myself, who combines the two. [Kant (1804a) 21: 37]

If human beings *are* reflections or images of God, and in whom temporal *Existenz* connects with divine *Dasein*, then the *universal* trait of making judgments of good vs. evil and right vs. wrong, and motivating conditions encountered in empirical circumstances of the temporal world that impel individuals to make these judgments more perfect, would surely seem to be congruent with the idea of thinking man in a role of "subject, predicate and copula" in a synthetic union of nature and supernature. But how sturdy is this seeming congruence? There are troubling facts seemingly contrary to this idea. We must look at them.

Perfection is something every human being is capable of striving to achieve. However, the evidence of one's own experience seems to tell us that not every human being does so. The culprit, of course, is the

human capacity for type-α compensation (ignórance). The process of practical Reason is regulated by the categorical imperative; the categorical imperative mandates that you act to eliminate disturbances to equilibrium; and the process of practical Reason is an *impatient* process. It gropes to achieve re-equilibration by the quickest route it can find, and type-α compensation is usually that quickest route *at least temporarily*. The equilibrium it leads to is an unstable sort; whatever the perturbing factor was, it remains a perturbing factor and must be dealt with again and again upon its every reoccurrence. One description of this is illustrated when someone says something is "gnawing away at me"; *the reoccurrences **collectively** become a new source of disturbance* requiring a better, more stable kind of compensation called type-β compensation. Here the person's action involves a modification of structures – either in the manifold of concepts or the manifold of rules – having the effect of changing what was a perturbing factor into a *variation* assimilated into the person's concept or rule structure. It requires more effort on the person's part, but it produces a better, more stable equilibration. Even this, however, can be only temporarily satisfying. In that case, we encounter the third type of compensation behavior, the type-γ compensation. Type-γ compensation consists of *anticipating possible variations*. These three types of compensations are not separate stages of mental development; they continue to recur at all stages in a person's life, both singly and in combinations with each other [Piaget (1975), pp. 55-58].

It is quite possible – and not at all uncommon – for people to eventually construct structures in the manifold of concepts and the manifold of rules adequate for dealing with circumstances they encounter in day to day living. Unusual circumstances – those that happen infrequently enough that occasional re-occurrences do not collectively rise to the level of becoming a new source of disturbance – are then more easily dealt with by means of pure type-α compensation, *and when this happens the perfection process is short-circuited by the person*. Indeed, a strong case can be argued that this is what the *dogma* of a religion works, howsoever unintentionally, to accomplish. However great an idea is in its original conception, when it calcifies into dogma it is great no longer because dogma opposes striving to perfect.

As a specific example, let us return to the learned clergymen who debated whether or not to behead a nine-year-old boy. These men were following a developed *maxim*: find a precedent in scripture and then follow that precedent. The maxim itself is the product of the combination of numerous instances of type α-, β-, and γ- compensated manifold structures. As different scriptural examples were brought forward by different men, they resolved their differences by another maxim: take a vote and allow the majority to rule. They did not question the correctness of any of their scriptural examples; they merely decided, individually, which ones seemed most applicable to the decision they had to make and let the vote bring the matter to a final decision. One possible decision they might have reached – to simply let the boy and his mother go free – was dismissed out of hand; *and this is nothing else than a type-α compensation*. The maxim ("refer to the scriptures") was not modified in any way. No effort to try to refine moral perfection was made. Once they shipped the boy and his mother off to the West Indies, *their* problem was solved and could not come back to disturb them again. Type-α compensation worked for them in this case.

In terms of the restaging of moral judgments, what these clergymen did is an example of a highly developed instance of *adult moral realism*. In 1676 slavery was tagged with no moral onus and violated no mores of Puritan society. There were no conflicting moral issues to provoke and drive further efforts toward moral perfection. Now, nearly three and half centuries later, there would be; but today's norms and standards didn't exist in their society in their day.

Herein we find a question pertinent to understanding the theological archetype. The very fact that *today* the decision they reached *then* is held, by at least some of their descendants, to be morally reprehensible, but was not in 1676, points out that moral perfection – like other forms of perfection – is, for *humanity*, a seemingly never-ending process. Can we, then, draw an inference that the same is true of God?

No, we cannot. The reason we cannot is because *any* answer that might be offered encounters the same issue discussed in chapter 3 for the question, "Did God have a Beginning?" That issue is transcendental

antinomy in speculation. Is God perfect? or is God continually in a process of becoming *more* perfect? The Abrahamic religions claim the former is true; but other religions – notably Buddhism and Hinduism with their doctrines of cycles of creation – seem to arrive at the latter conclusion. Narayanan tells us,

> The end of each cycle of creation is marked by cataclysmic events . . . After this period, the entire cosmos is drawn into the body of Vishnu and remains there until another Brahma has evolved. [Narayanan (2005), pp. 90-91]

Eckel tells us,

> Traditional Buddhist ideas about death are based on the ancient Indian doctrine of *samsara*, variously translated as "reincarnation," "transmigration," or simply "rebirth," but literally meaning "wandering" – from one lifetime to another. By the time of the Budda, Indian religion had come to assume that life is cyclical: a person is born, grows old, dies, and is then reborn in another body to begin the process again. . . . The nature of an individual's reincarnation depends on *karma* or moral "action." Someone who accumulates merit or good *karma* in the course of a life will be reborn in a more favorable situation in a future life, perhaps even as a god[12]. The reverse applies to those who perform bad actions. . . . No state of reincarnation is permanent. [Eckel (2005), pp. 194-195]

Among the ancient Greek philosophers, Parmenides' ον was characterized as being changeless ("motionless") [Marías (1967), pg. 22]. For Heraclitus, everything is a "becoming"; reality is changing, unstable; everything runs, everything flows. The antinomy I speak of here has been around for a very long time.

Earlier we saw Kant describe transcendental perfection in the Idea of the highest essence as "an essence that rejects every deficiency." But by this did he mean this highest essence *has* rejected every deficiency or *is continually rejecting* deficiencies? Kant himself didn't elaborate on this, but in asking this we are in effect asking "is God changeless? or is God changeable?" These are the thesis and the antithesis of a transcendental antinomy problem. You will recall that a Kantian Idea is a regulative principle of action, and for us the action in this context is synthesis – specifically, the synthesis of the thesis and the antithesis. For the present question, this amounts to asking a formidable and even uncomfortably mystical question such as "what is the changeless changeable?" Juxtaposing these two opposites can, and upon first encounter usually does, seem like the sheerest nonsense. Yet we do not lack examples that, at least upon first glance, do not seem so mystic. For example, in mathematics we have the following:

> The infinite is that which is without end. It is the eternal, the immortal, the self-renewable, the *apeiron* of the Greeks, the *ein-sof* of the Kabbalah, the cosmic eye of the mystics which observes us and energizes us from the godhead.
>
> Observe the equation
>
> $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + \cdots = 1.$
>
> . . . On the left-hand side we seem to have incompleteness, infinite striving. On the right-hand side we have finitude, completion. There is a tension between the two sides which is a source of power and paradox. . . . We want to complete the incomplete, to catch it, to cage it, to tame it. [Davis & Hersh (1981), pg. 153]

While mathematical infinity can be a challenge for the novice mathematics student, people can and do become reconciled to it – even casual about it – despite the fact that infinity is, in the words of Davis & Hersh, "the miraculous jar of mathematics." To someone even modestly well-trained in mathematics, the equation above is neither mysterious nor even particularly special. It is just one mathematical identity out of many – no better, no worse, and of no different character from many other such identities. It might

[12] Abrahamic religions would use the term "an angel" or "a saint" rather than an "a god" if they sought reconciliation among faiths.

perhaps be of some comfort to remember that when we inquire into theology we are inquiring about the *Existenz* of supersensible objects in the region beyond the horizon of possible human experience, and such inquiry is always mathematical at its root. Substitute "the changeable" in the left-hand side of the equation above, and "the changeless" in the right-hand side and you have, mathematically, the same *form* of equation. In the language of the Critical Philosophy, it is, "plurality regarded as totality = unity" – and this is a synthetic idea of Quantity in representation [Wells (2006), chap. 3]. It is *e pluribus unum*.

Mathematicians are always discovering new things in the cornucopia of their miraculous jar – some that are strange; some that are baffling; some that are wondrous; some that are perplexing; and very often many that are useful. For some people it is the same for meditating about God. The problem of antinomy blocks us from Knowledge of God's essence and keeps divine purposes out of our sight. But *relationship between God and the purpose of **you*** might be something quite different.

Consider again: if God created you and put you here, then you were put in a place where in your finite temporal *Existenz* an infinite achievement lies beyond your reach. Are we to think, then, that a human life (yours, for instance) has no divine purpose? That would seem to be an act of capriciousness by God and capriciousness is a deficiency in character. But if one can see no purpose for an unobtainable *achievement*, the same is not necessary true of *striving* to reach it. Just as it seems God must value faith above belief, so too it has to seem *God must value ceaseless striving to perfect oneself* – in Knowledge, in values, in morals – rather than achievement of a goal utterly unreachable in a single human lifetime.

This is not a new thought in theology. Not only do we see it in the Indian doctrine of *samsara*; I suggest to you it is the lesson subsisting in

> Do your best to go in through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to go in and not be able. [Luke 13:24],

and again in

> Not that I have already obtained all this or have already reached my goal, but I press on in order to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [Philippians 3:13-14],

and also in

> To this end I labor, striving according to his power that works powerfully in me [Colossians 1:29].

At the same time, can one help but feel a sense of sublimity if one understands how infinite the labor is, and can one not help but feel humbled by how daunting seems the task? Here, I suggest, is yet another reasonable inference: *God values humility and humility is therefore a virtue*. This would seem to be the lesson to take from

> Humble yourselves then under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time [1 Peter 5:6],

or again from

> God opposes the proud but he gives grace to the humble [James 4:6],

and again from,

> Humble yourself in the presence of the lord and he will lift you up [James 4:10].

The Quran also teaches this moral lesson:

> The servants of the Lord of Mercy [Allah] are those who walk humbly on the earth and who, when aggressive people address them, reply with words of peace [Quran 25: 63];
>
> Remember your Lord inwardly, in all humility and awe, without raising your voice, in the mornings and in the evenings – do not be one of the heedless [Quran 7: 205].

Critical **virtue** is an individual's constant disposition (unwavering attention) to carry out his Duties [Kant (1793-94) 27: 492]. Critical **Duty** is a necessitated and objectively practical act in accordance with an idea of objective moral law *that excludes all personal inclinations from serving as the ground* of the action. A Duty is made necessary (necessitated) by one's understanding of a moral law (theoretical moral tenet). That some act is held-to-be a Duty does not necessarily mean one is *dis*inclined to do it; it merely means that the ***ground*** for doing one's Duty is, to put it bluntly, because *you hold-to-be the right thing to do*. It is sometimes the case that doing one's Duty might also satisfy one's inclination; but if the reason for doing the action is *fundamentally* because it suits your inclination (because, e.g., doing it will bring some reward or personal benefit or ward off some evil consequence to yourself) it is *not* an act of virtue and carries *no* moral value. Some Duties are things you are disinclined to do and would not do if it was not a Duty. I find, though, that if I make a *habit* of fulfilling a Duty then the Duty no longer seems onerous. This seems to me to be a marvelous thing about Duties; habituating a Duty makes fulfilling it a source of satisfaction.

It might be helpful if you bear in mind that *no one can impose a Duty on you*. A Duty is a matter for which the form is an obligation. No one can impose an obligation on you without your agreement; all obligations are self-imposed; a Duty is how you *understand* the composition of an obligation; and therefore no one can force any Duty upon you that *you* do not agree *is* a Duty.

I think teachers of religion err if they emphasize adverse consequences of dereliction of Duty. "Repent or be damned" is not an exhortation to do something because it is right to do it; it is a threat extorting you to act out of prudence instead of out of Duty. If you submit to the threat, the only Duty you fulfill is a Duty *to yourself*, not a Duty subsisting in whatever the particular action might be. If a robber demands of you, "Your money or your life," do you regard the act of handing over your wallet or your purse a Duty *per se* or do you regard it as merely the prudent thing to do under the circumstances? It is often prudent to be prudent, but prudence is the use of skill to realize an objective of happiness; an objective of happiness is not an objective of Duty because happiness is grounded in inclination, not moral law. If you habituate fulfillment of a Duty, the *habituation* serves inclination but the *ground* of the act itself lies in a moral law. Duty and the pursuit of happiness conflict only when a person *makes* them conflict. This seems to me to be another marvelous thing about the congruence of reflective judgment (in inclinations) and practical judgment (in obligations). It is not-impossible for a person to be happy and virtuous at the same time.

Humility is the quality or state of being humble. In contexts of religion and morality, humble means to act in a manner reflecting, expressing, or offering in *a spirit of deference*. The Latin root of the English word "deference" is *deferre* – to carry, convey, or bring; to cause to go along. *Spirit* is an inner animation, a principle of self-motion. To defer is to *make yourself* go along with the wishes, opinion, or governance of another through respect. *Respect* is a self-produced affective perception of consciousness of the determination of one's will *through a rational law* without intervention from other influences of sense. The only rational laws a person has are those he has made for himself. Thus, no one can *make* you respect another person or thing. It might sometimes seem prudent to act expressing a *semblance* of respect for someone or something, but to do so is sycophancy, not respect.

The ancient pagan religions of Greece and Rome did not express respect *for* their gods. They expressed prudence and sycophancy, wariness and distrust. Their myths contained dire warnings. For example:

> But for those who practice violence and cruel deeds, far-seeing Zeus, the son of Cronos, ordains a punishment. Often even a whole city suffers for a bad man who sins and devises presumptuous deeds, and the son of Cronos lays great trouble upon the people, famine and plague together, so that the men

> perish away and their women do not bear children, and their houses become few, through the contriving of Olympian Zeus. And again, at another time, the son of Cronos either destroys their wide army, or their walls, or else makes an end of their ships on the sea. [Hesiod (c. 700 BC), pp. 20-21]

Humility as a virtue does not imply God values it because the relationship between the theological archetype and humankind is one of ruler and ruled. Howsoever much this idea might have served the egos and purposes of the despots of ancient Mesopotamia, the idea of humility in its proper sense requires no such relationship. It implies an acknowledgment of another's *authority*, but Critical authority is *possession of the power of causing something to become greater, to increase, to be strengthened, or to be reinforced in some way*. A king might possess such a power, but often his actions cause the opposite of these. For example,

> So Samuel told all of the words of Jehovah to the people who were asking a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to be his charioteers and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself chiefs over thousands and chiefs over fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be ointment mixers, cooks, and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give them to his court officials and to his servants. He will take your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you will be his servants." [1 Samuel 8:10-17]

In ancient civilizations worldwide, the ancient states were organized as kingdoms. Athens in ancient Greece and the Roman Republic in Rome became the notable exceptions to this political structure, and in both cases they began as kingdoms and changed their political character (direct democracy in the case of Athens, aristocratic republicanism in the case of Rome) only after the overthrow of especially despotic kings (510 BC in Athens, 509 BC in Rome). By the time of their establishments, the idea that people had to be ruled by a ruler had been around for more than two millennia and was taken for granted everywhere. It seems no strange happening that this same idea was applied to relationships between God and humankind as a matter of *political habit* when monotheism first arose in religion.

But this way of understanding relationship between God and humankind is only an inference of analogy and the product of habituated thinking. It is certainly not the only way one can understand the relationship, and it seems to me a very poor and imperfect way of thinking about it. It is a way of thinking that makes God the image of man rather than vice versa. In this treatise we are following up on the hypothesis that human beings are a reflection or image of the theological archetype, and the idea of God as a king or ruler is inconsistent with this hypothesis.

Deference to God in no way requires that God should be a king or a ruler. To have a spirit of deference requires no more than respect for God as a *leader* who merits following and trying to emulate. A human leader is a person who purposively stimulates the Self-determination of another person to express an action congruent with the leader's purpose [Wells (2010)]. Extending this idea by applying it to understanding the theological archetype is, alike to the case of understanding God as a king, an inference of analogy; the difference is that the leader analogy is not inconsistent with the hypothesis that human beings are a reflection or image of the theological archetype. Let us call this analogy ***faith in divine leadership***. This is an idea that has many consequences to be explored. The next chapter takes up this exploration.

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