Chapter 8 The Apprenticeship of Life

1. The Affective "Me" and the Noumenal "Me"

Chapter 7 explained that human beings are born with affective foundations and without any innate *a priori* object concepts. As a person grows and develops object concepts (that is, concepts of experience) he comes to understand his *Existenz* as that of an objective being living in a world of objects, and to see himself as one object among those other objects in this world. While we are still babies, each of us comes to mark out the *Existenz* of a real division of our world into two distinct parts, which each of us calls "me" and "not-me" [Wells (2006), chap. 11].

This developing conceptualization of the universe and one's own place in it happens through the actions of the general judgmentation loop (sensibility → reflective judgment → practical Reason → ratio-expression → speculative Reason → determining judgment → sensibility), and is essentially a *practical* outcome of regulation under the categorical imperative of pure practical Reason. (The meaning of every concept is *at root* practical). But *object* understanding is most immediately the outcome of harmonization of two specific types of judgment. Kant called these *judgments of perception* (reflective judgment) and *judgments of experience* (determining judgment) [Kant (1783) 4: 298]. He tells us,

> *Empirical judgments, so far as they have objective validity*, are **judgments of experience**; those, however, that are only *subjectively valid* I call mere **judgments of perception**. The latter do not need a pure notion of understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject. But the former always demand, in addition to the representations of sensuous intuition, special *notions primarily begotten in understanding*, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience *objectively valid*.
>
> All our judgments are at first mere judgments of perception; they hold only for us, i.e., for our subject, and only afterwards do we give them a new reference, namely to an Object, and intend that the judgment should also be valid at all times for us and for everyone else [Kant (1783) 4: 298].

The "pure notions of understanding" and "special notions primarily begotten in understanding" in this quote refer to Kant's categories of understanding – the pure and *a priori* rules for the structuring and construction of concepts [Wells (2009), chap. 5].

This is a very slow and gradual process; there does not appear to be any one single "golden moment" when the child discovers himself as something distinct from other things. There is nothing in an infant's behavior that even hints that he has begun to draw this distinction until sometime between ages 11 to 18 months [Piaget (1954), pp. 271-292]. When this understanding dawns, it gives birth to "me" and "not-me" simultaneously and as a disjunctive classification of object concepts in the child's manifold of concepts. Piaget concluded:

> The successive study of concepts of object, space, causality, and time has led us to the same conclusions: the elaboration of the universe by sensorimotor intelligence constitutes the transition from a state in which objects are centered about a self which believes it directs them, although completely unaware of itself as subject, to a state in which the self is placed, at least practically, in a stable world conceived as independent of personal activity. . . . From this time on, the universe is built up into an aggregate of permanent objects connected by causal relations that are independent of the subject and a placed in objective space and time. . . . The self thus becomes aware of itself, at least in its practical action, and discovers itself as a cause among other causes and as an object subject to the same laws as other objects. [Piaget (1954), pp. 350-352]

One might say, however poetically, that we begin life by setting out on a voyage of discovery, *viz*., the discovery of oneself. It also seems as if we are not given a choice to set out or not set out on this voyage.

If God created you and put you here, and you have gone on to live a life that seems most expedient to you (which you have if you are reading this)[1], then he set you here as a voyager through life in which you must not only determine yourself but also determine for your part what your personal relationship with God is to be. To me personally, I can see this as nothing less than the ultimate gift of freedom. How one uses this gift, or misuses it in the opinions of others, is a matter of one's own choices. I call this voyage "the apprenticeship of life."

As adults, we all take the important conceptual division between "me" and "not-me" for granted but, in point of fact, this state of our understandings is not so unambiguous as most of us routinely take it to be. William James wrote,

> The Empirical Self of each of us is all that he is tempted to call by the name of *me*. But it is clear that between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw. We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves. . . . We see then that we are dealing with a fluctuating material. The same object being sometimes treated as a part of me, at other times simply as mine, and then again as if I had nothing to do with it at all. [James (1890), vol. I, pg. 291]

For example, a person is usually inclined to regard the hair on his head as part of "me" – until it is lying on the floor of the barbershop. So, is the hair on your head part of your Self or is it not? Does getting a haircut change you essentially so that your Self after a haircut is not the same as your Self before you walked through the barbershop door? Most of us most of the time would probably say no. But sometimes from some people the answer might be yes – let us say perhaps a novice entering the Buddhist priesthood or a Marine Corps recruit just entering boot camp; in both cases, an initial haircut is part of an important ritual *designed* to make a person feel like he has become or is becoming a different person. René Descartes went so far as to reject the idea his own body was part of his Self [Descartes (1641)]. The Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius wrote,

> Whatever this is that I am, it is a bit of flesh and a little breath and the governing Reason. [Aurelius (c. 175 AD), Book II, pg. 26]

Your concept of your Self is your concept of your *Existenz*, and sometimes you change this concept. So it was that in 1 Corinthians 13:11 Paul could write, "*When* I became a man . . .".

If you look for them, it is not all that difficult to find puzzling questions of the "who am I?" and "what am I?" sort. Most of us most of the time do not bother with such introspections and take our Selves for granted, yet such questions about the Self are there nonetheless. What then should we expect when we probe similar questions of *Existenz* about the rather larger Object on the other side of that "me" and "not-me" real division: the world?

2. The Noumenal World

Figure 1 depicts one model of the phenomenon of being-a-human-being. Critical epistemology calls this the Organized Being model. *Nous*, *psyche*, and *soma* represent three logical divisions of Objects constituting holistic human *Existenz*. *Nous* pertains to phenomena of mind, *soma* to phenomena of body, and *psyche* to animating principles of a thorough-going reciprocity of *nous* and *soma* (which coexist in time) necessary to complete the constitution of a holistic real unity in mind-body co-*Existenz*.

[1] I add this qualifier here because there are certain heartbreaking tragedies encountered in life – such as the death of a child – that are bereaving and incomprehensible. Wanting to know a "why" for such things is one of the most vexing of the perennial questions that have always consternated people. This treatise would be remiss if it did not try to address such questions. As a preview, what I am thinking about in this regard is an old proverb that some date back to the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 455 BC). In popular form, it proclaims, "Only the good die young."

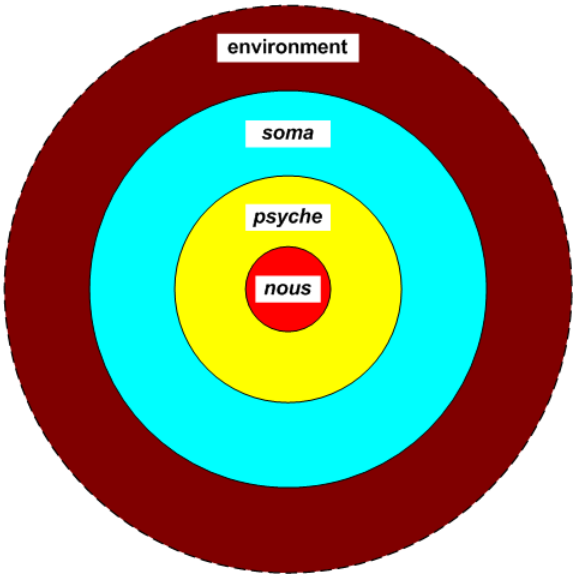

Figure 1: Critical epistemology's Organized Being model.

In Critical epistemology there can be no objectively valid *real* division of mind and body. This is because all of one's experience of human beings as objects is experience of a single thing – the person – and the idea of any real *ontological* division between mind and body is an idea beyond the horizon of human experience. Thus the idea of any real mind-body division is not objectively valid. However, this does not prevent one from making a merely mathematical (logical) *classification* of different phenomena of human *Existenz*, and this mathematical classification is what is to be construed from figure 1.

Nous and *psyche* are supersensible (but not supernatural) objects. These ideas contain all concepts of *homo noumenal* aspects of being-a-human-being. As mathematical objects, *nous* and *psyche* are Slepian secondary quantities (beyond the horizon of human experience). They have epistemological significance but no ontological significance whatsoever. *Soma*, on the other hand, is an idea of a sensible object, i.e., an idea of a Slepian principal quantity, and contains under it all concepts of *homo phaenomenal* aspects of being-a-human-being. Figure 2 provides a depiction of this concept structure in the Organized Being model and how the mathematical objects *nous*, *soma*, and *psyche* are used to understand the empirical Self (i.e., the human being understood as an object in Nature). In figure 2, Objects are represented by circles; the lines connecting them detail specific categories of understanding by which they are conceptually organized and combined [Wells (2009), chap. 5].

All three objects (*nous*, *soma*, and *psyche*) pertain to your *Existenz*. *Nous* and *psyche* fall within your concept of "me"; the environment falls squarely within your concept of "not-me"; *soma*, on the other hand, falls some-where, some-when, and some-what in between "me" and "not-me" (as explained in the previous section). *Soma* and environment are sensible Objects "in the world," but what does this phrase mean?

The term "the world" as used in Critical epistemology refers to the "what" (*Dasein*) of all-that-exists. This is its broadest connotation, used in both science and Critical theology. When it is used in *science*, it is understood in a restricted context: "world" means the composition of the mathematical entirety of all appearances (objects of experience) plus the unifying ideas of science (theories) that offer to explain connections among appearances. In this context, the word "universe" is a synonym for "world"; in philosophical treatises the Latin word *mundo* ("world") is likewise a synonym. (The English word "mundane" is derived from *mundo*). World as *mundo* pertains to the matter of *Existenz*; the form of *Existenz*, as we understand this *Existenz*, is signified by another word: Nature. Nature is the idea of a "world model" – which is to say, it is the idea of *unity in all speculations* regarding all-that-exists.

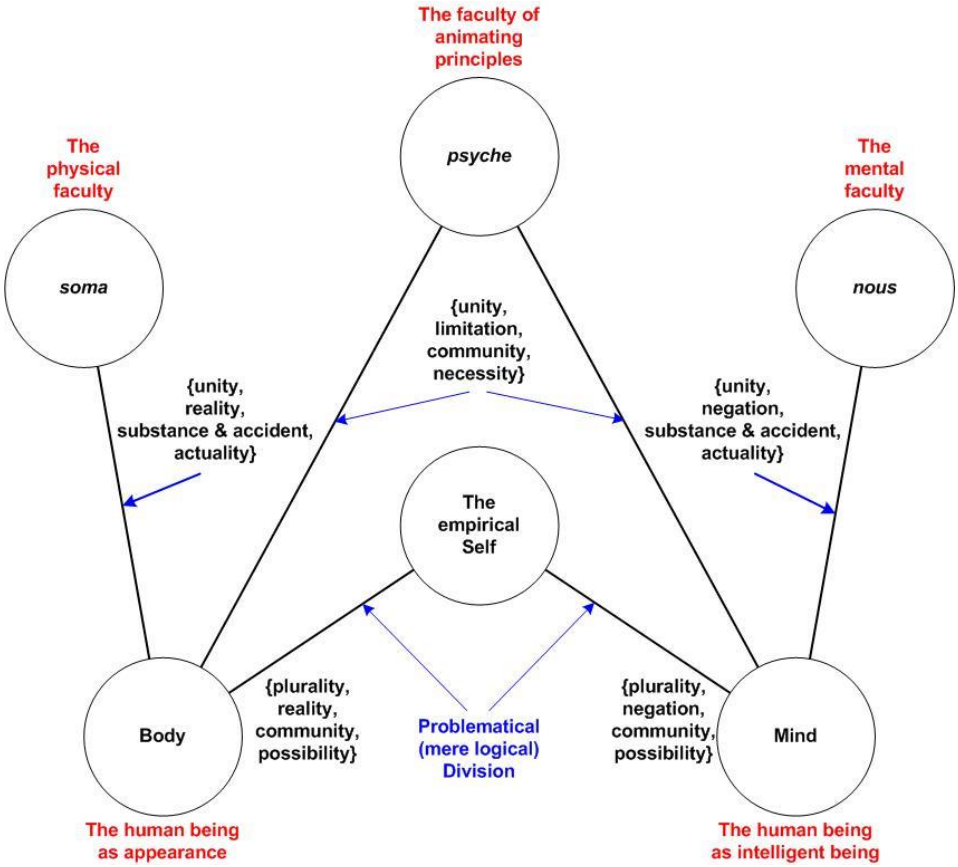

Figure 2: Concept structure of the Organized Being model and its determinant judgments by categories of understanding [Wells (2006)].

When used in theology, the word "world" is sometimes given a wider context. Science by definition is restricted to studying and developing doctrines for objectively valid concepts of natural phenomena. It seeks a unity of understanding for the "world models" (Natures) of different people's understandings of natural phenomena. But in theology, again by definition, the idea of *super*nature is introduced and added to the doctrine. Supernature regarded as an Object is an object entirely outside of the scope of science, which can make *no* objectively valid statements about supernature whatsoever – including a *categorical* statement "supernature and the supernatural do not exist." In theology, supernature is an object of faith; in science it is not an object at all. Many philosophers, including Kant, try to avoid contextual confusion by using phrases such as "outside the world" or "beyond the world" to refer to any idea of *Existenz* that includes supernatural objects or refers to supernature. For example, Kant's 1785 treatise on moral theory opens with the statement,

> It is not possible to think of anything at all in the world, yes or beyond it as well, that could be held to be good without restriction except a *good will*. [Kant (1785) 4: 393]

In theology, *logically* valid statements about supernature are made but *only* in regard to *mathematical* objects – that is, pure noumena of Slepian's facet B – and the objective validity of every such statement is only *mathematical* validity because the objects never have more than *subjectively* sufficient reasons for their conceptualization. In some cases – for example, Spinoza's *The Ethics* [Spinoza (1677)] – this logico-mathematical dialectic is plain to see. *The Ethics* is laid out as a series of definitions, propositions, proofs, corollaries, and scholia (explanatory comments following a proof). In other cases, the argument's logico-mathematical nature is almost invisible – for example, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* [Hegel (1807)].

In theology the idea of the *Dasein* of God is admitted and God is an Object of *faith*. If, then, one uses the term "world" to mean the "what" of all-that-exists, theology expands the scope of the term "the world" beyond its connotation in science. Accordingly, more caution must be used when employing this term. Otherwise one runs too great a risk of confounding meanings in expositions of theological doctrine. This risk is exceptionally great in all ontology-centered theologies and philosophies, but it is not entirely absent even in epistemology-centered theologies and philosophies. It even tripped up Kant when he confounded his ideas of "the categorical imperative" and "the moral law within me" [Kant (1788)].

Strictly speaking, the world-as-we-know-it is a world-of-appearances. The objectivity function in the synthesis in continuity reifies the world-of-appearances [Wells (2009), chap. 7]. No person ever has an experience of "the world *per se*"; the world *per se* is a noumenon and understandings of its *Existenz* are secondary quantities of mathematics. No serious philosopher doubts the validity of its *Dasein*, but its *Existenz* has been greatly debated (especially by ontology-centered philosophers). I'm fairly sure you are likely to think, "I know what the world is," and regard "What is the world?" as a pretty silly question. But let us take a quick peek at some of the different answers different eminent thinkers have put forth.

For Spinoza, God and nature are one and the same thing. God is everything that exists and all things are an affection of him [Marías (1967), pg. 233]. Taoism has a very similar idea but does not personify the idea of God. Spinoza argued,

> Proposition 24: The essence of things produced by God does not involve existence. [Spinoza (1677), pg. 49]

"Things produced by God" includes you, me, and, generally, the entire universe. Spinoza is vague about what he means by "essence" but he leaves us in no doubt that he means your individual existence, my individual existence, and, in fact, the individual existence of everything but God is *substantially* unreal:

> Corollary: Particular things are nothing but affections of the attributes of God; that is, modes wherein the attributes of God find expression in a definite and determinate way. [*ibid*.]

This is a rigidly materialistic and deterministic view somewhat darker than even the one in Genesis:

> By the sweat of your face you will eat bread till you return onto the ground, for out of it have you been taken, for you are dust and unto dust you return. [Genesis 3:19]

For Spinoza, even this "dust that we are and to which we will return" is substantially unreal. In my opinion, one could hardly ask for a better proof of the proposition, "Hogwash exists." Your opinion might differ. Nonetheless, Spinoza was a very influential guy whose philosophy strongly influenced those of Leibniz, Christian Wolff and the Wolffian school of rationalism – the school in which young Kant was reared until his "dogmatic slumber" was interrupted by Hume [Kant (1783) 4: 260].

For Berkeley, physical matter does not exist and all perceptions and representations of nature are representations made by one's *spiritual* Self [Berkeley (1712)]. For him, nothing exists buts spirits and God. God is the One who acts upon spirits and creates a sort of immaterial world for them. Human beings "live, move, and exist in God" [Marías (1967), pg. 257]. His philosophy allows that you and I do individually exist but do so in a spirit-world "in" God, not in a physically material world. This isn't an especially strange view for a cleric to hold (Berkeley became Bishop of Cloyne in 1734) but he found it hard to sell this view to his fellow Britons. In defense of his theory he wrote,

> I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny is that which *philosophers* call Matter or corporeal substance. And in doing of this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I

> dare say, will never miss it. [Berkeley (1712), pg. 276]

Berkeley allowed the reality of the existence of "the mind"; when Hume later attacked and killed this idea too, the wiseguys of Great Britain dismissed both men with the quip, "No matter, never mind."

Berkeley's idea of "the world" is not-inconsistent with the epistemological insistence that we *know* objects only as appearances. The difference between his view and Kant's is that Berkeley ascribes *ontological* significance to the *Existenz* of appearances and Critical epistemology ascribes only epistemological and practical significance for our *understanding* of objects of sensuous intuitions containing *materia sensibus* of receptivity. As Kant put it, objects conform to our cognition and not the other way around [Kant (1787) B: xvi]. He wrote,

> *Nature* is the *Dasein* of things insofar as that is determined according to general laws. If nature meant the *Dasein* of things *in themselves* we could never know it, either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. [Kant (1783) 4: 294]

It is in accordance with these general laws of judgmentation and understanding that each one of us *makes his own model* of Nature out of his personal experience; it is not-incorrect to say each of us *creates his own world* insofar as each of us *make* our own understanding of the world-of-appearances. Berkeley, on the other hand, holds that God creates a spiritual "world of ideas" *for* us.

Many ontology-centered philosophers (and scientists and laypersons) object to the idea of Kant's world-of-appearances. For example, Joad wrote,

> To many philosophers the distinction between appearance and reality has always seemed to be inadmissible. If a thing exists, they would affirm, it is real, and no one thing can be more real than another. There cannot, in fact, be degrees of reality. However, most of those who have thought fit to make the distinction have insisted that there is no gulf between the two realms; that reality not only underlies but manifests itself in appearance, as the spirit of a personality may inform a face or a general policy the measures of a Government. You have only to study the phenomenal world sufficiently closely, they maintain, and you will discern the nature of that which, while it transcends, is nevertheless immanent in it.
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> Kant, however, refuses to adopt this method of resolving the difficulties raised by the distinction between appearance and reality. Closely to study the world of phenomena is not for him to discern the outlines of reality in a flux of shifting appearances, for the reason that reality is in no sense given in the world of phenomena and cannot, therefore, be disclosed by a study of it. . . .
>
> Hence the distinction between appearance and reality is presented by Kant in a particularly obnoxious form. To put the point in another way, Kant's philosophy more than that of any other thinker is exposed to the criticism that, if we do not know reality, we have no ground for postulating it as a part cause underlying the world of appearance. [Joad (1938), pp. 395-396]

Perhaps you might have noticed the underlying flaw in Joad's argument, although a person who looks at the world from an ontology-centered personal metaphysic might not. Joad has here *reified reality* – that is to say, he has made "reality" a "thing." In point of fact, Kant never says anywhere that "reality" causes *anything*. The word "reality" has always been a troublesome word in ontology-centered philosophy because, in point of fact, philosophers have no definition of what they mean by it beyond a vague "that which exists." An ontology-centered thinker *must* eventually reduce "everything" to some underlying Entity (Parmenides' *ón* [Marías, Julian (1967), pp. 20-24]), and the way ontology-centered philosophy romances about "reality" tries to force "everything" to fit into one grand Thing which they call "reality." But this is not only a purely mathematical formalism; it is a viciously impractical notion because it can not actually be *used* to *do* anything, i.e., to reduce anything to practice. An idea that cannot be used in practice is correctly called a *useless* idea. The *practical* idea of reality is that it is a *context*; it is the transcendentally necessary universal context in which all ideas of real objects cohere as limitations.

Empirical reality means objective validity in the conscious representation of objects. *Noumenal* reality means everything that is positively presented in one's understanding. *Phenomenal* reality means everything that is positively presented in one's senses. *Objective* reality means *specific* transcendental affirmations and negations that delimit an object. These are the four *practicing contexts* that the general notion of Reality understands.

It might perhaps be too simple a question for the tastes of an erudite scholar like Joad, but what is "the reality" of "the kindergarten class of Kuna elementary school"? Well, it is Timmy and Susie and Johnny and Mary and &etc. – i.e. the five-year-olds who go to school at Kuna Elementary. Next year "the kindergarten class of Kuna elementary school" will be a "different reality" because the children will not be the same children. And this is *a context*, nothing more and nothing less. To say it is anything more or "deeper" than this leads to hopelessly obscure mysticism. ***Every* thing is real in some contexts, unreal in other contexts, and non-real in still other contexts**. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck are real as cartoon characters; you don't expect to see either of them show up at your son's tee-ball game. But if someone dressed up in a Mickey Mouse costume did, the 4- to 6-year old children would be thrilled.

Children at this age and younger are going through a number of very interesting stages of development leading to how they eventually come to understand nature and the world [Piaget (1929; 1930)]. Theirs is a world of magic and of objects directly influencing each other without spatial contact or intelligible causal connection ("participation"). Theirs is a world of animism where everything is endowed with life and consciousness. Theirs is a world in which human beings control the creation and conduct of all things, and that these things are alive and governed not by physical laws but, rather, by moral laws.

Lest you are tempted to smile and dismiss this childish understanding of his world, it should be noted that magic, participation, animism, and artificialism are also or have also been exhibited in many cultures. We find it on display, for example, in the writings of Homer:

> There he slew Thersilochus and Mydon and Astypylus and Mnesus and Thrasius and Aenius and Ophelestes; and still more of the Paeonians would swift Achilles have slain if the deep-eddying river had not grown angry and called to him in the likeness of a man, sending a voice out of the deep eddy: "Achilles, beyond men you are in might, and beyond men you do deeds of evil; for ever do the gods themselves protect you. If the son of Cronos has granted you to slay all the men of Troy, at least drive them out of my stream and do your grim work on the plain. For full are my lovely streams with the dead, nor can I in any way pour my waters out into the bright sea" [Homer (c. 8th-7th cent. BC), vol. 2, Bk. 21, pg. 421].

For the Greeks of classical Helena, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not regarded as myth or entertaining fiction; they were regarded as *history*. It has been hypothesized that animism (the belief that objects possess a spiritual essence and life) is the oldest form of religion. These examples show us that children do not "grow out of" their childish egocentrism automatically; that development relies in part on their education and socialization.

If human objective knowledge is knowledge of appearances, what prevents Kant's world of appearances from being hopelessly subjective and illusory? Why should we think our modern sophistication in understanding the world isn't just another species of childish magic and participation? After all, the most important parts of physics – the "four fundamental forces of nature" – can seem like magic to the young learner; science doctrine merely eschews any naked invoking of spirits or animism. Physicists speak of particles "exchanging" something called bosons (a sophisticated form of "participation"); gravity is said to be an "attraction" between two masses; many things about electricity, magnetism, and quantum mechanics certainly appear magical to the student first learning about them. These objects – which are extremely well established in physics and, quite frankly, with which I have no quarrels – are lodged deep in Slepian's facet B of secondary quantities. But, as well established as they are and as unlikely as it seems today that someday physics' theories will be overturned by new experience, every honest and

competent physicist will admit that we are not *certain* our theories are correct [Feynman (1965)]. A person who cannot cope with uncertainty will not be a good scientist. Historian Will Durant wrote,

> the glories of science have their roots in the absurdities of magic. For since magic often failed, it became of advantage to the magician to discover natural operations by which he might help the super-natural forces to produce the desired event. Slowly the natural means came to predominate, even though the magician, to preserve his standing with the people, concealed these natural means as well as he could and gave the credit to supernatural magic . . . In this way magic gave birth to the physician, the chemist, the metallurgist, and the astronomer. [Durant (1935), pg. 68]

This is where the requirement for *objective validity* is important. It is a bit misleading in some ways to speak of a "the" world of appearances because "this" world *taken in its entirety* is different for you than it is for me because you and I have different experiences. However and despite this, there are a great number of concepts and ideas about "it" that you and I have in common inasmuch as our judgments agree. Indeed, when we talk with each other about "it" what we mean *practically* is precisely our common subset of concepts and cognitions. Where we disagree about "it" we encounter concepts that are sufficiently different for you to hold-it-to-be-true that I am wrong while I hold-it-to-be-true that you are wrong. Mere disagreement does not necessarily imply one of us is right and one of us is wrong; we could *both* be wrong. Empirical knowledge is always contingent in its Modality; something could happen tomorrow that upsets one's confidence about what he knows about any object. Personally, I remember that happening a lot when I was a student studying quantum mechanics. It happens in science with surprising frequency [cf. Bryson (2003), Kuhn (1970)]. Mathematical knowledge of nature is always speculative because its objects are secondary quantities and we cannot find sensuous evidence for their verification.

All this is to say that for us there is no such thing as Absolute Truth – apodictic and absolutely certain truth – about the world or the nature of its phenomenal objects, and no knowledge at all of objects of sense as "true Entities" – what Kant called a *Ding an sich Selbst* or a thing-regarded-as-it-is-in-itself. We can know something exists (*Dasein*) because our senses are affected and reflective judgment renders a judgment of perception; *how* it exists (*Existenz*), however, is a determination made by the process of determining judgment and the laws of the transcendental Logic of the phenomenon of mind – what Kant called a judgment of experience.

This is the proper way to understand the idea of Kant's world of appearances. What we know of objects of sense are objects *as they are represented* by the laws governing the human power of cognition. It is different with objects of mathematics. This is because mathematical objects are not objects originating from affection of external sense; they are objects we *define*. They *are* what we *think* they are *because we define them to be that way*.

There are some things a person can know "for a fact" (beyond reasonable doubt). For example, *I* know "for a fact" that I woke up this morning. *You*, however, just have to take my word for it if you are to hold-it-to-be-true; for all you *know*, I might be in the habit of sleeping until noon and just don't want other people to think I'm lazy. More likely, you couldn't care less what time I woke up today. Objective validity *pragmatically* means what William James said it means:

> "Grant an idea or belief to be true," [Pragmatism] says, "what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life? How will the truth be realized? What experiences will be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?"
>
> The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: *True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not*. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known-as. [James (1907), pp. 88-89]

Objective validity at its root means that what *I* know-to-be-true about an object of experience is what *you also* would know-to-be-true *if* you came to experience the effects of the object *in the same way* I did. This is why science demands that findings be *reproducible* by other researchers. If it is reproducible, that fact eliminates effects of subjectivity special to one particular observer, keeping what is common in the laws governing the process of reflective judgment for all human beings. This is the practical meaning of James' "assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify." Seen in this way, the object might be called the "intersect" of people's experiences of its effects.

The idea of "the world of appearances" does have consequences for theology, particularly when troublesome perennial questions are at issue. Let us look at one of them.

3. The Question of an Afterlife

The *I* of transcendental apperception is implicit in one's every personal action regardless of whether the action is cognitive, affective, or practical. The *I* is logically implicit in every predication: *I* think *x*; *I* feel *y*; *I* will do *z*. But every person's knowledge of his or her *I* of transcendental apperception is knowledge of one's own *Dasein* without knowledge of one's own *Existenz*. Knowledge of the latter is called knowledge of one's Self. In terms of logic, *I* is the transcendental Subject in all predications of representation. Your Self is the Object of your cognitions of your own *Existenz*.

Cognizance of your *I* can be roughly described as a sense of your own personal "aliveness." Once an infant comes to draw that all-important real division between "me" and "not-me," it is to this sense of aliveness that all its predications of its Self are logically referred. Indeed – and as is discussed in chapter 10 – all our pragmatic and technical cognitions of "life" depend on this referral for their original ground. Reber & Reber are correct to say,

> [Life is] the collective total of those properties that differentiate the living from the non-living. The unsatisfying circularity of this definition will have to suffice for now. It is said with truth that biologists only began making progress when they gave up trying to define this term. [Reber & Reber (2001), "life"]

Of course, this "unsatisfying circularity" *is* unsatisfying and too much so. No ontology-centered metaphysic can relieve this unsatisfaction without losing itself in mysticism. Critical epistemology, on the other hand, provides a *Realerklärung* (real explanation) for "life," albeit this explanation "takes a bit of explaining" when you first encounter it. This is why I postpone that discussion until chapter 10. For the present discussion, it is informative to take a brief look at Piaget's findings about children's conceptions of "life" because we all carry these early notions with us into our adult lives. He writes:

> It will be of interest to complete the preceding research by a corresponding study of the ideas children understand by the word "life." There is, indeed, nothing to show that the concepts of "life" and of "consciousness" are completely synonymous any more than they are to an adult. But it seems that the idea of "life" is in certain respects more familiar to the child than the ideas understood by the words "knowing" and "feeling." . . .
>
> The results obtained have again clearly shown the four stages previously defined in connection with the attributing of consciousness to things[2]. During the first stage everything is regarded as living which has activity or a function or use of any sort. During the second stage, life is defined by movement, all movement being regarded as in a certain degree spontaneous. During the third stage, the child distinguishes spontaneous movement from movement imposed by an outside agent and life is identified with the former. Finally, in the fourth stage, life is restricted either to animals or to animals and plants. [Piaget (1929), pp. 194-195]

[2] These stages are: 1) all things are conscious; 2) things that can move are conscious; 3) things that can move of their own accord are conscious; and 4) consciousness is restricted to animals. [Piaget (1929), pp. 171-193]

It is probably a bit unflattering to Aristotle to observe that his explanation of "life" wasn't all that much more advanced than that of a little child. He wrote,

> We say then, assuming a fresh starting point for our inquiry, that that which has soul is distinguished from that which has not by living. But the word living is used in many senses, and we say that a thing lives if any one of the following is present in it – mind, sensation, movement or rest in space, besides the movement implied in nutrition and decay or growth. [Aristotle (335-322 BC), pg. 75 (413^a1)]

You should note that both the child's and Aristotle's explanations of "life" are cognitions of *Existenz* applied to objects of appearance. They are, if you will, merely "signposts" for recognition of "life." They are descriptions, not definitions, of "life" in terms by which "life" is *practically* characterized. A *definition* is a sufficiently distinct and precisely delimited concept. A *description* is a concept constructed by combining successive presentations of empirically given characteristics. Only objects of mathematics can be *defined*; objects of experience can only be *described* and, sometimes, *explained*.

Since the days of Claude Bernard, biology and medical science have, quite correctly, eschewed attempts to define "life" and have instead, like Aristotle, devoted their efforts to understanding the *appearance* of life. When we as adults describe something as being alive or as living, what we are doing is labeling its appearances in accordance with a *convention* that has actually changed very little from Aristotle's day. We say a mosquito is "alive" because it moves, it feeds, it reproduces, and it *seems* to us to act spontaneously. In recent decades biology has refined its "signposts of life" inasmuch as research since the 1950s has disclosed newer signposts that can be accurately applied to things *everyone has already agreed by convention* to call "living." Biology's new technical signposts are as follows:

> **life:** Complex physico-chemical systems whose two main peculiarities are (1) storage and replication of molecular information in the form of nucleic acid, and (2) the presence of (or in viruses perhaps merely the potential for) enzyme catalysts. Without enzyme catalysts a system is inert, not alive; however, such systems may still count as biological (e.g. all viruses away from their hosts). Other familiar properties of living systems such as nutrition, respiration, reproduction, excretion, sensitivity, locomotion, etc. are all dependent in some way upon their exhibiting the two above-mentioned properties. [Thain & Hickman (2004), "life"]

That this technical explanation is predicated upon a mere *naming convention* is splendidly exhibited by the ambiguous status accorded to viruses we find embedded within this dictionary entry.

For most ordinary everyday circumstances we can make these descriptions suffice. But when the topic turns to religion and theology their underlying ambiguities give us pause because of "life's" contradictory opposite: death. When one says, "*x* is dead," what one practically means is "*x* is-not alive." A little child has no concept of "death" until and unless it encounters its first experience of the subject. To say, "*x* is not-alive" does not mean precisely the same thing as to say, "*x* is-not alive" when the context of "death" enters into the predication. The difference is in the copula. In the first case, the predication is assertive, i.e., "*x is*"; in the latter, the predication is negating, i.e., "*x* is-not." The predication, "*x* is not-alive" means that, whatever else *x* may be, "being alive" is *not* predicated of its characteristics. Thus, Bram Stoker's Dracula was "undead" instead of alive or dead. To say a corpse is not-alive is an objectively valid assertion made about its *appearance*. But when we say, "John is-not alive" or "John is dead" this typically is meant as a transcendental negation being applied to "John *per se*." We mean to apply this predication somehow to "John's essence" but, in epistemological fact, we can apply it *with objective validity* only to the *appearance* of John – and this is a predication of John's *Existenz*, not his *Dasein*. The predication can be applied to John as an object of the natural world, but there is no predication we can make with objective validity that applies to John as an object of supernature. Even the New Testament story of Jesus' resurrection describes Jesus as an object of nature:

> While they were speaking of these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, "May

> you have peace." But because they were terrified and frightened, they imagined that they were seeing a spirit. So he said to them: "Why are you troubled, and why have doubts come up in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. But while they were still not believing for sheer joy and amazement, he said to them: "Do you have something there to eat?" So they handed him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it before their eyes. [Luke 24:36-43]

As hairsplitting as all this discussion of the appearance of a person vs. the person *per se* might seem to you, the distinction is extremely important for theology and for religious faith. For most people – possibly the vast majority of people – there is something sublimely awful about even the mere contemplation of death, whether your own or that of a loved one. A notion that death means the absolute end of you, your passage into not only non-*Existenz* but non-*Dasein*, is a notion that seems to negate any purpose or meaning to your life. It seems to make everything you are, everything you know, everything you have done, and everything you have ever felt useless and futile. Very, very few people can tolerate this sort of disturbance to one's equilibrium when the prospect of death is staring one squarely in the face (as opposed to being some sort of mere intellectual exercise). Although it is uncertain who first said it, the aphorism, "There are no atheists in foxholes," has been around for quite awhile.

The idea of an afterlife is a concept of transcendental denial of the end of your own personal *Dasein*. Of course, a person almost cannot help but to try to understand this concept with further concepts about what *Existenz* in the afterlife will be like. But all such concepts, and that of an afterlife itself, are speculations about pure noumena, including all judgments having to do with so-called "near-death experiences." The naked fact is that you will either *know* that there is an afterlife after you die or you will never know at all. Before you die, you may hold-it-to-be-true that there is an afterlife, or you may hold-it-to-be-false that there is an afterlife, or you may hope-there-is an afterlife, or you may hope-there is-not an afterlife. Whatever of these you choose, your choice will be based upon subjectively sufficient reasons, not objectively sufficient ones. Once again we encounter the primacy of faith over belief.

Perhaps the most common definition of afterlife, or life after death, is "continuing *Dasein* of an essential part of one's identity or stream of consciousness after the death of the physical body." In part, the idea of an afterlife serves to reestablish and maintain one's equilibrium after the awful disturbance to it that the understanding of your own mortality or the death of someone dear to you brings. This is an immediately practical benefit of the idea. But perhaps in some greater measure, the idea of an afterlife expresses a *hope* that human life – or, at least, your own – does have some meaning or purpose.

Such a hope is strongly emphasized in the Abrahamic religions; there are other religions that emphasize it much less or even not at all. Some societies – for example the BaMbuti Pygmies of the Congo – have a simple agnosticism with regard to the idea of an afterlife. The basic attitude they take is that they do not know if there is one or not and so do not speculate about it – a form of type-α compensation behavior. Turnbull quoted what one of the BaMbuti elders, a man named Moke, had to say of it:

> He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest." [Turnbull (1962), pp. 92-93]

Old Moke seems to me to be wiser in some ways than some "civilized" theologians I have met.

The Hellenic Greeks were more gloomy about death and afterlife. For them, your "shade" passed into the underworld – the realm of Hades – and carried on with an *Existenz* there that could hardly be described as "happy." Durant summarized the Hellenic speculation in the following way:

> After death the soul, separated from the body, dwells as an insubstantial shade in Hades. In Homer only spirits guilty of exceptional or sacrilegious offenses suffer punishment there; all the rest, saints and sinners alike, share an equal fate of endless prowling about dark Pluto's realm[3]. In the course of Greek history a belief arises, among the poorer classes, in Hades as a place of expiation for sins; Aeschylus pictures Zeus as judging the dead there and punishing the guilty, though no word is said about rewarding the good. Only rarely do we find mention of the Blessed Isles, or the Elysian Fields, as heavens for a few heroic souls. The thought of the gloomy fate awaiting nearly all the dead darkens Greek literature and makes Greek life less bright and cheerful than is fitting under such a sun. [Durant (1939), pg. 312]

Many things about Hellenic Greek burial and funeral customs were aimed at making sure ghosts of the dead did not hang around to afflict the living.

Today's major religions hold divers views about the afterlife, and important differences in doctrine are found even among denominations of the same major religion. These range from rejection of the idea of any afterlife (e.g. the Sadducees, a Jewish sect that flourished from the 2nd century BC to 70 AD) to reincarnation (Hinduism and Buddhism) to continuing *Existenz* in another "plane" of *Existenz*. There is also a tremendous variety of religious speculations regarding such ideas as souls and partial souls.

However, the fundamental assumption in all of them that do not reject the idea of an afterlife is that of continuing *Dasein* of individuals. This, in turn, necessitates a *Realerklärung* for "life." Discussing this point also requires very careful attention be paid to the distinction between one's knowledge of appearances vs. transcendent speculations regarding a human being as a *Ding an sich Selbst*.

The Talmud contains an interesting doctrine of "re-schooling." According to this doctrine,

> The Talmud offers a number of thoughts relating to the afterlife. After death, the soul is brought for judgment. Those who have led pristine lives enter immediately into the *Olam Haba* or world to come. Most do not enter the world to come immediately, but now experience a period of review of their earthly actions and they are made aware of what they have done wrong. Some view this period as being a "re-schooling", with the soul gaining wisdom as one's errors are reviewed. Others view this period to include spiritual discomfort for past wrongs. At the end of this period, not longer than one year, the soul then takes its place in the world to come. Although discomforts are made part of certain Jewish conceptions of the afterlife, the concept of "eternal damnation", so prevalent in other religions, is not a tenet of the Jewish afterlife. According to the Talmud, extinction of the soul is reserved for a far smaller group of malicious and evil leaders, either whose very evil deeds go way beyond norms, or who lead large groups of people to utmost evil. [Anonymous, Wikipedia article on "afterlife"]

Another frequent religious theme is resurrection of the dead. Again there is a variety of postulates concerning *Existenz* after resurrection ranging from resurrection as a purely spiritual being to a resumed *Existenz* as the person is now or was at some point in his life. Some speculations posit that the resurrection is a resurrection of body-and-soul, while others hold that the soul separates and continues on without a need for the body. In Christianity this latter thesis arose during the 18th century European Enlightenment within the pseudo-philosophy of Deism and is not supported by scripture.

Most denominations of Christianity adhere to a doctrine of body-and-soul resurrection. This is a doctrine not-inconsistent with the Critical requirement for no real division between mind and body. Islam also has a doctrine of resurrection. There are passages in the Quran (17:10; 18:103-106) that explicitly state there will be a resurrection, as well as stating that Hell will be a punishment for some. Most, but not all, denominations within the Abrahamic religions see the afterlife in terms of reward and punishment for one's conduct in life.

[3] Hades is the original name for the Greek god of the underworld. Later Hades gradually evolved into Pluto around the 5th century BC (who was also, interestingly enough, the god of wealth), and "Hades" became reserved as the name of Pluto's realm.

Most denominations within Hinduism and Buddhism, with their doctrines of reincarnation/rebirth, also regard "the next life" in terms of reward and punishment according to one's *karma*. Narayanan writes,

> Most Hindus believe in the immortality of the soul and in reincarnation. . . . A person's death is followed by rebirth, and the cycle of birth and death continues until one attains liberation. Rebirth is perceived as suffering, and the happiness one has on earth is said to be temporary. Liberation is conceptualized in several ways, including as ineffable and beyond words; as a loving union with the supreme being; as losing one's consciousness in the supreme being; and as being in the heavenly abode of Vishnu [Narayanan (2005), pg. 93].

Eckel tells us,

> By the time of the Buddha, 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. Rebirth can occur as a human being, a deity, ghost, or animal; or else a person may be reborn to punishment in Hell. . . . 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. The reverse applies to those who perform bad actions. Before they can be reincarnated in a different form, the worst offenders have to eradicate their demerits by suffering in one of the layers of Hell, which are ranked according to the severity of their punishments. . . . Just as the inhabitants of Hell can wipe out their sins and be reborn as humans once more, those who rise to divinity can exhaust their merit and slip back into the human realm. No matter how high a person rises on the scale of reincarnation, there is always a danger of slipping back down. No state of reincarnation is permanent. [Eckel (2005), pp. 194-195]

While it is usually unwise to try to pin Taoism down to any one definite description, afterlife doctrines are also found in it. Oldstone-Moore tells us,

> Chinese ideas about the soul and its fate date from ancient times, but were never organized into a single, definitive system. . . . Souls are made of the same vital material, *qi*, as all other things, and thus the boundaries between the living and the dead are relatively fluid. The *hun* soul is made of *yang qi* and represents the spiritual and intellectual aspects, the *po* [soul] consists of *yin qi*, which is the bodily animating principle. At death the *hun* soul departs from the body and ascends, the *po* soul sinks into the ground. . . . Beliefs about death and the afterlife draw from the various traditions of Chinese religion, and thus can encompass numerous – and, in some cases, apparently contradictory – notions about one's fate after death. In addition to being settled in the gravesite and in the ancestor tablets, the soul of the deceased is believed to descend into the Chinese underworld, or Hell, to be tried by the infernal judiciary. Important Buddhist concepts were integrated with indigenous Chinese ideas, including the idea of *karma* (an individual's balance of accumulated merits and demerits); the figure of Yama, the king of Hell; and the different punishment levels of Hell in which sinners suffer to redress their karmic imbalance before being reincarnated on earth. [Oldstone-Moore (2005), pp. 294-295]

As you can see, most afterlife doctrines mingle that earlier-mentioned root concept of a continuation of one's *Dasein* with concepts of *Existenz* pertaining to sin, virtue, and atonement/punishment. Doctrines of *eternal* hellish punishment tend to be confined to denominations found within Christianity and Islam.

One thing all of these ideas have in common is that they are all speculations pertaining to a human being as a *Ding an sich Selbst* (thing regarded as it is in itself). But *knowledge* of any *Ding an sich Selbst* is beyond the power of human cognition and such concepts lack objective validity. All human knowledge of experience is knowledge of appearances only; a *Ding an sich Selbst* beyond it is hidden in the fogbanks of Kant's broad and stormy sea [Kant (1787) B: 295]. Indeed, if knowledge beyond experience was possible for a human being, faith would be unnecessary and superfluous.

A second commonality in Abrahamic doctrines of sin, atonement, and punishment is that they often tend to describe God in terms more suited to a Mesopotamian despot than to a benign, compassionate, loving,

and all-powerful God. By doing so, they portray God in the image of Man rather than make Man an image of God. I think it is worth noting that in ancient civilizations the institutions of religion were usually in the hands of the rulers, and that kings often claimed to be gods themselves. Submission to and fear of a ruling military despot is an act of prudence and self-interest, but this carries no moral merit in terms of any idea of a community of humanity. As Rousseau put it,

> The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master unless he transforms strength into right and obedience into duty. Hence the right of the strongest . . . is really laid down as a fundamental principle. But are we never to have an explanation of this phrase? Force is a physical power, and I fail to see what moral effect it can have. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will – at most, an act of prudence. In what sense can it be called a duty? . . . If we must obey perforce there is no need to obey because we ought; and if we are not forced to obey, we are under no obligation to do so. Clearly the word "*right*" adds nothing to force: in this connection, it means absolutely nothing. [Rousseau (1762), pg. 5]

If God created you for some purpose and put you here, then he also made your beginning one of absolute naivety and innocence. He began you with a simple and credulous capacity for belief and placed you in circumstances where you yourself must *discover* faith through experience. He also made what you hold-to-be-true or hold-to-be-false matters of *your own personal choice* – choices you base upon reasons *you* find to be *subjectively* sufficient. Indeed, that human knowledge is knowledge of appearances, rather than things-regarded-as-they-are-in-themselves, *practically guarantees* you *and you alone* are empowered decide what you will have faith in and what you will not. It logically follows from this that: whatever divine purpose God might have for having created you, fulfillment of *his* purpose does not depend upon what choices *you* make. After all, can a man thwart God? Only consequences *for yourself* depend on *your* choices. You make *yourself* the person *you* choose to become by means of what you choose to do, how you choose to conduct yourself, and why you choose to do so *regardless of what others think and do*.

However, you are not placed in this world utterly without resources and aids that can help guide you in the choices you make. Chief among them are the aid and succor available to you *from other people*. The English word "succor" derives from the Latin verb *succurrere*, to hasten to the assistance or relief of anyone in difficulties. Not one of us would survive infancy without the succor we receive from parents or caregivers. Human beings as a species would not survive without the succor of our fellow humans. As Rousseau also wrote,

> I suppose men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation in the state of nature show [these obstacles'] power of resistance to be greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual for his maintenance in that state. That primitive condition can then subsist no longer, and the human race would perish unless it changed its manner of existence.
>
> But, as men cannot engender new forces, but only unite and direct existing ones, they have no other means of preserving themselves than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum of forces great enough to overcome the resistance. These they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power and cause to act in concert. [Rousseau (1762), pg. 13]

If God created you and put you here for some purpose, then he did so in such a way that necessity for receiving and giving of succor is part of the environment in which you live. This is nothing less than a *necessitation for community* among human beings. Does it not seem to logically follow, then, that living in community with one's fellow human beings can be regarded as an appearance of not merely a practical necessity but also as a possible image of a divine purpose?

As children we are, each one of us, ready and willing enough to *receive* the succor of those who care for us. We each depend on it, and it is easily observed that the child accords trust and what Piaget called "unilateral respect" to those from whom he receives it [Piaget (1932)]. But it is also easily observed that *giving* succor to others is something human beings *learn* from experience and learn little by little in small

steps. The moral lessons imparted by religions can be seen in this context as efforts to speed up this learning process. They are part of, but do not make up all of, the socialization of the child [*ibid*.].

A recurring concept darting in and about many ideas of an afterlife is this idea of *learning*. In Critical metaphysics, *to learn* is to add to or accommodate the structure of either the manifold of rules or the manifold of concepts or both. It *creates your Self*. The outcome of learning is called an *education*. We can define *education* as the acquisition, development or perfection of knowledge, skill, mental capability, practical character, or aesthetical taste by an individual. Seen in this way, we can speak of the idea of *learning as Self-creation*. Let us examine this idea and then look at it in the context of an afterlife.

4. Learning as Self-Creation

We are born affective beings who discover our objective worlds. We also remake our worlds to some degree, that degree varying from person to person. At a minimum, each of us remakes the world insofar as each of us *makes his individual person* through educational Self-development, development of personal habits, and development of interpersonal skills. Some of us remake the objective world by begetting and rearing the next generation or by teaching and partially molding them. Others set out upon the independency of their adult lives to change the world according to their own tastes and purposes. Many people seek no more than to find a place of their own in the world and to settle themselves into it as comfortably as they can, accommodating themselves more than trying to make the world accommodate to them. And some people embark upon their independency seeking to broadly or deeply remake the world so that it better accords with their ideals of perfection for all of humankind. For each of us, the passage through life can be likened to a voyage of discovery. Artist Eva Koleva Timothy wrote,

> The seed of greatness lies in each of us. Its cultivation is the labor of a lifetime. And yet . . . from the moment we are born, we inherit a gift so profound, so extraordinary, that it should never be taken for granted. This gift is simply our ability to know or to understand something today which we did not fathom the day before. In short, we are able to learn . . . and through learning we open the door to our most daring dreams. . . .
>
> True learning is innate and passionate. It requires neither coercion nor cajoling. It springs naturally from our desires to grow, to create, to master, and to make meaning of life. While composed of many interim accomplishments, it is less a destination or a diploma than an epic voyage taken over the course of a lifetime.
>
> As we embark upon that vast sea of learning, we may choose to row our way across in the straightest possible path to the other side. Or we can set sail, propelled over the waves by the winds of our imagination and the currents of creativity. In either case, there will be storms to weather, doldrums to deal with, and a constant realignment of our course over time. . . .
>
> As we lose ourselves in our learnings, we allow ourselves to become part of something greater than self. We begin to perceive the possible though presently invisible and it is this wonderful combination of purpose and perspective which conjures zephyrs of inspiration to bear us toward our dreams. [Timothy (2010), pg. 8]

What a person does with this gift of a capacity to learn varies widely. A learner acquires an aptitude for learning from Self inclinations, attitudes of parents and companions, and from the effectiveness teachers have in orienting learner affectivity either toward or away from it. Learning happens in a complex social environment illustrated in figure 3 [Wells (2014), chap. 11]. The effect of this environment – whether by accident or by intent – is stimulation of individuals' educational Self-developments. Figure 4 depicts this idea of educational Self-development in 2LAR form; I further explain this depiction below.

Capacity to learn does not appear to be a uniquely human ability; many mammalian species also seem to exhibit it. It does, however, appear to be the case that human beings exhibit this ability to a much greater extent than animals – great enough in fact to be called a distinguishing mark of being-a-human-being.

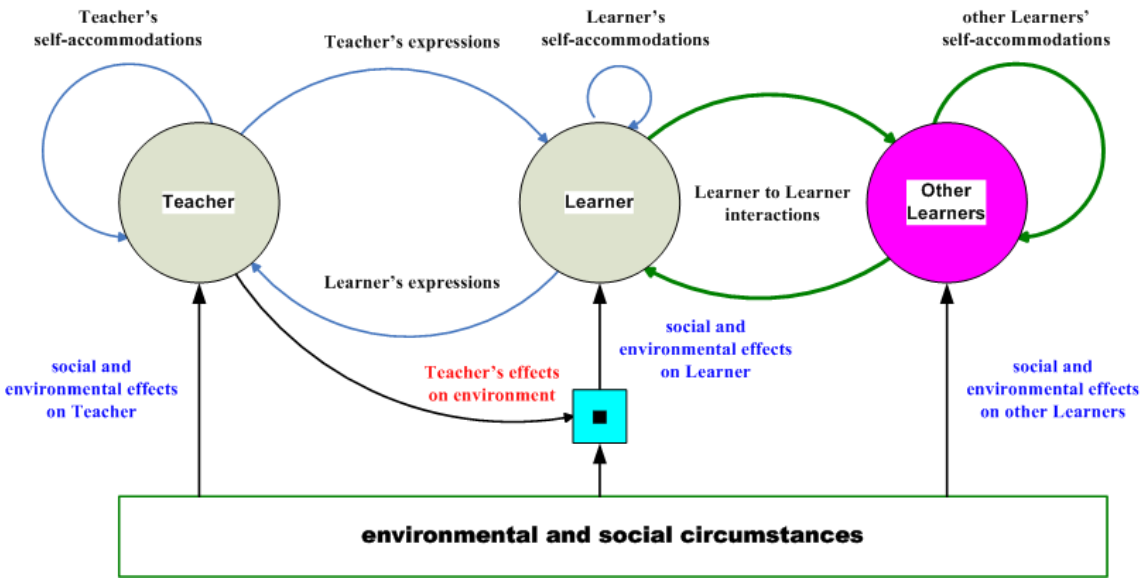

Figure 3: A learner's learning environment and social interpersonal interactions [Wells (2014), chap. 11].

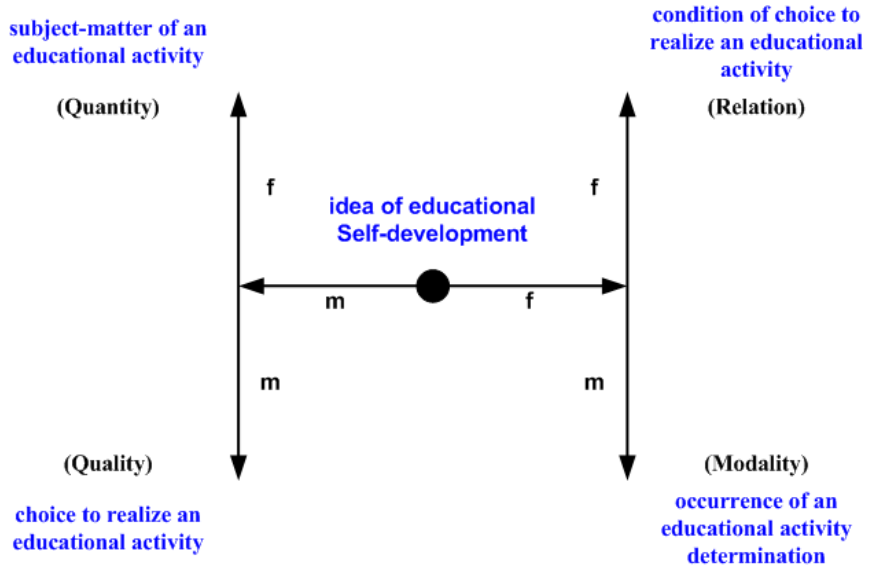

Figure 4: 2LAR of the idea of educational Self-development [Wells (2012), chap. 1].

Furthermore, every human Society undertakes to provide its young people with some sort of disciplined activity that attempts to guide, direct, and mold what its young people learn – whether by apprenticeship, formal schooling, moral training, religious upbringing, or through some combination of these. Societies also unintentionally stimulate learning through their institutions. For example, Mill convincingly argues that government and political institutions, whether intentionally or not, act as agencies of public education [Mill (1861), pp. 20-22]. This is because they cannot avoid stimulating educational Self-development activities in their citizens. Despite the apparent simplicity of figure 3, the human learning environment is perhaps the most complex one found in nature. Out of respect for the strength which habit exerts on people's thinking, it seems only prudent for me to more clearly explain the terms I use here to describe it.

To learn is to add to or accommodate the structure of either the manifold of rules or the manifold of concepts. As these manifolds are the practical determinations of *who a person is*, learning is essentially an

act of Self-creation. A learner is a person who acquires (comes to possess) some new objective knowledge, practical skill or aesthetical taste[4] as a result of an educating experience. An educating experience is an experience that produces as an effect the possession or further perfection of some item of objective knowledge, practical skill or aesthetical taste the person did not possess or possessed less perfectly prior to that experience. Formal schooling is one kind of educating experience but it is not the only kind. Human learning is an active process, by which I mean that it is effected through educational activities [Wells (2012), chap. 1]. To educate is to cause education to occur. A teacher is any person who, through communication or some other action, enables or stimulates or provokes a learner to learn something.

An educational activity is any activity by which an individual makes an undertaking to develop and perfect his own knowledge, skill, mental capabilities, practical character or aesthetical taste. Educational Self-development is the idea of an individual's determination of a choice to be or not to be educated through the undertaking of an educational activity. Figure 4 depicts the 2LAR structure of this idea. The idea is represented by four topical headings: subject-matter of an educational activity (Quantity); choice to realize or not realize an educational activity (Quality); condition of choice to realize an educational activity (Relation); and occurrence of an educational activity determination (Modality). An educator is one who causes education to occur [Wells (2012), chap. 1]. Educational Self-development is the means by which a human being *develops the power of his person* (called his *Personfähigkeit*). Infants exhibit a practical capacity for educational Self-development from their natal day [Piaget (1952), pp. 25-29], and children go on to improve their skills at educating themselves by extending it through development of concepts and reasoning skills. Child's play is one of the early types of educational Self-development.

An individual learner is responsible for his own attitudes toward and aptitude for learning; but, as figure 3 indicates, *others* play a role in what course his Self-development takes. This is to say that learning ability and educational Self-development are *cultivated*. This cultivation takes place through affectivity and what Kant called "the approvals of taste" [Kant (*c*. 1773-79) 15: 271], [Wells (2014), chap. 14, § 3]. Kant noted,

> In everything that is to be approved in accordance with taste there must be something that facilitates the differentiation of the manifold (patterning); something that promotes intelligibility (relationships, proportions); something that makes the pulling of it together possible (unity); and finally, something that promotes its distinction from all other possibilities (*praecisionis*[5]). [Kant (1773-79) 15: 271]

Respectively, these are given the names patterning, conceptualizing, coalescing, and precisioning. Taken together, they are the *aesthetic* functionals of approvals of taste.

How one learns, what one learns, what one makes his attitude toward learning become, and how one uses this capacity to learn: all of these settle into *habits* the individual acquires through experience; but others participate in shaping this experience and partially orienting learner actions. I will argue that this latter fact has important implications for theological comprehension of two of the foremost perennial questions of life: Is there some divine aim or purpose for human *Existenz* as an object among objects in the world of appearances? and, how can one understand the purpose of an afterlife?

Perhaps the most concretely obvious benefit of learning and education is that it prepares an individual for living a life of relative independency as an adult. Human beings do not live completely independently of one another, of course. Infants and young children are vitally dependent upon their parents and care-givers during their tender years. But, eventually, children become adults and, when they do, other people expect them to become responsible for their own affairs and to largely take care of themselves – to be the

[4] Taste is the aesthetical capacity for judgmentation of an object or mode of representation through a subjective satisfaction or dissatisfaction in which there is no objective interest.
[5] Literally, the act of lopping off, amputating, or cutting away an extremity. Figuratively it means "making precise."

agents of their own lives.

Kant called this ability the individual's *power of his person*: the organization of the capacities of a person for realizing or attempting to realize the objects of his appetites. I use the word *Personfähigkeit* as the technical term for this power. Its 2LAR structure is: the person's physical power, which subsists in the capacities of his body (Quantity); the person's intellectual power, which subsists in his knowledge, intelligence and judgment (Quality); the person's tangible power, which subsists in his stock of tangible personal goods, fungible skills, and his stock-of-time available to him for using them (Relation); and the person's persuasive power, which subsists in his ability to sufficiently communicate his thoughts and ideas to other persons and thereby gain their consent, agreement or cooperation [Kant (1793-4) 27: 593-602], [Kant (1797) 6: 444-445], [Wells (2010), chap. 7, pg. 260]. An individual's *Personfähigkeit* is intimately bound up with his personal and private moral code. Kant wrote,

> Cultivation of his natural powers (powers of intellect, powers of mind, powers of body) as a means to all possible ends is a man's Duty to himself. Man is culpable to himself (as a rational being) not to leave his natural gifts and capacity unused and rusting, as it were, of which his reason can someday make use [Kant (1797) 6: 444].

A person's moral code, in turn, subsists in the manifold of rules he constructs in practical Reason under his highest practical imperatives and tenet structures. Often the individual expresses clues as to what sort of moral code he has built for himself through his habitual actions. For example, an habitual liar displays to the rest of us that he has no moral maxim against deceiving others in service of maxims of self-love he has constructed for himself.

Kant saw cultivation of Self-education and individual *Personfähigkeit* as Duties one owes to oneself but also as bound up with Duties to others because humanity is made better by enlightened Societies. It does seem quite clear, however, that many people do in fact "leave their natural gifts and capacities unused and rusting." Many – perhaps even most – human beings tend to largely become creatures of habit in most ordinary circumstances, beginning very early in infancy [Piaget (1952), pp. 122-143]. In William James' opinion, habits run the lives of most people. He wrote,

> [Habit] dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees because there is no other for which we are fitted and it is too late to begin again. . . . Already at the age of twenty-five you see the professional mannerism settling down on the young commercial traveler, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counsellor-at-law. You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the 'shop,' in a word, from which the man can by-and-by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. . . . If the period between twenty and thirty is the critical one in the formation of intellectual and personal habits, the period below twenty is more important still for the fixing of *personal* habits, properly so called [James (1890) vol. I, pp. 121-122].

James, it would seem, was very much a proponent of the old saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." While I do agree that it becomes increasingly more difficult for a person to alter his habits and develop his learning skills as he becomes older, I do-*not* agree that it is ever "too late to begin again" insofar as learning and one's attitude toward learning is concerned. Ebenezer Scrooge is a fictional character, but a moral lesson of an old dog learning new tricks taught in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* runs deep in the storyline Dickens presented. He clearly expressed his opinion that old dogs *can* learn new tricks. What James left out of his assessment is an ability *every human being possesses*: **creativity**.

Creativity is one of the defining properties of the phenomenon of mind [Wells (2006), chap. 14, pp. 1276-1281]. Creativity is a power arising from what I earlier in this treatise called the aesthetic Idea[6].

[6] the function of continuity in perception.

Like learning, it is an ability that must be cultivated if the individual is to develop it to a sufficiently high level for others to take note of it. A person who cultivates and develops this ability to a very high degree is sometimes called a "genius" – and, indeed, James' own accounting for "genius" accords well with the Critical *Realerklärung* of creativity explained in Wells (2006). The "old dogs who cannot learn new tricks" in James' somewhat pessimistic assessment above are people who have cultivated a habit of *not* seeking to perfect or use their creative abilities. James wrote,

> There is an everlasting struggle in every mind between the tendency to keep unchanged and the tendency to renovate its ideas. Our education is a ceaseless compromise between the conservative and the progressive factors. Every new experience must be disposed of under *some* old head. . . . Hardly any one of us can make new heads easily when fresh experience comes. Most of us grow more and more enslaved to the stock conceptions with which we have once become familiar, and less and less capable of assimilating impressions in any but the old ways. Old-fogyism, in short, is the inevitable terminus to which life sweeps us on. . . . Genius, in truth, means little more than the faculty of perceiving in an unhabitual way. [James (1890), vol. II, pp. 109-110]

As true as it might be that most people exercise their creative ability less and less as they age, James' "inevitable terminus" of "old-fogyism" is *not* in fact "inevitable"; it is merely more oftentimes seen than not.

The very fact James acknowledges *some* people do *not* "grow more and more enslaved to" their "stock conceptions" and habits is an experiential factor arguing against his anti-creative thesis. James argued that different human interests and passions have a transitory period in which they can "ripen," and that if they are not developed at this time, they never or hardly do later. There seems to be little room to doubt that he suspected this "transitory period" to be somehow set by biology, but this was and still is just hypothetical speculation. James argued his point on the basis of appearances:

> With the child, life is all play and fairy-tales and learning the external properties of "things;" with the youth it is bodily exercises of a more systematic sort, novels of the real world, boon-fellowship and song, friendship and love, nature, travel and adventures, science and philosophy; with the man, ambition and policy, acquisitiveness, responsibility to others, and the selfish zest of the battle of life. . . . In all pedagogy the great thing is to strike while the iron is hot, and to seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come, so that knowledge may be got and a habit of skill acquired – a headway of interest, in short, secured, on which afterward the individual may float. There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history, and presently dissectors and botanists; then for initiating them into the harmonies of mechanics and the wonders of physical and chemical law. Later, introspective psychology and the metaphysical and religious mysteries take their turn; and, last of all, the drama of human affairs and worldly wisdom in the widest sense of the term. In each of us a saturation-point is soon reached in all these things; the impetus of our purely intellectual zeal expires, and unless the topic be one associated with some urgent personal need that keeps our wits constantly whetted about it, we settle into an equilibrium, and live on what we learned when our interest was fresh and instinctive, without adding to the store. Outside of their own business, the ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas they shall have in their lives. They *cannot* get anything new. [James (1890), vol. II, pp. 401-402]

It is true enough that most people choose to specialize in particular pursuits, to close down interest in and pursuits of other things, and even that society tends to encourage and approve of this behavior. But it is also true that some people *do not*. One should not mistake practical maxims of developed habits for pathological thick-headedness. It is true that the new intellectual skill you might develop tomorrow is constructed upon foundations you previously set down in your manifold of concepts, just as it is true that the improvement of athletic skills by a major league baseball player are constructed upon foundations laid down in his manifold of rules when he was a Little Leaguer. In thinking and reasoning as much as in

athletic skill, *practice makes perfect*. So too it is in social skill; so too it is in moral customs. The ground of all of these – of all creativity latent in the power of a person – is human *affective* nature.

It is not-incorrect to say that for each of us there are two worlds: a subjective ideal world of our own makings; and a natural world that affects our sensibility and does not submit, as our bodies do, to our individual willpowers and the causality of freedom. We discover that the latter, the apparent world of our environment, frequently gainsays the ideal world of our own creations, and that we must accommodate ourselves to its actualities. A human being is *in commercium* with the world of appearances. We are each a partial effect of and, at the same time, a partial cause of the objective world. Part of the latter includes effects each of us has, through our actions and interactions, on other people's determinations of their subjective worlds. The phenomenon of human *commercium* will be seen later in this treatise as a fact of fundamental pertinence to our attempts to address perennial questions of life and its meanings.

The mere fact that others do influence our own Self-constructions does not mean a person can absolve himself of responsibility for the choices *he* makes in his own acts of ideal-creation and Self-determination. Regardless of how he comes by them, each person's failings are *his* failings. He owns them. Each of us is both cause and effect of our own Self-determinations of the appetites, Desires, and aspirations that go into the subjective worlds of our own ideals. As Horace wrote,

> Whatever passion masters you, it burns you with a flame for which you need not blush, and free-born always is the object of your weakness. [Horace (23 BC), *Odes*, Bk I, Ode XXVII]

5. Life as Apprenticeship for Afterlife

If, then, educational Self-development prepares a person for life, and living is the on-going practice of the power of one's person (*Personfähigkeit*), is it not theologically pertinent to speculate on whether life itself is, by analogy, a preparation for something else that might follow after one's life ends? After all, the alternative speculation is that everything one experiences in life comes to nothing at its conclusion – that all one's accomplishments, all one's triumphs, all one's sorrows and grief, all one's strivings and struggles are ultimately in vain and therefore meaningless. *That* is an outlook of dark gloom worthy of Housman:

> Smart lad, to slip betimes away
> From fields where glory does not stay
> And early though the laurel grows
> It withers quicker than the rose.
>
> Eyes the shady night has shut
> Cannot see the record cut,
> And silence sounds no worse than cheers
> After earth has stopped the ears:
>
> Now you will not swell the rout
> Of lads that wore their honors out,
> Runners whom renown outran
> And the name died before the man. [Housman (1896), XIX: *To an Athlete Dying Young*, pg. 40]

What sort of lessons, if any, does living one's life seem to impart? Through discovery of the objective world of appearances, we each discover that we are limited beings; that the world of Nature does not obligingly submit to all our wishes, hopes, and Desires. Neither does it appear that everyone has an equal opportunity of a prolonged voyage of discovery and Self-development through life. What, for example, is more tragic and apparently meaningless than the death of an infant or young child? For a little child what is more frightening and terrible than the death of a loving parent? or fills with greater sadness of empathy those possessing a minimum of compassion who witness this befall a child? For many, only *faith* in a better afterlife – in a future beyond death where, as Revelation puts it,

> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the former things have passed away. [Revelation 21:4]

– provides any way to cope with the most tragic events of human circumstances. One of what can be called a *blessing of appearances* is: *Knowing* that our knowledge is knowledge of appearances, and not of things-*per-se*, is a strong brace holding open the door to our *hopes* for an afterlife.

And life teaches us also of the *Dasein* of such things as love, joy, friendship; of profound satisfactions in deeds by which one helps another in need; of pleasures had from bringing order out of chaos; of beauty; of wondrous awe in the sublime; of tenderness and affection; that selflessness can be soothing to one's sense of well-being. Dickens wrote of his transformed "old dog":

> His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him. [Dickens (1843), pg. 585]

If there is or is to be an afterlife, this is something entirely beyond the horizon of possible human experience in temporal life and so beyond human knowledge of experience. All human knowledge of experience is knowledge of appearances only; a *Ding an sich Selbst* beyond it is hidden in the fogbanks of Kant's broad and stormy sea [Kant (1787) B: 295]. Indeed, if knowledge beyond experience was possible for a human being, faith itself would be unnecessary and superfluous. *Hope* is one of the primary subjective grounds of faith. Perhaps it is even its principal ground. Kant said,

> Hope is a *praegustus*[7] of the future. [Kant (1777-78) 25: 787]

It has been said, "Experience is the best teacher." A teacher usually does not reveal to the pupil the reasons for the lessons he receives. Rather, the pupil must "take it on faith" that there *is* a purpose behind the lesson and that it is a good and beneficial purpose. If the experiences of life constitute a form of schooling, and if God values faith above belief, should any less be true for lessons of human *Existenz*? For theological doctrine, human limitation of knowledge to knowledge of appearances *necessitates* faith. It would be not-incorrect to say ***faith is the apprehension of an intuition of hope***.

I think it is not very difficult through introspection and reflection to see how one's education affects the welfare and satisfactions one realizes in life. But if a human being's temporal life is to be looked at like a kind of schooling and preparation for an afterlife, questions arise at once: What sort of preparation? What *lessons of life* are those by which a human being harmonizes himself in reciprocity with divine purpose? Bluntly put, *what is it one should suppose one is put here to learn*? Does human temporal *Existenz* provide any clues to how one can understand and find an answer for this?

Temporal life certainly provides no objective information about whether there is an afterlife, what an afterlife is like, or what one is to do in such an afterlife. It does not even give us any reason to suppose there is only one kind of afterlife (or two, if you accept a hell-and-punishment doctrine; or zero if you hold the idea of an afterlife to be false). All our ideas about the supernature of an afterlife (or its nature if you accept a reincarnation doctrine) are entirely speculations about the *Existenz* of a pure noumenon and utterly lack objective validity. Faith that there is an afterlife of any sort rests entirely on subjective, not objective, grounds. In a word, it rests on hope.

However, *if* you hold-to-be-true as articles of faith: (1) that God exists; (2) that he has a divine purpose or purposes for human *Existenz*; and (3) that God put you here for some divine purpose; *then* dialectic arguments can be hypothesized with logical (i.e., mathematical) validity for orienting one's Self-development in terms of preparation in expectation *of* an afterlife. The proposition that there *is* an afterlife is a proposition of the kind mathematicians call a "formally undecidable proposition"; if you hold-it-to-

[7] The Latin word *praegustus* means "foretaste." One connotation of Kant's word, *Zukunft*, translated here as "future," is "life hereafter."

be-true then you do so on faith. When the idea of an afterlife is taken as a premise for logical reasoning, this reasoning is called a dialectic argument.

Aristotle, the father of formal logic, explained the difference between demonstrative logic and dialectic logic in the following way:

> The intention of this treatise is to discover a method by which we shall be able to reason from generally accepted opinions about any problem set before us and shall ourselves, when sustaining an argument, avoid saying anything self-contradictory. . . . Reasoning is a discussion in which, certain things having been laid down, something other than these things necessarily results through them. Reasoning is demonstration when it proceeds from premises that are true and primary or of such a kind that we have derived our original knowledge of them through premises which are primary and true. Reasoning is dialectical which reasons from generally accepted opinions. . . . Generally accepted opinions . . . are those which commend themselves to all or to the majority or to the most famous or distinguished of them. Reasoning is contentious if it is based on opinions which appear to be generally accepted but are not really so. [Aristotle (4th cent. BC), pp. 272-275]

Reasoning pertaining to the idea of an afterlife falls under Aristotle's heading of dialectical reasoning because the majority of people in the world think there will be an afterlife of *some* kind. In formal logic there are two ways of showing an argument to be false. One is to point out an error in the logical form of the *argument*; the other is by showing that the *premise* is false. When we are talking about afterlife, the premise that there is or will be one can neither be shown to be true nor shown to be false. Our goal here, therefore is to try to understand a teleological end not of our own making by examining conditions of human nature. Aristotle also said,

> [It] may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man, if he has a function. [Aristotle (date unknown), I. vii. 10, pp. 30-31]

Aristotle's word translated here as "function" is εργον, and can also be translated as work, deeds, or occupation. What he means by "function of man" is something special human beings do that distinguishes being-a-human-being from being-something-else. After what was, for Aristotle, a short dialectic he came to the hypothesis:

> [If] we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence – from these premises it follows that the Good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them. Moreover this activity must occupy a complete lifetime; for one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one fine day [*ibid*., pp. 32-33].

There is no one activity any person does which "occupies a complete lifetime" except Self-development through learning. Just as Aristotle held that "being a good carpenter" does not require a man to be born with excellences or virtues of carpentry skill but, rather, is a person who works diligently to develop this skill and put his skills into practice, so also we cannot and do not expect an infant to be born completely Self-developed. It can also be correctly argued that *perfect* Self-development is not even achieved in a person's lifetime. Just as an *apprentice* is a learner preparing for his future occupation, might not it, by analogy, be premised that a human being's temporal lifetime is spent learning – or, at least, having the opportunity of doing so – to prepare for an afterlife of some kind? Is life *an apprenticeship for afterlife*?

This does seem like a quite reasonable hypothesis in at least the case of a person who is born, leads a long life, and dies of old age. There are other questions that vex this hypothesis in those cases where a

person dies in childhood or "before his time" due to accident or disease. As is so in all of those perennial questions that perplex humankind, these cases require additional examination to discover if their *appearances* **contradict** the hypothesis or merely seem to be **contrary** to it. If the latter, we then seek to find its reconciliation. To further this inquiry we must devote attention to understanding *what sort* of apprenticeship life might seem to be.

And, coupled with this, there is another consideration. Just as an apprentice might fail to perfect his skill to a level qualifying him to become a journeyman, so too the analogy implies that some people might fail to sufficiently perfect their Self-development during their apprenticeships of life to qualify themselves to participate in an afterlife. As I said earlier, a human being cannot thwart a *divine* purpose but he *can* fail to make himself become a *positive* agent in the service of one.

Every religion containing a doctrine of afterlife holds it to be true that topics like morality and virtue have something to do with the supernature of an afterlife. But experience also teaches us that some people sometimes do immoral deeds and some people sometimes lack anything that can arguably be called virtue. Furthermore, social norms of virtue and vice, morality and immorality exhibit important variations in how these ideas are understood. This means these ideas are subjective – otherwise they could command universal agreement. In turn, this situation means we must regard ideas of virtue, vice, morality, and immorality not as objects of nature but, rather, noumena of supernature because, as Aristotle also wrote,

> [It] is clear that none of the moral virtues is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit. . . . Moreover, all the things that come to us by nature are first bestowed in a potential form; we exhibit their actuality afterwards. [*ibid*., II i. 4, pp. 70-71]

What "nature bestows on us" is a capacity to learn, not innate virtues or vices. But learn *what*? In regard to the most common doctrines of afterlife, these doctrines share at least one idea in common. We call this the idea of *sin*. But what is "sin"? The dictionary definition of sin specifies that sin is a *knowing and intentional* transgression of a religious law or moral principle [Webster (1962)]. But this definition is not adequate because it begs the questions: *Whose* moral law? *What* religious principle? Who says what is or is not to be a religious law or a moral principle? By what authority does such a lawgiver or principle-setter act? Revelation principles in religion are meant to sweep such questions aside, but this will not do.

The fact is that every human being is born innocent of any notion of sin. What each of us *is* endowed with at birth are sensuous and, later, intelligible orientations of appetite that define Critical good and evil. It is from such orientations that societies and people develop ideas of sin. Moral realism is a stage in this development. Later come stages of cooperation and codification of the rules and principles Webster's definition relies upon for its meaning. But every human being develops for himself his own manifold of rules and out of this manifold is formed his own personal and private moral code by which he determines judgments of right vs. wrong, good vs. evil. We each are forced to learn for ourselves what will be judged as sinful or not-sinful.

It follows that perhaps the great purpose served by creating each of us in innocence and setting us in a world of appearances that gives no objective appearance of sin-*per-se* is this: that the apprenticeship of life is oriented toward the discovery of what-makes-"sin"- sin. *Practically* speaking, sin is whatever is-not not-sin. And in the world of appearances we *do* encounter one great social phenomenon that might be called the classroom of virtue-and-sin. This is the phenomenon of *Sittlichkeit* (moral customs or folkways). The nature of learning (fig. 3) is such that causative influences and mutual influences on each others' learning cannot be practically avoided by any person living in any kind of Society from the largest to the smallest.

That different Societies develop different mores and folkways means that *Sittlichkeit* is not universally objective. If it is not universally objective then it can only be normative and subjective. It logically follows by inference of analogy that lessons of morality are like classroom lessons. Every person

constructs for himself his own practical and private moral code; the lessons of life, on the other hand, are exercises pertaining to how to construct and understand *Moralität*, i.e., a system of practical laws standing under practical hypothetical imperatives that a human being constructs in his manifold of rules. Religions are correct to emphasize morality (the idea represented in the manifold of *concepts* having a system of moral laws as its object). They err only in promotions of doctrines of moral realism. Ideas of morality *per se*, as an object, are too big for human understanding; but the *Dasein* of morality is not too big a concept. Morality *per se* is a pure noumenon. The consequence of this is that, for human beings, *practical* validity for ideas of morality are necessarily deontological.

Here, then, is something we can take as a clue for orienting us in our search for understanding why God might create us to be of the nature we are *and* deny to us any *objective* hint or warning to orient our Self-developments. Whatever other ideas one might hold pertaining to an afterlife, faith in an afterlife seen as a community of humanity implies a need for understanding what "sin" is, what makes it sin, and what is divinely purposive in eschewing it. Insofar as *Sittlichkeit* can be premised to constitute a kind of class-room learning exercise for learning lessons about sin, it follows that this treatise must examine the human phenomena standing under the general idea of *Sittlichkeit*. It is to this that this treatise turns next.

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