RATIONALITY, REPRESENTATION, AND RACE

Deborah K. Heikes

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For Augusta
who now sees feet of clay

Preface

Henry James believes there are a million windows in the house of fiction, and after years of work on rationality, I am convinced there are, if not a million windows on reason, at least a great many perspectives philosophers have adopted. The cover image, Paul Klee's *One Who Understands*, connects (and even represents) many of the themes that are important for my arguments. A nondescript person, probably seen as male, probably seen as white, looks out knowingly. Why this person is male, why this person is white, why this person is thoughtful and reasonable—these are not distinct questions. And the answers to them depend upon the windows through which we look.

What we are able to see—or even allowed to see—from some of these perspectives is limited, and I have come to believe that modern windows on reason are quite peculiar and unusual when considered in the context of all of Western philosophy. As feminists have argued for decades, the view from most of these windows is almost invariably sexist. Yet, after listening for years to my colleague Bill Wilkerson accuse Kant of racism, what began to occur to me is something strange happens during the Enlightenment to allow race (and specifically skin color) to become a significant demarcater of human beings. My interest in rationality and the role it has played in the oppression of women shifted suddenly to race with the arrival in my department of a new colleague, John Nale.

Before John came along, I had been working on some ideas, but I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do with them. My project had something to do with an argument for rationality meant to demonstrate how treating it as a virtue concept had relevance for contemporary problems, just not ones that only (or at least primarily) concerned feminists. I knew I wanted to build upon my previous work, I knew the general direction I wanted to take my arguments, and I knew that I intended to expand the issues with which I was concerned. I had done some research, and I had a loose conglomeration of semi-random ideas floating around in my head. Then I heard John give a talk to students. Immediately thereafter, the department had occasion to sit down with him to discuss his research. Listening to his ideas provided the catalyst I needed to coalesce my own. Specifically, John believes Kant's views on race solve the mind/body problem. It's an interesting, intriguing, highly unusual project. It made me think about Kant in ways I never had. During my student days, I was fortunate enough to take Kant courses from Tony Genova, Art Melnick, and Michael Young. John's take on Kant is nothing like theirs. Listening to him made me realize that to think about Kant on race tapped into my larger concerns with the corruption of rationality in the modern period and with the sorts of contemporary problems for which I seek remedies, namely, those of oppression and moral objectivity. John is the one who turned my attention to race in the modern era, and for that I am grateful.

The actual text of this book was written very quickly, but the ideas here are the same ones that have always interested me and that first drew me to philosophy: rationality, objectivity, mental representation, language use, concepts, rule-following, and the social dimensions of knowledge. My training as I learned to explore these ideas was heavily analytic, but however strongly analytic my training, I do not see philosophy as divided along standard disciplinary lines. I see philosophical questions and the attempts to answer them as much more fundamental than the 'school' to which one belongs. After all, whatever protestations to the contrary, we all want the same thing: something resembling true answers to the questions. Thus, the argument of this book is one that takes moving the discussion of rationality forward seriously, regardless of tradition.

In part, I seek to analyze a particular problem in the development of the concept of reason: modernism's narrowing of reason so that it

becomes the domain of only white males—and not all white males at that. More importantly, though, I seek not to worship the problem but to find a solution. After all, uncovering the exclusionary nature of reason has been done. Diagnosing the problem is one thing, but fixing it is another matter entirely—and I want to fix the problem. I want rationality to become once again a respectable concept, one capable of providing some normative assurance that equality and justice are not important simply because we value them. To recover the worth of the concept, I believe it is important to consider the 'what' and the 'why' of rationality's transformation during the Enlightenment because something unusual happens during this time that is not typical of philosophical reflections on the concept before or since. Understanding what was lost is a means to recovering important aspects of what it means to be a rational being, capable of formulating ideas and interacting with the world.

In short, what was lost is the Greek conception of rationality as something fundamentally human and as something very much part of a life. Sure, the Greeks privileged contemplation, but they never understood minds as entirely removed from *this* world. The integration of reason with everyday life, those menial aspects of life where Heraclitus tells us the gods are present, is something that we are attempting to recover. The lived experiences of practices and forms of life, of being-in-the-world, or of the effects and practical bearings of beliefs—these are all efforts to get at something that was lost to the moderns and that ultimately made 'reason' something oppressive and exclusionary. To understand that rationality can be more than the moderns claimed it to be provides hope of inclusion and of moral frameworks that offer correctives for the sins of our modernist fathers.

As with any book, I owe a great many debts to those who helped me think through this material. Many of my students helped me think through these ideas during a research seminar, and they did so in ways that I can only describe as lighthearted and fun. To do justice to how lighthearted and how fun would take far too long to explain. These are many of the same students who created 'middle-t truth' as an alternative to 'truth' and 'Truth.' This is a concept I hope to employ in my own work someday. In addition, my departmental colleagues were kind enough to discuss the Kant material with me. As he always does, Andy Cling held

my feet to the fire when I explained my argument to him. He is the best dissector of arguments I know. Beyond my departmental colleagues, I attended some conference papers that spoke to some of the issues that concern me here. The most influential of those was by Sarah Woolwine and Eva Dadlez, whose paper is included in my references here. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to an anonymous reviewer who offered criticisms that were highly insightful and helped me greatly in thinking through the structure of the entire argument. This reviewer was kind enough to tell me to trust myself.

As usual, I owe to Augusta Gooch much gratitude for reading the manuscript multiple times and for offering invaluable editing advice. She is constantly teaching me how to be a better writer. Whatever clarity my writing has is due to her assistance. Augusta also taught me a thing or two about Aristotle, and she helped me decipher some quite impenetrable passages in Heidegger. Against my wishes, she also tutored me on the topic of act and potency. What minimal understanding I have of this distinction, I owe to her. The confusion is all mine.

In some very odd way, I should also offer some acknowledgment to my cat Agatha. For months, she sat on my lap or on my desk as I wrote and rewrote. Researching, writing, and typing may not be the easiest chores to do with a cat—and there was many a day when I wished she would just leave me alone—but whatever my frustrations, she was a constant and loving companion through long days and months of writing. She is lying on my desk as I write this.

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Contents

1

What's the Problem?

An insightful colleague recently told me: philosophy is about problems.[1] It's about how problems are identified and dissected; it's about how concepts are included and excluded when circumscribing problems; and it's about how we uncover and re-discover forgotten problems and solutions. Shortly after this conversation, I came across a passage from Aristotle: 'For those who wish to get clear of difficulties it is advantageous to discuss the difficulties well; for the subsequent free play of thought implies the solution of the previous difficulties, and it is not possible to untie a knot of which one does not know' (1941, 995a28–30). Aristotle understood as well as anyone that the philosophical landscape we are traversing is well worn. Others have previously asked the same questions, and, for better or worse, they have offered answers. The ways in which issues are formulated and responses to problems are proffered do help us untie knots in our thinking. Sometimes it pays for philosophers to do a little archeology.

[1] I owe this way of thinking about philosophy to my colleague John Nale, who specifically characterizes continental philosophy as 'problem generating.' In dissecting problems, one determines which concepts to include and exclude. My project here is to go back to the philosophical tradition and re-frame problems so that attention is re-directed to different concepts.

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If philosophy is indeed about problems, one of the most vexing of them is undoubtedly 'reason.' The concept has fallen on hard times. The most vehement attacks often come from the so-called continental and American pragmatist traditions, which set themselves sharply in contrast with positivism's willingness to take a Cartesian model of methodological reason, wed it to a radical empiricism, and consign everything else to the flames. Nevertheless, as Anglo-American philosophy has slowly freed itself from this truncated picture of reason, it, too, has adopted a more critical stance toward Cartesian instantiations of the concept. Regardless of philosophical tradition, the cries against reason have become louder and louder.[2] This is no accident. The aspects of a *full* human life are varied and involve far more than what can be empirically verified. Positivism, in particular, makes evident how, under strictly interpreted modern assumptions, very little of human life is meaningful, or even worthy of investigation. The purely scientific view of rational method is, at this extreme, suffocating.

What I find so striking is how a concept so central to the discipline has come to be held in such disrepute. After all, it is difficult to imagine what philosophy could be in the absence of rational argumentation, whatever we mean by 'rational.' Richard Rorty may think he knows what this image looks like. He may believe that philosophy should become cultural criticism 'all the way down.' But even cultural criticism requires some means of constructing arguments capable, in principle, of convincing one's opponents. If we go so far as to emphasize the counter-concept, irrationality, we find ourselves unable to defend our conclusions.[3] Stated slightly differently, even Rorty in his most radical incarnation relies on reasons. After all, in the absence of rationality we lack a guide, a standard, a heuristic principle for how we are to proceed in our efforts to

[2] Richard Rorty is the most radical quasi-analytic critic of all things Cartesian, but almost everyone writing on the topic of rationality, not just its critics, diverges from the strictly methodological, disembodied, culturally neutral version. See Audi, Nozick, and Toulmin for more mainstream examples. Then, of course, there are scores of feminists writing on the topic, including, Code 1993, Rooney 1991, 1994, Longino, Lloyd, Alcoff, Nagl-Docekal, and others.

[3] Feminists are some of the biggest critics of reason, but philosophers like Herta Nagl-Docekal nevertheless argue that emphasizing irrationality leaves us in 'both a theoretical and a practical dead end. … [A] critique can only be convincing, even for women, when expressed in argumentative language' (1999, 60).

engage others. At that point, philosophy is truly pointless. Even beyond its importance for philosophy, however, rationality very much appears to be what binds the elements of our lives together and allows our lives to be meaningful. We use our faculty of reason not just for solving logical problems but to plan and make dinner, to get us to work, and to maintain friendships (all matters outside the domain of positivist concerns). For millennia, humans have defined themselves as essentially rational beings. How is it that reason has fallen on such hard times? And, how can the concept be salvaged?

Answering these questions entails adopting various perspectives on reason, perspectives like the small window openings in Henry James' house of fiction. 'The house of fiction has,' says James, 'not one window, but a million …. They have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from any other …' (James 1934, 46). The 'house of reason' appears not all that different. To examine current impressions of reason is to notice that reason has a great many windows—and to notice that each of these exhibits a subjectivity/relativity of perspective. It is to notice much hand-wringing over reason's various incarnations and to notice much doubt over whether we even need to retain the concept at all. It is to notice that at each window stands figures with pairs of eyes, not so much ensuring a distinct impression as struggling to figure out how to develop a wider field of vision. It is to notice that perhaps, just perhaps, standpoint epistemologists are right: reason is always socially situated.

We always come at reason from some perspective which is limited and biased in one way or another. Of course, this is hardly a comforting observation. While pairs of eyes or field instruments ensuring distinct impressions may be relatively unthreatening in fiction, the image is a far more destructive one in philosophy and in science. That the need for some sort of so-called objective constraint on cognition is a central theme of the modern era is not an accident, nor is it an accident that critics of modernism struggle to recover a meaningful notion of objectivity. What critics of modernism, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, understand is that 'the standpoint of the forums of modern liberal culture presupposes the fiction of shared, even if unformulable, universal standards of rationality' (MacIntyre

1988, 400). These critics call the moderns on their 'fictions' and ask us instead to acknowledge a diversity of perspectives and traditions, shaped, or even stratified, by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Then again, if reason is simply determined by the perspective or tradition we adopt, literally *anything* goes. The windows on reason must in some way be interconnected so that the vision of each pair of eyes shares something in common with others; elsewise, we lose the normative power of reason.

So what exactly does any of this have to do with the fact that reason has fallen on such hard times? What does any of this have to do with salvaging the concept? I believe stories are available to answer these questions, and like most stories, fictional or not, there is a short version and a long version of the tale. The short version starts like this: modern accounts of reason are distorting and oppressive—and, let's face it, a lot of people are tired of being left out. As Emmanuel Eze explains and—as I will argue—rightfully so: 'modern philosophy's pretension to universality and cross-cultural values has often been just that: a pretense' (Eze 2001, x). Of course, Enlightenment thinkers would take issue with this claim. After all, the Age of Enlightenment is supposedly an Age of Equality, an age where science allows us to master the material world, where hierarchical social conceptions are overthrown, and where rights become universal—except, of course, for colonialism, slavery, the disenfranchisement of women, and similar 'unimportant' issues. At the founding of the USA, for example, 'all men are created equal'—only if one is male, wealthy, and white. As feminists and race theorists have effectively argued, the status of 'rational agent' is not accorded to all, and for those who are excluded and objectified, the Enlightenment hardly seems enlightened at all. The second part of the story concerns how we 'solve' the problem of reason's exclusionary bent through a revival of a pre-modern or nonmodern understanding, an understanding which is much more complex, open-ended, and inclusive than the moderns ever thought possible. This account of rationality considers the insights of the Greeks, who view nous as part of a functionally complex and embodied soul and of post-Cartesian philosophers who insist that reason is a communal activity constrained by features of the world which lie outside individual minds.

The longer version of the story is, not surprisingly, more complex. It involves tracing the ways in which the questions and answers of

mainstream philosophical discourse create the infrastructure for nefarious uses of the concepts of race and sex. Put as straightforwardly as possible: Cartesianism gives us just plain, old-fashioned, radically bad ways of thinking about philosophical problems—and these bad ways of thinking actually encourage the marginalization and oppression of those who are non-white and non-male. Such marginalization occurs because the shift of focus toward introspectively accessible ideas means that somehow, someway these ideas represent an external world, but not just any representation will do. My ideas are, after all, going to have to be relevantly similar to your ideas if they are to be deemed objective. As a result, moderns turn to observational and deductive methodologies which result in their inability to deal with difference and diversity.

Since *something* about our understanding of rationality goes horribly wrong in the seventeenth century, the narrative I offer concerning reason and its problems begins with the moderns. Here, the ways Hume and Kant respond to the epistemological threat of subjectivism is telling about and critical for their attitudes toward non-whites and non-males. After analyzing the problem, I turn to possible solutions, including post-Cartesian (i.e., nineteenth and twentieth centuries) responses to the core philosophical assumptions that give rise to modernist exclusions. However, there is another nonmodern philosophical tradition that has a great deal to say about reason, or, more accurately, soul: the ancient Greek tradition. For the Greeks, soul is something diverse, something integrated within the world, something that has nutritive and emotional functions. In many ways, they have a vision of the soul that we are clumsily trying to restore. In the end, I seek to parse, somewhat selectively and electively, two millennia of philosophy in an effort to get to 'the good stuff' and to demonstrate how reason can morally demand inclusion.[4] As I will argue, reason has some serious crimes for which to atone, but the concept can and should be rehabilitated. My task here is to reformulate the problem of reason and to transform the concept itself, all while taking the advice of Aristotle: to know the knot one attempts to untie.

[4] Another of my colleagues calls this a 'plunder approach' to scholarship. In taking this approach, I am interested less in scholarship for its own sake and more for what it can tell us about contemporary philosophical problems and solutions.

1.1 The Terrain of Reason

So much for opening moves. Before I begin unpacking my argument in earnest, a bit more explanation is in order. My attempt to untie the knot of reason will be at times anachronistic, slightly unorthodox, and admittedly idiosyncratic.[5] In some ways, the idiosyncrasy is almost inevitable given my explicit rejection of universal standards and my intent to characterize a diversity of approaches to reason. In other words, I will not for one second make a pretense to necessary or sufficient conditions for rationality. As my argument progresses, I will occupy a variety of windows on reason, partly to discuss the differences well, especially when it comes to the difficulties of modernism, and partly to find a solution to previous difficulties. Although it may be true that thinking and acting according to principles properly captures some aspects of what it is to be rational, I take it that rationality is not something as easily captured in deterministic principles as the moderns would have us believe. After all, the fact remains that one can follow principles and remain terribly, even frustratingly, unreasonable.[6] Another sort of practical limitation on principles is given in a story shared by Stephen Toulmin. A series of doctors could not properly diagnose a patient until one of them expressed interest in the personal, not just medical, aspects of the patient's condition.[7] That is, before they could correctly diagnose the medical condition of the patient, they needed to look beyond the merely biological or physiological concerns. As Toulmin concludes, 'this failure to handle the case on a personal basis can be put down to the narrowing of attention we called "professional blinders"' (2001, 114). The modern outlook on reason, with its attention to consciously following logically

[5] Idiosyncrasy isn't such as bad thing, as I will explain. Note that Nicholas Burbules claims there is 'an inherent personal, idiosyncratic, and indeterminate character to what it will mean to be rational' (1991, 249). This idea stands in need of a little qualification which I provide in the final chapter, but it decisively demonstrates how far rationality today has strayed from its modern roots.

[6] This is something understood by anyone who has dealt with government bureaucracy.

[7] In this case, a woman was experiencing blackouts for no discernible reason—until one of the doctors asked about when the blackouts started and discovered the onset coincided with the woman's mother suddenly dying. When the doctor simply expressed human sympathy for her loss, the woman collapsed in 'paroxysms of grief.' In other words, a correct understanding of the medical situation required seeing beyond what is typically considered relevant in a medical context. See Toulmin 2001, 113–114.

rigorous methods, is akin to 'professional blinders.' It may capture *some* aspects of our lives—but not all. In its messy and functionally diverse totality, rationality captures a range of abilities and sensitivities that extend well beyond logical principles. My starting point, then, is one I share with Eze, who maintains, 'it is only at the most general levels that one best explores the answers to the question What is rationality?' (2008, xiii).

As Aristotle and Eze both understand, 'what we mean when we refer to a person being rational in general … is not only complex but also, in more than the surface features, elusive, enigmatic, and mysterious' (Eze 2008, xi). I am interested in these enigmatic and mysterious aspects of reason. Those reasoners most closely associated with less formal, more inscrutable aspects of reason are the ones generally deemed less capable, when they are noticed at all. Yet, as it turns out, the inscrutable aspects of reason are absolutely central to our lives as rational beings, and they are almost always ignored or made invisible by modern ways of thinking. Even more significantly, a willingness to consider often overlooked aspects of reason makes visible *people* who have been invisible. In addition to 'professional blinders,' which can hide the human being behind physiology, a simple example of the dismissal of those who 'reason wrongly' are cases in which men refer to 'women's logic' when at a loss to understand how women think. The phrase is almost always pejorative and implies that women are not, in fact, logical. This is in no way surprising since women have been, throughout the history of philosophy, most closely associated with a lack of formal, procedural reason. In this regard, however, women are in no way special. After all, anyone who falls outside of the domain of properly circumscribed reason (e.g., slaves and barbarians) gets excluded. What is slightly more surprising is how narrowly the domain of reason is circumscribed in an age of supposed equality and the expansion of rights. In bringing to the fore how limited a modern account of reason is, I seek not only to make visible the sources of marginalization but also to develop a more inclusive rationality. That is, I seek something many believe is elusive: a 'place on the terrain of Reason to which women [and non-whites] can claim rightful occupancy' (Code 1991, 119).[8] As it turns out, the

[8] Code maintains that there is no such place that women can occupy in the terrain of Reason, but I search for one nonetheless.

terrain on either side of Enlightenment thinking is much wider and has much more solid footing. It actually offers some stable ground for those who have been expelled from more exclusive territory. This is because both Greek and post-Cartesian accounts of reason better consider and cope with diversity. They insist that reason be sensitive to context—and sensitive in ways the moderns simply cannot allow.

Of course, lumping together Greek thinkers with post-Cartesian ones may appear to ignore some key differences, especially with respect to the role metaphysics plays (or fails to play) in grounding rational belief. But there is a method to my anachronistic madness. My historical chronology is not always linear but neither is it haphazard. Something quite unusual happens to reason in the modern period, which elsewhere in Western philosophy is either absent (in the case of Greek thinking) or considered highly problematic (in the case of post-Cartesian thinking). This *something*, which I will address repeatedly from different perspectives, concerns the moderns' obsession with making reason what Genevieve Lloyd calls an 'achievement concept'—and it especially concerns the ways in which 'achievement' is defined. With the advent of modernism, *no longer is being rational an aspect of being human*. Instead, reason becomes 'a skill to be learned, a distinctively methodical way of thinking, sharply differentiated from other kinds of thought' (1984, 39).[9] This way of thinking is peculiar and, as I will argue, is a central pillar in the modern marginalization of non-white and non-male humans. In effect, those who are deemed incapable of achieving rationality are thereby deemed epistemically and morally unworthy. My emphasis throughout is on how this peculiar form of reason creates a particularly virulent form of representationalism and, thus, allows not simply for the invention of 'race' but for the uneven application of so-called universal moral concepts.[10] The historical oddity that is a modern approach to reason explains *why* Enlightenment rationality has such difficulty dealing with the differentness of people who are

[9] What will become clear in Chap. 4 is that virtue is something that shares much in common with skill, albeit a skill to be achieved in a way much different from the one advocated by the moderns.

[10] Throughout the arguments, I will shift back and forth between issues of race and gender. While the issues confronting race theorists and feminists are not always the same, substantial overlap does exist. I will, however, often emphasize the development of racism, especially in the work of Kant, because it truly emerges in the modern period in a form unlike previous eras. On the other hand, sexism goes back to the origins of Western philosophy, and, thus, its appearance in modern form is more of a continuation of existing attitudes.

neither white nor male, and this oddity is what needs to be overcome if reason is to once again apply to *all* humans. That *something* happens in the modern era that belies claims to universal reason and the equal worth of persons is, at this point, undeniable. I am interested in uncovering what this something is. So it is with modernist windows that I begin.

1.2 In the Shadow of Modern Reason

Regardless of whether we choose to accept or reject the assumptions, methods, and arguments of modernism, we ignore them at our own philosophical peril. Everything about our current fascination and frustration with reason suggests our dependence on modernism. If nothing else, the fact that otherwise radically diverse approaches to philosophy can be lumped under the heading 'Post*modernism*' clearly indicates the importance of modernism for articulating contemporary problems. This lingering importance extends well beyond the professional philosophical world. Consider an anonymous remark from a discussion board on personality types demonstrates:

> [we] are not our emotions. From my experience, most other types are inherently linked to their emotions, whereas we understand that our emotions, like our minds and bodies, are separate entities from the self. Therefore, we can separate our consciousness from our emotions when we want to … sometimes.[11]

The language may be slightly inconsistent and somewhat confused, but it is unmistakably the language of Descartes—and in everyday conversation. What this remark demonstrates is how much we understand and rely on a Cartesian approach, even if we professional philosophers are less accepting of Cartesian doctrines (not to mention less willing to separate emotion, body, *and* mind from self). In the more formal expression of philosophers, it remains equally the case that we *must* cope with the Cartesian language of rationality and not, say, the Greek notion of the soul as an integrated set of cognitive, emotional, and material capacities.

[11] This passage is from the website intjforum.com.

This is made especially evident by Linda Alcoff, who argues that when feminists critique reason we are

> not obsessing over an outdated conception of reason but revealing the implicit assumptions still operative in even the minimal conception of reason endorsed today. In other words, the idea of a radical break … between Modernist concepts of Reason and modern accounts of reason is both implausible and in fact mistaken. (1995, 6)

Indeed, no sharp division can be drawn. Modern conceptions of reason are still operative, if only as a backdrop for criticism or a starting point for rejecting it, and to be sure, philosophers who wish to reject reason almost always ask that we turn our backs on modern version of the concept.[12] Even so, what Alcoff fails to notice is that, however much the moderns still speak to us and however much we still glance through their windows when looking toward reason, we have broken away from them. To understand the extent of this break entails first understanding why we find Cartesianism to have so badly failed.

Although many of the concerns with modern conceptions of rationality are quite familiar and hardly seem worthy of restatement, my interest in what is quite familiar about modernism is motivated by how it subtly but decisively supports virulent forms of racism and sexism. Modernism is, above all, the source of many of our enduring assumptions, biases, conceptualizations, and comprehensions of rationality. It is the source of our obsession with epistemology. It is why we often look askance at metaphysics. The philosophical terms we use, the problems we address, and the arguments we create are, if not directly modern, formulated in response to modernism. Unfortunately, one of the lasting legacies of modernism is oppression. That racism originates during this time is in no way incidental, and this is something that can be clearly seen when one looks out from modernist windows. *Modern racism is warranted*, at least from within the perspective of the era. At the same time, if we shift perspectives, modern racism has become philosophically untenable. As the philosophical terrain

[12] What Alcoff does not highlight is that there is a break with the moderns, even if it is not a radical one. To understand the extent of that break entails first understanding how Cartesianism fails.

has changed, the epistemological foundations that allowed for—or even required—distinctions among humans along the lines of race and sex, these foundations are in ruins. That is, the theoretical underpinnings for the exclusivity of reason have either been rejected or are under serious attack, and this has implications for how it is we understand race and sex.

In all the contemporary rage against reason, what is often overlooked is how remarkably egalitarian is Descartes' starting point. Whatever the flaws and liabilities of his thinking, he begins with an explicit presumption of equality; that is, he takes as a given that humans—*all humans*—are inherently and equally capable of reasoning.[13] Some of us may better cultivate and use our reasoning abilities, but reason, says Descartes, '*exists whole and complete in each of us*' [italics added] (1985, 112). In this, he very much shares a Greek perspective on reason (as long as we read the Greeks liberally).[14] After all, in the ancient world, rationality is *the* mark of humanity, so much so that even Aristotle allows women and slaves some measure of reason, which is far more than Kant appears willing to allow. Concerning the native population of the Americas, Kant states that he can explain why this race which is 'incapable of any culture, stands—despite the proximity of example and ample encouragement—far below the Negro, who undoubtedly holds the lowest of all remaining levels that have designated as racial differences' (2013, 186–187). Without question, this attitude is deplorable, but it is in no way unusual for the time. It is an attitude shared by many centrally important Enlightenment thinkers.[15] The rather consistent racism and sexism of Descartes' successors makes his opening philosophical move in the *Discourse* all the more surprising. He says,

> The power of judging well and of distinguishing the true form the false—which is what we properly call 'good sense' or 'reason'—is *naturally equal in all men*, and consequently that the diversity of our opinions *does not arise*

[13] Descartes uses the term 'men,' not 'humans,' but I will defend my use of this term shortly.

[14] Here, I am obviously sweeping under the rug some seriously sexist comments, not to mention Aristotle's attitude toward the reasoning abilities of male slaves. I will eventually address these limitations, arguing that they are no longer tenable due to the overthrow of biological essentialism. For the full argument, see Chap. 5.

[15] Berkeley actually owned slaves, and Locke was instrumental in laying out the Constitution of the Carolinas. For a discussion of Locke's indiscretions in particular, see Bernasconi 2003. I will discuss, at length, Hume and Kant in subsequent chapters.

> *because some of us are more reasonable than others* but solely because we direct our thoughts along different paths and do not attend to the same things [italics added]. (1985, 111)

All things considered, this fairly radical pronouncement of the equality of reason in human beings is unusual—and rather unexpected given the philosophical abuse sometimes heaped upon Descartes for his role as the originator of modernism. Despite getting a great deal wrong in his treatment of reason, despite unwittingly laying the intellectual groundwork for the moral excesses to come, Descartes here quite explicitly asserts that, all things being equal, humans are rational beings. Well, he does say 'men,' but we actually have good reason to believe he does not mean that term literally. Descartes' own life and work appear noticeably devoid of any particularly objectionable elements.[16] He not only avoids making specifically sexist or racist claims but also engages women in philosophical conversation, most notably Princess Elizabeth and Queen Christina. The same cannot be said for many other philosophers of the time, most notably Berkeley, Locke, Hume, and Kant. And given our current intellectual climate, one in which philosophers of race are re-reading our history and are insisting that philosophy come to terms with the explicitly racist remarks of some of its central figures, Descartes' largely clean record on issues of race and gender is rather remarkable. As a result, I see no reason not to take Descartes at his word: reason is egalitarian.[17] Yet if

[16] Timothy Reiss discusses the issue of Descartes' silence on the topic of slavery. While Reiss does find the silence worrisome, he concludes that we lack grounds for believing Descartes supported slavery. See Reiss 2005.

[17] Even though Descartes uses the term 'men,' that he avoids denigrating women and that he engages philosophically with women are prima facie evidence that he did not take the term literally. Also, Descartes seems to take the Platonic ideal of the soul as essentially distinct from the body to its logical conclusion—having a woman's body does not appear to corrupt the soul for Descartes, at least not any more than having a male body does.

On the empiricist side of modernism, Hobbes starts with a similar notion: that men *believe* themselves to be equal in wisdom. In the *Leviathan*, he says,

> For such is the nature of men that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent or more learned, yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves; for they see their own wit at hand, and other men's at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equal, than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of anything than that every man is contented with his share. (Hobbes 1909, 94–95)

the starting point of modern thinking on the topic of reason is truly this sort of equality, what went wrong? Why was the age of egalitarianism anything but equal?

And it was anything but equal. The modern era is one in which the concept of race and the practice of colonialism are invented. It is an era in which the universal rights of man quite explicitly exclude women. Clearly, something of a disconnect occurs between philosophers' assertions of universal moral equality and the descriptions of non-whites and non-males such that Laplanders, Negroes, and the so-called fair sex are not spoken of in glowing terms.[18] Until quite recently, this disconnect has been largely ignored, and until even more recently, the attention drawn to it has been focused on gender far more than on race. One reason for this is that it is somewhat easier to see inequality in the case of gender since, as Charles Mills points out, 'the whiteness of "men" [is not] inscribed on the concept's face in the same way as their masculinity is' (2002, 3). Yet the whiteness of reason is increasingly difficult to ignore. The Greeks may not have been the most socially progressive, but as with almost every other area of philosophy, *something* changes in the modern era. *Something* happens that leads to the creation of 'race.'

The *something* that happens occurs in the context of a decisive break in Western thinking, a break that does not manage to change philosophical questions in any dramatic way but that radically alters the framework for answering those questions. Whatever the contributions of ancient and medieval philosophers, we live on the opposite side of a significant intellectual divide: the divide between medievalism and modernism. Much has been made of this divide. Margreta de Grazia writes:

> Whether you work on one side or the other of the medieval/modern divide determines nothing less than relevance. Everything after that divide has relevance to the present; everything before it is irrelevant. …[Indeed] it works less as a historical marker than a massive value judgment, determining what matters and what does not. (2007, 453)

[18] The racist views of Hume and Kant are the subject of the following chapter. As for Locke, Bernasconi points out that Locke not only invested in the slave trade but also personally added the word 'power' to *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* so that it read, 'Every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and Authority over his Negro slaves' (Bernasconi 2003, 14).

Neither the scholastics nor the ancients speak to us like the moderns do.[19] It is difficult for us today, living as we are the other side of the medieval/modern divide, to make sense of scholastic perspectives. We simply don't approach philosophical problems in the same way or with the same style of argument. A Heideggerian approach to scholasticism, for example, informs us that:

> The unity of Scholastic thought [lies], not in any particular Scholastic doctrine, but in the form of Scholastic thinking, the way the Scholastics approach every subject matter. … [T]he Scholastic way [is] … a discursive and dialectical balancing of authority (*auctoritas*), principally the authority of theology with its roots in a divine revelation, and natural reason (*ratio*). *Scholasticism never regards finite reason as a final court of appeal*. 'In the Scholastic episteme, the confidence in the powers of human reason to discover the texture of the real is counterbalanced by the insight that God, ultimately, transcends the text—every text' [italics added]. (McGrath 2006, 4–5)

To be interested in balancing authority or divine revelation, to doubt reason's role as the final court of appeal, to express unwavering confidence in reason's own powers to transcend the text—nothing could sound more foreign to one raised in a modern or postmodern world.[20] Similarly in art, we understand, almost intuitively, the (special) perspective of the Renaissance onward. It somehow seems 'natural,' despite the fact that it is anything but natural. By contrast, the flattened surfaces of medieval painting are foreign and often strike us as oddly misshapen, even when the work is otherwise beautiful and admirable. We do not 'see' the world as the medievals did. And however much art has moved beyond modern assumptions about representation, we still 'see' vanishing point perspective. Similarly, in philosophy, as in art, we may not share the same perspective, but we continue to live in a world where we can

[19] I have already hinted at this, but I will discuss at length the philosophical recovery of pre-modern thought in the second part of this book.

[20] On the matter of reason's role as the final court of appeal, the issue is more complex than I make it sound here, and I address this complexity at length, especially in Chap. 3. The point at the moment is, whatever our own doubts about reason, our approach is rarely, if ever, to look beyond it for some further intellectual authority.

envision modern problems and their motivation; we can make sense of a world in which order is imposed from the inside out, not the outside in. Unlike the medieval/modern divide, the gap between us and the moderns remains a bridgeable one.

Because of this, the *something* that happens in the modern era remains capable of exerting influence on our attitudes toward those whom we see as different. We have not yet crossed a 'relevance watershed' from a modern to a postmodern world. 'We still instinctively reach for the old vocabularies,' says Charles Taylor, the vocabularies 'we owe to Enlightenment and Romanticism' (1989, 393). Breaking problems down into simpler elements, following the logical implications of the connections among these simpler ideas, these remain, at least in some circles, legitimate philosophical endeavors. More significantly, we continue to retain the language of autonomy, equality, and objectivity. These moral and epistemic concepts still hold our imagination; they still speak to us in powerful ways. And we still struggle to preserve them in light of their crumbling foundations. Philosophical problems, including the problem of reason's exclusionary nature, are sustained and defined by the legacy of modernism, so much so that we can hardly understand the import of contemporary philosophical discussion without understanding the modern tradition that dominates our ways of thinking, even when we seek to reject it.

For these reasons, the implications of modernism for discussions of race and sex are especially difficult to ignore. Even though neither racism nor sexism was new in the modern era, they became more entrenched and more virulent at the precise moment when the equal worth of persons was lauded and touted as a major advance in moral thinking. *Something* happened to allow this. *Something* happened that permitted philosophers like Hume and Kant to formulate moral theories on the presumption of equality while simultaneously and *vigorously defending* views that nonwhites lack any civilization. *Something* happened that permitted Kant to explicitly remove women (and many men) from the realm of principles (which, not coincidentally, is a moral realm).[21] That such a hierarchical undercurrent exists simultaneously with the call to the equality of all *men* demands our attention. The reason to study modern reason, then, is that

[21] See Kant 1960, 81.

an appropriately attentive study should reveal not only the scope of moral indiscretions but also the ways in which the concept theoretically underpins exclusion and oppression. Once we understand these issues, we can seek a corrective account of rationality.

The tale of reason's corruption is neither simple nor quick, but the *something* that allows reason to become so exclusive and to acquire such a scandalous reputation is linked, first, to the isolation and psychic distancing of epistemic agents from the physical and social world and, second, to the far too radical shift toward representationalism. When Descartes relocates philosophical attention inward, he creates something of an epistemic vacuum. The move away from stable, external, ontological grounds creates the need to establish a universally shared method of representing reality; otherwise, how are we to know which is the *right* way to organize our ideas? Recall, Descartes' assertion of the equality of reason. At the end of the passage, he says: 'the diversity of our opinions does not arise because some of us are more reasonable than others but solely because *we direct our thoughts along different paths and do not attend to the same things*' [italics added] (1985, 111). We direct our thoughts along different paths. On the one hand, this is a seemingly innocent remark. People think about different stuff. Big deal. On the other hand, by the time of Kant, the moderns truly come to recognize how epistemically dangerous thinking differently can be. They realize that if what we have to work with are only the resources of our own minds and cognitive capacities, then permitting thinking to proceed along different paths allows for different representations of what science tells us should be an *objective* reality. The result? When epistemic individualism and representationalism come together, difference must be diminished.

The transformation that allows the modern world to formulate more virulent stereotypes of race lies largely in how moderns respond to and seek to replace the comfort and security of ancient ways of thinking. In 'the perennial dispute between the Heracleiteans and the Parmenideans,' Robert Fogelin notes, the Parmenidean 'packaging of rationality, reality, unity, and immutability is a persistent feature of Western philosophy' (2003, 24). What Fogelin leaves out, however, is how determined are modern attempts to hold onto this packaging. Rationality, reality, unity, and immutability could be taken for granted in the Greek world, not

so for the moderns. For all the talk of contrast between Parmenidean and Heraclitean perspectives, the Greek world is a kinder, gentler one in which the dwelling of humans is far more secure than it is in either the modern or postmodern world. It is a world into which humans are fully absorbed. In fact, the human place in a moral and material world is central to how the Greeks understand and package rationality, reality, unity, and immutability—even Heraclitus has logos. By the classical era, philosophy is about defending the *practical* benefits of philosophy for living a just life. Socrates, for instance, does not engage in philosophy as a mere epistemic exercise but as a means to improve the soul. If he lived today, he might just say, with Wittgenstein, that 'Work on philosophy is … actually more of … a kind of … work on oneself' (1993, 161).[22] Knowing what, say, piety or justice is should not be simply intellectual exercise but rather should be an essential part of living a worthwhile life. For Socrates, and for those who follow him, reason concerns attaining order within the soul so that one can live a just life. After all, the world has a natural and moral order. It is our job not simply to discover this order but to *become good*.

The world of the moderns is quite different. What happens during the Enlightenment is a culturally pervasive reworking of this packaging such that humans are left, in a very important sense, nowhere. As cognition turns in on itself, it loses external constraints. What happens afterward is a well-worn tale. As knowledge starts to work from the inside out, our physical locatedness in a material world recedes and we are expected to re-present a world from which we have become isolated. Humans come to stand outside of nature, at least insofar as we are creatures with minds. And insofar as we are creatures with minds, we may very well have faculties of sense and imagination, we may still have bodies and emotions, but these are not essential to who we are. In this epistemic withdrawing, each of us come to be associated primarily and essentially with intellect. In the end, it is not so much that the moderns are unconcerned with moral aspects of our lives; rather, it is that they are more concerned with finding an epistemological surety, a surety which appears unachievable as long as reason is allowed to reside within the messy irregularities of life.

[22] Wittgenstein could obviously have used a little of Plato's literary flare.

The result is that an adherence to strict methodology replaces ontology and reason necessarily narrows. The focus comes to be less on living the good life and more on having epistemically defensible beliefs.

One of the most significant aspects of the modern turn for the 'racing' and 'gendering' of human beings is that rationality, which is a human quality for the Greeks, is separated from humanity. Beginning with Descartes, the intellect must function in a way that achieves and assures rationality, reality, unity, and immutability. That is to say, reason is no longer the defining feature of humanity but is something we acquire (or not) by following correct methods. And the only correct methods? Scientifically circumscribed procedures. The enormous success of this intellectual revolution in how reason is understood actually masks how decisively it discounts and disregards, both epistemically and morally, that which does not fall within its gaze. In other words, as it restricts the range of rationality, it also restricts the range of who can be considered rational. Nevertheless, the exclusions are not ones of which philosophers are always consciously aware. Rather, the mainstream problems of Enlightenment philosophy—and the mainstream solutions to those problems—create the conditions for a principled differentiation among various types of human beings. This differentiation is not the goal, but it is a powerful effect. And it is an effect or difficulty that is discussed well. Yet, in spite of the fact that the marginalization of non-white and non-male humans is well understood, what is less well understood is just how theoretically sophisticated and deep is this exclusion. Whatever the democratic and populous origins of Cartesian reason, his version of rational methodology decisively and effectively limits the scope of reason. Most unfortunately for those who are left outside the domain of reason, Cartesian assumptions, when put into the hands of Kant, quickly and somewhat imperceptibly limit the range of moral egalitarianism. Enlightenment philosophy generates exclusions through the précising of 'reason.' As a result, uncovering the problem of reason requires that we also recover what is lost when reason is transformed into a powerful instrument for scientific observation and deductive argument.

Ultimately, modern windows on reason are all too isolated, too limited, too partial. But what's missing from the modern viewpoint? What in this outlook needs to be overcome? In the introduction to *Philosophy*

and the Mirror of Nature, Rorty tells us, and I think rightly, 'It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions' (1979, 12). We have for too long had the picture of reason looking out on the world as an observer not as a participant. This is a powerful image, one that undergirds modern science, and many of its greatest successes. But it is also a picture that has permitted moral agents to withdraw from the world, and to isolate, exclude, and demean those who do not—or appear to not—meet certain ideals and standards of methodological detachment. In short, it has looked away from many of the moral excesses of modernism. Archetypes of this picture are the scientist looking through a telescope or the artist painting. Such objectification may be effective for certain tasks, but it comes at a price. The philosopher, scientist, or artist in the Enlightenment loses the ontological ground that the Greeks could take for granted, although each attempts to replace ontology with rigorous, determinate methods supposedly capable of obtaining objective truth—at least for those proficient in meeting the standards of rationality. Put differently, at the heart of modernism's exclusionary conception of rationality lies an engulfing concern with subjectivism and representation.

One way of highlighting how difference comes to be diminished is to consider how modern philosophers make use of ocular metaphors. Consider the parallel case of painting, which at this time adopts vanishing point perspective. The transformation in painting demands the artist adopt a clearly circumscribed standard of representation and a clearly articulated method for obtaining that standard. Anything lying outside this standard and method cannot be represented and is not worth the artist's attention. In the same way, the metaphors of the 'Mind's Eye' and the 'light of reason' establish a method for achieving epistemic certainty (or at least high probability) and, hence, truth. In making this move, modern philosophers insist that the faculties of reason and sensation are the same for everyone. Conveniently, this limits the scope of rationality so that 'everyone' need consider only a scientifically circumscribed set of phenomena appropriate for observation under the 'right sort' of conditions. In hindsight, what is obvious is that the modern light of reason becomes a narrow beam, a true limelight. What it illuminates—for example, cannon balls or planets—does come to be seen with a great deal

of clarity and precision. Problem is, the constriction of attention to what falls within that narrow beam obscures and makes invisible anything not illuminated—for example, race or gender. As a result, what lies in the shadows—that is, what lies outside of formal validity, consistency, conceptual analysis, scientific observation—is not worth investigating and is, in a very literal sense, not real.[23] Hence, the moderns become unable to account for difference, which itself implies that those who are different either must somehow be like 'us' or must not fully share in reason. Not only is reason made out to be more narrow and less interesting than it really is, it practically, *perhaps* essentially, assures the exclusion of non-males and non-whites from epistemic and moral agency.

Whether Enlightenment rationality is as *inherently* oppressive as some feminists and race theorists believe, it is unquestionably oppressive for most people who are neither white nor male. Reason, supposedly the great moral equalizer in universalistic ethics, was indeed used to support, for example, colonization, such that in colonized parts of the world, natives 'required conquest and occupation rather than self-determination and sovereignty …. [T]he peasant was not historically ready for citizenship' (Eze 2008, 186). Eze rhetorically asks what this could mean, but he knows what it means: natives and peasants were not granted full status as rational moral agents. What seems odd is that such an oppressive account of reason could come from a framing paradigm explicitly committed to equality. Then again, we can ask how committed Enlightenment philosophers are to the equal worth of *persons*. For Mills, while the equal worth of persons is a hegemonic framing paradigm, it 'is profoundly misleading, deeply wrong, … it radically mystifies the recent past, and … it needs to be confronted and discredited if our socio-political categories are to be true to the world they are supposed to be mapping' (2002, 3). To restate the point: 'equal worth of persons' is a myth; we need to acknowledge it is a myth; and we need to do a better job of capturing what's really going on in the world. Of course, feminists have been doing their best to make this case for a while now, telling stories in which reason is less of a hero than it is in the 'hegemonic narrative' of mainstream philosophy.[24] It is no accident that the rights conferred to

[23] See Frye 1983, 155–161. I will discuss the phenomenon of invisibility in the next chapter.

[24] An early and notable example of this sort of storytelling is Genevieve Lloyd's *Man of Reason*.

men during the Enlightenment are not conferred to women, and it is no accident that the categories of race with which we are so familiar come into being during this time. This is the story race theorists are now telling. Descriptively, the re-telling of the story of exclusion has much to offer, not the least of which is to uncover precisely those features of reality that have subsisted in the shadows and that have thereby not been mapped. One of these features is how Enlightenment epistemology and morality drives a wedge between the concepts of person and human. Put straightforwardly, philosophers like Kant are quite committed to the equal worth of *persons*; they just don't believe non-whites and non-males are persons.

This disconnect is revealed if we discuss the difficulty well, but the discussion should not stop there. As feminists have come to understand, normative moral concepts such as the equal worth of persons are worth defending. That colonialism could be co-extensive with the Age of Enlightenment is not truly a problem of rationality; it is a problem of how Enlightenment philosophers conceived of rationality. We can change the narrative. We need to change the narrative. But the new narrative must do some substantive ethical work, and it must do this work in the face of great suspicion concerning narratives. Consider Nancy Hartsock's concern with Postmodernism. She notes that we might *think* that figures like Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, and Lyotard would provide some guidance in finding ways to include the voices of marginalized groups. After all, these are philosophers who have argued against the Enlightenment and its universalizing and so-called totalizing theories. However, she argues that, given a broader analysis, Postmodernism is a hindrance and not a help to those who wish to bring about change through a systematic understanding of the world for, at best, it 'manages to criticize these theories *without putting anything in their place*.' She goes on:

> Those of us who are not part of the ruling race, class, or gender … need to know how it works. Why are we—in all our variousness—systematically excluded and marginalized? What systematic changes would be required to create a more just society? At their worst, postmodern theories merely recapitulate the effects of Enlightenment theories—theories that deny marginalized people the right to participate in defining the terms of interaction with people in the mainstream. (Hartsock 1987, 190–191)

We need to understand the philosophical motivations and explanations behind marginalization and exclusion, but *we also need to put something in its place*. The equal worth of persons may be a modern ideal, but it is a modern ideal that still rings true to many in our time. For those of us concerned with injustice, it is an ideal worth salvaging. Nevertheless, to save this ideal requires some detailed assessment of why it failed so miserably in the first place, especially of why it failed within a moral theory built upon the *dignity of all rational agents* (i.e., Kant's moral theory). Simply telling the tale that 'male' and 'white' are implicitly attached to 'reason' in the modern world fails to take note of how the failures are unambiguously *modern*. It fails to note how both pre- and post-Cartesian philosophy endorse a much more expansive, integrated, and diverse understanding of rationality. It fails to note how much post-Cartesian thinking has altered the hegemonic and profoundly misleading framing paradigm. It fails to solve the deep moral failings within the problem of reason.

1.3 Out of the Darkness

As much as I hope to articulate clearly the foibles of modernism, the real task here is actually to identify a constructive alternative to Cartesian rationality, one that can reestablish a meaningful connection between humanity and a diverse rationality while also normatively grounding desperately needed moral concepts (e.g., justice and equality). Despite the despair expressed in some corners of the philosophical world concerning the future of reason, a great deal of the foundational work for reformulating the concept has already been done; it is just a matter of unpacking it and bringing to the fore the implications of this work for issues of race and sex. Take, for example, Heidegger. No one would ever call Heidegger progressive on issues of social justice, but in his own way, he understands quite clearly the underlying issues. As a critic of the Cartesian program, Heidegger rejects the metaphysics of presence which he argues operates from a perspective of detachment that can, at best, capture reality in a distorted manner. He recognizes, as an alternative, the power of pre-modern philosophy for reintegrating reason into a lived

experience and overcoming some of the most destructive difficulties of Cartesianism. Of course, what Heidegger eagerly draws our attention to is that Cartesianism is not the only philosophical game in town. We also have the ancient Greeks and medievals from whom we can learn.[25]

While examining modernism in light of Greek philosophy may appear a tad bit anachronistic, Greek philosophy does highlight aspects of reason plunged into darkness by modernism. Given that Descartes explicitly places his view in opposition to Aristotelian philosophical conceptions, examining the divergence of ideas from the Greek and modern periods actually makes perfectly good sense. For the Greeks, mind (nous) is not an isolated faculty. It is part of a larger soul. And this soul is less a *thing*, as it turns into for the moderns, and more a set of diverse functional capacities that hang together. Within this diverse set of capacities constitutive of the soul are materially oriented elements, including nutritive ones. Mind is not distinct but resides within this functional set of abilities, and it is a set that includes bodily appetites as well as emotions. In contrast, Descartes willingly and knowingly rejects a Greek integration of nous with body and emotion.[26] He consciously denies that soul is essentially integrated in the world and, thus, leaves nous with nothing but its own resources on which to depend. Of course, philosophers in the Enlightenment are aware of this contrast and do recognize the growing disconnect between mind and world, but they mostly accept it as just another problem to be solved. Internal representations, they believe, do hook up with the world

[25] Heidegger may have been an early adopter of vociferously calling for a return to the pre-Socratics, but his encouragement for drawing philosophy back to pre-modern thinking is notable. His influence on French philosophy is as undeniable as his medievalist background, which brings with it an interest in non-modern approaches. Tom Rockmore notes, 'Like a massive, yet rarely visible dark star, Heidegger shapes and determines the nature and course of French philosophical debate. As Michael Roth has stated, "Heidegger's influence on French philosophy can scarcely be overestimated"' (Rockmore 1995, xi).

Yet Heidegger is not the only medievalist important to the development of contemporary philosophy. According to Bruce Holsinger, the work of Georges Bataille, another medieval scholar, also influences the work of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, Barthes, and Lyotard. For a more complete overview of medievalism's influence on contemporary Heideggerian and French philosophical thought, see Holsinger (2005, 1–25).

[26] As I will argue in Chap. 4, Descartes radicalizes a Platonic understanding of mind. As a well-known critic of Plato, Aristotle, by extension, offers a useful framework for identifying the limitations of Cartesianism. After all, Aristotle is sensitive to precisely the same concerns in Plato that Descartes picks up on and develops.

in objectively knowable sorts of ways; we just have to figure out what those ways are. Problem is, no solution is forthcoming.

What Heidegger, along with Wittgenstein and Peirce, understands is the liabilities inherent in removing the faculty of reason from the world with which it must cope. Each of these philosophers clearly articulates problems generated by asserting a mind/world gap. Each offers an early, explicit, and effective critique of epistemic isolation and representationalism. Peirce, in particular, is one of the first to attack introspection and individualism, and he counters Cartesian doubt with a pragmatic approach that is echoed in Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Like Descartes, Peirce looks to science as a model. Unlike Descartes, he concludes from this model that *individual* consciousness is incapable of maintaining an isolation from the world much less of acquiring knowledge through solitary endeavors. He supports a 'fundamental hypothesis' reminiscent of the Greeks: 'There are real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them' (Peirce 1934a, 107). And the beliefs we have about these real things are habits of action which are tied directly to the world and which cannot be doubted without some genuine reason to do so. The emphasis on activity is also echoed in Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Still, whether we consider rationality as an achievement of solitary minds or as a communal endeavor to discover truths about the world, we seem, at this point, to be quite a long way from the Greeks who simply grounded standards for rational thought in a stable metaphysics.

Whatever Peirce's appeal to so-called real objects in the world, he (like all of us who temporally follow Kant) cannot escape the conceptual aspects of object talk. Simple appeals to an ontological structure as a constraint on cognition are unavailable to us. Regardless, we are, in many ways, much closer to Greeks than we are to the moderns, and this despite still speaking the increasingly antiquated language of the moderns. Heidegger may express a somewhat fanciful desire to return to a pre-Socratic metaphysics, but he also offers something slightly more realistic and just as Greek in spirit: lived experience. We may have lost the things themselves, but the way in which he denies us access to a ding an sich actually serves as a means of reestablishing a cognitive reintegration with the world. Heidegger asks us to consider the meaning things have for us *in the world in which we live*. We come to know things as we make

use of them, not through some abstract representation of them. We *experience* our world; we don't just methodologically analyze it. In a similar manner, Wittgenstein offers an equally powerful critique of Cartesian introspection: in the absence of some externally accessible standard of judgment, a standard which Descartes does not allow, anything goes in the realm of cognition. What Wittgenstein wants us to recognize is that individual reason cannot be self-sufficient in the way moderns would have us believe. And many philosophers today agree that it really makes no sense to think that our rational minds exist apart from the material and social world with which we must interact on a daily basis. Further, because the internalism and idealism inherent in the Cartesian program have proven to produce confused and distorted representations that are oddly disconnected from actual pursuits of knowledge, they are widely rejected.

An immediate concern with my choice of Peirce, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein as models should be their silence on ethics generally. How can *these guys* help feminists and race theorists solve the problem of reason? Sure, none of these early critics of modernism addresses the issues of morality and social justice that interest feminists and race theorists. Sure, in their harsh criticism and disparagement of epistemological failings, none of them considers the *moral* failings of modernism. Those remain invisible. Nevertheless, all of them do something that is, in the long run, just as important: they clearly diagnose the underlying problems of Cartesianism and offer strong alternatives to representationalism. They grasp how thoroughly distorting is the claim that solitary minds, following established methods for cognition, really can come to have knowledge.[27] The result is that in rejecting this aspect of Cartesianism, they allow for the possibility that rationality is a communal activity, and they allow for the inclusion of diversity within reason. Indeed, their mainstream epistemological concerns offer a powerful corrective to modern representationalism and provide a structure within which the source of modern racism can be not only undone but also replaced.

[27] The full argument for the connection between representational epistemologies and moral indiscretion will come in the following chapter.

As critics of modernism have made quite clear, what was lost in the modern period (and what still has not been fully recovered) is a clear vision of rational beings as interdependently immersed in a world that is not only stable but also offers normative constraints on epistemic and moral beliefs. Of course, this sort of immersion was terribly dangerous for the moderns. It threatened their faith in science and in reason by undermining the promise of Objectivity (with a capital 'O'). Toulmin highlights this problem with an example from the voyage of Captain Cook. Whereas the voyage which was intended to establish astronomical truths, the scientific aspects of the journey were not what most interested Europeans. What did interest them? Stories about the customs of Tahitian people. And for a European world that placed the certainty of knowledge within the mind, competing systems of ideas, like those of the Tahitians, threatened that certainty in a psychologically much more powerful way than could Descartes' 'very slight metaphysical doubt.' While neither a feminist nor a race theorist, Toulmin concludes from this story something important: *it is only certain men who achieve rationality*.

> In this way, 'objectivity', in the sense of impartiality, became equated with the 'objectivity' of timeless truths; the rational merits of an intellectual position were identified with its logical coherence; and the philosopher's measure of a man's rationality become his ability to recognize, without further argument, the validity of the axioms, formal entailments, and logical necessities on which the claims of the authoritative system depended. (1972, 44)

Note, the authority of modern epistemology is said to depend on logical necessities. *This* is the measure of a *man's* rationality. Yet this is a quite peculiar standard, although the moderns certainly would not see it as such. Still, in establishing the standards for rationality that they did, the moderns clearly grasp the dangers of self-reliance. Fully understood by the time of Hume and Kant is that if we cannot get outside of cognitive systems, and if our beliefs are dependent upon merely culturally held concepts, then the self-justifying methods and procedures of rational cognition cannot assure objectivity.

Whatever our own sense of the limitations of modernism, we inherit a critical task from the moderns: the need to establish objectivity (even with a small 'o'). Despite being in a very different place than our modern predecessors, we share their sense that metaphysics (at least in the Greek sense of this term) is dead. This is perhaps the one aspect of modernism that has survived relatively unscathed. Consequently, we lack the surety enjoyed by the Greeks, whatever our other similarities with and affinities for their views. With the loss of metaphysics, philosophy loses 'the Given,' an extremely important external constraint on belief and knowledge. Of course, our difficulty is not new. Kant understood quite clearly that without the friction provided by contact with an independently existing reality, concepts would be free floating. Hence, his unwillingness to abandon noumena or to accept a thoroughly Humean empiricism. But Kant's solutions are not available to us, which is just as well given that, as I will argue, they ground a seriously entrenched racism and sexism. Nevertheless, we *need* solutions. As our anti-modern world has lost 'the Given,' it has also abandoned foundationalism, representationalism, and atomism. We often reject metanarratives, totalizing theories, and dichotomous thinking. We often question the very possibility of unified, rational, objective selves. We abandon all those elements of Cartesianism that were intended to reintroduce objective constraints into cognition.

In many ways, this rejection of modernism has, for its proponents, been liberating and freeing. Nevertheless, postmodernism (with or without a capital 'P') is not all philosophical sunshine and light. To question the nature of rationality, the possibility of knowledge, and the unity of the mind comes at a steep philosophical price. At no other time have philosophers been so unsure of the continued existence (or at least usefulness) of our discipline. For almost a century now, the transformation—or even death—of philosophy has been preached and prophesized.[28] More recently, preached are the problems of postmodernism's disunity and its destruction of theory, problems which have been widely documented, both by those sympathetic and unsympathetic to the whole endeavor.

[28] Even Derrida speaks of the tendency to declare the 'death of philosophy,' although he rejects this tendency, stating, 'I do not at all believe in what today is so easily called the death of philosophy (nor, moreover, in the simple death of whatever—the book, man, or god, especially since, as we all know, what is dead wields a very specific power)' (1981, 6).

This is especially true for feminists, who are at all times concerned with issues of oppression.[29] At heart, the issue is that, in the widespread rejection of the excesses of modernism, we seem to have lost the ability, if not the desire, to defend normativity. Because normativity requires us to appeal to what are now considered questionable concepts, concepts such as reason and objectivity. We at times appear to lose our motivation for defending equality and justice, despite our desperate ethical need for these concepts. Sadly, these concepts have become synonymous with exclusion and oppression, and they appear to commit us to deeply suspect dichotomous ways of thinking.

Although I share many of the widespread concerns about modernism and modernist concepts, I have been and continue to be a defender of rationality. In coming out with her so-called absolutist leanings, Louise Antony says, 'I do believe in truth, and I have never understood why people concerned with justice have given it such a bad rap' (2002, 115). I feel the same about rationality, even if it is perfectly understandable why this concept has been given such a bad rap. Feminists and race theorists—indeed, anyone concerned with issues of oppression and justice—need normativity, objectivity, and truth. We need to point to the *wrongness* of certain attitudes and behaviors. Sandra Harding argues precisely this point when she notes that feminist alternatives to the Enlightenment project could not 'completely take leave of Enlightenment assumptions and still remain feminist. The critics are right that feminism (also) stands on Enlightenment ground' (Harding 1996, 313). Problem is, we cannot continue to stand on Enlightenment ground. That ground is far too shaky. We may require the moral concepts developed by the likes of Kant, but we can no longer accept the foundations on which those concepts depend. In other words, if we are to have these concepts in our argumentative arsenal, they require a nonmodern concept of rationality, one robust enough to defend them but flexible enough to allow for a diversity of ways of being rational. No one interested in equality can afford to cede the moral ground these concepts offer.

[29] For examples, see Hartsock 1987, esp. 190–1; Benhabib 1992, esp. 228–9. Also see Nicholson 1999.

What is a self-respecting philosopher to do? Surely, some philosophers have stuck their proverbial heads in the sand and just keep doing what they have always done: churn out (hopefully) deductively valid arguments on esoteric points of philosophy, whether it be of language, logic, or epistemology. Some have given up on the philosophical endeavor entirely.[30] Some have called for a return to the ancients—or to the classical pragmatists, who were never committed to modernism in the first place.[31] And, of course, some are content to remain oppositionally opposed to everything modern, regardless of the cost. Still, it is clear that unlike the moderns, who were absolutely self-confident in the power of reason to guide them beyond the excesses of scholasticism, we are not so sure of ourselves and the future direction of philosophy. Unlike Descartes, who had to go as far as generating an evil deceiver to question the reliability of his cognitive capacities, we live in a world that regularly rails and rebels against reason. Given claims that reason is inherently suspect, we probably shouldn't marvel that the death knell of philosophy has been rung. Nor should we be surprised that the foundations of our 'house of reason' are cracked and collapsing.

On the normative side of this tale, rationality is perhaps the most important of all framing paradigms. The nature of this frame may currently be a matter of great debate, but rather than wash our hands of it, feminists and race theorists should contribute to the dialogue. In other words, if we don't like the way philosophical issues are framed, we should do something about it. If we are going to reject essentialism, then we should reject essentialism concerning the meanings of normative concepts such as rationality.[32] Alessandra Tanesini gets it exactly right when she explains:

> To claim that this concept [i.e., reason] is gendered is to hold that we ought to change at least some uses of the concept. … In other words, there are reasons for claiming that the community is wrong about the meaning of the term in question and for suggesting ways in which the term ought to be used. (1994, 210)

[30] Here Rorty comes to mind, even though he might disagree depending, of course, on how we define 'philosophy.'

[31] Once again Rorty, in another instantiation, comes to mind, along with one of his philosophical 'heroes,' Heidegger.

[32] I will discuss the need to reject essentialism—and how to do it—in the final chapter.

What Tanesini offers is a Wittgensteinian approach to reason; this time complete with a sensitivity to the social and moral consequences of our use of terms. We philosophers do take perfectly good words—words like 'knowledge,' 'justification,' and 'reason'—words whose meanings are perfectly clear in their everyday usage, and we distort them to the point of senselessness. Who in their right mind, for example, *really wonders* if that barn off in the distance is a barn façade? Or *really wonders* whether Smith knows that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket? These sorts of extreme problems with defeasibility are a product of modernist ways of thinking that are, I argue, directly linked to the development of racism. This is because defeating this level of defeasibility demands a narrowness of perspective that excludes any hint of difference. Certainly there are occasions, such as in a court of law, where the standards of evidence are meaningfully raised to artificially high levels, but these are the exception, not the rule. Even Hume, one of the most sophisticated skeptics around, argues that none but the fool or madman will doubt his everyday experiences. Peirce explains that 'We cannot begin with complete doubt. We must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy' (1934b, 40). The problem is, of course, that some of our prejudices—and especially those prejudices built into the meanings of our terms—get us in trouble. Modern reason is specifically designed to conceal and diminish prejudices, but that does not eliminate them. What we need is a means of exposing and responding to them—and a means of retaining a sensitivity to our own biases and prejudices.

Rather than look for universally valid principles that restrict difference and that permit, even encourage, insensitivity to so-called otherness, we must face the very real difficulty of exposing these biases and of finding a better vision in a philosophical world suspicious of metaphysical grounds and overwhelmed with epistemic perspectives. What post-Cartesians highlight in a variety of ways is that the model of rationality should shift, in all likelihood, to something closer to a quantum observer whose act of observation is itself an integral part of the world—or, to change the image, to environmentally focused and located art (e.g., the work of Robert Smithson or Christo) which exists not in museums but in relation to other parts of the world. As in these latter examples, reason, like the

quantum observer or environmental artist, is continually responding to and interacting with the world around it. The moderns may lose sight of the practical purposiveness of our rational cognition, but we can no longer afford to do so.[33] We think, believe, desire, act with specific goals in mind—and within specific limitations put on us by the world in which we live. We don't get to just make it all up. A rational faculty that fails to take into account various human interests and the ways in which the world assists or limits us in pursing these interests is not a faculty we can continue to understand as rational. Unquestionably, rationality is a much broader, much more value laden, and much more egalitarian concept than what the moderns allow it to be.

We need not, then, just give up on reason. We need instead an account of reason that can function as a corrective to the problems of racism and sexism. We need to shape the discussion in ways that make reason responsive to its past history of exclusion, and we need to come to terms with a communally shared understanding of rationality. To do this, we need not reinvent the wheel. The Greeks show us how nous is not an isolated faculty but is a set of diverse functional capacities that includes not only cognitive elements but material and emotional ones as well. Post-Cartesians show us how to reject transcendental grounds and objective methodologies while retaining concepts (like reason) as public property whose meanings can be altered.[34] Because both these nonmodern perspectives are open to the various ways we can think rationally and to a variety of agents who do so, they are actually much better equipped to ground the Enlightenment moral concepts of equality and justice. In other words, nonmodern reason can allow for the enigma and mystery that lies outside procedural accounts. Enigma and mystery, however, are always difficult for philosophers. Some contemporary accounts of reason struggle mightily to replace the very proceduralism others reject. Contemporary accounts are often uneasy with diversity and difference, despite efforts to acknowledge it. Still, we are not without resources. Good old-fashioned virtue concepts offer a means to a normativity which

[33] The term 'purposiveness' is central to Kant's arguments concerning race. My use here is less transcendental and much more in line with general usage. But the pun is intended.

[34] Says Toulmin, 'For what we believe we are answerable as individuals; but the language in which our beliefs are articulated is public property' (1972, 35).

is sensitive to precisely the sort of diversity and difference the moderns cannot tolerate. It also allows us to establish standards, albeit ones that are dependent on immanent appeals to what the reasonable person believes and does. Ultimately, the challenge is to build upon a virtue concept while replacing an outdated Greek metaphysics. The goal is to develop rationality in a way that it can continue to provide a substantive ground for moral concepts.

1.4 Beyond Modernism

To answer the question of how reason becomes a concept that invokes 'images of domination, oppression, repression, patriarchy, sterility, violence, totality, totalitarianism, and even terror' (Bernstein 1986, 187), I first offer a philosophical story about reason's corruption, then seek a story of hope and redemption. I tell the story of how reason lost its way by going back to the philosophers themselves, both to those who unwittingly and wittingly led reason astray and to those who have attempted to revive more comprehensive, more inclusive conceptions of rationality. But the reason with which I am interested is ultimately not that of the philosopher nor the scientist but rather that of ordinary, everyday humans. My concern is with the full range of rationality in situ, as something that is in and of the world, with all the contextually dependent messiness that implies. Outside of those who have quite constricted definitions of what constitutes rationality, this assumption should not beg too many questions, especially if one is willing to follow the lead of Descartes' critics and to adopt a practical starting point.[35] What the Greeks understand is that humans do have a faculty of reason that we use to get us through an actual, lived world of physical objects, bodily desires, and emotional responsiveness. And by all appearances, they are right. It is the fullness of all the ways we literally and symbolically navigate out lives that offers the most open and inclusive understanding of what it means to be a rational *person*. Of course, this is not a new approach. In his preface to *Human Understanding*, Toulmin sums up his opposition to philosophy's

[35] For an explanation of 'practical starting point,' see Hildebrand 2003.

single-minded pursuit of questions of logical form by countering with the following claim: 'Men demonstrate their rationality, not by ordering their concepts and beliefs in tidy formal structures, but by their preparedness to respond to novel situations with open minds—acknowledging the shortcomings of their former procedures and moving beyond them' (1972, vii–viii). As human beings, we live lives that require both predictability and adaptability. Being open-minded does not exclude believing and acting on the basis of principle, nor does it exclude acting in concert with emotion or acting habitually in ways that can be anticipated by others. In fact, the person whose actions appear disconnected from all emotion or whose actions appear somewhat random is the person whose rationality may be questioned.

This way of thinking about rationality is consistent with the demands of virtue, which requires that we act in consistently responsible ways that are sensitive to material, emotional, and social contexts. What virtue demands that logical procedures do not is a perceptiveness concerning the features of our lives that give it meaning. More significantly, what virtue allows that logical procedures do not is a morally diverse world of particular (i.e., not generalized) moral agents. And this need to be responsive to context requires responses that are variable rather than rule-bound. Furthermore, virtue demands a self-critical deliberation that requires us to learn from our mistakes. Unlike modern visions of reason, virtue does not allow us to deem certain aspects of life as insignificant because they fail to fit the formal picture of how reason is supposed to proceed. Given that rationality is immersed in the banality and messiness of human life as much as it is in the theoretical and justificatory problems of philosophers, virtue concepts provide precisely the right sort of vision for an inclusive concept that can ground normative moral concepts. It does this by providing a standard that is not committed to single and strictly logical method but one built upon the actual practice of reason in a socially complex world.

The work of both Aristotle and the later Wittgenstein offers solid framing for just such an account, although each approaches reason from a rather different perspective. The Aristotelian world, with all its talk of universals and essences, is thoroughly metaphysical; the Wittgensteinian world is, by contrast, utterly nonmetaphysical, so much so that we are

called to return language from its metaphysical to its ordinary use. Even though Aristotle may hardly appear capable of the ontological agnosticism of communal practices, his concept of virtue is in fact sensitive to the particular embodied conditions of human life. Even though Wittgenstein may hardly appear capable of substantively grounding ever-changing practices, his concept of forms of life is sensitive to limitations beyond cultural or social ones. So, despite their differences, both are committed to following principles that are flexible and responsive to theoretical and practical concerns. And both assume reason is fully of this world. Still, given their temporal situatedness, Aristotle can, unlike Wittgenstein, offer no direct rebuttal to Descartes. Yet Aristotelian philosophy stands opposed to procedural quests for certainty, epistemic and moral isolation, and disembodied minds. Instead, it seeks responsiveness to actual *activity* in a social world. Wittgenstein similarly focuses on activity as a salve for the isolation created by modern representationalism. He tells us that when we reach bedrock, we don't introduce radical doubt or look deeper within our cognitive structures; we simply say: this is what we *do*. And, in a very important sense, this emphasis on lived experience and on standards arising out of lived experience gets at something the moderns tend to miss, namely, that rationality is a lived activity. It is more than simply a matter of following certain logical procedures. It involves more than simply what Aristotle would call nous. Reason is substantive and social and responsive—and we should understand it as such.

To argue for this receptive, reactive, not-tied-to-a-single-procedure concept, I offer an historically situated argument that, in rejecting the possibility of Cartesian certainty, can admittedly seek to establish only the 'strongest possible presumption' on its behalf (Toulmin 2001, 19). Again, this is not a new idea. Aristotle is explicitly aware that this is all that a virtue account has ever been able to produce. We can only seek a level of precision in argument appropriate to the area of inquiry—and the nature of rationality (both theoretical and practical) is as open-ended an area of inquiry as one is ever going to find. At the end of the day, it is not only hopeless but also misguided to demand necessary and sufficient conditions for rationality. It is to ask precisely for the kind of narrowness that led modernism astray.

One concern, however, is that this open-ended approach to reason appears to discount the role of justification in rationality. Of course, reason should be concerned with justifying beliefs. It is only prudent to seek common, ordinary standards for judgment. It is even sensible to pursue further scientific and philosophical scrutiny of our beliefs. What Descartes does, though, is much more extreme. He suspends all belief and affirms only those which can eliminate all relevant defeaters—even evil deceivers. Because a thoroughly epistemic notion of rationality is conflated with justification, it comes to be fraught with all the doubts that skepticism could hope to generate. However contradictory it seems, the resulting quest for certainty has produced a great deal of uncertainty—including deep worries concerning reason itself. Cartesian skepticism is accentuated by one of most glaring difficulties of any modernist epistemology: representationalism. Once Descartes is stuck in his own head, he is forced to ask the question: how can I justify my beliefs about the world outside my mind? In other words, we have whole bunches of ideas—innate ones, if we are rationalists; from impressions, if we are empiricists—but these ideas are only ideas. They are supposed to be *of something*, but what? And how can I know these ideas accurately re-present the world outside of my own head? Even if we refuse to engage the possibility of universal deception, we are left wondering how a realm of internal ideas connects to a material world of objects—and wondering how accurate are the re-presentations of reality viewed by the Mind's Eye. The problem of representation looms very large indeed, and it looms large even in the absence of Descartes' demon. Little surprise that observation and ocular metaphors become all the more prominent during this time.

Given the level of skeptical concern generated by the moderns, an alternative which allows flexible considerations for the various ways rationality operates ordinarily does not appear as such a bad option. Even in the absence of necessary and sufficient conditions for rationality, at least a lived, embodied rationality can sidestep many of the problems created by representationalism. The subject matter for contemporary versions of rationality may lack the precision of logic, but both reason and virtue can be discussed theoretically in a schematic manner that specifies some conditions for appropriate rational belief and activity. That is, if we allow ourselves to overcome our own doubts. A major difficulty for a task such

as the one I have outlined is that we contemporary philosophers lack the self-confidence of the moderns. The power of reason to define us as humans and to define the discipline of philosophy has not disappeared, but the terms of the debate have been fundamentally altered. Where the moderns were sure of themselves in their rejection of scholasticism and where they put their faith in reason, our self-assurance is weaker and our faith in reason is practically nil. The moderns upheld the ideal that each of us is a thinking, autonomous, unconditioned self that can, in principle, individually unlock the secrets of a mechanistic physical universe (and slightly less mechanistic moral universe) through a rigorous application of a rational methodology. They exhibited an absolute faith in the power of reason to discover objective knowledge (with varying degrees of certainty). They believed that progress is inherently good and that human life can be made better and better through the discovery and application of dispassionate knowledge. In our day, we exhibit little hope that reason can actually resolve the difficulties we face. In our world, faith in reason has given way to widespread attacks on modernity and everything that comes with it, including rationality itself. Equally uncertain for us is what philosophy should become. We have, for instance, Heidegger arguing that we should return to the pre-Socratics; Kuhn arguing that 'subjective' values never actually left 'objective' science; Lyotard arguing that philosophical texts are not governed by pre-established rules and cannot be determinately judged; and Rorty calling for philosophy to become cultural criticism. While philosophers today may tend to agree that modernism is becoming a historical artifact, we can otherwise find little consensus about the methodology that contemporary philosophers should champion in its stead.

Even worse, we are not always so sure that modernism can or should be escaped. Modernism promises us what the postmoderns tend to call 'grand narratives' or 'metanarratives.' Many philosophers do wish to abandon such things, but time and time again, others question whether it is wise to do so. As Harding notes, 'feminist postmodernists [paradoxically] adhere to some powerful Enlightenment assumptions' (1996, 314), she also notes that, most ironically, they retain the assumption that science and epistemology can *only* be done within a modern framework. That is to say, some feminists abandon reason because they implicitly

accept that Enlightenment thinkers have dominion over the term. Of course, for any self-respecting postmodernist, this presumption becomes a substantial temptation to simply give up on reason. Many 'just accept the position of Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault, and other critics that there has already been too much policing of thought' (Harding 1996, 301–302). Yet abandoning reason is not the only option. We can also insist that the concept come to better 'represent' what it is we humans actually do in living cognitively developed lives. To reject the goal of telling one, true story of reality need not imply that no stories can be told. Nor does it mean that all stories are equally good. Rationality is *something*. Its house may have a million windows, but its windows are not infinite.

As we move beyond the modern period, it seems almost everything is 'up for grabs'—even rationality. Key philosophical dichotomies (as well as the idea of dichotomous thinking itself) are all under scrutiny: reason v. emotion, objectivity v. subjectivity, fact v. value, unity v. plurality, and so on. The concept of reason, which lies at the heart of any philosophical endeavor, has suffered a strong and sustained attack from just about every corner of the philosophical world. The idea of objectivity is doubted even more heavily as values lurk around every philosophical corner inserting subjectivity and uncertainty about any and all claims to knowledge. And our understanding of unity has seemingly crumbled under postmodern efforts to highlight the philosophical significance of plurality. Even as the central concepts of modern philosophy come under attack, there is no agreement on methodological principles according to which one should formulate these attacks. The postmodern triumvirate of Derrida, Foucault, and Rorty have declared: 'All is difference.' The quest for a universal grasp of objective reality is doomed to failure. To make matters worse, Habermas points out that 'anyone who considers himself avant-garde can read his own death warrant' (1981, 6). Why? Because, unlike the traditional philosopher who engages in some a priori search for truth (with or without a capital 'T'), the avant-garde philosopher can only build on those principles to which we communally agree. Rorty, who considers himself avant-garde, agrees saying, 'Nobody is so passé as the intellectual czar of the previous generation' (1982, xl). Of course, Rorty is not much bothered by the fact that the next generation of philosophers may find him passé for he promotes a 'post-philosophical culture' in

which Philosophy (with a capital 'P') gives way to philosophy (lower case 'p') as a way of studying the 'comparative advantages and disadvantages of the various ways of talking which our race has invented' (1982, xl). Rorty, however, is often far from the mainstream of philosophical discourse.

Even if Rorty is, at times, a voice in the wilderness, this hopelessly relativistic mood does, in many ways, extend beyond Postmodernism-narrowly-conceived to the wider philosophical world. The later Wittgenstein rejects the linguistic objectivism of his earlier work; Quine, who emerges out of the positivist tradition of all things, opens the door to competing epistemological frameworks; Kuhn has the concept of 'paradigm shifts'; and so the list goes on. Similarly, philosophers today widely reject the modern account of reason, which 'took as its starting point Descartes's claims that knowledge must have the certainty of a geometrical system, and that opinions unsupported by such a rigorous theory were just that—nothing but unsupported opinions' (Toulmin 2001, 156). Of course, few philosophers today accept this view, arguing with Toulmin that 'our procedures must vary with the different tasks that we are undertaking' (2001, 86) or that 'the idea of rationality is concerned far more directly with matters of function and adaptation' (1972, vii). For Nozick, 'Philosophers who write about reasoning tend to concentrate upon an exceedingly narrow range of thinking as the sole legitimate mode of reasoning' when they should be concerned with reason as an evolutionary adaptation that allows us to cope with the world and that responds not simply to 'objective' outcomes but to emotions and symbolic meanings as well (1993, 164).[36] And Putnam maintains that no argument is really needed to see that rationality is value laden: 'If "rationality" is an ability (or better an integrated system of abilities) which enables the possessor to determine what questions are relevant questions to ask and what answers it is warranted to accept, then its value is on the sleeve' (1981, 202). For the last several decades, most philosophers have come to accept a variety of anti-modern claims: knowledge is not Objective (with a capital 'O'); the universe we know is not simply waiting to be discovered but is historical and relational; science is culturally conditioned; truth is relative to our communities; the arbiter of truth is, at best, human intellect; universally

[36] For more on this, see Nozick 1993, 26–35.

valid explanations must give way to the partial and incomplete; rationality is value laden and inseparable from emotion, and the list goes on.

This, then, may be the central difference between the moderns and ourselves: the rejection of modernism requires a certain skepticism about objectivity, about science, about normativity, about truth, about logic, and about our own rational faculty (or faculties). In facing the loss of religious certainty, the moderns turned to the intellect as a tool for unifying an increasingly fragmented world. In facing the loss of the cultural hegemony we inherited from the moderns, we find reason itself partial and subjective, no longer able to provide certainty in an increasingly uncertain world. This offers hope for increasing the domain of reason and as understanding it as more than just intellect or nous. But it also makes it more difficult to see reason as a single *thing*. We are no longer permitted the great faith in reason that was perhaps the central guiding feature of the Enlightenment, and with this, we are no longer permitted the comforting embrace of framing paradigms. When discussing the Hellenistic period, Pierre Hadot explains: 'The dogmas and methodological principles of each school are not open to discussion. In this period, to philosophize is to choose a school, convert to its way of life, and accept its dogmas' (1990, 495–496). This was equally true for the mature period of modernism, even if the so-called schools were more limited. One chose empiricism or rationalism, but the framework was always Cartesian. This is no longer true today. We lack any unifying dogmas or methodological principles—and necessarily so, since to assert them is to revert to modernism. This then seems the fate of postmodern philosophy: the dogmas and methodological principles of each school remain always open to discussion. In the final analysis, this leaves the resolutions to the so-called problem of reason quite open-ended. Just as the nature of virtue can be theoretically expressed only schematically, so too with rationality in a nonmodern context. I generally agree with Martha Nussbaum, who owes to Aristotle her framing paradigm: 'the idea that our aim is not to anchor our conclusions to extrahistorical first principles but, rather, to seek the best comprehensive fit among principles and concrete judgments, "preserving the greatest number and the most basic"' (1999, 23).

One final point of housekeeping concerns this issue of seeking an appropriate level of precision in any area of inquiry. Because of the historical

breath of the philosophers I discuss, the terminology is messy. Across the history of philosophy, there is slippage among the terms 'reason,' 'mind,' and 'soul.' For Descartes, and most of the moderns, 'reason' and 'mind' are largely synonymous expressions, but even within the modern era, Hume and Kant treat reason quite differently. Contemporary usage of 'reason' and 'mind' inherit the synonymy, but 'mind' is a term both of precision and of art, depending on context. For the ancient Greeks, the synonymy of reason and mind (or, better, soul) is not there at all. Mind or nous is part of soul (*psyche*), but soul cannot be reduced simply to mind. And, to add to the confusion, reason can be spoken of as theoretical or practical. Throughout it all, I will attempt to disambiguate between more narrow conceptions of mind and more expansive conceptions of soul and rationality (in the virtue sense of the term), although I will rarely distinguish between the theoretical and practical tasks of reason. At times, however, the ambiguity will remain. This is to be expected. My focus is on the faculty of reason as it exists in and applies itself to problems in the world, regardless of whether those problems be intellectual or moral. What I argue is that rationality is not only much broader than the limited, rigorously methodological conceptions of modern philosophy, but also the case that 'reason' or 'rationality' cannot be given necessary and sufficient conditions. In other words, Aristotle had it right: one can only seek the level of precision inherent in a field of study, and rationality is a substantive (not methodological) concept that interacts with a world of open-ended possibilities. I need to fill out what it means to claim that rationality is an ability (or better an integrated system of abilities) which enables the possessor to determine what questions are relevant questions to ask and what answers it is warranted to accept. But the picture will lack the logical precision of modern accounts—and this is for the better.

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2

Representation and Racism

While modern philosophers share an almost unshakeable faith in reason, the legacy of modernism is a great skepticism concerning reason. None of the moderns—not even Hume—sets out to undermine the cognitive power of reason, but undermine it they do. Poor Descartes is often portrayed as the villain whose universal doubt ultimately diminishes the confidence we can have in our own cognitive powers, but that is, of course, never his intent. His mission of putting science on a firm foundation is instead designed to establish that even at the limits of hyperbolic doubt, reason remains a trustworthy guide to truth. In fact, his great confidence in reason is precisely what justifies his rejection of scholasticism. He tells us that his motivation for abandoning the study of letters is because it strikes him that 'much more truth could be found in the reasonings which a man makes concerning matters that concern him than in those which some scholar makes in his study about speculative matters' (Descartes 1985a, 115). His view is clear: nothing can be learned by reading philosophers that cannot be better obtained through his new philosophical method. In following this new method and the reasonings of his own mind, he originates the philosophical preoccupation with drawing sharp distinctions between self and world, between knower and

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known, between subjective and objective. Individual minds become the arbiters of truth.

Given the shadow that Descartes casts over every aspect of modern philosophy, the *something* that allows racism and sexism to flourish surely has Cartesian roots. Whatever mild protestations Descartes offers to the contrary, rationality becomes something humans must achieve, but noticeably, not everyone is deemed capable of achieving it. One question, however, concerns the depth of those roots. What is often overlooked is how centrally and theoretically grounded are the exclusions of this rationality—and they are theoretically grounded. In fact, for Cornel West, 'the very structure of modern discourse *at its inception* produced forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity as well as aesthetic and cultural ideals which require the constitution of the idea of white supremacy' (2002, 90). That modernism would *require* white supremacy is perhaps slightly overstated, but white supremacy is surely neither an accidental nor an incidental aspect of modernism. By and large, modern racism is not simply philosophically defended; it is philosophically *defensible*. That is, at the core of modern epistemology lies the grounds for exclusion. In the end, efforts to retain the objective reliability and universality of reason, especially the efforts of Hume and Kant, are critical for supporting the racist and sexist attitudes of the time.[1] To establish this, however, I will need to unpack how it is that reason becomes both modern and racist. What are the factors that lead to the inability of modern reason to account for difference? More importantly, what can we do about it?

The official story of this era is one in which we can rely on the authority of reason to discover truth and knowledge because it is a faculty that is autonomous, methodologically governed, distinct from the world, separate from emotions, transcendent, and noncontingent.[2] Reason is the guiding light for philosophical and scientific investigation. The problem for the moderns is that once reason is removed from the world, it has little on which to rely beyond its own powers and contents. Modern philosophical

[1] To reiterate, I understand that racism and sexism are distinct phenomena. However, because my concern is with oppressive practices generally, I will move back and forth between discussions of racism and sexism, especially since each of these practices are reinforced in the work of Kant.

[2] Hume is a bit of an exception, but I will discuss this shortly.

approaches alter reason decisively—and not always for the best. Richard Bernstein addresses the situation and the questions to which it gives rise about as succinctly as can be done:

> Why is it that when 'Reason' or 'Rationality' are mentioned, they evoke images of domination, oppression, repression, patriarchy, sterility, violence, totality, totalitarianism, and even terror? These questions are especially poignant and perplexing when we realize that not so long ago, the call to 'Reason' elicited associations with autonomy, freedom, justice, equality, happiness, and peace. I not only want to understand what is happening but—even more importantly—what ought to be our response to the disturbing and confusing situation. (1986, 187)

The Age of Enlightenment, the Age of Equality, was never entirely enlightened or equal, so much so that many would argue it could be more accurately described the Age of Exclusion and Oppression. The trend of the last several decades has been to criticize, attack, and undermine reason, and this has factored into the crisis of confidence surrounding the concept. Throughout much of the philosophical world, we find an explicit and decided loss of faith in reason. For Bernstein, the battle over the concept of reason is akin to a battle between the forces of lightness and those of darkness.

But surely, the 'problem of reason' couldn't really be a moral battle between good and evil? Actually, it can, and in a very important sense, it is. In hindsight, it is rather obvious that modernism allows for the further enhancement of derogatory attitudes toward women as well as for the drawing of racial divisions, divisions which are invariably attached to pejorative judgments of non-whites. Modern accounts of reason—all of which defend equality, justice, freedom, and dignity—come with a dark side: these ideals are not afforded to everyone. The criticisms of feminists and, more recently, race theorists assert not just that the Enlightenment project fails but that it fails in its own moral efforts to provide 'liberty and justice for all.' What is ultimately at stake in our comprehension of reason are the Enlightenment moral concepts that have been thought to be transformational in the development of human rights and equality. And, it is a battle that we ignore at our own moral peril. The actual intentions of

Enlightenment philosophers aside, their construction and development of the concept of reason is parochial and exclusionary rather than universal and liberating. The seeds of reason's own destruction are planted during the very founding of modernism. Thus, if we are to regain our faith in reason, we need briefly to tell the tale of how reason lost its way before turning to how badly the way was lost.

2.1 Reason's Retrenchment

By the culmination of the Enlightenment, by the time of Hume and Kant, modern reason becomes for all intents and purposes a concept with a highly restricted domain, and the motivation for this restriction is expressly epistemological. The model of rationality we inherit from these thinkers is one that desperately seeks uniformity as a way to establish objective knowledge of the natural and moral world. Hume may be skeptical about the possibilities for grounding objectivity, but he understands the need for uniform principles, even if they remain only probabilistic. Kant is in no way skeptical about the authority of reason, but even he is forced to admit that the ground for objectivity ultimately lies in principles that transcend experience, albeit not the limits of cognition. What motivates both philosophers is a need to address the consequences of modernism's inward turn.

With Descartes comes the epistemological dogma that knowledge is acquired through an inward focus on the contents of one's own mind. With Hume and Kant comes the epistemological recognition that there is precious little for a disengaged intellect to re-present. That is to say, representational epistemologies are in some serious trouble by the time of Hume. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the connection of mind and world weakens to the point that the philosophical emphasis lies almost exclusively in discovering some rational procedures for ordering ideas. Even though internal ideas are supposed to re-present the world, how they actually do this is a question that Hume and Kant both press. What Hume does—and what awakens Kant—is to take the uncompromising next step of carrying the basic epistemological allegiances of empiricism through to their logical conclusions. In the *Treatise*, he notes

that although philosophers attempt to distinguish perceptions which are fleeting from objects with continued existence, the attempt to do so is 'only a palliative remedy' (Hume 1978, 211). In other words, good luck to the philosopher who attempts to establish that our sensory impressions are grounded in stable, external objects for, as Hume adds, 'it follows that we may observe a conjunction or a relation of cause and effect between different perceptions, but can never observe it between perceptions and objects' (1978, 212). More dramatically, as our connection with the external world becomes essentially unknowable, the mind itself also dissolves into something unknowable. Without any invocation of evil deceivers, Hume is able to generate a genuine skepticism concerning the power of reason to know a world, a world that itself appears out of reach.

What Hume comes to understand better than any of his predecessors is the self-referential nature of rational methodology and the skeptical consequences thereof. Because we never manage to offer a justification of epistemic norms without somehow proposing the very norms we wish to justify, Hume is willing to allow that cognitive principles may not be all that certain. In fact, he notes that because they are empirically grounded, cognitive principles can be, at best, probabilistic.[3] Hume may agree with other philosophers in holding that our superiority to beasts lies in the superiority of our reason, but he fully comprehends his own inability to find an objective ground for rational principles. 'You want certainty?' asks Hume. Sorry, the best you are going to get is empirically fallible principles. Thus, in a move quite unusual for an Enlightenment philosopher, he argues that 'reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct of our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations' (Hume 1978, 179). Inasmuch as he cannot find the secret springs and principles that allow reason to discover necessary connections among matters of fact, he is willing to accept that the faculty of reason is less powerful than what philosophers often take it to be. The situation is so bad that when discussing induction, Hume concludes that 'all these operations are a species of natural instincts, which *no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able, either to produce, or to*

[3] See Hume 1978, 92–93.

prevent' [italics added] (1975, 46–47). So much for the validity of the axioms, formal entailments, and logical necessities on which the claims of the authoritative system depended—they can be had, but not in a manner that has any import for the empirical domain. Few philosophers have ever expressed such skepticism about reason itself.

All this contingency and skepticism gets Kant's attention—and no wonder. Kant understands as well as anyone the import of Hume's argument: metaphysics, the queen of the sciences, is dead. The comforting surety of an ontologically grounded world is completely replaced by a world whose governing principles are to be found solely in the human mind. Even worse? Humean principles are merely empirical generalizations lacking any real epistemic authority. However much Kant considers this a scandal, he also recognizes that Hume is, in a very important sense, correct: Cartesianism commits us to a Copernican turn in which the only way objects can be known is through our own cognitive structures, not vice versa. The solution for Kant is to expressly reject Humean contingency and to uncover necessary, a priori cognitive principles that can reestablish the authority of reason. Elsewise, we are doomed to rely on the kindness of natural instincts, without any guarantee that they will continue to be kind.

In either case, this tension between our supposedly infallible access to internal ideas and our need to ground their veracity in some outer world is lost on neither Hume and Kant. It is this tension that pushes Kant to explore the limits of reason and, ultimately, to restrict access to it. The difficulty, as they both understand it, lies in holding a position in which ideas supposedly mediate between an external world and the inner realm of the mind, but each responds to the strain in a different way. For Kant, 'we cannot *know* these objects as things in themselves, … [but we must] be in position at least to *think* them as things in themselves; otherwise we should be landed in the absurd conclusion that there can be appearance without anything that appears' (1929, Bxxvi–xxvii). In other words, there must be objects in the world, else we find ourselves in the paradoxical position of having representations that re-present nothing.[4] How we 'get at' these becomes important.

[4] See Kant 1929, A109.

Conversely, for Hume, external objects cannot make themselves evident to the mind for our senses 'convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of any thing beyond' (1978, 189). Of course, Kant retorts that 'If we accept his [Hume's] conclusions, then all that we call metaphysics is a mere delusion' (1929, B20) to which Hume responds, 'duh!' About the best we can do, says Hume, is *hope* that 'the idea of an object is an essential part of the belief of it' (1978, 94). The complication, however, is that as reason loses all hope of contact with an external reality, the permissible perspectives on reason become artificially limited. For the first time since the Greeks invention of mind, 'rationality' and 'humanity' are decoupled.

Now, given how much more philosophically uptight is Kant, he is reticent to follow Hume down the rabbit hole of radical empiricism, in part because he refuses to accept the subjective consequences of losing entirely a metaphysical ground for cognition. The best assurance of the universality of reason that Hume can provide is via empirical observation, and this, even he admits, fails to provide any real epistemic guarantee.[5] Necessity, for instance, can only be had through some actual impression, which means necessity becomes a concept that lies in the mind, not in the object.[6] That necessity lies in the mind and not in the object, Kant agrees. Be that as it may, he is less enamored by the idea that necessity has empirical origins. Much more must be said about exactly how necessity is contained in the mind—and if Kant has anything to say about it, it won't be through sensory impressions. After all, he is seriously worried about Hume's stance that 'belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than the cognitive part of our natures' (Hume 1978, 183). All the more does Kant fret Hume's claim that reason offers nothing beyond subjective assurances. Says Hume,

> 'Tis not solely in poetry and music, we must follow our taste and sentiment, but likewise in philosophy. When I am convinc'd of any principle, 'tis only an idea, which strikes more strongly upon me. When I give the

[5] Hume says, 'reason must be consider'd as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect; but such-a-one as by the irruption of other causes, and by the inconstancy of our mental powers, may frequently be prevented. By this means all knowledge degenerates into probability' (1978, 180).

[6] See Hume 1978, 165.

> preference to one set of arguments above another, *I do nothing but decide from my feeling* concerning the superiority of their influence [italics added]. (1978, 103)

Kant, of course, wants none of this. He is happy to concur with Hume that empirical principles can provide a contingent connection among ideas, but there has to be something absolutely necessary about how the world hangs together, and this necessity must be provided by reason itself. No other source is possible.[7]

Still, Hume is not insensitive to the need for necessity, both epistemically and morally. From an epistemic point of view, he maintains that 'regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute' (1975, 88). And from a moral point of view, he claims that 'it is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations' (1975, 83). In other words, Hume believes that cognition does and *ought* to operate in a stable and normative manner, although, regrettably, not everyone conforms to the standard for correct reason (or, more accurately, correct taste).[8] Kant likewise grants that cognition requires rules, but he demands more than 'regular conjunction' or 'great uniformity.' What Kant insists upon is a *guarantee* of the regularity of experience. He is fearful of the metaphysical and epistemic hazards of merely contingently connected ideas. He finds it scandalous that the existence of external objects must be taken as a matter of faith. Subjectivism wins the day if we cannot find *necessary* principles for the synthesis of ideas—and this Kant simply will not tolerate. We need instead some a priori rules that can assure the objectivity of our experience. *These* principles are what define the limits of rationality and thereby define what experience can be.

From an epistemological point of view, the limitations provided by *necessary* principles may seem comforting in the face of the Humean skepticism. After all, what Humean reason cannot do is attest to the

[7] See Kant 1929, A121.

[8] I will shortly defend the normative part of this claim concerning Hume believing reason ought to operate in a certain way.

cohesiveness and unity of experience, at least beyond some faith that human nature makes it so. In place of some explicitly arational hope in the connection of cause and effect,[9] Kant offers a guarantee based on principles. This promised comfort, however, becomes a whole lot less comfortable, at least for some, when the application of these principles is considered. In decisive fashion, not everyone is found to be capable of the right sorts of cognitive achievements.[10] Kant 'hardly believe[s] that the fair sex is capable' of principles, but so as not to offend anyone, he adds that they 'are also extremely rare in the male' (1960, 81). Thus, despite explicit claims to equality, reason epistemically starts to look a whole lot less universal. Unfortunately, practical reason is equally implicated when it comes to the application of principles.

To be sure, the effect of Descartes' inward turn on value theory is significant. After all, the sources of epistemic success are not the only ones that come to be contained within the mind. And just as with the epistemic case, so too in the moral one: the movement of moral reasoning inward leaves some folks liberated and others marginalized. As much as with theoretical rationality, practical rationality becomes an achievement of which not everyone is capable, and those incapable of achievement often become entirely invisible to those fortunate enough to be deemed epistemic and rational agents. At the end of the day, certain types of people are just better at making moral judgments and, hence, are more deserving of moral consideration—or so say Hume and Kant.

Rather surprisingly perhaps, these two philosophers are not all that far apart on the point of embarcation for their ethical reflections. Each recognizes a morally significant divide between reason and sentiment/desire/emotion. They equally dichotomize reason and emotion. And in an unusual move, Hume actually foreshadows an important aspect of deontology:

> 'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it. In order, therefore, to prove, that the measures of right and wrong are eternal

[9] See Hume 1975, 46–47.

[10] The reason why Kant denies the use of principles to non-whites and non-males will turn out to be highly similar to the reasons Plato offers to support a hierarchical conception of the soul. I will discuss this in Chap. 4.

> laws, *obligatory* on every rational mind, 'tis not sufficient to shew the relations upon which they are founded: We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and *must prove that this connexion is so necessary*, that in every well-disposed mind, it must take place and have its influence; tho' the difference betwixt these minds be in other respects immense and infinite [italics added]. (1978, 465)

Hume clearly recognizes that formulating and acting according to moral laws are not one and the same thing, and Kant wholeheartedly agrees. Where they genuinely disagree is, first, in the significance each places on the divide between reason and emotion and, second, in the epistemic plausibility each assigns to the necessary connection between moral law and the will. For Hume, 'reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will' (1978, 413), while for Kant, reason must be the motive toward an action of the will if that action is to have moral worth. For Hume, the moral law depends on the usefulness of sentiments, while for Kant, moral law shuns usefulness.

Then again, Hume sort of agrees with Kant on the relationship of reason to sentiment: they are entirely distinct and this distinctness is absolutely relevant to morality—just not in the way Kant thinks. Hume maintains that reason lacks moral autonomy and sovereignty. He tell us that 'since morals … have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they *cannot be deriv'd from reason*; … reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence' [italics added] (Hume 1978, 457). In fact, Hume takes it that morality is so tied to sentiment—and not to reason—that it cannot exist without feeling. He says, 'Extinguish all warm feelings and prepossessions in favor of virtue, and all disgust or aversion to vice; Render men totally indifferent towards these distinctions; and morality [can no longer have] any tendency to regulate our lives and actions'(1975, 172). Feeling is a necessary condition for morality. But, of course, one must feel in the right way, and in the realm of morality, correct feeling concerns what is useful for us as human beings. Hume concludes the second *Enquiry* by saying, 'Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish virtues; for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve no manner of purpose'

(1975, 270). Hume rejects metaphysical (and even epistemological) grounds and emphasizes instead the usefulness of virtue for the lives we actually lead. Because passions are not conformable to reason, morality becomes a matter of taste, not intellect. Additionally, reason is to be distinguished from taste insofar as 'the former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: The latter gives sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue.'[11] Morality and taste stand in opposition to reason. In turn, the ends of human action are not given to us through reason; rather, they are given to us through sentiment.

So, Hume denies that reason can be the source of distinction between good and evil (take that, Kant).[12] As Taylor interprets him, Hume 'anatomize[s] the moral sentiments, in all their ultimate metaphysical arbitrariness, could-have-been-otherwiseness, in order to accept them, endorse them, know what address we are living at' (1989, 345). Yet this is not an address at which Kant wants to live. 'Moral *sentiments*,' metaphysical arbitrariness,' 'could-have-been-otherwiseness'—for Kant, them's fightin' words. The moral law may lie within, but according to Kant, that does not make it arbitrary. Where Hume distinguishes reason and emotion in order to deny the sovereignty of reason, Kant follows the philosophically more well-worn path. He accepts that emotion or desire is something reason does not ultimately control, but he believes this only enhances the power of reason in its a priori function. Reason does have an instrumental worth in guiding the will toward ends, but in the final analysis, rational nature, as an 'end in itself,' has an ultimate worth regardless of how well or poorly it functions in achieving ends external to it.

This debate could not be more well discussed, yet it is a debate with consequences for the equality of human beings. What happens on Hume's view is that when everything is said and done, the capacity for sentiment appears to be lacking in some humans. After all, the Laplander and the Negro are lacking a relish for wine. As a result, even if everyone were found to be equally capable of reason, not everyone is actually deemed equally capable of achieving a delicacy of taste. And, for Hume, morality is 'more

[11] Hume 1975, 294.

[12] See Hume 1978, 458. What 'real' means here is problematic, but Hume certainly does not commit himself to idealism.

properly felt than judged of' (1978, 470). Then again, Kant could not disagree more. Since we cannot be held responsible for what is beyond our control and since our sentiments are not under our control, morality must lie solely within reason. In other words, reason should act in a self-sufficient, principled manner, free from the material and emotional aspects of our lives. Moral motivation can never stem from sentiment or desire but must come instead from the necessity of acting according to a law that reason gives itself. This means that morality requires an uncompromisingly strong version of autonomy, one that relies *entirely* on principles. Unfortunately, not everyone is capable of such severely principled action for this sort of action is 'extremely rare' in males and is practically unheard of in women. Whether morality is based on taste or principle, moral reasoning also appears to be something short of universal.

2.2 Purposive Racism

Thus far, the story of reason is rather uneventful. The similarities and contrasts between Hume and Kant on these points are well known, even if the links to oppression and exclusion are not. Within both these views, the framing paradigm of reason distills everything that reason is and does into narrow channels, leaving out anything and everything that fails to fit. Notably, feminists have successfully illuminated the difficulties with this paradigm. One of the most significant of these difficulties that it assumes that reason is distinct from the particularity of the body which 'contains' it and that only men are capable of transcending this particularity; hence, only men are truly capable of reason. As feminists have argued for decades now, because reason is divorced from the material and social conditions of the bodies that 'contain' it and because only men are capable of transcending this sort of particularity, only men are capable of reason. As Helen Longino explains,

> What the postmodernist and the feminist resist is the idea that there is a template of rationality in which all discourses fit, a template that dissolves the barriers of locality, a universal language into which all statement from local contexts can be translated and bought into logical relations with each other… . One person's rationality, then, is another's tyranny. (2005, 81)

Insofar as reason is singular and universal, it becomes despotic. Given this tendency to domination, oppression, repression, patriarchy, sterility, violence, totality, totalitarianism, and even terror, what the postmodernist, the feminist, and even the race theorist dispute is that there is one, and only one, way to be rational, that there is one, and only one, standard by which to judge the rationality of others.

While the difficulties surrounding reason's uniformity are well discussed, a difficulty that is less well discussed, even overlooked, is how great is the modern need for a unified standard of rationality. Often unnoticed is that by the culmination of the Enlightenment, philosophy actually requires an epistemic privilege that noncoincidentally attaches to white males. Now, to be fair to Enlightenment philosophers, none of them sets out with the intent to tyrannize. They may not be the most open-minded lot, but all they really want is to establish the objectivity and authority of scientific knowledge claims. The issue with tyranny arises when reason comes to be defined as much in terms of the subjectivity it opposes as it does the objectivity it defends. Put differently, tyranny is simply the (mostly) unintended consequence of threats to epistemic objectivity. The problem of subjectivism is certainly not lost on any Enlightenment philosopher. Across both the rationalist and empiricist traditions, the risk of subjectivism mandates that inquiry into reason be concerned with finding universal procedures and methods, whether they be empirical or a priori. For example, when it comes to the rather widespread denigration of the body, the motivation for such denigration stems directly from subjectivist worries. After all, body is an idiosyncratic and unreliable source of knowledge, not appropriately universal in the sort of epistemic grounds it supplies. In the same way, emotion, which is closely connected to body, becomes similarly suspect.[13] Only universal procedures are thought to be capable of saving us from certain epistemic doom.

[13] The concluding sentences of the *Meditations* are telling on this point. In discussing the trustworthiness of perceptions, Descartes says,

> I ought not to have even the slightest doubt of their reality if, after calling upon all the sense as well as my memory and my intellect in order to check them, I receive no conflicting reports from any of these sources… . But since the pressure of things to be done does not always allow us to stop and make such a meticulous check, it must be admitted that in this human life we are often liable to make mistakes about particular things, and we must acknowledge the weakness of our nature. (1984d, 62)

Now, when it comes to matters of race and sex, we scarcely have to ask what this has to do with women. After all, feminists have established an invariable association of women with body, an association that exists across the history of philosophy. Nothing in the modern period changes that. In many ways, the Enlightenment simply codified what philosophers already believed about women, namely, women's connection to everything bodily makes us suspect reasoners. But what does any of this have to do with race? How is it that the invention of the concept of race—and with it the concomitant hierarchical assessments of race—comes about at the same time reason is universalized and purified of all connection to body? It would seem that quite the opposite should happen: race *should* stop mattering because mind *should* lack the bodily markers of race. But this is clearly not what happens. As a result, we can ask whether Enlightenment rationality requires us to see the world in ways that not only emphasize dichotomy but also *require* us to view a world in which there are 'haves' and 'have nots' when it comes to rational prowess. Whether Enlightenment ideals are inherently exclusionary may be a matter of great debate, but it is no longer possible to dismiss out of hand the possibility that they are.

Since I have elsewhere dealt at length with the relationship of women to modern accounts of reason, I am more concerned here with race. I realize that issues of gender and race are not identical, but the concerns overlap significantly, especially insofar as mainstream philosophers continually fail to see the significance of either gender or race in the generation of epistemological systems. For instance, when confronted with the racist writings of the Enlightenment's mighty dead, many philosophers take, without malice, the position that, while certainly objectionable, we can safely dismiss these remarks as inessential to the larger philosophical program.[14] At the opposite extreme is West, who claims that not only are Enlightenment ideals racist, they are *essentially* racist. West does not directly consider the development and motivation of mainstream philosophical views, but he does examine the results of modern thinking. According to him, the very praxis and structure of modern discourse, its

[14] In the case of Kant, see in particular Louden 2000 and Hill and Boxill 2001. For a criticism of Hill and Boxill's ahistorical analytical approach, see Bernasconi 2003.

'controlling metaphors, notions, categories, and norms,' lead inevitably and inherently to racism as a result of the way they shape modern notions of truth and knowledge.[15] As extreme as this view might appear, the fact that many major figures of the Enlightenment have some pretty nasty things to say about non-whites and non-males presents decent prima facie evidence.[16] After all, if racism were not conceptually ingrained, surely some major figure would find it in *his* heart to defend the moral equality of non-whites. It's not like discussions of race and slavery were unknown at the time. Certainly, West is on to something. To see what requires a bit more digging into modern discourse.

When it comes to the racism of Enlightenment philosophers, the case of Kant is especially difficult. While his moral theory defends the absolute dignity of each and every rational being, he undoubtedly has some of the very worst things to say about both blacks and women. For starters, he states that blacks are 'very vain but in the Negro's way.' He claims the difference between whites and blacks is so fundamental that it 'appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour' and that being 'quite black from head to foot' is 'clear proof' that what one says is stupid (Kant 1960, 111, 113). And since Kant is arguably the inventor of the modern concept of 'race,' these sorts of derogatory remarks—remarks that seem entirely at odds with Enlightenment ideals and Kant's own moral theory—should give us pause. Nevertheless, we should not assume simply on the basis of such claims that Kant, or any other Enlightenment thinker, is a thoroughgoing racist. That philosophers of this period tend to universally express pernicious attitudes toward those of differing race and gender does not entail that Enlightenment ideals, grounds, or principles are *inherently* racist or sexist. Still, we can and should ask whether Enlightenment ideals are more than incidental and whether they are implicated in colonialism, slavery, and the disenfranchisement of women.

Unlike Hume, whose unpleasant remarks *appear* to be made largely in passing, Kant writes detailed treatises on the topic of race, and his effort

[15] See West 2002, 92–93.

[16] For examples, see Mills 2002a, 11. To the best of my knowledge, Descartes is the only exception to the litany of modern philosophers with racist and sexist remarks.

to distinguish different races is especially abhorrent.[17] As he often does in his philosophy, Kant takes Hume as a starting point, and then elaborates upon and further develops Humean ideas.[18] Start with Hume:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. (1758, 125n)[19]

An unfortunate remark? Sure, but it is *only* a footnote and not part of the main text. Or so it seems. What makes Hume's comment all that much worse is that it is not offhand or unreflective. In the face of criticism, he goes back and edits it so that it is specifically directed against blacks.[20] And this is from an Enlightenment figure who appears somewhat more sympathetic and who does not have the same level of systematic views on race or gender as does Kant.[21] Unfortunately, Kant not only concurs, he goes out of his way to second the thought:

> Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. (1960, 110–111)

This sort of exchange leaves many philosophers scratching their heads, wondering what to make of these somewhat infrequent yet explicitly and

[17] For discussions of Kant's writing on race, see Eze 1997; Mills 2005; and Kleingeld 2007.

[18] I will return to this idea in the final chapter.

[19] While this footnote is quoted in every discussion of Hume's racism, Eze argues that far from being a mere offhand remark, this footnote was carefully placed and is grounded in Hume's theory of human nature. See Eze 2000.

[20] See Immerwahr 1992.

[21] See Palter 1995. Also consider Baier's 2002 comments on Hume as a 'woman's epistemologist.'

jarringly prejudicial remarks.[22] What seems especially appalling about Enlightenment philosophers' racism is that these same philosophers are otherwise committed to egalitarianism as a matter of principle. No one holds rational beings in as high esteem as does Kant. So what gives? How is it a proponent of human dignity can show so little respect for others? After all, even in his writings on race, Kant readily admits the humanity of all humans. After all, he acknowledges that 'all human beings anywhere on earth belong to the same natural genus, because they always produce fertile children with one another even if we find great dissimilarities in their form' (2000, 9). Given our common humanity, surely Kant's moral theory should provide a corrective to racist judgments, or at the very least, it should speak against taking Kant's anthropological reflections to be self-conscious, thoughtful, or consistent with his larger architectonic.

As confused as we may be, race theorists chastise us for our incredulity, and rightly so. While none of us should need reminding that that classification of human varieties is as old as philosophy itself, Mills does indeed find the need to remind us of precisely that. 'The concept of a human population demarcated in its cognitive abilities is by no means alien to Western philosophy,' says Mills; rather, it is 'a central thesis of the book from which … all Western philosophy springs: Plato's *Republic*' (2002b, 14). As distasteful and ill-advised are the pejorative distinctions among humans, the more significant and penetrating question is *why* they make these distinctions. What motivates them? Is the motivation centrally connected to their mainstream philosophical projects?

While West addresses the issue of the theoretical grounding of racism only in an indirect manner, his approach to the problem does demonstrate how certain elements of modernism come together to create an atmosphere of white supremacy. In other words, he offers a framing paradigm for investigating the conditions which permit racist attitudes on the part of modern philosophers. The superiority of whites to other races comes, says West, from three convergent aspects of modernism: (1) a science governed by the ideas of observation and evidence, (2) a Cartesian emphasis

[22] Mills notes that one of the more common reactions has been to 'register the appropriate emotion, and then basically continue as before, saying that these views, however unfortunate and deplorable, do not affect X's theory' (2002a, 11).

on the internal representations of subjects, and (3) classical ocular metaphors and ideals (such as beauty, proportion, and moderation). These produce a discourse in which truth and knowledge are 'governed by an ideal value-free subject engaged in observing, comparing, ordering, and measuring in order to arrive at evidence sufficient to make valid inferences, confirm speculative hypotheses, deduce error-proof conclusions, and verify true representations of reality' (West 2002, 97). But what's so racist about this? On the surface, it is not all that evident why this confluence supposedly produces racist attitudes.[23] Be that as it may, there is a bit more to the tale.

The confluence of observation, representation, and metaphor plays out in ways West believes are inevitably racist. The development of these elements has two stages: the first involves the growing epistemological authority of science coming together with classical aesthetic ideals; the second involves the emergence of the scientific fields of physiology and anthropology, fields in which humans are distinguished on the basis of physical characteristics. These two stages turn out to be especially powerful for whatever observations and comparisons are to be made among the visible, physical characteristics of humans, and they naturally lend themselves to disambiguating different sorts of humans—and doing so on the basis of readily available standards such as classical ideals of beauty. Little doubt, West is correct about the power of aesthetic discrimination in racial discrimination. Nevertheless, within this confluence lies something more than a skin-deep conception of beauty, something far more than mere aesthetic displeasure. Beyond aesthetic judgment lies a much deeper philosophical space capable of disparaging the ability of non-whites to achieve rationality as much as it disparages their ability to achieve beauty.[24] That space is created by the ways epistemic and moral responses to subjectivism connect to observation, representation, and beauty.

Consider first the tasks of observing and explaining difference. Not only are these absolutely vital for Kant's account of race, observation has a specific place within his architectonic structure, as he makes exceedingly

[23] The 'seemingly' here is mine, not West's.

[24] Hume is also guilty of disparaging non-white's cognitive abilities, and I will get to his arguments shortly.

evident. When writing about race, he indicates that 'we must be led by a determinate principle in order merely to be able *to observe*, i.e., to give that kind of attention to that which is capable of *giving indication of descent* [italics added] and not merely character similarities' (Kant 2013b, 177). This is a significant claim. Kant is explicitly concerned not merely with appearances but with what underlies those appearances. In essence, he sets himself the task to identify, *through observation*, traits which infallibly reproduce themselves over generations and which are indicative of some 'special seeds or natural dispositions.' Over time, these seeds or dispositions, which originally were common to all humans, are developed differently in various races—and not accidentally so. Kant's 'scientific' account of race may start from a shared sense of humanness, but it quickly and confidently moves to considerations of hereditary dissimilarities and deviations, based firmly in what he takes to be the most hereditarily persistent trait: skin color.

The four races Kant identifies are: the 'noble blond' of Northern Europe, the 'copper red' of America and East Asia, the 'black' of Senegambia in Africa, and the 'olive-yellow' of Asian-Indians (2000, 20). These races emerge as a result of living in climates in which conditions such as air and sun alter the 'original seeds' humans once shared. Prima facie, this account may seem a bit simplistic but not destructively racist. However, Kant further asks us to consider the cause of difference. Recall that his chief objection to Humean principles is that, insofar as they are merely empirical, they are incapable of grounding any necessary connection among ideas. Rather than simply identify differences, Kant seeks to examine 'the entire human genus as it can be found all over the earth and … [specifying] *purposive* causes to account for the appearance of deviation *in those cases where natural causes are not readily discernable*' [italics added] (2000, 14). This is the same point Kant makes often in his critical philosophy: once physical–mechanical explanations leave off, metaphysical explanation takes over—and takes over necessarily. In other words, not everything about nature can be explained using natural methods, so when we reach the end of natural investigation, we must make up for deficiencies of inadequate theory by appealing to ultimate purposes that can be determined by a priori reason. Race is to be defined, quite literally, by observing differentness within a *teleological framework*. In doing this, Kant highlights physiological properties which he claims originally

developed from climatic features but that are now transmitted consistently across generations *because something within the different races has been fundamentally altered*. Far more important than mere observation, then, is the teleological framework within which that observation occurs. Purposive causes, not appearances, are what concern Kant.

Purposiveness may not always garner a great deal of attention, but it does stitch together the critical philosophy in important ways. At the end of the first *Critique*, Kant makes perhaps his strongest statement of the need for a purposive unity. He argues,

> The law of reason which requires us to seek for this unity, is a necessary law, since without it we should have no reason at all, and without reason no coherent employment of the understanding, and in the absence of this no sufficient criterion of empirical truth. (1929, A651/B679)

Because cognitive structures simply cannot function without the regulative idea of purposive unity, we must seek it out even though it cannot be found within nature itself. In other words, without assuming a systematic unity, we cannot guarantee that the variety of appearances we find in nature will be conformable to our cognitive faculties; or, simply put, we cannot be assured that all the pieces of experience will fit together into a coherent whole. As important to Kant's theoretical work as this idea of purposive unity is, it is not specific to his theoretical work. An even more important aspect of purposiveness shows up in the third *Critique*, where Kant explains that a purposive unity is essential for morality and autonomy because it promises a harmony between the realms of nature and of freedom. He says:

> Nature must consequently also be capable of being regarded in such a way that in the conformity to law of its form it at least harmonizes with the possibility of the ends to be effectuated in it according to the laws of freedom. (Kant 1911) There must, therefore, be a ground of the unity of the surpersensible that lies at the basis of nature, with what the concept of freedom contains in a practical way, and although the concept of this ground neither theoretically nor practically attains to a knowledge of it, and so has no peculiar realm of its own, still it renders possible the transition from the mode of thought according to the principles of the one to that according to the principles of the other. (2001, 176)

The idea here is that while purposive unity is something we can only assume—and must necessarily assume—it nevertheless assures us that the laws of nature will conform to the systematic unity of experience *and* that they will also conform to our moral nature. As Guyer explains, 'We can only give content to the idea of a purpose for nature that we are led to by our reflection on the purposiveness of organisms by thinking of human moral development as the ultimate end of nature' (2001, xxvii). Purposiveness is, in other words, centrally connected to the worth of persons. Kant further comments that the transcendental concept of the purposiveness of nature is merely a subjective principle of judgment.[25] Of course, as anyone who has read Kant's moral theory understands, not all subjective judgments are created equally. Some are consistent with universal law—or at least necessary presuppositions—and, thus, are not *merely* subjective. When we find systematic unity in experience, Kant says we rejoice 'as if it were a lucky chance favoring our design,' but it is not just a lucky chance (2001, 184). It is a *necessary* presupposition, one that is essential to unifying not only nature itself but also the realms of nature and freedom. While the laws of nature conform to the systematic unity of the necessary conditions for thought, this unity also includes the ends of freedom or morality. Put as simply as possible: material nature is noncontingently connected to moral nature.

The language of purposiveness—with all its moral import—lies at the heart of Kant's critical philosophy. And, when writing on race, Kant reminds us of this: 'Where <experience> comes to an end and we have to begin with material forces we have personally invented <that operate> according to unheard of laws incapable of proof, we are already beyond natural science' (2013b, 189). As in the critical work, so in the anthropological: philosophical inquiry must go beyond natural science to metaphysics. As a result, it is not all that surprising that he would use the concept of purposiveness in articulating the nature of race. When moving beyond what can be known a posteriori, including what can be known through observation, regulative ideas function as a means by which experience can actually be understood to be a cohesive whole. Because of this, race is not simply an accidental differentiation among humans. It is something containing within it purposive causes. It is something that

[25] See Kant 2001, 176.

functions within a totality and that is ultimately subject to 'final causes.' Put very simply: things (including racial divisions) happen for a reason, and Kant's task is to determine what that reason is. In the final analysis, race becomes theoretically linked to moral reasoning and autonomy in ways that undermine the personhood of non-whites—and all because nature is purposive.

While discussing the purposive causes of race, Kant explains, 'I have tried in a little essay on the human races to demonstrate a similar warrant, indeed, a need, to proceed from a teleological principle where theory forsakes us' (2013b, 173). This 'little essay,' 'On the Different Human Races,' is where he maintains that race *must* be something more than an accidental feature of mere appearance. According to Kant, 'we also wish to specify natural causes in those cases where we cannot become aware of any purposes' (2000, 14), and this in turn leads us beyond the merely empirical to the metaphysical.[26] In essence, Kant wants us to be aware that his repeated appeals to final causes apply to human beings as much as anything else. Even organized beings are to 'be conceived only as a *system of final causes*' (Kant 2013b, 189). The result is that humans are ultimately subject to metaphysical explanation, albeit metaphysical explanation that is reinterpreted so as to fit within the Copernican picture of a world structured by cognitive principles. The further consequence of this? The ground of race is metaphysical, not natural. And this is the point for Kant. After all, he says, 'it is easily without doubt certain that nothing purposive would ever be found <in nature> by means of purely empirical groping about without a guiding principle that might direct one's search: for *to observe* just means to engage experience methodically' (2013b, 174). When done correctly, observation guides us to purposiveness.

Of course, this brings us back to West's concern with the observational ideal of modern scientific investigations. What we ultimately discover when we *observe* nature is the infallible reproduction of certain features that are surely guaranteed by an underlying principle. Kant concludes, 'Any possible change with the potential for replicating itself must instead have already been present in the reproductive power so that chance development appropriate to the circumstances might take place according to

[26] See Kant 2013b, 189.

a *previously determined plan*' [italics added] (2000, 14). This means that observation is not open-ended. Rather, it serves as a guide to some intentional plan, which is a point Kant also makes outside of his writings on race. In the third *Critique*, when he says that 'we cannot form any concept at all of the possibility of such a world *except by conceiving of such an intentionally acting supreme cause*' [italics added] (Kant 2001, 399). In part, such a statement is to be expected since the standard Kantian representational story tells us that all observations are filtered through concepts and that concepts must themselves be unified. But, and this is a big 'but,' the fact of a determinate or intentional plan says nothing about what that plan entails. The manner in which Kant fills out the content of this structure is a great deal more empirically determined than he appears to realize, and it serves as an entry point for some fairly unsavory biases.

The biases that shape much of Kant's thinking about race concern remaining two areas that West identifies as central to Enlightenment racism, namely, aesthetics and physiology. As it turns out, both are highly relevant to the continuation of the story of purposiveness and race. Consider first aesthetics. At one point in his discussion of race, Kant makes use of an analogy with portrait painting, which has as its goal (at least 1788) to copy the original subject as faithfully as one can. That is, the mark of the painting's quality is found in how well it represents the original. Now, says Kant, something similar is true of the various races. Human beings have an original lineal stem stock. Within this stock are 'seeds' that are '*purposively* suited for the first general populating <of the earth> …' [italics added] (2013b, 181). To be sure, the original race of humans contained all possible 'endowments,' but nature, which always acts purposively, adapted humans' natural dispositions over time so that people can survive in the climate in which they live.[27] Regrettably, however, the story does not end there. Kant continues with the claim that one race is, in fact, closest to this stem stock. Hence, it is that stock against which all other races are supposedly copied and judged. Naturally, this is the white race, although Kant says this without 'any prejudice on behalf of the presumptuously greater perfection of one color' (2013a, 54). Presumably, also stated without any prejudice, 'Humanity is at its

[27] See Kant 2013b, 178–181.

greatest perfection in the race of whites' (Kant 1997, 62). Even setting aside the obviously prejudicial nature of his remarks, the implications of his remarks on race, when put in the context of his larger philosophical work, belie the equality of races. Yet Kant can 'non-prejudiciously' say such things because observation is indicative of broader purposes. Consequently, differences in physiology are simply indicative of an underlying structure. Of course, what West understands is that this attitude makes observation normative; hence, his appeal to the idea of a normative gaze in which *observed* racial variations are taken to be derived from and judged according to classical Greek ideals.

The emphasis here on physical beauty connects directly to the second stage of racism in West's account, physiology.[28] For West, we cannot overestimate how the monolithic commitment to aesthetic and cultural norms of classical antiquity led to 'the emergence of the idea of white supremacy as an object of modern discourse' (2002, 97). Such a monolithic commitment is obviously evident in Kant, whether it be in his attitudes toward women or non-whites. In discussing women's beauty, Kant says, 'the sort of beauty we have called the *pretty figure* is judged by all men very much alike, and that opinions about it are not so different as one generally maintains' (1960,89). In this case, men universally judge women according to the same standard. However, this appears to be equally true in the case of judging the beauty of various racial groups. Kant notes that Pacific islanders can be distinguished from Negros 'partly because of their skin color <and> partly because of their head and beard hair, which, contrary to the attributes of the Negro, can be combed out to a presentable length' (2013b, 188). Here the representation of beauty, which is perceptibly a quite particular notion, is something that can be approximated by the Pacific islander insofar as *he* can approximate the ideal established by Europeans, but this ideal lies beyond the Negro. Kant offers no sense that alternative standards might be possible. As if this weren't bad enough, Eze ups the ante of criticism. He claims that Kant 'had *uncritically assumed* [italics added] that the particularity of European existence is *the* empirical as well as ideal model of … *universal* humanity,

[28] West considers physiognomy and phrenology, in particular. Since I am concerned with the underlying philosophical theories, I lump these under considerations of physiology.

so that others are more or less human or civilized … as they approximate the European ideal' (Eze 1997, 117). All humans may be members of the same species, but variations among them are, for Kant, to be evaluated according to normative standards which Eze asserts Kant never questioned. And the standard for human physiology? Greek ideals of beauty, proportion, and moderation. Since Europenas are taken to more closely conform to Greek ideals, Africans never stand an aesthetic chance.

Even worse, blacks never stand a moral chance. As Eze adds, 'Kant's position manifests an inarticulate subscription to a system of thought which assumes that what is different, especially that which is "black," is bad, evil, inferior, or a moral negation of "white," light, and goodness' (1997, 117). Kant, in other words, sets the moral forces of lightness and darkness against one another. And Eze is not the only one who thinks so. In discussing how the *Critique of Judgment* bridges the gap between the first two *Critiques*' realms of nature and of freedom, A.C. Genova takes it that the upshot of Kant's 'analysis is that beauty becomes the symbol of the good, and sublimity of moral dignity' (1970, 465). Now, Genova is not interested in the implications for race, but the implications are there. Says Kant, 'The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world … has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world' (1997, 64). Obviously, beauty is something that the white race more readily has. But if beauty, which is something blacks cannot even approximate, is associated with the good, Kant's remarks on race are surely indicative of an even stronger prejudice against non-whites. At this point, Kant is sounding more and more like a person whose views are thoroughly imbued with racist attitudes. Even so, that the observational and aesthetic biases of Kant and other modern philosophers *necessitated* racism, as West claims, is still not clear. It could still be the case that Kant simply misunderstood the purposive design of nature and imposed his own biases onto the underlying principles. That is to say, all the talk of purposiveness and beauty/goodness might be correct in theory but get it wrong in practice since Kant was evidently fairly biased in his outlook. As contemporary epistemologists teach us, bias may be essential to humans' epistemic and moral outlook in general, but that does not imply any necessity for a *specific bias* or means of interpreting some agreed-upon standard.

However unlikely it might appear, it remains at this point possible that Kant is not *philosophically* a thoroughgoing racist. What is clear is that the convergence of scientific observation and classical aesthetic ideals, especially when framed by a purposive connection within all of human cognition, makes race a powerful category for discriminations among humans. And, as Mark Larrimore tells us, 'classification of human varieties is never innocent' (2008, 342). As observation comes to be wedded to representationalism, the racism (and sexism) generated by Cartesian epistemology becomes even more sinister (as if it were not already sinister enough). As concerns over subjectivism demarcate a narrow range of rational agency, they restrict what counts as 'real.' Ultimately, the concerns and convergences of modernism meet in the final element in West's confluence of ideas: ocular metaphors. When these metaphors are put into place such that certain types of humans come to be, at times, objectified and, at other times, invisible—but at all times, less than persons. In the use of ocular metaphors lies a stronger case for the *inherent* nature of racism and sexism in the modern period.

2.3 Vision and Representation

Ocular metaphors are prominent throughout the history of philosophy. As far back as Plato and the allegory of the cave, knowledge is spoken of as illumination, and truth is revealed by light.[29] Even so, the use of such metaphors becomes much more prominent during the Enlightenment, which in turn elicits various concerns about how they shape modern accounts of reason. While Descartes does not invent the metaphors of light and vision, he certainly puts them to good use. In fact, of central importance to his epistemology is mental vision. Everything revolves around perception, especially perceptions that are clear and distinct. In fact, the clarity of a perception is explained with an analogy with seeing. Says Descartes, 'a perception [is] "clear" when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind—just as we say that we see something clearly when it is present to the eye's gaze and stimulates it with a sufficient

[29] Also see Plato 1961b, 191c-d; Plato 1961a, 39b-c.

degree of strength and accessibility' (1985b, 207). The clarity of this gaze officially remains unaffected by the potential spell of the evil deceiver, for even with the evil deceiver hypothesis in place, Descartes maintains, 'Whatever is revealed to me by the natural light … cannot in any way be open to doubt' (1984d, 27). The result of Cartesian imagery, says Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine Grontkowski, is to allow 'us to retain both the conception of knowledge as active and the use of the visual metaphor by severing the connection between the "seeing" of the intellect and physical seeing—by severing, finally, the mind from the body' (2003, 215). What truly sees is not the physical eye but the inner eye of the soul.

In an important sense, this is the origin of 'the gaze.' To gaze upon something requires some separation, some distance from it. Whereas in the scholastic period, minds remain immersed in the world, this is not the case from the mid-seventeenth century onward, at which point the withdrawing of mind from world grants epistemic agents the ability to look upon the world not as participants in it but as observers of it. The result of this distancing of knower from the world is to generate a theoretical ground for scientific observation in which visual clarity detaches from the world. And with the ocular imagery in place, the push to remove the Mind's Eye from the actual eye becomes more forceful. With this intention, Descartes argues that as a child his 'mind employed the bodily organs less correctly …, and was more firmly attached to them; hence it had no thoughts apart from them and *perceived things only in a confused manner*' [italics added] (1984b, 297). However, this belief that body interferes with proper, correct, accurate perception is precisely the sort to belief attacked within many critical readings of the metaphor of sight. In other words, critics look quite directly at this idea of the disembodied, immaterial, objectively seeing eye of the mind and find the image quite problematic. Critics instead focus on the details of how vision has been understood as well as on the role visual metaphors function in the production of knowledge. What they often want to know is whether accounts of vision are 'discursively adjusted to fit into some larger epistemological, ontological, or metaphysical program of requirements—requirements for knowledge, truth, belief, certainty, objectivity, testimony, corroboration, justification' (Levin 1997, 8). And since these accounts are indeed almost invariably found to be implicated in distortions of knowledge, we can

and should ask how they reinforce power structures created by epistemological frameworks. After all, if we see clearly the ways these images reinforce oppression, we can suggest different, less destructive, perspectives.

As it turns out, ocular metaphors tend to work powerfully and effectively to make certain problems invisible. For example, in the aptly named 'To Be and Be Seen,' Marilyn Frye argues quite persuasively that lesbians actually do not exist (nor do women more broadly).[30] She asks us to consider basic dictionary definitions of terms. Using these, she demonstrates not only a decided lack of meaning for the term 'lesbian' but also how lesbians fail to fall within the extension of 'real.' Etymologically, 'real' relates to the king—and what is visible to the king. But lesbians are invisible within society's power structures, even definitionally. The same tends to be true of women more broadly. Of men's inability to understand women, Frye writes:

> Reading or hearing the speeches of men on the unintelligibility of women, I imagine the men are like people who for some reason can see everything but automobiles and are constantly and painfully perplexed by blasts and roars, thumps and bumps, which they cannot avoid, control or explain. But it is not quite like that, for such men do seem to recognize our physical existence, or at least the existence of some of our parts. What they do not see is our souls. (1983, 165)

While Frye is not directly criticizing ocular metaphors here, she does highlight a serious flaw with vision: it is culturally constructed, and, thus, it can be constructed in ways that make invisible certain things and certain people.

Another example which highlights the theme of invisibility and the limitations of vision is Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, which opens as follows:

> I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said

[30] See Frye 1983, 155–161. In telling fashion, there are two books entitled *Invisible Lives*, both dealing with issues of sexual orientation, Namaste 2000 and Barrett 1989.

> to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me. (1952, 3)

In this quote, as well as in Frye's, what fails is the 'seeing' of the intellect, not the eye. Each of these passages also underscores an important part of the metaphor from the modern perspective for each references the soul/mind. In Frye's case, her soul is not seen, thereby minimizing her personhood. In Ellison's case, having a mind is something that *might* be said of his protagonist—there is, however, no guarantee that he does have a mind. These are only examples, albeit powerful ones, of how gender and race have been made invisible. However, they illustrate nicely how gender and race have become invisible within philosophy, namely, though philosophers' unwillingness to 'see' the sexism and racism of the Enlightenment's mighty dead.[31]

In the same way that West highlights the normatively observational character of scientific knowledge, so too do contemporary feminists. As the body is important for understanding racism, so too is the body important for understanding sexism. Women's bodies are historically the subject of a so-called objectifying gaze, and as a result, the metaphor of vision and the corresponding notion of perspective have a predominate place in feminist discourse. This gaze is clearly illustrated in an image often discussed by postmodern art critics: Albrecht Dürer's image of an artist drawing a woman using a perspective device. This image from Dürer's *Painter's Manual* of 1525 shows a fully clothed male artist at one end of a table, an unclothed reclining woman at the other end of the table, and a grid separating the two. Even the most cursory look at this image makes evident the objectifying male gaze. Yet we can also ask the

[31] Although my argument in this section will focus more on gender than race, Mills does offer a perspective on race. He admits to attempting to do for race what he believes feminists have been able to do for gender, namely, exposing racial invisibility—and then demonstrating the philosophical difference these concepts make when the implications are no longer ignored. See Mills 2002b, 1–2.

deeper question of what it means to treat a subject (in this case the female model) as an object. Nussbaum offers seven different ways of understanding 'objectification.'

1. *Instrumentality*: The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes.
2. *Denial of autonomy*: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
3. Inertness: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity.
4. *Fungibility*: The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type, and/or (b) with objects of other types.
5. *Violability*: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into.
6. *Ownership*: The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, and so on.
7. *Denial of subjectivity*: The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account (1995, 257).

Of these seven ways of objectifying a subject, a surprising number can easily be ascribed to the Dürer image. The connection between the image and instrumentality, inertness, and fungibility is clear. The model is treated as a tool for the artist's purpose; she lacks agency and activity; and she is obviously interchangeable with other models who the artist might also draw. In addition, and given our knowledge of the historical time, it is not difficult to envision that the artist fails to consider his model as possessing either autonomy or subjectivity.[32] Actually, it would be surprisingly atypical if he did view her as an autonomous subject. Only ownership and violability fail to be obviously represented in this particular image, although with little effort, we can imagine them just beneath the surface. What is unquestionably evident is the explicit and multi-level objectification of the woman in the drawing. Also evident is

[32] I will in short order discuss autonomy in more depth.

that we are to consider the artist to be an 'ideal value-free subject engaged in observing, comparing, ordering, and measuring in order to arrive at evidence sufficient to make valid inferences, confirm speculative hypotheses, deduce error-proof conclusions, and verify true representations of reality.'[33] The mechanism shown in this drawing is designed to help the artist accurately represent the *object an sich*, as it 'truly' is in the world. It does this by laying out a grid against which the male artist maps features of the world onto a two-dimensional surface. In this way, *he* can achieve a 'realistic' perspective, at least of 'some of our parts,' albeit not our souls.

Beyond the obvious reliance on a mechanical, scientific, mathematical means for 'accurately' seeing and re-presenting reality lies the assumption that anyone non-white and non-male is an object to be studied and known in the same way one might study and come to know about inanimate objects. This point is emphasized by Donna Haraway, who claims that vision

> has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White …. (1988, 581)

Certain sorts of bodies are deemed to be objective, unbiased, rational. These are the bodies that, because they are free of the corrupting influence of social marking, allow minds to have clear and distinct vision. What feminists have attempted to make evident is that men's bodies are just as much inscribed, albeit differently inscribed, by the same social structures that inscribe women's bodies. Elizabeth Grosz, like many other feminists, argues that 'body, or rather, bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself' (1994, x). No getting around it, bodies, all bodies, are influenced or infected (depending on how one chooses to look at it) by the world.

[33] See West 2002, 97.

In one way, this is very much in line with what the moderns thought as well. Descartes tells us that the actions of the mind 'can often be slowed down by wine and other corporeal things' (1984a, 245) and that the knowledge of children is likely to be misguided because it relies on 'the weak foundation of the senses' (1984c, 400). In short, bodies are part of an embedded, natural world and are thus incapable of the sort of transcendence required for rational thought within modernism's procedural, logical, scientific 'vision.'[34] In another way, the whole point of this critical analysis of modernism is to show how inescapable are inscribed bodies and to show how possessing *any* sort of body actually biases epistemology. Generally speaking, the placement of vision within the soul signifies a leap out of the marked body. Vision stands apart from the social and cultural structures that represent and inscribe bodies—except that vision does not actually stand apart, neutral and disinterested. The official story of Galilean science is that there is no room for the particularity of the knower in the logical and empirical necessities of scientific investigation, but as Keller argues, modern science does, time and time again, indeed take a particular perspective as universal—the perspective of men. As a result, science is inherently biased. She says, 'It is not true that "the conclusions of natural science are true and necessary, and the judgement [sic] of man has nothing to do with them"; it is the judgment of woman that they have nothing to do with' (Keller 1982, 592–593). Although the modern tradition deems that certain bodies transcend particularity, contemporary feminists have shown this to be false. The gaze that inscribes the body is not objective and impartial. Kant's willingness to declare black skin a sign of reduced intelligence, for example, is not objective and impartial. However much he fails to see the inscription of his own body, his vision is simply not of what is objectively true and necessary. Haraway goes on to add that the 'eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity … to distance the subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power' (1988, 581). While 'unfettered power' might slightly overstate the case, the point is one that is

[34] As I will discuss shortly, the exception to this is Hume, who finds that rationality is indeed not transcendent. On the other hand, his account of reason also finds it to be ineffectual and dependent upon the passions. It is not the autonomous author of epistemology or morality.

commonly expressed among non-male and non-white philosophers: the 'objectifying gaze' is inherently dishonest and oppressive. It is dishonest because it erases its own marked embodiment, that is, its own sex, gender, and race. It is oppressive because it marks 'the other's' differentness in ways that deny that person's status as a subject or because it controls the subject by functioning something like a Foucaultian panopticon. On this reading, power lies inherently at the heart of 'the gaze.' More can be said about the relationship between power and the detached and disembodied gaze of modernism, but for now suffice to say that critics of modernism offer strong reasons to believe that the distortions created by ocular metaphors are detrimental to those who are excluded from agency. In fact, the distortions not only mask the ways body affects rationality, they also mask the ways standards of beauty and morality affect rationality.

2.4 The Value of Inequality

Ocular metaphors may falsely push us beyond the limits imposed by bodies, but so too do standards of beauty. In the Enlightenment, these standards converge with concerns over clarity of vision, observation, and representation such that the moral worth of non-whites and non-males becomes highly suspect. While both Hume and Kant develop a connection between aesthetic judgment and moral standing, both also express skepticism concerning the ability of non-whites and non-males to make appropriate judgments and achieve moral agency. Whereas Hume's view may be slightly less objectionable since he merely hints that non-whites lack the right sort of moral agency, Kant is thoroughly and theoretically committed to a lack of agency for all but some white men. All the more troubling is that this lack of moral standing actually remains invisible from within Kant's moral theory. Accordingly, the only way to see Kant's biases is to step outside of his architectonic. Of course, the problems are larger than just Hume and Kant. Even with Descartes' modest starting place (i.e., that humans all share equally in our ability to reason), he still asserts that with practice some people do reason better than others.[35]

[35] See Descartes 1984a, 111.

In itself, this is highly believable and certainly true in common parlance. Some people *do* think more clearly than others. Yet for the moderns, there is more to it than that. Rational cognition is an achievement that requires not just clear thinking but following set procedures for thinking. The ability to follow correct procedures is what ultimately grounds moral concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, and dignity. Without proper reason, there can be no moral responsibility or rights—but as we are learning, not everyone is capable of proper reason.

Kant's moral theory is often held up as providing perhaps the strongest ground for universal equality and dignity. Would that this were true, the problem of reason's oppressive exclusivity would dissolve. Instead, a strict reading of Kant decidedly excludes women and non-whites from the domain of the moral—and all because women and non-whites supposedly fail to have the right sort of reason. Now, to be entirely fair, Kant himself never expressly states that women and non-whites lack moral standing. Much like Aristotle, he allows that the virtue of a woman, which is a beautiful virtue, is of a different sort than the virtue of a man, which is a noble virtue.[36] He acknowledges that a woman has just as much understanding as a man, but significantly, it is a different type of understanding (i.e., a woman has a beautiful understanding versus a man's deep understanding). The difficulty arises when Kant dismisses a woman's capacity for a *deep* understanding. He states, 'Her [woman's] philosophy is not to reason, but to sense' (1960, 79). He adds, 'Women will avoid the wicked not because it is unright, but because it is ugly… . Nothing of duty, nothing of compulsion, nothing of obligation!' (1960, 81). Given Kant's take on reason more generally, these sorts of statements essentially dismiss women's capacity to engage fully in reasoning.[37] Women, who

[36] See Kant 1960, 81.

[37] Kant says,

> Deep meditation and a long-sustained reflection are noble but difficult, and do not well befit a person in whom unconstrained charms should show nothing else than a beautiful nature. Laborious learning or painful pondering, even if a woman should greatly succeed in it, destroy the merits that are proper to her sex, and because of their rarity they can make of her an object of cold admiration. (1960, 78)

This particular passage suggests that perhaps women, or at least a few women, can think as well as men, but it also suggests that something is greatly amiss if they even attempt to do so.

act not from reason but from sensation, can hardly be moral beings. And the argument for this is rather straightforward: women don't act according to principles; to lack the ability to act according to principle is to fall short morally; to fall short morally is to lack in dignity; to lack in dignity is to fail to be someone to whom we can be directly morally obligated or whom we must treat as an end-in-itself. Put another way, since only rational beings can be moral beings, and since only moral beings can have dignity, women cannot possibly be on equal moral footing with men.

Be that as it may, if we want to give Kant every benefit of the doubt, he probably does not *intend* to undermine entirely women's moral status. After all, he does allow women a certain type of virtue. Yet no such charitable interpretation seems possible when it comes to non-whites. With respect to blacks, the evidence of their inferior reasoning is not developed in quite the same way, but upon reflection, the evidence is clear. In discussing a specific encounter with a Negro carpenter, Kant determines that because 'this fellow was quite black from head to foot, [we have] a clear proof that what he said was stupid' (1960, 113). For this reason and others, Kant places Africans on a lower rung of his racial hierarchy. Additionally, in discussing the idea of migration among races, Kant says, 'Where have <Asian-> Indians or Negroes ever attempted to spread out into northern lands?—Those exiled into <northern lands> … have in their descendants never wanted to serve as a stock useful to settled farmers or craftsmen.'[38] Once again, he reminds us that somehow the character of non-whites is fundamentally flawed. In other places, he does not allow blacks a feeling for the beautiful, which is something he at least allows women. Take Kant's comment from *Observations*: 'The mental characters of people are most discernible by whatever in them is moral, on which account we will yet take under consideration their different feelings in respect to the sublime and beautiful …' (1960, 99–100). The implication seems to be that all peoples are capable of some mental character and, thus, some morality. And Kant does encourage this interpretation, saying, in a mark of some sensitivity, that 'In each folk the finest part contains praiseworthy character of all kinds'

[38] Kant 2013b, 185–186.

(1960, 100).[39] Not so bad, it appears—until one reads a bit further. Kant goes on to add: 'The Negros of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling' (1960, 110). No feeling with respect to the sublime; no feeling with respect even to the beautiful. Kant's stated lack of bias in judgment is itself lacking, especially when one considers the import of this comment.

Even those who wish to defend Kant against his offensive racial comments can scarcely claim he is entirely innocent. For Pauline Kleingeld,

> Although Kant's own *definition* of race as such is formulated merely in terms of heritable differences in physical appearance, he nevertheless connects his understanding of race with a hierarchical account according to which the races *also* vary greatly in their capacities for agency and their powers of intellect. (2007, 574)

What this quote gives with one hand, it immediately takes back with the other. Kant's view of race is formulated *merely* on heritable differences in physical appearance, but since these differences are linked to disparities in agency and intellect, it hardly seems a case of 'merely.' Furthermore, as I have argued, very little in Kant's view of race is attached *merely* to physiological differences for he repeatedly and consistently maintains that nature is purposive in the distribution of heritable differences. Given that two of Kant's essays on race are published during the precise period he was developing his moral theory, a theory that is above all linked to our capacity to act as autonomous moral agents, it appears even more unlikely that his view concerns *merely* physical appearance. And this is a point to which Kleingeld is sensitive. Her eventual position is one that is quite plausible (although not established): Kantian moral principles are indeed race neutral in formulation but are also infected by Kant's own racist attitudes.[40] In short, 'racist prejudice can (and in Kant's case does) influence how the most basic moral and political principles are applied in

[39] The full footnote reads, 'In each folk the finest part contains praiseworthy character of all kinds, and whoever is affected by one or another reproach will, if he is fine enough, understand the advantage that follows when he relinquishes all the others to their fate but makes an exception of himself' (Kant 1960, 100).

[40] See Kleingeld 2007, 384.

the elaboration of the full theory' (Kleingeld 2007, 386). This infection is something that a re-worked understanding of rationality needs to address, but doing this requires us to understand the cause of the infection. That is, before the concept of reason can be salvaged, we really need to understand the moral implications of unequal attributions of reason. Otherwise, we cannot remain sensitive to the problems and correct for them.

For Kant, what is truly important is to recognize that what distinguishes humans as distinct from animals, what undergirds our freedom and, hence, our dignity is our 'developmental expression of rational-moral "character"' (Eze 1997, 120). He holds that character is a distinctive constitution or peculiar property of the will and that the will 'is to make use of gifts of nature' such as talents of mind or qualities of temperament (Kant 1996, 393). From these comments, Allan Gibbard determines that, when it comes to morality, Kant 'insists that morally good character is the place to start' (1990, 310n). 'Character' may not imply acting according to habituated dispositions that appropriately respond to and influence inclination (i.e., an Aristotelian notion of character), but for Kant, it can be 'a moral task definitive of our vocation as members of humanity' (Munzel 1999, 2). That is, character is linked to humanity. Kant claims that 'true virtue can be grafted only upon principles … [that are] the consciousness of a feeling that lives *in every human breast* … . [It] is the feeling of the beauty and dignity of human nature' [italics added] (1960, 60). Yet, within Kant's writings on race and on women, it is not always clear that non-whites and non-males, human though they may be, are capable of using the will to properly make use of 'natural gifts' or feelings of beauty and dignity, and thus, it is not clear that non-whites or women can develop the right sort of moral character. Morality is about acting autonomously according to laws one gives oneself and doing so from the a priori motivation of duty. Whenever one acts on sensation, as women and (in all likelihood) non-whites do, morality is absent. Hence, women lack duty, compulsion, obligation. Similarly in the case of non-whites, Eze tells us: 'If non-white peoples lack "true" rational character … and therefore lack "true" feeling and moral sense, then they do not have "true" worth, or dignity' (1997, 121). Eze concludes that for Kant, 'European humanity is *the* humanity *par excellence*' (1997, 121). I would qualify this claim: *male* European humanity is *the* standard.

Just as Kant discriminates among various races, arguing ('without prejudice') that some are better than others, he discriminates along lines of gender. Addressing the issue from the perspective of aesthetic judgments, Meg Armstrong maintains that in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*,

> Kant will, from these amazingly homogeneous dispositions for aesthetic experience … sort through melancholics, phlegmatics, cholerics, females, males, Italians, Germans, Englishmen, and Indians. One might regard the *Observations* as a classificatory chart of all the impure aesthetic judgments, those tainted with material or other interests as well as the perceptual and corporeal matrices provided by cultural constructions of gender, race, and nation. (1996, 221)

This 'classificatory chart' undoubtedly comes with hierarchical evaluations of the various types of humans Kant identifies, but the issue at this point is which of these humans are capable of divorcing themselves from the material conditions in which they find themselves and of making judgments solely according to principle. Although interpreters of Kant are often willing to defend his attitudes toward women's moral capabilities, assuming they discuss these attitudes at all, his comments on women certainly indicate that he holds them to be ill-suited to reasoning according to principles.[41] Women are also mostly incapable or ill-suited to doing philosophy, and Kant specifically denigrates any woman that attempts to do philosophy.[42] Whether he actually holds the view that women are inferior (which I think he does), the implications of his moral and aesthetic theories make it difficult to establish that women actually have the same moral standing as men. Staying within the domain of aesthetics, Kant argues,

> All the other merits of a woman should unite solely to enhance the character of the beautiful, which is the proper reference point; and on the other hand

[41] Among other places, a defense of Kant's attitude toward women, as least in the *Observations*, can be found in Patrick Frierson's introduction to the text. However, Frierson admits that by the time of the *Anthropology*, Kant's use of the term 'feminine virtue' 'rings hollow when such virtue falls far short of the "good will" that is the only thing "good without limitation"' (Frierson 2011, xxxi).

[42] See Kant 1960, 78–79.

> among the masculine qualities the sublime clearly stands out as the criterion of his kind. All judgments of the two sexes must refer to these criteria…all education and instruction must have these before its eyes, and all efforts to advance the moral perfection of the one or the other. (1960, 83)

So what does it mean to associate women with the beautiful and men with the sublime? Sarah Woolwine and Eva Dadlez take the following from the previous passage:

> 'While the explicit gendering falls away' from Kant's account of the beautiful and sublime in his critical writings, 'the gender-based opposition remains in force.' This is evident, first, in Kant's identification of the sublime with the subject's superiority over nature in the third *Critique—a superiority that is connected with the ability to act from principle rather than inclination* [italics added]. (2015, 111)

Once again, these critics find that acting from principle is taken to be privileged. Once again, they find that men (or, more precisely, white men) are associated with acting from principle. The argument here is from an aesthetic point of view, but it follows exactly along the lines of Kantian morality: one must act from principle and *not from inclination*. Said differently, moral virtue requires subordinating particular desires or inclinations to universal principles. And this is not an observation that comes only from within feminist scholarship. Recall that Genova understands the bridge between the first *Critique's* realm of nature and the second *Critique's* realm of freedom to be provided through Kant's analysis that 'beauty becomes the symbol of the good, and sublimity of moral dignity' (Genova 1970, 465). Beauty is associated with the good, but of course, one could achieve the good without any moral import as does Kant's benevolent man who acts out of a love for humanity. Moral dignity is the more important concept. When the import of this association on gender stereotypes is introduced, Kant's restriction of women's virtue to the domain of the beautiful entails that women fall short of masculine virtue, which is principled and sublime.[43]

[43] See Kant 1960, 81.

While the case against Kant is a strong one indeed, he is sadly not the only European philosopher who is committed to a deep inequality in reason. Hume is often taken to be a relatively progressive philosopher, especially among some feminists, and he certainly has less to say on the topic of race than does Kant. But he occasionally makes comments that should give us pause.[44] In discussing his moral theory, he explicitly states,

> Were there a species of creatures, intermingled with men, which though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, and could never, upon the highest provocation, makes us feel the effects of their resentment … [o]ur intercourse with them could not be called society, which supposes a degree of equality; but absolute command on the one side, and servile obedience on the other. (Hume 1975, 190)

This passage is rarely commented upon, even in feminist discussions of Hume, but it is rather damning for anyone who wishes to insist that modern ethical views are truly universal.[45] After all, Hume admits it is actually permissible to oppress people, provided you are assured that they cannot fight back. Another particularly damning, and previously discussed, footnote from Hume is much more heavily cited and discussed. In full, it reads:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. *Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of*

[44] On the one hand, some feminists specifically appeal to Hume. For example, Longino says, 'When in a quandary, turn to Hume' (2005, 84). Also see Baier 2002. On the other hand, Hume's essay 'On Love and Marriage' paints a quite negative picture of women. See Hume 1964b.

[45] I discuss this passage in Heikes 2010, 50–51.

> *men.* Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any symptom of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly. [italics added] (1758, 125n)

As hard as it seems to defend this remark, Hume does precisely that.[46] But as with Kant, the mere fact of Hume's evident racist attitudes does not imply that some fundamental philosophical point is at stake. Then again, what is especially interesting about this passage is that Hume includes a very Kantian element: 'Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men.' In other words, he implies that some aspects of race (i.e., those which demonstrate a uniform and constant difference) are more than accidental. Given Hume's radical empiricism, he absolutely cannot provide the same philosophical ground as can Kant for a connection between race and differences in human nature, but he appears to assert just such a connection. This sort of claim highlights something that is often overlooked in Hume's philosophy: whatever his skepticism toward the power of reason to justify its own principles, Hume actually does appeal to a quasi-universal regularity in matters of both reasoning and taste.

Granted, Hume is less dramatic in his insistence on universalizable principles, but he offers them nonetheless. In discussing induction, he says, 'regular conjunction has been *universally acknowledged* [italics added] among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute' (1975, 88), and when considering morality, he says, 'it is *universally acknowledged* [italics added] that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations' (1975, 83). Even in the case of taste, something which on the surface truly does appear more subjective, Hume nevertheless agrees with Kant: when it comes to matters of taste, 'certain

[46] Immerwahr discusses Hume's rewriting of this passage in response to criticism from James Beattie. See Immerwahr 1992, 483–485.

qualities in objects … are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings' (Hume 1964a, 273). This statement, however, is rather ambiguous. Hume clarifies it by claiming that nature acts in such a way (albeit not in a purposive way) that certain objects align with certain feelings. To identify properly this alignment, we need to find those qualities that generate *universal* responses. Expectedly, Hume discovers that those possessing a delicacy of taste are capable of discerning general rules of beauty. He says,

> Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact, as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense. Here then the *general rules of beauty* are of use, being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree: And if the same qualities, in a continued composition, and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. [italics added] (1964a, 273)

What he means when he speaks of drawing rules of beauty from established models is the classical ideal shared by white European male philosophers of the time. Since these 'logically chosen' standards appear out of reach of some types of humans, this places a great many people in the domain of those who merely have *pretentions* of possessing a delicacy of taste.

One immediate concern is that aesthetic standards artificially restrict the domain of reason such that those outside this domain are lacking in agency. In offering a case against Hume, Marcia Lind, whose focus is gender and not race, argues that there is a fundamental flaw in Hume's aesthetics and ethics, namely, the assumption of an underlying similarity of all humans. Upon reflection, something goes awry with this assumption for it is not readily consistent with Hume's larger epistemic theory. After all, the only way to establish an underlying similarity of human nature or to establish the universality of taste is through empirical observation. A priori arguments simply

aren't an option. So how do we come to a *universal* standard of taste? According to Lind, by 'artificially constructing agreement among critics by limiting who was party to the agreement' (1994, 57). Hume discusses how the 'most vulgar' of ballads have some harmony but adds that 'none but a person familiarized to superior beauties would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellence of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity' (Hume 1964a, 276). Here, mention of 'superior' and 'inferior' beauty, as well as the implication that there is correct judgment on such matters, highlights that there are general rules for taste, but it also highlights that some people are better versed in these rules—and that the distinction can be based on race.

Hume's tactic of restricting who is party of the agreement of a standard raises an additional concern. In an unrelated discussion, Harding makes an observation that is telling. She indicates how limited is the group of people (or, perhaps, humans) who would find this restrictive maneuver legitimate, saying 'Only members of the powerful groups in societies stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality could imagine that their standards for knowledge and the claims resulting from adherence to such standards should be found preferable by all rational creatures, past, present, and future' (1993, 60). For those left out, like the Laplander and the Negro, the liabilities of this stance are all too obvious. Those occupying less privileged standpoints can more readily see, for example, how Greek standards of beauty highlight certain features of the world while dismissing others. After all, because those denied space on the terrain of reason or of taste are forced to look from a different perspective; they are often afforded a much clearer view from their discrete vantage point. To illustrate, Lind draws attention to the fact that Hume's 'exposure to "superior" beauties is not just *any* sort of education, with any sort of range, but a *classical* education' (1994, 57). The Pacific islander, who cannot attain the classical standard, will understand with acuity how limited is the view from this perspective, primarily since he or she must look out another window. Distortions are much clearer from the outside.

In the final analysis, then, Hume obtains objectivity in matters of taste by excluding those who do not share the right biases.[47] This is a point made more clear by considering Hume's wine example.

> A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine. And though there are few or no instances of a like deficiency in the mind, where a person has never felt or is wholly incapable of a sentiment or passion that belongs to his species; yet we find the same observation to take place in a less degree. (Hume 1975, 20)

Now, recall West's thesis that observation, science, and classical models of aesthetics come together to produce racism. Observation and aesthetics dovetail in Hume's account in a racist manner. Hume explicitly excludes as a legitimate critic anyone who does not accede to the general rules of beauty developed from established models. He even goes as far as to state such a lack of 'relish' is a deficiency of mind. Because Hume ultimately believes that the ends for reason are dictated by matters of taste, his assessment of matters of taste must have implications for the moral standing of those incapable of the right sentiments or passions.[48] Morality is, of course, 'more properly felt than judged of' (Hume 1978, 470). And taste 'gives [the] sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue' (Hume 1975, 294). At the very least, Hume's attitude toward those 'naturally inferior to whites' suggests that some races fail to demonstrate mastery of correct sentiment—and, in the final analysis—morality is a sentiment.

2.5 Essential Inequalities

We could ask whether Hume is an essentialist about race, but, of course, Hume is not really essentialist about anything.[49] As with all things, he is philosophically committed to the possibility that the world could always

[47] Lind herself argues that this limitation can be overcome and does not affect Hume's larger moral theory. See 1994, 62.

[48] I leave open the question of just how Hume's aesthetic theory relates to the moral standing of whites.

[49] Immerwahr does suggest that Hume's actual view on race is one of 'polygenesis,' meaning different races belong to different species—and implying that non-whites are 'permanently and irretrievably inferior' (1992, 482). If this interpretation is correct, then Hume's view could be read as an essentialist one.

be different than it is, although he appears less than sensitive to this in his discussion of race. With Kant, however, we encounter a much more essentialist version of racism and sexism, and this has serious implications with respect to the conferral of personhood. In short, since in the generation of race lies an irreversible and infallibly reproducible modification of the 'stem stock' of humans, the difference among races is an *essential* difference. Kant arrives at this conclusion in the same way he arrives at many conclusions, by building on Hume's empirically oriented arguments and observations.[50] Kant reports Hume's inductive generalization that 'among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries … not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality' (Kant 1960, 110–111). As he tends to do, Kant seeks some unity underlying these diverse 'empirical facts,' and from them, he infers a purposiveness that allows him to build an anthropological architecture in which Africans—and women—are incapable of 'the feeling of the beauty and worth of human nature' (1960, 51). Furthermore, since the worth of human nature is tied up with moral dignity, anyone incapable of feeling that worth must surely be held in some suspicion. On this point, Kant is entirely unambiguous: having moral standing and possessing dignity are entirely unrelated to being human, except insofar as human beings actually formulate and act upon principles that we give to ourselves. This is an important distinction. Although previous to the Enlightenment it

[50] My concern with Kant's essentialism is mostly motivated by the ways it underpins a moral hierarchy. I return to this issue in the final chapter and discuss how the shift to evolutionary biology undermines this sort of essentialism and opens the door to a more inclusive account of rationality.

At the same time, I am also concerned with an argument originated by Eze (1997) which is criticized by Hill and Boxill. They argue that 'Eze says nothing to suggest that Kant believed that these passages were any more than empirical *a posteriori* claims that could be falsified by experience' (2001, 455). As I have argued, Kant's racism and sexism go far deeper than simply empirical observations. Given the structural, architectonic nature of all of Kant's work, it seems difficult to establish, as Hill and Boxill attempt, that Kant's claims about non-whites—and women—fail to imply that 'non-whites lack dignity, in the sense that they lack to capacity to act morally' (2001, 455).

Basically, I agree with Bernasconi (2003, 16) criticism. He maintains that their strategy is to segregate the 'basic' aspects of Kant's theory from the 'separable' parts and to jettison those 'separable' parts that aren't necessarily connected to the theory. For Bernasconi, this is a suspect way to approach the history of philosophy for it divorces the philosopher from the context in which he (and it is always a 'he') wrote. In other words, it puts forward a view of what Kant (or others) *should* have said, according to contemporary standards, and not what he (or they) actually did say.

was historically the case that being human was, ceteris paribus, a sufficient condition for being rational and possessing for moral standing, this is quite explicitly not the case for Kant. The need to *achieve* rationality sets a standard that, when combined with Kant's anthropology, proves to be difficult for certain people to achieve—namely, those incapable of principles, who not coincidentally turn out to be non-white, non-male.

Whether the restriction is essential or not, what is clear is that both Hume and Kant limit the range of rationality. Of course, the problem is larger than simply these two philosophers. As the domain of the rational is demarcated under the influence of scientific models of investigation, as the need to avoid the pitfalls of subjectivism become clearer and clearer, what falls outside of a so-called objective observer's gaze is made invisible. In the process, it is either ignored and left to wither or, worse, directly denigrated and attacked. Given all the talk of objectivity, universality, and equality, what is obscured is that the definitions of these terms are epistemologically precised in ways that undermine the moral standing of anyone deemed incapable of the right sort of rationality. The significance of what is left out—difference, subjectivity, emotion, particularity, narrative—is difficult to see for the widely shared biases of Cartesianism make it increasingly difficult to accept difference *and* maintain a stance of Objectivity. As a result, when the moral ideals of equality and liberty are granted to all, what goes unnoticed is how the uncoupling of humanity and rationality changes the meaning of 'all.' Lynda Lange offers a concrete example in which the 'The Spanish perception of the indigenous peoples of the Americas was entirely self-referential: they literally did not perceive the "other" as "other," but rather as deficient examples of "the same… ."' Quoting Dussel, she adds,

> Spanish selfreferentiality [sic] was so strong that even the dazzling evidence of urban development among the Aztecs and Incans that was superior to what the Spanish would have known in Europe failed to suggest to them that these peoples might be best thought of as simply different from them, rather than inferior to them. (Lange 1988, 135)

As the attention of the Europeans narrows, the artificial limits placed on perspective preclude the possibility of difference, so difference is simply

not seen. In turn, the domain of personhood is imperceptibly altered. Personhood is no longer attributed to all humans but only to humans of the right sort. When it comes down to it, says Mills, '"Person" … is really a technical term of art, referring to a status whose attainment requires more than simple humanity' (2002b, 8).

To see how 'person' comes to require more than humanity, consider again Kant's appeal to Buffon's rule. Whatever he thinks of those who are neither white nor male, he clearly does not deny their humanity. The shift in Kant's thinking, and it is a subtle one, is to link moral worth not to humanity but rationality. What makes this shift so subtle and what begins to make 'person' a term of art is that in the modern period humans are still thought of as rational animals. As a result, the transition of the notion of personhood away from humanity goes largely unnoticed. Furthermore, for all his 'hard minded' restriction of personhood to rationality, Kant never maintains that we can avoid all duties to nonpersons—and nonpersons include not only animals, but small children, people in comas, those suffering from forms of dementia, and other humans lacking full rational capacities. These duties just cannot be directly owed to those who are incapable of formulating and acting according to principles. As harsh as he sounds in the *Groundwork*, Kant really does believe morality extends beyond obviously rational beings. He really does allow room for some moral obligation with respect to non-whites and non-males. The great difficulty, however, is that deontology cannot *assure* the *moral* requirement of equal treatment of all humans, even if it can assure the moral requirement of equal treatment of all persons (i.e., rational agents who are autonomous lawgivers to themselves and others). Still, that some humans would fall beyond the sphere of a supposedly universal morality would not be readily noticed by those sharing the prevalent biases and perspective of the time. The scope of 'universal' just wasn't meant to be literally universal. Consequently and quite ironically, an age that prides itself on clarity and precision ends up with definitions of 'reason' and 'person' that are actually far less clear, far less precise than they initially are believed to be.

Fundamentally, the moral problem of persons is an epistemological problem. Enlightenment moral concepts impose fundamental inequalities on those who fail to achieve rationality, but they do so because they

are grounded in an epistemology obsessed with Objectivity and utterly incapable of self-critical reflection on its own biases. As modern knowers become independent of the world and each other, as they come to depend upon representational epistemologies to bridge the mind/world gap, the increasingly important role of perspective is disguised. And this occurs not only within rationality but analogously within art.

One of the central differences between the medieval and modern outlooks lies in the relationship of observers to the world. These differences are just as striking in art as they are in philosophy and science. Taking medieval art as a case in point, Susan Bordo argues that, for medievals, 'absorption in the world rather than locatedness in the world was central' (Bordo 1987, 62–63). In modern painting, by contrast, the viewer is required to adopt a particular perspective—a specific location—in order to view the painting.[51] What happens is that, as reason contracts, epistemic subjects withdraw from the world in a way medievals never could. This opens up a 'psychic distance' between the perceiving subject and the world perceived, a psychic distance that is evident in the painting *Las Meninas*, a painting in which 'representation is represented at every point' (Foucault 1970, 307). Says Foucault,

> the painter, the palette, the broad dark surface of the canvas with its back to us, the paintings hanging on the wall, the spectators watching, who are framed, in turn, by those who are watching them; and lastly, in the centre, in the very heart of the representation, nearest to what is essential, the mirror, showing us what is represented, but as a reflection so distant, so deeply buried in an unreal space, so foreign to all the gazes being directed elsewhere, that it is not more than the frailest duplication of representation. All the interior lines of the painting, and above all those that come from the central reflection, point toward the very thing that is represented, but absent. (1970, 307–308)

In this painting, as in any painting using vanishing point perspective, the viewer is put in a particular place—but without seeming to be so.[52]

[51] See Bordo 1987, 66.

[52] The fact that the viewer in this case is the king is significant but not immediately related to the issue at hand. However, the fact that the king holds the spot from all things are viewed relates to Frye's argument concerning the non-reality of lesbians. See Frye 1983, 155.

Here, we stand in the shoes of the king, whose vision determines reality and whose perspective we are unreflectively able to adopt since we 'know' how to view the world in the way the artist portrays it. In this creation of the illusion of visual depth, the biases we bring to the painting disappear from view because we share them.

As in philosophy, we find that being 'located' or 'situated' matters in a way it never did for the medievals. If we look at only slightly earlier works, for example, van der Weyden or Bosch—or even someone as late as Brueghel—the images appear flattened and slightly distorted. Surely this is not how they appeared to those in the period. People of that time held different assumptions concerning how space was to be represented. To them, the paintings must have appeared perfectly normal. The creation of a Cartesian ideal of reason or rational inquiry presents much the same situation. Once the Cartesian turn was made, everyone 'knew' the standards of rationality were to be found in mimicking the observation and logical deduction of scientific method. More clearly than anyone else, Hume understood the limits of this method and was willing to accept that reason was less than authoritative, yet even he relied on the logical power of reason to order the contents of the mind. Standpoint epistemologists are right: it is easier to see other's biases than it is to see your own, especially when shared by a powerful group.

What we can see that the moderns could not is how narrow is the field of vision from their windows. Our biases shape our construction of knowledge—but they also shape our understanding of what it is to be rational. In the case of modernism, the racist and sexist attitudes of some of its most influential thinkers guarantee that the received representation of reality includes white male supremacy, perhaps not essentially but certainly with some intentionality. In arguing for a methodology that requires us to avoid error by using quite specific means of investigation, Descartes ultimately excludes other ways of thinking about reality. We are left with an ideal of a single, all-encompassing theory of nature built upon objectively known scientific laws, which in turn define the domain of the real. Yet to view reality in this way is to make invisible other ways of seeing, which then leaves two possibilities: those believed to have different methods of reasoning (e.g., women, Africans, or Native Americans) must be recognized as having legitimate alternatives to European male ways of

thinking or these groups must be excluded from the domain of reason. Now, if they are recognized as having equally valid ways of reasoning, the problem of representation leads almost immediately to a problem with subjectivity and relativism. Hume, in his essay *On the Standard of Taste*, surely understands this

> to enable a critic the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration but the very object which is submitted to his examination. We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance. (1964a, 276)

Hume does believe there is a difference between being right and thinking one is right on matters of taste, and our only hope of getting it right is to focus solely on the object from *the correct point of view*. In other words, we must specify the conditions of observation, which modern philosophers take to constitute a 'universal' perspective. Of course, Hume does recognize that this excludes some people from aesthetic knowledge. After all, he admits that 'A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine' (1975, 20), but that is a small price to pay for maintaining a standard of taste.

As usual, Kant follows Hume's lead and also argues for the universal nature of aesthetic judgments, and, as usual, he wants a much stronger version of universality than what Hume is prepared to defend. In another instance of drawing a strong connection between morality and aesthetics, Kant claims,

> since taste is at bottom a faculty for the judging of the sensible rendering of moral ideas … [from which] that pleasure which taste *declares to be valid for mankind in general*, not merely for the private feeling of each, it is evident that the true propaedeutic for the grounding of taste is the development of moral ideas and the cultivation of the moral feeling; for only when sensibility is brought into accord with this can genuine taste assume a determinate, unalterable form. [italics added] (2001, 356)

Matters of taste are universally valid, and not just from some empirically correct point of view. Variation in standards is not a possibility, so one whose standards do not fit the received view is lacking in the appropriate objectivity and cannot be a fully competent reasoner. Time and time again, modern philosophers seek representations that can objectively, universally, nonprejudicially reflect a world that we can no longer directly access. In the current example, the standards for imposing order on the world are aesthetic, but they can equally be epistemic or moral. In epistemology, we find 'especially since Kant, [that] the existence of some fundamental and unchanging framework of concepts and principles, which forms the universal and compulsory skeleton for all more technical and empirical "world-pictures", has widely been taken for granted' (Toulmin 1972, 413). Such compulsory skeletons are required to save the objectivity of knowledge, and Enlightenment concepts that gain their traction from the idea of reason that grounds these skeletons—for instance, justice, freedom, dignity, autonomy—cannot allow for a diversity within rational methodologies. Those who do not share the perspective of the king must be excluded from rationality.

What happens for the moderns is that scientific models of observation and classical ideals of beauty do indeed come together with the representational distancing of subjects from the world to produce a powerful objectifying gaze. Since the explanatory power of modern reason depends upon its intensely concentrated field of focus, the assumptions inherent in this gaze makes it difficult, if not impossible, for modern rationality to function inclusively when confronted with difference. If its vision were more diffuse, subjectivism would threaten to undermine the entire edifice. From within modernism, however, the narrowness of vision is difficult to see. After all, in their eagerness to break away from the excesses of scholastic/Aristotelian ways of thinking, modern philosophers are eager to demarcate correct and incorrect ways of thinking, and they are eager to rid themselves of the biases of the older ways of thinking.

For those of us on this side of the Cartesian/post-Cartesian divide, the limitations of modern perspectives on personhood and morality are much easier to see, even if it is not always easy to see how we should respond to these limitations. Taking aim against Cartesian notions, Rorty tells us that 'Once consciousness and reason are separated out …,

then personhood can be seen for what I claim it is—a matter of decision rather than knowledge, an acceptance of another being into fellowship rather than a recognition of a common essence' (1979, 38). Since essences are largely eliminated from modern philosophy and science, personhood needs a ground other than mere humanity.[53] Yet when the concept becomes linked to reason in the modern sense of the term, personhood falls out of the reach of many. That is because as philosophers come 'to concentrate upon an exceedingly narrow range of thinking as the sole legitimate mode of reasoning' (Nozick 1993, 164), they also tend to concentrate upon an exceedingly narrow range of phenomena for observation. I have argued that to repair the damage, we must first make visible what becomes utterly invisible with the Copernican turn: the wide range of differences among humans and among forms of reasoning. I have explained why sex, gender, race, culture all become irrelevant to the acquisition of knowledge—or, conversely, how possessing these qualities exclude one as a competent reasoner. Because having a race or a sex (which white men in the Enlightenment evidently do not have) is considered an insurmountable obstacle to correct reasoning, a hidden epistemological and moral hierarchy lies deep within the Age of Equality.

On modern accounts, the application of reason is restricted to those problems amenable to scientific and logical solutions, defined, of course, through modern conceptions of science and logic.[54] In this constriction, many contemporary philosophers discover the greatest distortion and damage to the concept of rationality. Adding fuel to the critical fire, Lloyd finds that as Reason comes to be seen as a skill to be acquired, 'its relationship with other aspects of human nature were also transformed… . Something happened here which proved crucial for the development of stereotypes of maleness and femaleness …' (1984, 39). Something also happens which proves crucial for the development of

[53] In the final chapter, I argue that Kant is actually an essentialist about race.

[54] See Toulmin 1972, vii. In much the same manner as Toulmin, Eze attacks modernism, specifically a Baconian approach:

> If all known philosophical systems since Socrates are the abstract invention of the scholars rather than patient empirical observation and mastery of objective nature or societies, it is, of course, only because Bacon was working from a peculiar conception of rationality, a conception tied to a particular metaphysics of nature and language. (2008, 37)

the concept of race. This something includes an emphasis on observation that distances knowers from the world and restricts the range of acceptable ways of thinking. But at the heart of this something also lies the transformation of reason away from a broader Greek understanding and toward a concept defined by a privileged group of people for their own use.

Unlike Cartesian methodology, which articulates a right order of thought grounded in the mind's own operations, the Greeks have a much broader conception that links reason to ways of pursuing activities.[55] What we divide under the headings of 'logic' and 'rhetoric' is, for the Greeks, all part of logos. Yet, this insight into the functional diversity of reason is not the only insight lost on modern thinkers. What the Greeks understood is, as Taylor reminds us, that 'The world of human affairs has to be described and explained in terms which take account of *the meanings things have for us*' [italics added] (1989, 69). Such meanings are what Enlightenment principles don't take into account, at least not explicitly. Hume and Kant do attempt to explain what it is to be creatures like us with the formal interests we have in the world, but in the push for objectivity, neither can escape the focus on formal requirements. Hume goes the opposite direction from Kant and takes reason to be the slave of passions, but that is because he cannot provide the sort of objectivity that earlier Enlightenment thinkers set as a standard. Nevertheless, even Hume resorts to a so-called universal standard of taste, a standard which actually smuggles in an especially white, male, European way of thinking. And this is the problem for modern thinkers, both epistemically and morally: the tools of modernism demand the invisibility of perspective and bias. The search for Truth, and the search for a solid ground for science, becomes impossible if reason can be more than what a small group of privileged thinkers take it to be. Epistemic individualism assures that. It also assures that the foundation for Enlightenment moral concepts, concepts such as justice and equality, will depend upon one's ability to conform to prescribed methods and standards for cognition. Such concepts do apply universally—for those who meet the restricted definition of 'rational.'

[55] See Lloyd 1984, 40–41. Also see Toulmin 2001, 24–28.

When it comes to Enlightenment philosophers' explicitly racist and sexist comments, no one holds their feet to the fire quite as strongly as Mills. Yet, even Mills allows that Enlightenment concepts may be salvaged. 'The fact that certain concepts and values may have been developed to privilege certain groups does not at all prove that these concepts and values are of zero worth or that they cannot be extended to other' (2002a, 22). As Mills goes on to explain, the fact that the concept of, say, rights-protections was originally developed for white males does not mean it cannot be valuable for working-class black women. Quite to the contrary, working-class black women need rights-protection all that much more than do white males. Those of us who have been denied a place of *rightful* occupancy on the terrain of reason would be well served by finding a ground that allows us to make substantive moral claims.[56] To stake our claim, we require epistemically and morally defensible territory. The trick is retaining the liberatory aspects of Enlightenment concepts while eschewing the oppressive elements. The remaining task, then, is to reclaim 'reason' and 'rationality' from the modern tradition and to allow it to be the open-ended, yet structured, faculty that it has at other times been allowed to be. The meanings things have for us contextually make all the difference in the world. We need to recover a sensitivity to the contextual nature of what it is to believe or act correctly in these circumstances, for beings like us.

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[56] Even the fact that Code uses the term 'rightful' in the passage I paraphrase indicates the need for normativity (1991, 119).

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3

Philosophy's Outward Turn

Reason's transformation into an achievement concept which is open only to white males may have been largely invisible to those working in the Enlightenment, but philosophical biases are not what they once were. Shifting biases make it much easier to see the *something* which allows for the creation of racial concepts and which appears to demand judging other's rational capacity on the basis of similarity and difference. This *something* is closely linked to epistemic isolation and representation.[1] Once the mind is disconnected from the ontological security of an independent reality, it becomes solely responsible for guaranteeing the reliability of its procedures. Modernism may be built on the faith that the proper use of reason will guide us to accurate representations of the world and, hence, to objective truth and knowledge, yet this is not quite how things worked out. As the modern project progresses, the promissory note first offered by Descartes, the one where he claims he will establish stable and unshakeable foundations for scientific truth, gets harder and harder to cash. As it turns out, rather than putting science on a firm foundation, he undermines epistemic foundations that, by all appearances, are

[1] I focus here on race and not gender since philosophers clearly didn't need the Enlightenment to develop sexist attitudes; those have been evident from the beginning.

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irreplaceable, at least not within a modern framework. For the moderns to make any good faith effort at cashing Descartes' promissory note, they simply have to cut off the diversity of reason, and, when that happens, humans who are unable or unwilling to live up to the pre-ordained standard must be denied epistemic and moral agency. To do otherwise would threaten to undermine the very objectivity of knowledge, of metaphysics, of science. The result is that the Copernican turn plunges us into a world that threatens to epistemically dissolve into cultural relativism, if not a solipsistic subjectivism—and all because, contrary to modern approaches, there really are a variety of ways to conceive of the limits, principles, rules of cognition.

This problem of objectivity is one we directly inherit from Cartesianism, and it is this difficulty that motivates much of the turn away from modern assumptions. Although the meaning of the terms 'soul' and 'world' need to be altered to fit a philosophical context, Enlightenment philosophers really do attempt to answer the rhetorical question, 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Matthew 16:26). Kant, in particular, argues that the *only* way to gain an epistemologically solid grasp of the world as a totality is to gain one's own soul, or at least to gain the logical methodology according to which reason must operate. By contrast, we nowadays appear to have very much lost our souls. We live in a world that rejects metanarratives, accepts the pervasiveness of bias, and attempts to embrace diversity and difference. In short, we live in a world that is far more Heraclitean, and willingly so. We have abandoned the dream of a single, universal worldview; we are skeptical of quests for unified theories of an objective reality; we dismiss myths that knowledge is inherently good and that progress is inevitable; we challenge claims to the certainty of truth and the coherence of rationality. In place of these Enlightenment ideas, we have dictums such as 'all is difference'; we posit a world that is decentered and perspectival; we believe knowledge is always partial and that change is ever-present; we argue for the relativity and incompleteness of truth; and we tout the death of philosophy and understand that 'reason' has become a bad word.

Even if the language of modernism still speaks to us, we approach philosophical difficulties from a perspective quite distinct from the moderns.

As a result, it might seem that the problem of exclusion that I am keen to resolve should, perhaps, already be solved. After all, if philosophy no longer accepts the foundations that theoretically motivated the marginalization of certain peoples and if reason is no longer a thoroughly procedural notion, then we should be good: all really is difference, so everyone gets to join the party. Aside from the obvious fact that this is not what has happened, a deeper worry emerges. The moderns were concerned about a very real, very knotty philosophical difficulty. In the absence of metaphysical grounds or common cognitive structures, reason appears unable to provide a substantive foundation for so-called objective epistemic and moral concepts. These concepts—concepts such as truth, equality, freedom, justice, and autonomy—speak to us for important reasons. Epistemic and moral projects that seek to establish the reality of oppression, truths concerning marginalization, or the moral impact of exclusion can hardly succeed without them.

Modernism is, then, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the aspiration to universal and objective knowledge offers hope that we can argumentatively convince our opponents using the force of reason. On the other hand, these concepts appear to be, if not inherently exclusionary, then exclusionary in practice—and in ways that are not easily subverted within modernist perspectives. If the ground on which epistemic and moral concepts depend is not what it claims to be, then we have two choices: rethink our dependence upon normative concepts or redefine rationality so that it can serve as an adequate ground for normativity. Clearly, I argue for the latter option. Those of us working in the margins of mainstream philosophy cannot afford to cede the normative ground. To argue the reality and wrongness of oppression requires something closely resembling a strong normativity, albeit something that will offer a standard more probabilistic than certain. This 'probabilistic surety' needs to be solid enough to provide strong reasons without looking out modernist windows or working within oppressive moral and epistemic paradigms.

Fortunately, because different windows on reason are available to us, stepping outside of the modern framework is not all that difficult to do these days. While modernism has been subject recently to powerful critiques from feminists and race theorists, it has for well over a century

also been the subject of scathing critiques from within the philosophical mainstream. The framework of modernism remains central to current philosophical projects, but it increasingly does so only as a foil for those who seek to reject it. It is no longer the only philosophical game in town, and its loss of hegemony is evidenced by widespread recognition of the role society and culture play in our epistemic and moral lives. In fact, these days, few philosophers express much allegiance to Cartesianism. Yet the rejection of this way of thinking is not all that recent in origin; it actually began already in the nineteenth century. One of the better-known proselytizers for a post-Cartesian philosophical world, albeit one lacking substantive normative concepts, is Rorty. Rorty wants us to believe that 'Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey have brought us into a period of "revolutionary" philosophy … by introducing new maps of the terrain …' (1979, 6–7). He also wants us to believe 'they glimpse the possibility of a form of intellectual life in which the vocabulary of philosophical reflection inherited from the seventeenth century would seem as pointless as the thirteenth-century philosophical vocabulary had seemed to the Enlightenment' (Rorty 1979, 6). Although I substitute Peirce for Dewey as the philosopher who ushers in a revolutionary period, Rorty is on to something. Independently of whether one wants to follow Rorty down the rabbit hole of cultural relativism (which I do not), he clearly and insightfully articulates the significant transformation away from Cartesianism in the work of each of these philosophers.

Before turning my attention to the details of these anti-Cartesian arguments, I offer a caveat about Descartes' early critics. Regardless of my interest in the oppression and exclusion wrought by the concept of reason, these specific opponents of Cartesianism truly ignore the moral, political, and social implications of their work. Peirce focuses on the scientific community, making it the model for the acquisition of knowledge more broadly, but nothing in his concern with science directly relates to issues of race and gender. Wittgenstein is especially interested in language communities and their practices, but he never considers the role that power might play in the construction of meaning. That his work can speak to issues of race and gender is evident to some of us, but that

effort Wittgenstein himself leaves to others.[2] Heidegger does occasionally address ethics, but outside of his infamous lapses in moral judgment (which are a topic for another discussion), the real import of his work here lies in how it undermines the representationalism and the so-called metaphysics of presence of modern reason.[3] Generally speaking, none of these philosophers addresses oppression, exclusion, or injustice, yet this does not mean that we should ignore the implications of their work and the guidance it offers for overcoming a Cartesian vision of rationality. These philosophers cut a trail away from representationalism by questioning reason's ability to distance itself from the world. More generally, post-Cartesian philosophical approaches are much more sensitive to the need for reason to move beyond formal arguments and to embrace the fullness of human life. They bring back into focus the functional multiplicity of rationality situated in a lived environment and, in doing so, explicitly undermine the representationalism which undergirds the Age of Inequality. At the end of the day, they start us down a path toward a more inclusive and situationally sensitive understanding of rationality.

3.1 The Turn Away from Modernism

The notion of an inner realm is so specifically a modern invention that this inwardness is, in large part, what makes the modern mind *modern*. The distinction between the 'inner' and the 'outer' *locates* the mind, and, says Taylor, it does it in such a way that our sense of self is inseparable from the impression that we are creatures with an inner depth from which we move outward.[4] Whatever sense of this inner depth we retain, the post-Cartesian world widely expresses great dissatisfaction with the myopic

[2] I discuss how Foucault's interest in power relates to Wittgensteinian concerns in Heikes 2012, 84–86. At no point, however, I do mean to imply that Wittgenstein actually recognized the import of his work on race and gender. For more on the feminist implications of Wittgenstein, see Tanesini 1994.

[3] It is ironic, given his Nazi sympathies, that I use Heidegger here. Without question, his work falls well short of the strong moral ground necessary to overcome oppression. Be that as it may, his work surly undermines representationalism, and for that reason, it holds interest for my project.

[4] See Taylor 1989, 111–112.

focus on ideas within that depth and with its radical disconnectedness and isolation. For us today, it is commonplace to assume, as did Aristotle, that humans are social and communal. It is equally commonplace to assume that bias cannot be entirely escaped, especially through self-conscious reflections on subjectivity. Even the most hard-minded contemporary philosopher accepts that human culture and values make a difference not only to our actual lives but also to our philosophical arguments. For example, in his highly technical, analytically respectable, decision-theoretic treatise on rationality, Nozick easily and readily makes statements such as: 'We humans are partial creatures, not wholly autonomous' (1993, 123). Or, to paraphrase another passage, that rationality can pursue emotion, passion, and spontaneity.[5] And finally, 'There are *many possible kinds of reasons* for and against any belief … and there are *many possible standards* for evaluating such reasons. No one seeks out all possible reasons impartially and gives them equal weight' [italics added] (Nozick 1993, 105). These are not the statements of a classic hard-minded philosopher. These are not the statements of a philosopher working within a modern paradigm. Yet they are also so typical that philosophers today throw them out with little, if any, comment.

So, how did we get here? Obviously, the story is far too complicated to tell in its entirety. However, three philosophers stand out as having planted the seeds of the rejection of modernism: Peirce, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein. Each vigorously argues that we have been led to an intellectual dead end by the stance of radical subjectivity—and by the representationalist model of knowledge which produces a seemingly inescapable, if contrived, skepticism.[6] They ask us to consider the ways in which the modern philosophical project has created problems that could be avoided if we only adopted a different way of thinking. According to Peirce, while we should avoid returning to scholasticism, 'modern science and modern logic require us to stand upon a very different platform than [Cartesianism]' (1934c, 5.265). Heidegger goes so far as to claim that 'mere Cartesian Scholasticism, with its rationalism, has lost all power

[5] See Nozick 1993, 106.

[6] These are not the only philosophers to have challenged modernism. Perhaps more famously, French postmodernists and feminists have openly challenged modernism. In this chapter, however, I focus on these three early challenges to modernism.

further to shape modern times' (1982, 140). And Wittgenstein calls the idea of an inner, private experience a 'grammatical monster' (1993c, 283), arguing that an 'inner experience cannot shew me that I *know* something' (1969, §569). While expressions like 'grammatical monster' *may* slightly overstate the case, the fact remains that metaphor of the Mind's Eye is, at least within philosophical circles, far less persuasive than it has ever been. Furthermore, the anti-Cartesian programs that each of these philosophers originate are alive and well today. Whatever the differences in these three approaches—the pragmatic, the continental, and the analytic—these traditions share in common a genealogy that includes a rejection of a Cartesian mind turned inward upon itself. Each of these pivotal figures accepts that thinking cannot work outward from a private inner realm of the mind; instead, philosophy begins from an engagement with the world. We must begin, for lack of a better term, from a stance of 'doing-in-the-world.' The emphasis on doing instead of simply believing offers the first glimpse of a rationality freed from inflexible methodology.

3.2 The Pragmatic Turn: Peirce

Even as he introduces modern methodologies, Descartes spends a significant amount of time in the opening of the *Discourse on Method* giving a narrative which explains how he comes to his method—a narrative in which he claims *not* 'to teach the method which everyone must follow in order to direct his reason correctly' (1985, 112). The method he, personally, has lit upon is a system by which he resolves 'to seek no knowledge other than that which could be found in myself or else in the great book of the world' (Descartes 1985, 115). A few years later in the *Meditations*, he begins by noting his past discovery of false ideas and explains that he has expressly rid his mind of worries and created a stretch of free time so that he can properly address the truth (and falsity) of his former opinions. The difference this time is that instead of stating how he did in fact arrive at a method that may or may not be adopted by others, he now takes great pains to explain how his method demands that he remove himself from the world in order to arrive at indubitable belief. As Karsten Harries argues, 'This is no incidental bit of biographical information, unrelated

to his philosophy. It tells that the philosopher's enterprise has its origin in a disengagement from the world' (1968, 285). What Descartes does almost immediately upon relating his narrative about how he actually develops a new way of thinking is to entirely jettison narrative in favor of a geometrical model of knowledge.[7] This new method makes the discovery of truth a matter of only the individual's own ideas and cognitive capacities, although this truth supposedly remains objective.

One of the first sustained challenges to this sort of philosophical method comes from Peirce, who as early as 1868 offers a philosophical approach that explicitly and systematically rejects Cartesianism. In 'Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,' he begins by reviewing four principle aspects concerning the 'spirit of Cartesianism' and then immediately concludes that we require 'a very different platform from this' (Peirce 1934c, 5.265). In building his 'very different platform,' Peirce destroys and replaces many foundational elements of Cartesianism, including the geometric model, the method of doubt, and, what appears to be the 'most pernicious' plank of all, individual consciousness as the seat of certainty. His is indeed a different vision of rationality. Instead of a geometric model, Peirce advocates a scientific model which maintains that our knowledge of the world is grounded in *communities* of inquirers rather than individual epistemic agents:

> In sciences in which men come to agreement, when a theory has been broached it is considered to be on probation until this agreement is reached. After it is reached, the question of certainty becomes an idle one, because

[7] During the transition to modernism, arguments could legitimately include narrative elements. How decidedly the door is shut on this sort of alternative method of doing philosophy is evidenced by what becomes of Michel de Montaigne, who is now considered more of a literary figure than a philosopher. Montaigne may have approached his investigations more subjectively than did Descartes, but the problems in which he was interested were the same ones that occupied Descartes. Says Hassan Melehy,

> Concerned, like Descartes, with the human subject, with human reason, with how they may be represented, with the effectiveness and with the limits of representation, Montaigne, anticipating the advent of the *cogito*, refused its finality… . [A]lthough the subject does engage in an interaction with the language it writes and speaks, *it continually relinquishes its claims to authority and autonomy* [italics added]. (1997, 7)

This is certainly not the vision of Descartes. It lacks a Cartesian faith in the power of reason. But at the time, it was taken as seriously as the Cartesian alternative, and this despite the fact that Montaigne arrived at his conclusions using arguments whose style was soon to lose its relevance in the eyes of modern philosophers. See Toulmin 2001, 22.

> there is no one left who doubts it. We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore for the community of philosophers. (1934c, 5.265)

Rationality is not to be attained by focusing on internal ideas and deriving what logically follows from them; it functions, as the paradigm of the sciences demonstrates, in the agreement of communities. And once this agreement is reached, *genuine* doubt is no longer possible. For Peirce, the idea of radical doubt is, for all intents and purposes, impossible since doubt makes sense only on the basis of belief and on ways of acting in the world. As Peirce says, 'Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts' (1934c, 5.265). More decisively, we are simply incapable of considering our rational capacities to be systematically mistaken, which in turn leaves room to interpret that rationality of others far more charitably than most Cartesians are willing to do.[8] Implicitly, the standards of rationality, like the standards of belief, become communally negotiable.

On the 'most pernicious' topic of 'single individuals as absolute judges of truth,' Peirce attacks its two central implications, namely, that the source of truth is individual consciousness and that this consciousness can be entirely detached from the world (1934c, 5.265). In other words, rationality may still be something to be achieved, but it is not achieved in isolation or acquired by those removed from the world. In setting up his own rejection of Cartesianism, Dewey picks up on this theme and identifies the problem thusly:

> The [Cartesian] theory of knowing is modeled after what was supposed to take place in the act of vision. The object refracts light and is seen; it makes a difference to the eye and to the person having an optical apparatus, but not to the thing seen. The real object is the object so fixed in its regal aloofness that it is a king to any beholding mind that may gaze upon it. A spectator theory of knowledge is the inevitable outcome. (1988, 19)

[8] As a practical matter, the need to trust our cognitive faculties is also recognized by Descartes in a backhanded way. He says at the end of *Meditation I* that his doubt 'is an arduous undertaking, and a kind of laziness brings me back to normal life' (1984, 15). In other words, maintaining a stance of radical doubt is fairly hard work. Where Descartes differs from Peirce is that Peirce thinks the exercise is not merely difficult but impossible and pointless.

The ocular metaphor, which was so central to Enlightenment ways of thinking, is suddenly in disrepute. Peirce himself may not directly address spectator theories of knowledge, but he lays the groundwork for their rejection by replacing the radical focus on the individual viewers with a commitment to communal standards. Rather than being shown to be self-sufficient sources of knowledge, individuals are identified as sources of error. Says Peirce, 'reality depends on the ultimate decision of the *community*; … The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows … is only a negation' (1934c, 5.317). This passage suggests not merely Peirce's disagreement with an atomistic individualism but a deeper commitment to the community as an epistemological corrective to isolated knowers. Observation is something to be negotiated. As Susan Haack notes, Descartes' 'pernicious individualism' is turned on its head by Peirce. On his view, 'the individual is now the locus of ignorance and error, the community the locus of knowledge, truth, and reality' (1982, 158). Yet this simply stated conclusion does not quite do justice to the force of the argument against inwardness and representational theories of knowledge.

Peirce not only objects to the idea of introspection as a source of knowledge, he thoroughly dismantles the very possibility of introspection, which in turn undercuts representationalism. When discussing the faculty of intuition, Peirce says, 'There is no evidence that we have this faculty, except that we seem to *feel* that we have it…' (1934b, 5.214). Even worse, he says, is that if one could 'really could shut himself up in such a faith, he would be, of course, impervious to the truth' (Peirce 1934b, 5.214). In other words, intuition has the quality of being 'evidence-proof' because we must intuit that our intuitions are truly infallible—and, of course, such intuition of the truth of intuitions is viciously regressive. Much more likely, says Peirce, is that our so-called intuitions are actually mediate cognitions and that our so-called intuitive faculty fails to recognize these as mediate cognition. That is, what we mistakenly take to be a direct perception of an internal world is instead a thought that is determined by other thoughts. This error in perception even manifests itself outside of abstract philosophical concerns. 'Every lawyer,' says Peirce, 'knows how difficult it is for witnesses to distinguish between what they have seen

and what they have inferred' (1934b, 5.216). This is surely a lesson Kant could use when he infers, based on observation, some ultimate purposiveness in the differentiation of races.

Peirce's conclusion? In the end, we lack any 'reason for supposing a power of introspection,' which further implies that 'the only way of investigating a psychological question is by inference from external facts' (1934b, 5.249). To support this claim, Peirce uses the example of anger. If someone is angry, says Peirce, 'it can hardly be questioned that there is some relative character *in the outward thing* with makes him angry' [italics added] (1934b, 5.247). Such a reliance on external facts means that 'Our idea of anything *is* our idea of its sensible effects …' (Peirce 1934b, 5.401). It lies in our interaction with the world, not necessarily in our internal representations of it. So, if psychological questions can only be investigated via external facts, the Cartesian platform is even further damaged for we have no direct, unmediated access to the self; rather, the self must be inferred through a reality that is ultimately determined by the community and through the use of language that references this reality. Straightforwardly stated, there can be no Cartesian cogito. And if there can be no cogito, knowers cannot be epistemically self-reliant. Reason must, in other words, depend on more than its own resources. And because reason necessarily relies on external factors such as objects in the world and other rational agents, the push to make identical the cognitive processes of all knowers thereby appears all the more improbable.

Peirce's attack on introspective mental states foreshadows Wittgenstein's so-called private language argument, and it comes with a hint of mockery. Peirce says,

> he [Descartes] sought a more natural fountain of true principles, and professed to find it in the human mind; thus passing, in the directest way, from the method of authority to that of apriority … . Self-consciousness was to furnish us with our fundamental truths, and to decide what was agreeable to reason. … The distinction between an idea *seeming* clear and really being so, never occurred to him. (1934a, 5.391)

This need to distinguish between something *seeming* to be clear or correct and its *actually* being so is precisely the problem that later concerns

Wittgenstein.[9] In Peirce's case, he counters the Cartesian regress into unverifiable intuitions by arguing that beliefs are essentially the establishment of habits of action. He says reality 'like every other quality, consists in the particular, sensible effects which things partaking of it produce. The only effect which real things have is to cause belief, for all the sensations which they excite emerge into consciousness in the form of beliefs' (Peirce 1934a, 5.406). To replace that part of the Cartesian platform that relies on an individual's mental states, Peirce appeals to a view in which 'Belief is not a momentary mode of consciousness; it is a habit of mind essentially enduring for some time, and mostly … unconscious' (1934d, 5.417). Because beliefs are not mere modes of consciousness, we need not worry about the possibility of being wrong about our access to internal mental states. Instead, we ought look to the effects of actions and the judgment of the community. Peirce offers the most beautiful assessment of belief when he calls it 'the demi-cadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life' (1934a, 5.214). Less metaphorically, he continues on by listing three properties of belief: 'first, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule or action, or … a *habit*' (1934a, 5.214).

This last little bit, the part about habit, takes an approach to belief that is anything but Cartesian for it entails that belief cannot stand apart from the world. Peirce may worry about signs and mediation, but he refuses to allow that beliefs offer introspectively accessed mental representations that we need to align in some way with the world. Rather, *habits* of mind are constitutive of belief. They don't represent the world from afar; they guide our actions in the world. What makes one belief distinct from another is the sorts of actions to which it gives rise. If beliefs do not differ with respect to the different modes of action to which they give rise, then says Peirce, 'no mere differences in the manner of consciousness of them can make them different beliefs…' (1934a, 5.398). Ultimately, rationality is not focused on internal states of mind but on how we act within a

[9] Rorty actually argues precisely this point. He says, 'In its most general form, Wittgenstein's 'master argument' against all forms of reductionism is that they generate infinite regresses, and this is also Peirce's master argument against Cartesian intuitionism' (1961, 214).

world constituted by social practices that give it the meanings it has for us. This theme undercuts the threat of subjectivism by placing the locus of knowledge within a community and by placing constraints on beliefs that are grounded in worldly interactions. It is a theme that allows for greater flexibility in defining 'proper' ways of reasoning. It is a theme that is repeated and developed by both Heidegger and Wittgenstein.

3.3 The Continental Turn: Heidegger

Unlike Peirce who merely seeks a 'very different platform' for philosophy, Heidegger sets out to 'phenomenologically destroy' much of the Cartesian program, especially its so-called metaphysics of presence. For Descartes, I can know *that I think* long before I can determine the truthfulness of the content of my thinking. This is because the cogito is oriented toward itself and, as such, is fundamentally removed from anything outside itself. Heidegger, on the other hand, says that the task of thinking is 'the surrender of previous thinking to the determination of the matter for thinking' (1977c, 392). Whatever the difficulty of the Heideggerian way of speaking, he makes it quite clear: thinking cannot occur in isolation, and it cannot be detached from content. That is, thinking does not arise out of seclusion for it absolutely requires that we direct our attention outward toward the world. To change the emphasis slightly, the self is *not* a mere cogito concerned only with its own ideas; the self is, first and foremost, an agent in the world. As we direct our attention outward, Heidegger wants to return us to the ancient Greeks and their concern with the ways we are ontologically connected to the world. Basically, Heidegger replaces the concept of an introspectively oriented cogito with the concept of *Dasein* which is *essentially* Being-in-the-world. As Charles Guignon explains, 'Dasein … is essentially "Being-with," a communal being whose sense of reality is initially preshaped by the way the "They" articulates significance. Accordingly, language is the medium in which a community's "clearing" (its understanding of itself and its world) is opened up and maintained' (1990, 661). Put in plain English, we are necessarily immersed in the world—and this embraces immersion in a social world, a 'they,' as well as a physical one. Hence, the

'they' that articulates significance is potentially far more inclusive than Enlightenment philosophers can allow.

Because he wishes to return Being *to the world*, Heidegger seeks the phenomenological destruction of the cogito. The path to doing this is notoriously complex, but throughout his work, Heidegger emphasizes the concept of dwelling as a central element of our 'being-with' the world. One of the senses of 'dwelling' in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is: 'To abide or continue for a time, in a place, state, or condition.'[10] The various layers of what this 'abiding' or 'continuing' imply is what Heidegger wishes to explore. In *Being and Time*, he tells us 'Being-in … is a state of Dasein's Being; … one cannot think of it as the Being-present-at-hand of some corporeal Thing (such as the human body) "in" an entity which is present-at-hand. … "In" is derived from "*innan*"—"to reside", "*habitare*", "to dwell" …' (1962, 79–80). He goes on to add, '"*ich bin*" ["I am"] means in its turn "I reside" or "dwell alongside" the world, as that which is familiar to me in such and such a way' (1962, 80). In part, the idea expressed here is that we humans do not simply approach the world as a thing that stands outside of us; we do not, in other words, begin from a perspective of isolation or radical separation. Rather, we live *in* a world that is familiar—it is common, intimate, workaday. Later, in *Building Dwelling Thinking*, he takes this concept of dwelling and further explains how dwelling is basic for humans and how it immerses us in the world. For example, says Heidegger,

> think for a while of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter *in simple oneness* into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. (1977a, 338)

[10] Aside from translation issues, my appeal to the OED is clearly a perversion of Heidegger's view since he recognizes only German and Greek as appropriate languages in which to do philosophy. I disagree.

Instead of emphasizing representation, as the moderns do, this example highlights how human dwelling involves an integration of human activity within an existing environment. We build, in this case our houses, so that we can dwell, yet this dwelling is not concerned, as are the moderns, with rationality as the conveyer of 'knowledge of truth and falsehood' (Hume 1975, 294); rather, it involves a response to the environment and a bringing together of disparate aspects of the environment in ways that create meaningful spaces. The human tasks of building and thinking do not arise out of a concern for representing the world truthfully; they arise out of 'the workshop of long experience and incessant practice' that characterize dwelling (Heidegger 1977a, 339).

In a sense, the Heideggerian emphasis on dwelling turns some of Kant's anthropological concerns on their head. The cause of differences among human races is, for Kant, largely environmental. As we live in the world, we are affected by things like sun and air in ways that alter our natural dispositions and enhance our ability to live in that climate. This shares a surface agreement with the idea of dwelling, but Heidegger's account is deeper and richer. Where Kant focuses on what he believes to be a naturalistic, biological study grounded in a metaphysical notion of purposiveness, Heidegger looks to the *meaning* of dwelling. Where Kant examines the ways in which our environments alter and limit our 'natural' abilities, Heidegger considers how our ways of living adapt to our environments and integrate us within them. Within the Heideggerian account is adaptability to circumstance that is liberated from the connection with ultimate purposes and inalterable changes in disposition. Being-in-the-world integrates us in an everyday life but without necessarily altering some 'original human form.'

One further example of this idea of the integration and the importance of every part of our lives can be found in Heidegger's retelling of a story told about Heraclitus. Aristotle's version goes like this: 'when the strangers who came to visit him found him warming himself at the furnace … and hesitated to go in, [Heraclitus] is reported to have bidden them not to be afraid to enter, as even in that kitchen divinities were present' (1983, 645a17-20). The moral of Aristotle's story is that everything has a nobility, but for Heidegger, the story also tells us something about the embeddedness of our lives. He focuses on the point of view of the

disappointed visitors who stand before the great thinker caught in a quite menial task, warming himself by the fire. They are seeking the grandness of the philosopher's thought. Instead, they find him banally human. For Heidegger, what Heraclitus understands—and what Descartes does not—is that '"even here," at the stove, in that ordinary place where every thing and every condition, each deed and thought is intimate and commonplace, … "even there" in the sphere of the familiar … it is the case that "the gods are present"' (Heidegger 1977b, 234). We do not come to know the world by standing apart from it. Quite the opposite, we know it because we engage with it continually. The engagement itself is essential to human life.

This conception of dwelling requires that we reject another key component of the Cartesian program: the metaphysics of presence. In addition to criticizing the Cartesian cogito, Heidegger attacks Descartes for his geometrical model of knowledge which is well suited only to grasping 'Being as constant presence-at-hand' (Heidegger 1962, 129). This idea of the present-at-hand captures a certain detached or disengaged attitude toward objects, the precise attitude Kant adopts in his 'observation' of race. This attitude stands opposed to the notion of ready-to-hand. And in contrasting these two terms, Heidegger makes it clear that the ontological orientation of taking objects as present-at-hand is, at best, a secondary mode of encountering the world. When an object is ready-to-hand, we do things with it and we relate to it within the context of our involvement in a world that has a pragmatic character such that things in it are constituted by their 'serviceability, conduciveness, useability, manipulability' which he calls the 'in-order-to' (Heidegger 1962, 97). He says:

> If we look at Things just 'theoretically', we can get along without understanding readiness-to-hand. But when we deal with them by using them and manipulating them, this activity is not a blind one; it has its own kind of sight, by which our manipulation is guided and from which it acquires its specific Thingly character. (Heidegger 1962, 98)

Here Heidegger uses something of an ocular metaphor, but in a very different way than Descartes. Instead of withdrawing from the world to see clearly and distinctly using the Mind's Eye, sight directs us toward

the manipulation of objects. Heidegger goes on to add: 'The ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all … . [In] its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [*zurückzuziehen*] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically' (1962, 99). In other words, as we use objects, the objects themselves (whatever that means) recede into the background, and what we are left with is our manipulation of them in some context in which they have a use for us. Whenever *we* attempt instead to withdraw from the world in an effort to better understand it, when we focus *solely* on the 'Thingly character' of objects outside of their lived contexts, they slip through our grasp as we lose sight of what they are *in* the world.

Of course, Heidegger believes that Descartes himself understands this. In a direct attack, he says: 'Descartes knows very well that entities do not proximally show themselves in their real Being. What is "proximally" given is this waxen Thing which is coloured, flavoured, hard, and cold in definite ways, and which gives off its own special sound when struck' (Heidegger 1962, 129). We cannot 'get at' the objects themselves by isolating them from their context; rather,

> What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon, the motor-cycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling… It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'. The fact that motor-cycles and waggon are what we proximally hear is the phenomenal evidence that in every case Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already dwells alongside what is ready-to-hand within-the-world. (Heidegger 1962, 207)

Whatever the technical complexity of Heidegger's argument, his conclusion is clear and consistent: our fundamental relationship to the world is as beings engaged with it in its totality and engaged in ways that are meaningful for creatures like us. To stand apart from the world in an attempt to objectively observe it is unnatural and distorting. The problem with the modern approach is that it makes the world static and cuts off the possibility of understanding the behavior of beings as *in* the world.[11] We should instead focus on what shows itself in what gets used

[11] See Heidegger 1962, 130–131.

or produced, that is, what shows itself in our concern with the environment. As Heidegger says, 'This is the way in which everyday Dasein always is: when I open the door, for instance, I use the latch' (1962, 96). Just as with Peirce, we live in a world that is not ready-made and independent of our interaction with it. To the contrary, I best access the world and obtain knowledge of it when I stand within it and refuse to adopt a stance of disengagement. And insofar as this way of thinking requires engagement, it also requires us to consider not simply some ideal way of encountering the world but instead requires that we consider the multiple ways the world comes to have meaning for creatures like us. That is, in engaging with the world, we don't get to dismiss those parts that fall outside of some predetermined method.

3.4 The Analytic Turn: Wittgenstein

Finally, comes Wittgenstein. Despite the fact that his early logical methodology reflects a geometrical method, at the heart of his post-Tractarian writing lies an unmistakable rejection of Cartesianism, including the twin 'grammatical monsters' of isolation and introspection. While he almost never speaks of the history of philosophy, he often speaks of philosophy itself—and in anything but Cartesian terms. Philosophy is described as a form of therapy, as destroying idols, as something that offers 'homespun and ordinary' answers that leaves everything as it is.[12] He tells us that 'the work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose' (Wittgenstein 1993c, 173). This purpose is not to *solve* philosophical problems through deductions from clear and distinct ideas; rather, it is to *dissolve* problems by bringing words back to their everyday use. Yet to achieve this dissolution, we must, as Heidegger asks us to do with things, understand the uses and manipulations to which we subject language. When done correctly, philosophy does not interfere with the actual use of language, it does not make language present-at-hand; rather, it reminds us how we really avail

[12] See Wittgenstein 1993c, 161, 167–168, 171, 195. Also see Wittgenstein 1958, §124, 126, 133.

ourselves of words.[13] It asks us to 'plow through the whole of language,' the practices, the pictures, the gestures, the actions, the forms of life (Wittgenstein 1993d, 131). What makes Cartesianism a 'grammatical monster' hiding under the bed is that it exploits our fear of imprecision and ambiguity to the point that language itself becomes subject to a metaphysics of presence. And at that point, Wittgenstein believes the perspicuity of representation is lost entirely. The key to dissipating the darkness and banishing the monsters is not to be found in the light of reason but is instead to be found in the uncovering of the everyday aspects of language-use.

In his notes on Wittgenstein's lectures, G.E. Moore makes evident that Wittgenstein knows exactly what he is doing, that he knows he is radically shifting philosophical discussion. Says Moore, Wittgenstein 'held that though the "*new subject*" [of philosophy] must say a great deal about language, it was only necessary for it to deal with those points about language which have led, or are likely to lead, to definite philosophical puzzles or errors' [italics added] (1993, 114). And ponder these points of language Wittgenstein does. Consider his response to Moore (albeit in a slightly less belabored fashion): if I were on the floor struggling to stand up and I were to ask for your hand, you would not express a skeptical wonderment about your hands nor would you attempt to prove the existence of them; you would simply help me up. Why, asks Wittgenstein, are we so clear about the meaning of terms in commonplace contexts and so bewildered in philosophical ones? The answer partly depends on the fact that our use of language relies on grounds that we rarely, if ever, articulate. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein considers how we know whether the world started more than five minutes ago or whether the ground under our feel will stay solid. As Taylor points out,

> These are matters on which we will not normally have formulated a belief; not because we doubt them, but because we're too busy relying on them, leaning on them as it were, as we go about believing and doubting other things. They are part of the tacit background of objects of reliance, of things that are 'ready-to-hand', in Heidegger's language. (1989, 491)

[13] The idea of returning words to their ordinary usage suggests a quietism that is inconsistent with feminism and race theory. However, given that language-games lack an essence, a Wittgensteinian theory of meaning readily allows for the co-opting of terms—or so I shall argue.

We share a background body of beliefs that allow us to function in the world, and Descartes' metaphysics of presence asks us to examine these beliefs in the absence of the contexts in which we use them. If we are to fix the difficulties—these puzzles and errors, these 'false analogies' and 'false arguments'—we must reject the metaphysical usage language comes to have for the moderns and return words to the everyday contexts in which their meanings are perfectly clear.[14] As with Peirce, so too with Wittgenstein: genuine doubt makes sense only against a background of *communally* held beliefs. Philosophers who divorce philosophy from a lived world or who attempt to generate doubts are, for Wittgenstein, not motivated by genuine disquietude. They are simply tying knots in our thinking.

To unravel these knots, Wittgenstein reminds us that 'Learning philosophy is … [remembering] that we really use words this way' (1993c, 179). To facilitate this remembering, he utilizes the concept of language-games. Central to most games is the way they are played, and on this point, language is no different. Context makes all the difference. As a result, language-games carry with them a dependence on our actual ways of interacting in the world. This allows them to act as a corrective to the 'grammatical monsters' that remove words from their ordinary use. It also allows them to diffuse 'false analogies,' such as that of the Mind's Eye, by directing out attention outward. In his efforts to dissolve the problems of philosophy, one of the most important ideas that Wittgenstein rails against is introspective access to inner states of awareness. At the heart of the dissolution, of course, is language, which is illustrated by the analogy of the beetle in the box.[15] If we each supposedly know the term 'beetle' by referring to what is in a box (i.e., an idea in one's head) and if none of us can look into another's box (i.e., another's head), then none of us can really know if other people have the same sort of object in their boxes. As a result, says Wittgenstein, the actual object turns out to have *nothing* to do with the meaning of the term. We can imagine that this beetle is constantly changing—or imagine that the box is empty—and it will make no difference to the meaning because whatever the term 'represents' is

[14] See Wittgenstein 1958, §116.

[15] See Wittgenstein 1958, §293.

irrelevant. What we know is simply how we use the term in our daily lives and what habits or 'forms of life' it involve.

This emphasis on the publically accessible use of language is *the* central, anti-Cartesian theme running through Wittgenstein's later work. To translate the beetle-in-the-box argument to another issue, say 'race,' the conclusion would have to be that 'race' cannot be metaphysically determined by the transcendent beetle of purposiveness; its meaning instead lies in its use. Rather than relying on introspective mental contents, which now play no role in determining the meanings of terms, Wittgenstein insists that the only way to determine the meaning of a term is to consider the use it has within a social practice. In this way, Wittgenstein not only undermines the representational aspects of language, his view also allows for a shift in discussion of race (and sex) away from the metaphysical distortions of Kant. No longer can we peek behind the curtain of observation for that observation is meaningful only when engaged and interacting with a publically shared world.

More theoretically, we have here the argument that Peirce earlier foreshadowed. Just as Peirce criticizes Descartes for not considering the distinction between an idea seeming clear and its actually being so, Wittgenstein claims that 'private languages' cannot distinguish between one's thinking one is correct and actually being so. Hence, a subjective focus is untenable. For any sensory impression that I privately label, I can never be certain that my future uses of that term will be correct unless I have some standard of application for that term. However, if I rely on some standard of correct application that is also internal and private, I can never be certain that I am applying that standard correctly.[16] There will be no difference between an idea *seeming* clear and distinct and its actually being so. Once again, the regress of interpretation cannot be ended by appeal to Cartesian intuitions. Otherwise, we must intuit that our intuitions are correct—but, of course, this cannot stop the regress since we can never know that our intuition about the correctness of our intuitions is correct. As with Peirce, thought is mediated, and, consequently, we must abandon all hope of ever achieving first-person certainty through principles (determinate or otherwise) provided by reason

[16] See Wittgenstein 1958, §258.

itself. In Wittgenstein's sense, however, the mediation occurs not from thought to the external world but from meaning to social practices. '*Speaking* a language,' he says, 'is part of an activity, or of a form of life' (Wittgenstein 1958, §23). 'To understand a language means to be master of a technique' (Wittgenstein 1958, §199). Ultimately, we cannot understand language unless we understand the practices that give rise to it and in which it functions.

The call to remember how it is we actually use words echoes a central question asked by Heidegger: what is it that we can say about the essence of the world? The answer for both philosophers is: not much if we ask the question from a stance of disengagement. Wittgenstein is no more a fan of detached representation than are other post-Cartesian philosophers. He argues instead that we must appeal to the actual application of words in actual practices.[17] This idea harkens back to the *Tractatus*, where we are told that we must be silent on issues that transcend the limits of language. Wittgenstein never renounces this belief. He always holds that '*the limits of my language* mean the limits of my world' (Wittgenstein 1922, 5.6). And this, in turn, implies that we cannot examine the world as 'present-to-hand.' The deep sense of connection between the world and language is something Wittgenstein shares with Heidegger—and with Peirce. It ties into Heidegger's notion that meaning cannot be divorced from human immersion in the world and with Peirce's notion that thoughts and beliefs concern habits of action. The connection between Heidegger and Wittgenstein is, for Ross Mandel, specifically found in their each having reversed Cartesianism: 'instead of explanations, theories, and models being used to replace the everyday sense of things, they maintain we should treat these models and explanations as emerging from the way we ordinarily experience the world and as referring back to that experience' (1978, 265). This approach fundamentally undermines a Kantian, or even Humean, sense of observation with an appeal to universal standards which rely either on transcendental grounds or on limited considerations of experience. Although Wittgenstein himself never considers the wide latitude among ways people ordinarily experience the world, his view,

[17] 'Language cannot express what belongs to the essence of the world… . Language can only say what we could also imagine differently' (Wittgenstein 1993c, 189).

unlike the moderns, allows for different practices and different experiences based on those practices. In the end, diversity is something that not only finds expression but also cannot be eliminated.

3.5 Post-Cartesian Observation

So, here we have highly influential figures in each of the main branches of twentieth-century philosophy showing us how *not* to be Cartesians, showing us how *not* to observe the world in a modern manner. Even the briefest of surveys illustrates the influence that each of these philosophers has had—but it also indicates a coming together of philosophical traditions. For example, while the pragmatists may look to James and Dewey as central figures, these two philosophers are directly influenced by Peirce—but, of course, Wittgenstein, who also had a strong interest in James, appears to share much in common with Peirce.[18] Among so-called continental philosophers, Heidegger has had an enormous influence. Equally true is the pervasive influence of Wittgenstein on latter-day Anglo-American philosophers, especially Putnam and Rorty, who themselves have had substantial influence in bringing analytic philosophy closer to pragmatism. And in the work of Rorty, there is a strong linking of American pragmatism's rejection of a 'quest for certainty' with French philosophy's deconstruction of a 'metaphysics of presence.' To take these comparisons one last step, in thinkers like Derrida, we see the clear influence of Heidegger and a conception of linguistic meaning similar to Wittgenstein. By the middle of the twentieth century, Cartesian thinking is undoubtedly becoming less dominant. Dewey is arguing for a practical starting point for philosophy; Quine is, by eliminating the transcendental from philosophy, naturalizing epistemology; and Gadamer is arguing that knowledge relies on interpretation. From there, one finds Feyerabend arguing against, of all things, method, and Kuhn making the radical claim that science is value laden in precisely the way moderns believed they were eradicating. Davidson maintains that 'the concept of objective truth, and of error necessarily emerge in the context of

[18] See Rorty 1961.

interpretation' (1984, 169), and Putnam argues that 'the notion of truth itself depends for its content on our standards of rational acceptability, and these in turn rest on and presuppose our values' (1981, 215). The language of modernism may still speak to us, but many of its epistemic ideals—the same ideals that ground its moral concepts—do not.

Beyond their far-reaching influence, then, these early critics of Descartes bring to philosophy an approach that is a corrective to the excesses of modernism. That is, they show us how *not* to approach philosophy as a discipline that provides singular, foundational approaches rooted in subjectivity and theoretical detachment; how *not* to treat reason as something that stands apart from the world; how *not* to take introspective mental contents as offering a reliable representation of 'reality'; how *not* to see minds as disembodied intellect; how *not* to buy into the assumptions that cut off the possibility of diversity and difference. In discussing Wittgenstein and Heidegger specifically, Taylor explains that they share a basic concern of the Romantics: to reject the hegemony of disengaged reason and mechanism.[19] In its stead, they, and Peirce, offer a philosophical approach that considers how we interact with the world and the communal practices that shape our world. They show us how to externalize our philosophical thinking, often using language as a model. In each of these approaches, subjectivism cannot get any footing because individual, isolated 'reasoners' cannot reason at all. In each approach, we are encouraged to understand rationality as a communal endeavor whose standards are located in a communally shared world.

A key result of this sort of anti-Cartesian thinking is to remove much of the ground upon which the exclusion of non-whites and non-males depends. Within the Cartesian tradition, reason operates along specific rails modeled after the observational and logical methods of science. Forms of reasoning that do not fit this model are rejected, and reasoners who seem not to operate according to the principles endorsed by this model are deemed to be less than rational. Hence, the oft-repeated claims of women's 'irrationality.' Hence, the oft-presented image of the 'noble savage' (or worse). The movement away from Descartes alters the model of reason so that, in an important sense, rationality is something

[19] See Taylor 1989, 461.

reciprocally negotiated since the standards of correct belief depend on epistemic communities and publically available standards. Rationality is also something that is refocused outward and not inward. The various interactions, similarities, and overlapping themes that *locates mind within the world*, that rejects introspective awareness, that finds flaws with representational epistemologies all indicate a moving beyond the subjectivity of modernism.

Heidegger may be the philosopher that most clearly exemplifies this. He says in *Being and Time*, 'The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of "knowledge"' (1962, 95). We cannot properly cognize phenomena if we consider them under modern standards of observation or in isolation from the ways in which we encounter them *in the world*. Such phenomena are meaningless for us—or at least their meaning is radically misconstrued—if we fail to comprehend how they fit within a larger context and come to have the meanings they have for creatures like us within this context. Heidegger tries, time and time again, to get us to see that reason does not fundamentally concern itself with internal contents of the mind, but rather it engages with a world in a directed and interested way. We care about hammers and trees and art not as objects in-themselves and not as ideas to be related to each other within the mind. We care about these things insofar as we encounter them in an everyday world. They have meaning for us not as 'bare presences' but as things we use, enjoy, appreciate. According to Heidegger, 'The Greeks had an appropriate term for "Things": *πράγματα*—that is to say, that which one has to do with in one's concernful dealings (*πραξις*). But ontologically, the specifically "pragmatic" character of the *πράγματα* is just what the Greeks left in obscurity …' (1962, 96–97). This *πράγματα* (*pragmata*) is something that I will attempt to recover in the following chapter, but suffice to say Heidegger—and others—realize that philosophy lost something when it began focusing on objects independently of their place and function in the world.

Philosophy also loses something when human beings are studied in the same manner as objects. While Heidegger is clearly uninterested in the objectification of people, he does have a strong interest in how we come

to see objects. He grasps how ocular metaphors and the emphasis on a particular form of scientific observation have contributed to the division between knowing subjects and objects known, and even though he ignores the effect on people, he realizes this division produces a distorting objectification of objects. Most significantly, he is aware of the importance of sight metaphors but wishes to distance his own thinking from them. In rejecting the so-called objective observation of the Cartesian tradition, he says,

> 'Seeing' does not mean just perceiving with the bodily eyes, but neither does it mean pure non-sensory awareness of something present-at-hand in its presence-at-hand… . [From] the beginning onwards the tradition of philosophy has been oriented primarily towards 'seeing' as a way of access to entities *and to Being*… . (Heidegger 1962, 147)

'Seeing' may involve more than simply our eyes, but because we are 'thrown' into a world that we must understand and interpret, it also considers a wider context. That is, we must move beyond vision as purely an activity of a soul concerned only with itself. 'To see' requires some sort of synthesis of cognitive and noncognitive elements, thereby bridging the mind/world gap on which the moderns were so insistent.

In a similar fashion, Peirce links vision to the world viewed. His discussion of vision is in literal rather than metaphorical terms, but in it he argues against a picture theory of meaning, saying,

> the conclusive argument against our having any images, or absolutely determinate representations in perception, is that in that case we have the materials in each such representation for an infinite amount of conscious cognition, which we yet never become aware of. Now there is no meaning in saying that we have something in our minds which never has the least effect on what we are conscious of knowing. (1934c, 5.305)

A content of the mind that does not influence habits or actions is utter nonsense. Or, stated differently, the idea of an 'inner re-presentation' makes no sense without some presentation. In a way, this is precisely the idea Kant offers with his image of a dove who imagines her flight

would be easier without the resistance of air.[20] In Kant's case, he uses the analogy to illustrate Plato's mistake in leaving the world of experience in favor of the world of Forms, Forms which are empty without the content provided by experience. In Peirce and Heidegger's case, the analogy could be applied to the mistake of leaving the interactive world of habit and of action for the world of internal ideas and representations, which are empty without the content provided by interacting with something outside oneself. In the case of 'seeing,' we cannot just rely on what goes on in the Mind's Eye. For Heidegger and Peirce, what Descartes fails to understand is that 'seeing' is mediated. It requires construction, and it always depends upon our interests, desires, and goals. When we observe, in other words, we bring along biases and prejudices, both for good and for ill.

Taking this idea a step further, the same holds for the ways in which we 'see' people. In the construction of race, the interests, desires, and goals Kant had in promoting the superiority of whites influence what he 'sees' in the travelogues and reports available to him. Given his commitment to purposiveness, Kant simply cannot allow, as does his critic Forster, the 'insipid way of presenting these matters, which takes every difference in our species … [to be merely] accidental, and allowing them still <to be> ever coming into and going out of existence as ordained by external circumstances' (2013, 180–181). Kant has already determined, when he looks at the evidence, that the differences cannot be accidental, so he demands that the 'variety among human beings from the very same race … [be] purposively secured' (Kant 2013, 179). While even he must admit that such purposiveness cannot be discovered empirically, it must, he says, be there. It absolutely must be there, lest we find ourselves unable to escape the inevitability of Hume's conclusion: reason is not sovereign. And, of course, this latter conclusion is why Kant finds the alternative so insipid. The result is that humans who are 'observed' to reason differently cannot actually be said to reason correctly; otherwise, universal standards of reason become a great deal more difficult to obtain. Of course, the very human cost of Kant's approach is that non-whites, if not women, are shown to be less capable of reason and, thus, less than persons—and this is a difference that makes a difference. It is a difference that produces

[20] See Kant 1929, A5/B8-9.

different habits in how we treat others. It is a difference that allows for a great deal of inequality.

On the other hand, post-Cartesian thinking exhibits little concern with the threat of subjectivism. After all, reason is now engaged with a world that requires more of it than mere isolated, individualistic, deterministically rote rule-following. Thus, the conditions placed on observation shift. I pick up a hammer, for instance. I am in no way interested in what the hammer essentially is or in what its qualities in general are; I am in no way interested in representing the hammer. I am instead interested in what I can *do* with it. And, by extrapolation, when I observe people, I am not concerned with them as objects but as beings with whom I exist in relation. A similar point is made in Wittgenstein's later work—and with the same image of tools. The various bits of language have different purposes and can be put to different uses, but in picking up a bit of language, I am not concerned with its mere presence or with what it pictures but with the meaning it has in a particular context.[21] That is, language is not there to represent the world but to be put to use.

This is, of course, different from the earlier Tractarian account in which language does represent through pictures, albeit of the logical and not the literal type. On that more Cartesian account, language models the world, much like when toy cars and dolls are meant to represent real cars and real people when recreating the scene of an accident.[22] The pictures language provides tell us the possibilities of how objects in the world may be arranged. But, the logical formalism of the *Tractatus*, which follows the path of Cartesian methodology, gives way to language-games which include 'language and the actions into which it is woven' (Wittgenstein 1958, §7). That is, in coming to criticize his Tractarian view, Wittgenstein speaks of various 'illusions,' in which we attempt to find the a priori order of the world in thought, and he speaks of how we have a tendency 'to assume a pure intermediary between the propositional *signs* and the facts' (1958, §94).[23] This representational picture cannot work, Wittgenstein

[21] Although the use of 'picture' is never literal for Wittgenstein For the toolbox analogy, see Wittgenstein 1958, §6.

[22] See Wittgenstein 1961, 7.

[23] Also see Wittgenstein 1958, §96–97.

comes to realize, because there are multiple ways to map a picture onto reality. In other words, a mere picture cannot unequivocally determine its use.[24] If all we have is a picture, we cannot possibly know what it is *for* or how it is to apply to the world. In other words, representations underdetermine their use. More to the point, pictures or words or even propositions are in isolation meaningless. With the metaphor of the toolbox, Wittgenstein intends for us to come to 'see' that language gets its meaning not from what it is *in itself* but from the ways in which we use it in a social world.

Still, even in his later work, Wittgenstein struggles with representation. He does ask how it is that sentences manage to represent.[25] However, in his later work, representation comes in a perspicuous variety. The concept of 'perspicuous representation' [*übersichtliche Darstellung*] is repeatedly and significantly used throughout Wittgenstein's writing, even if it is not much developed.[26] It denotes 'the form of representation, the way we see things' (Wittgenstein 1993d, 133). And the 'way we see things' depends on interpretation, not representation. In his account of the duck–rabbit image, which actually occurs within a longer discussion of the uses of 'see,' Wittgenstein refuses to distinguish the physical act of vision from the interpretive aspect.[27] As a demonstration, he considers a schematic illustration of a box. When I 'see' a box, says Wittgenstein, there is no difference between that and interpreting the lines of the image as a box. He goes on to add, '"I see the figure as a box" means: I have a particular visual experience which I have found that I always have when I interpret the figure as a box or when I look at a box' (Wittgenstein 1958, 193–194). To hold onto the notion of an inner picture that is somehow separate from the object and that must somehow be linked to the object is to make that external 'object into a chimera; a queerly shifting construction' (Wittgenstein 1958, 196). Instead, we must recognize that the distinction between 'the inner' and 'the outer' is an illusion perpetuated by a

[24] For more on this, see Arrington 1983, 182–186.

[25] See Wittgenstein 1958, §435.

[26] Diamond and Gerrard explain: 'Early, middle and late, perspicuity was Wittgenstein's goal. What changed was the road to perspicuity: from the *Tractatus* "*Begriffschrift* to the *Investigations*" perspicuous presentation of intermediate cases' (1999, 137–138).

[27] See (no pun intended) Wittgenstein 1958, 193–208.

perversion of language. This sort of Cartesian image creates a grammar that lacks perspicuity [*übersichtliche*]. It is not laid out clearly; it is not open to view.[28] And Wittgenstein would very much like to see the grammar of a language laid open to view.[29]

Nevertheless, the sort of language with which Wittgenstein is interested remains traditionally philosophical. In other words, despite his strong interest in social practices and in forms of life, Wittgenstein himself displays a limited understanding of them *in concreto*. His examples are of building crews, shopkeepers, and going to the moon, but he is uninterested in power structures that all of these activities share. Part of this hesitancy to address more ethical dimensions of life—those dimensions which include racism and sexism—is likely his own reticence to address ethics since it runs against the boundaries of language.[30] Wittgenstein actually retains a sense that ethics has some universal and transcendent qualities, but since we can never access them, we must remain silent on the topic.[31] However, language-games, including those of ethics, are open-ended. How we understand the practices into which language is woven is open-ended. And power structures have since been repeatedly recognized as an important, even essential, part of the actions into which language is woven. The real advantage of a Wittgensteinian approach to language and to issues of perspicuous representation is that it neatly allows for this sort of expansion. As we address the role of practices in meaning, we no longer represent the world as much as we participate within its structures. But, of course, these structures can be altered, along with the meanings of the language to which they give rise.

The reworking of observation, representation, and ocular metaphors does, of course, go far beyond the works and worries I have addressed here. A much larger debate can be had concerning ocular metaphors and the ways in which these influence philosophical thought. David Levin provides, primarily from a continental perspective, a helpful overview of twentieth-century responses to the privileging of vision. He also discusses

[28] See Wittgenstein 1993c, 177.

[29] See Wittgenstein 1958, §435.

[30] See Wittgenstein 1993b, 44.

[31] See Heikes 2004.

how the idea of 'the gaze' figures prominently in contemporary thought, specifically in Habermas, Foucault, and Derrida.[32] According to Levin, 'what Habermas opposes is not so much the paradigm of vision as such but rather the epistemological privileging of a reifying and totalizing vision, a gaze of domination' (Levin 1997, 6). For Foucault, the issue is 'the "sovereignty" of the philosopher's gaze … [which is] nothing but an arrogant—and futile—historical conceit' (Levin 1997, 6). And finally, Derrida, who contests 'the domination of vision in the discourse of metaphysics, arguing that … [it has] significantly contributed to, the rhetorical forces of reification and totalization in a "metaphysics of presence"' (Levin 1997, 7). The concern here—and in other philosophers such as Dewey, Arendt, and Gadamer—is with the ideal of a detached observer who occupies an epistemically privileged perspective. This is the same powerful observer whom Harding discovers can imagine *his* standards for knowledge be found preferable by all rational creatures, past, present, and future. By contrast, philosophers who find suspect the metaphor of vision tend also to reject the assumption that vision is simple and immediate, that there is a single vision shared by all rational creatures, past, present, and future. They insist instead on the role of cognitive construction in the development of vision—and they take their cues from earlier philosophers such as Peirce and Heidegger, both of whom insist on the mediated nature of what it is we 'see.' Similarly, from the analytic side of the fence, Wittgensteinian arguments against Cartesian representationalism and the metaphysics of presence demand sensitivity to the role of cultural influences, even if the power relations within society are ignored.[33]

Despite all this criticism, however, the metaphor of vision remains a powerful one. It is what Rorty attempts to undermine in perhaps his most influential work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Rorty argues that mirror-imagery is the original sin of epistemology and that it starts very early, at least as far back as the *Republic*, that very same work that Mills

[32] See Levin 1997, 3–7.

[33] As an aside, there is some debate concerning Wittgenstein's status as an analytic philosopher, at least in his later incarnations, and many analytic philosophers do look askance at Wittgenstein. Nonetheless, no one doubts Wittgenstein's lineage is from the analytic tradition or that he has had a strong influence on the analytic tradition. See Glock 2004.

accuses of demarcating humans based on cognitive ability.[34] Somewhere along the line, the Greeks drew a 'distinction between the eye of the body and the Eye of the Mind, νοῦς—thought, intellect, insight—was identified as what separates men from beasts' (Rorty 1979, 38).[35] However, this distinction is not where Rorty believes the genuine difficulty lies. That comes when Descartes takes this image to a whole new level, proposing an inner arena with its inner observer. Until then, Rorty claims, the image of the Mind's Eye was never taken seriously enough to get us into too much epistemic trouble. With Cartesian introspection, however, mind loses contact with body, at which point skepticism concerning our ability to re-present external objects in an inner realm becomes a serious issue. The image of the Mind's Eye, then, motivates a somewhat desperate search for epistemic foundations that at some point just begins to strike some as just plain silly.

The tale is by now a familiar one. But so too are the arguments of anti-Cartesian philosophers, who attempt to undercut the metaphors of the Mind's Eye and an inner arena. As Rorty explains, Wittgenstein and Heidegger 'do not think that when we say something we must necessarily be expressing a view about a subject. We might just be *saying something*. . . . [We] see people as saying things, better or worse things, without seeing them as externalizing inner representations of reality' (1979, 371). 'God's eye perspectives' and 'the view from nowhere' are surely still part of our philosophical vocabulary, but post-Cartesian philosophers have worked to re-embody the human gaze, only now with a concern for the particularity of perspective, the knower's immersion in the world, and the recognition of the role played by power in the creation of knowledge and meaning.

In this re-embodiment of the observer, philosophers, scientists, and even artists are not that far apart. The vision of Newtonian science is to describe the world *as it is*, independently from any particular observer. Following a standard Cartesian approach, this view maintains that objectivity is what one obtains when one adopts no particular point of view.

[34] See Rorty 1979, 60 n32. Also see Plato 1961, 510a.

[35] For many philosophers, it seems Plato is the first who eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The Dürer drawing of the so-called perspective machine similarly embodies a Cartesian/Newtonian objective point of view, albeit before there was a Descartes or Newton. The official modern story is that detaching from all perspective offers a means to objectively represent the world as it is in itself. Yet, this story makes invisible how the method of representation we actually adopt also carries with it a quite specific point of view. The tools of scientific observation limit how the scientist can describe the world in front of *him*. The drawing machine limits how the artist represents the scene in front of *him*. Still, just as the scientist does not find scientific method to constrain his understanding of the world, so too the early modern artist does not take the invention of perspective to increase the level of subjectivity in art. Quite the opposite, the goal was to more accurately represent things as they truly are in real life by mechanically removing the artist from the scene to be drawn or painted. And this again highlights that deeply paradoxical part of modernism: objectivity is to be found by emphasizing and embracing subjectivity. What is hinted at in Dürer and brought to fruition by Descartes is that close attention to the conditions of observation and measurement and to the ways our ideas re-present reality will lead us to an understanding of the world as it is *in itself*. What cannot be subsumed under or explained by scientific observation is not really real.

As the intellectual world has moved further away from Cartesian assumptions, so too has the artistic one. The Impressionists of the late nineteenth century began consciously to insert subjectivity into their work. They sought out the particular to such an extent, that they could meaningfully paint the same scene over and over and over again—all because the perceived lighting was different in each case. Although artists were in no way forced to accept this shift of perspective, Putnam, one of the more vocal opponents of the 'God's eye point of view,' considers how scientists have been forced to reconsider the gap between observer and observed and how the so-called progress of science has made the objectification of objects increasingly more challenging. In a manner parallel to philosophy's transformation in the twentieth century, the Newtonian model has not survived well the transition to contemporary physics, especially quantum mechanics. Unlike the Newtonian world of discrete objects, quantum systems are an ambiguous combination of possibilities.

And unlike the Newtonian world with distinct observers and observed, quantum systems contain observers whose very act of observation alters what is observed. That is, observers *participate* necessarily in the system. For Putnam, this way of thinking, captured in the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics, is giving up a long-held prejudice, namely, that we can achieve a God's eye point of view.[36] For quantum physicists, the observer and the means of observation are inseparable from the world observed. They recognize, in other words, that how we interact with the world matters not only to our ways of cognizing but also to the world itself. In science as well as philosophy, the idea that we can have access to things-in-themselves has not survived the Enlightenment.

Be that as it may, that perspectives are particular and embodied comes with its own epistemological limitations and entails its own relativistic threat. If knowledge is grounded in the community, scientific or otherwise, the problem of subjectivism dissipates—only to be replaced by the difficulty of adjudicating between epistemic communities. At some point, if the standards of meaning, use, and knowledge are determined by the community, then we cannot evaluate those standards independently of the communities holding them. Recall how Hume recognizes that we never manage to offer a justification of epistemic norms without somehow proposing the very norms we wish to justify. These contemporary critics of Cartesianism have the same problem, just on a communal scale rather than an individual one. In one way, this problem might not seem so great. After all, the rejection of Cartesianism entails, in part, a refusal to obsess over standards of rationality as some sort of abstract exercise. Take the following remark from Wittgenstein:

> Reason—I feel like saying—presents itself to us as the gauge *par excellence* against which everything that we do, all our language games, measure and judge themselves.—We may say: we are so exclusively preoccupied by contemplating a yardstick that we can't allow our gaze to rest on certain phenomena or patterns… . The yardstick rivets our attention and keeps distracting us from these phenomena, as it were making us look beyond. (1993a, 389)

[36] Says Putnam, on the Copenhagen Interpretation, '*every property of the system is considered to have meaning and existence only in relation to a particular measuring apparatus in a particular experimental situation*' (1990, 4).

In what turns out to be an attack on the metaphysics of presence, he wants us to stop staring at 'reason' and focus instead on what it actually *does*. In this way, post-Cartesians always have lived experience to fall back on. They always allow that however conceptually determined are these experiences, they are not entirely conceptual. In another way, refocusing our attention on activity is not sufficient to make the problem of objectivity go away. We eventually reach bedrock in our explanations. We can always say 'this is what we do,' but that does not entail that our ways of doing are better than another way of doing. If we want to make a *moral* case for *our* ways of thinking about equality and justice, we need more than this is what *we* do. After all, what *we have done*—and done for centuries—is promote inequality and injustice. Appealing to practices *simpliciter* cannot save ethical normativity. Modern moral concepts need to be co-opted and subverted, but the justification for doing so must amount to more than 'this is what we feminists and race theorists think we should do.' We need some normative force behind the 'should.'

Of course, not everyone agrees. Rorty takes the threat of relativism and embraces it, telling us that everything boils down to hermeneutics, that philosophy is cultural 'all the way down.' He also says that with Deweyan epistemology,

> we will not imagine that there are enduring constraints on what can count as knowledge, since we will see 'justification' as a social phenomenon rather than a transaction between 'the knowing subject' and 'reality.' If we have a Wittgensteinian notion of language as tool rather than mirror, we will not look for necessary conditions of the possibility of linguistic representation. If we have a Heideggerian conception of philosophy, we will see the attempt to make the nature of the knowing subject a source of necessary truths as one more self-deceptive attempt to substitute a 'technical' and determinate question for that openness to strangeness which initially tempted us to begin thinking. (Rorty 1979, 9)

Rorty is willing to commit only to social constraints on normative concepts, and he thinks Wittgenstein and Heidegger agree with him. The problem, however, is that the normative becomes empty if we cannot persuade others to join us. If we are going to resolve issues of sexism and racism, we need more than what a Rortyian interpretation can offer.

And to hear Putnam tell it, Rorty agrees. Putnam argues that, despite protestations to the contrary, Rorty actually wants it both ways: he wants to encourage more tolerance, but he also deep down wants a God's eye point of view.[37] In other words, Rorty wants more than he epistemically and morally allows himself. Why would Putnam think Rorty commits himself to a God's eye perspective? Because Rorty is a 'wet liberal' who believes that we can and should hold better beliefs. Even so, Rorty very much wants to say that, at heart, the hermeneutic discourse we engage in when we debate cultural norms and standards cannot stand outside *all* cultural norms and standards. The problem for Rorty's avowed view is that 'better' and 'worse' can only be relative if philosophical discourse can only be hermeneutic.

All things considered, many of us still want something like a God's eye point of view; many of us listen to the siren song of modern moral concepts—and for good reason. We do think some ways of believing and acting are better than others. Putnam may be right that '*the very project of representing ourselves as being "mappers" of something "language-independent" is fatally compromised from the very start*' (1990, 28). However, we still need some friction so that our concepts can take flight. We still need some means of justifying the wrongness of racism and sexism, even for those moral and epistemic communities that accept it. The difficulty is that we are no longer allowed unproblematic access to a world *in itself*. We are no longer allowed access to an ontic logos. The perspectives of anti-Cartesians do lend themselves to rethinking rationality as something that encounters limits, usually socially imposed, not of its own making. This does not itself save us from thoroughly hermeneutical discourse, but it does allow us to think, as Heidegger asks us to do, along ancient lines.

Heidegger is quite explicit about the need to recover ancient thinking and to rediscover problems that were buried by Plato and his successors. The difficulty with going back to the pre-Socratics is that we actually tend to think in Platonic terms. That is, of course, Heidegger's point. Yet he also believes our commitment to a Platonic paradigm makes it difficult for philosophy to move forward. While I doubt that we can meaningfully return to the pre-Socratics, I do think Heidegger is right to look to the

[37] See Putnam 1990, 24–25.

Greek worldview. At the origins of modernism, philosophers made a conscious effort to redefine problems in ways that distinguished their efforts from those of the scholastics and the Greeks. Today, many philosophers make a conscious effort to reject modernist assumptions. As a result, the medieval/modern divide is less a determiner of relevance now than it has been since Descartes. Philosophers have explicitly and widely rejected modernist assumptions, which have produced a revival of some ancient views, for instance, Aristotelian virtue ethics. Further, many influential philosophers have themselves been influenced by both ancient and medieval thought. From the beginning of his career, for example, Heidegger appears to be explicitly aware of the philosophical shift toward modernism—and the foibles of this shift. Why? Perhaps because he was trained in medieval philosophy. In writing about his own work, Heidegger says, 'It has been said that my work is Catholic phenomenology—presumably because it is my conviction that thinkers like Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus also understood something of philosophy, perhaps more than the moderns.'[38] Here Heidegger acknowledges some debt to the scholastics, or at least some sense that they understood philosophy better than did the moderns. What they, and all pre-modern philosophers, surely understand better than the moderns is the depth and breadth of the human faculty of reason. The Greeks did not treat reason as a simple unity, and as a result, their approach is much more sensitive to a multitude of functions within reason and to the diversity of ways that reason acts in the world.

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[38] Heidegger 1988, 20.

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4

The Origin of Mind

To this point, I have examined the distortions produced by conceiving of reason in modern terms. I have argued that in a so-called Age of Equality only some humans count as persons having equal worth. I have considered how post-Cartesian attacks on modern epistemologies undermine key pillars of support for formulations of race. What I have yet to do is determine, in the wake of modernism's crumbling foundations, how we retain the normative force of moral terms like 'justice' while eliminating unsavory biases concerning who is deserving of justice. As I have discussed, one avenue for redress comes via mainstream criticisms of Cartesianism which challenge introspection, isolation, and representationalism and which challenge the idea that reason can be self-justifying. These objections entail an expansion of reason beyond logical methodologies for they insist that our concept of reason emphasizes embeddedness in a material and social world. While this allows us to recognize the importance and ineliminability of bias, it also weakens the normative force of moral concepts. In particular, the turning of attention outward allows for greater possibilities for diversity, but it also allows for greater possibilities for cultural relativism. Reason may no longer be wedded to internal procedures that are detached from the surrounding world, but it is also no longer wedded

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to pretensions of a God's eye perspective, which in the past offered some hope of objectivity. Even though these anti-Cartesian alternatives do provide a pathway to a new understanding of reason, they do not solve every difficulty. More to the point, we may be stuck with perspectivalism, but if we want substantive moral concepts, we must be capable of defending them in ways that transcend our own particular biases.

Fortunately, postmoderns are not the only ones who consider reason to be integrated within and focused upon the world. Other windows on reason share this perspective, namely, that of the ancient Greeks. While their approach to reason is more metaphysically oriented than ours, it is also far more diverse. Knowing what we know about the difficulties of modern rationality, it is worth asking whether Greek thinking, which is thinking of the sort the moderns reject, is again worth considering. Despite the fact that much about the concept has changed over the last couple thousand years, the Greeks are the first to consider the mind (nous) in a way that we recognize as *mind*. Perhaps the most notable difference between their perspective and ours, however, lies in their concern with much broader phenomena than we consider under the heading of 'mind.'[1] No Greek thinker considers nous to be all there is to having a mind, and no Greek thinker considers nous reducible to logical procedures. Instead, they take it to be a part of a larger set of functional capacities, including nutritive ones, brought together under the heading of 'soul.' This soul can be more or less unified. At one extreme, Homer offers a mental world that is oddly familiar while clearly lacking any account of a unitary mind. We recognize in Homeric heroes the same emotions, motivations, and cognitions, but our experiences of these come with a self-awareness and a sense of autonomy evidently lacked by the early Greeks. Because the gods directly influence various parts of the mind, often without the protagonists' awareness, Homeric man is not in control of many of his own actions.[2] At the other extreme is Plato. While he shares in a vision of the soul with

[1] The Greeks often speak of the soul rather than mind, and some slippage in terminology is unavoidable in this discussion.

[2] As Snell explains, 'Homer lacks a knowledge of the spontaneity of the human mind; he does not realize that decision of the will, or any impulses or emotions, have their origin in man himself. What holds true of the events in the epic holds also for the feelings, the thoughts and the wishes of the characters; they are inextricably linked with the gods' (1982, 31).

multiple functions, he nevertheless emphasizes repeatedly the importance and specialness of nous. In fact, for Plato, when the soul functions as it should, it is a unity which acts under the direction of mind. This is an image much more familiar to us. Between these extremes is the long tradition that Aristotle considers when he attempts to untie the knot in our understanding of soul/mind.

This tradition—a tradition which includes Democritus, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, Plato, the Pythagoreans, among others—shares much in common with contemporary accounts of rationality. Most significantly, we share with the Greeks an aversion to viewing reason only from the perspective of logical methods applied to internal representations of the world. They recognize that the concept of psyche is not limited to nous. Beyond reflective deliberation and various psychological functions, the soul animates what is living; it embraces nutritive and other aspects of bodily activity; it incorporates emotional states; and, most importantly, it expresses virtue. The Greek soul is embodied, embedded, and ethical. As Aristotle says at the beginning of *De Anima*, 'there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body' (403a5–6). And because the soul directs us toward the achievement of goals, it is rarely, if ever, isolated from the world of *πράγματα* (*pragmata*).

This sense that soul is a many-splendored set of functions which are essentially involved in an embodied existence is one that is increasingly asserted in our own time, even if we have yet to figure out how to come to terms with the material aspects of mind. For example, both Antonio Damasio and Susan Greenfield argue that we are incapable of understanding mind as distinct from body and emotion. According to Damasio, 'our minds would not be the way they are if it were not for the interplay of body and brain during evolution …. The mind has to be about the body, or it could not have been' (1994, xvi). And for Greenfield, 'Emotions must somehow be incorporated into any neuroscience Rosetta Stone' (2000, 16). Although the Greeks, especially the pre-Socratic philosophers, would find confusing the way we refer to the mind as a *thing* which is independent of body and emotion, they share our concern with understanding how mind fits within the whole of human life. This bit of the narrative of reason is, since the seventeenth century, often overlooked and forgotten.

Still, even with our rejection of modernism, it may be that Greek views are too far removed from our own. That is, our interest in the mind may simply be irreconcilably different from the Greeks. After all, we live on the other side of that great metaphysical divide which makes the language of the moderns more intelligible to us than that of the ancients. We know (in some loose sense of 'know') what it means to consider reason to be a purely methodological and procedural notion, distinct from body, emotion, and the physical world, even if we understand that it cannot be entirely divorced from these other functions. And for us this so-called knowledge stands independently of whether we commit ourselves to the modernist program. Our ease of understanding is simply much greater with the language of modernism than it is with Greek ontology. In Greek philosophy, we find psyche or nous, but these are not *mind*, at least not in our sense of mind. Were we to engage with ancient philosophers, they would find our theories of mind strange: highly technical, narrowly focused, largely naturalistic, and curiously devoid of any connection to body or emotion—even when we seek such connections. In Greek philosophy, we find a much greater tolerance for metaphysical ambiguity in the connection of mind and body; it is an ambiguity of which Cartesian dualism has made us quite intolerant. Our modern and postmodern ear has become tone deaf to the metaphysics of mind that so occupied the ancients and to the ways in which metaphysics provided the ground of rational thought. Having been pushed to our limits by skeptical considerations, epistemology, even now, dominates philosophical discussions of rationality. Justification of beliefs, not psychic abilities, remains our primary concern.

The Greeks in general, and Aristotle in particular, don't see the issue of mind in the same way. Sure Aristotle has much to say on the topic of justification, but he does not take justification to exhaust the topic of rationality. And, it is in his unwillingness to reduce rationality to justification that we can find a broader and substantively normative framework for a decidedly nonmodern rationality. Of course, Aristotle is drawing on a rich tradition, a tradition to which Heidegger asks us to return. In extolling the merits of pre-Socratics, Heidegger seeks to uncover past thinking as a means of guiding contemporary thought. He understands that the ancients' formulation of problems and solutions, the conceptual

demarcations, the sense of the soul's multiplicity—these are abandoned by the moderns. Yet he also understands that Greek approaches can tell us something important about how philosophy lost its way. And one of the things it can highlight for us is how minds become hierarchically structured. As it turns out, Descartes' account of mind takes its cues from Plato. Yet this is what makes Aristotle and his sensitivity to his philosophical inheritance so significant. Aristotle discusses better than anyone the difficulties of Platonic philosophy. As a result, his approach to rationality promises some correction of Platonic foibles and distortions. Furthermore, Aristotle is sensitive to the depth of the tradition he inherits not just from Plato but from the pre-Socratics as well. This deeper tradition stands opposed to tripartite souls divorcing themselves of worldly considerations and intellectually pondering the Forms. Thus, it considers souls in a much wider context than concerned merely with knowledge and justification. Ultimately, however, it is not the pre-Socratics who speak most clearly to us; rather, it is Aristotle who struggles directly with a Platonic notion of a soul ruled solely by reason. Aristotle's account, with its materialistic and scientific bent, and with its understanding of the full range of mind within the context of human activities, offers a decidedly non-Cartesian and surprisingly contemporary conception of reason—one connected to a sophisticated and surprisingly contemporary moral theory.

In discussing the difficulties well, as Aristotle would have us do, what becomes clear is how atypical is Plato's conception of the soul compared to earlier Greek thinkers. No other philosopher of that era stresses nous quite the way Plato does. And inasmuch as modernism builds on a Platonic notion of mind, it shares many of the same flaws. In fact, modern reason is just as exclusionary as Plato's—and for many of the same reasons. As a result, the problems Aristotle addresses in his response to Plato turn out to be many of the same problems post-Cartesian's address in their response to Descartes. The difference is that we are further removed than is Aristotle from a tradition with a strong sensitivity for the diversity of reason and its functions. Aristotle has the advantage of building upon the vast and varied approaches of the pre-Socratics. While these early Greeks may not clearly address issues of inequality, neither do they reinforce it as Plato's view clearly does. Ultimately, the advantage of Aristotle's approach

is that it frames rationality in a way that involves more than just nous. It offers an account that engages bodily desires and appetites. It permits agents to utilize more than one approach to deliberation. It involves both theoretical and moral components (or virtues). It permits *people* to be more or less rational, which stands in sharp contrast to Cartesianism's more 'all or nothing' approach. It offers a model of rationality that is less representational and more inclusive, that is less theoretical and more practical, and that is less distant and more engaged. And it promises a ground for moral concepts substantive enough to resist oppression.

4.1 Homer and the Pre-Socratics

Clearly, the Greeks are the originators of the Western concept of mind.[3] Other ancient cultures failed to have a specific term for mind. The Sumerian language, Julia Asher-Greve tells us, allows no such conceptual dichotomy between mind and body.[4] For Mesopotamians, the 'body was the essential ego/being. In the absence of a specific concept of mind the corporeal body was representative of the totality of the individual' (Asher-Greve 1997, 447). Similarly, 'The Anglo-Saxon concept of *sawol*, the linguistic ancestor of the modern English word "soul," lacked any psychological content, and the evidence … shows … this absence is common in the soul beliefs of most "primitive" peoples' (Bremmer 1987, 3–4). As early as Homer, the Greeks begin to change this way of thinking and to see the mind as something somehow different from mere body. A new idea emerges for Greek poets—and later for Heraclitus—'intellectual and spiritual matters have "depth"' (Snell 1982, 17).[5] These early Greeks are the first to show an interest in self-understanding and in coming to terms with the intellectual. Still, the notion of a unified mind, one conceptually distinct from body, does not emerge all at once. In fact, the concept that

[3] For more on the Greek invention of mind, see Snell 1982.

[4] See Asher-Greve 1997, 434.

[5] Also see Heraclitus DK B45 (Kahn 1979, 45). He is the first to state explicitly that the soul has depth.

comes to us as 'mind' starts as something far more complex and with a far greater functional range than we often recognize.

As scholars have noted, Homer has no single word for mind. Instead, he makes use of several words—psyche, *thymos*, nous—that are reminiscent of or that stand in relation to what we today would consider mind.[6] While he readily distinguishes various functional capacities in humans, he lacks awareness of them as entirely distinct or as parts of a psychic whole. For example, *thymos* (emotion) is associated with nous (intellect) in a way that lacks strict demarcation. Bruno Snell explains, 'If … *thymos* is the mental organ which causes (e)motion, while *noos* is the recipient of images, then *noos* may be said generally to be in charge of intellectual matters, and *thymos* of things emotional' (1982, 12). Even so, because of an overlap of these functions, Homer can also refer to *thymos* as the seat of knowledge and nous as the seat of emotion. These 'mind words,' along with psyche, actually refer to separate organs and are not quite translatable into post-Platonic terminology.[7] Says Snell,

> Our transcription of *psyche*, *noos*, and *thymos* as 'organs' of life, of perception, and of (e)motion are … merely in the nature of abbreviations, neither totally accurate nor exhaustive; this could not be otherwise, owing to the circumstance that the concept of the 'soul'—and also of the 'body' … —is tied up with the whole character and orientation of a language. (1982, 15)

In interpreting the various terms related to what becomes soul or mind, Snell makes clear, first, that each of these concepts still interact with physical aspects of human beings and, second, that the individual functions these terms refer to are not unified.[8] For example, 'The word *psyche* is akin to *ψύχειν*, "to breathe", and denotes the breath of life …' (Snell 1982, 9). Psyche is a sort of life force which leaves the body upon death. It is

[6] For a summary of the literature on Homer's view of the soul, see Katona 2002.

[7] See Snell 1982, 14–16. Also, Robb indicates that these psychological terms can be conceptualized as designating physical organs, as functions for which the organs are responsible, or as quasi-personal agents. See Robb 1986, 319.

[8] Taylor indicates that other scholars have objected to Snell's characterization of the difference of Homeric man. See Taylor 1989, 118.

different both from *thymos*, the organ for (e)motion, and from nous, the faculty of having clear ideas or intelligence.[9]

What scholars agree upon is that none of these terms function as the sole bearer of human personality. Rather, says Kevin Robb, they together form an 'entire complex, or psychological territory,' … [that] performs the same service that, much later, the unitary psyche performs for a Socrates' (1986, 319). When it comes to emotions, to cognition, to actions, or to speech—that is, when it comes to the affective, cognitive, and linguistic life of the person—these functions 'are ascribed in Homer elsewhere than to *psyche* in life, and they play no part in the shadowy existence of *psyche* after death' (Robb 1986, 319). Finally, in summarizing the literature on Homer's view of mind, Gabor Katona explains 'Homeric man understood himself as an aggregate of different "mental" agents …. [He] did not know genuine personal decision, did not yet know of the will as an ethical factor, and he constantly felt himself decisively influenced (guided or impeded) by gods …' (2002, 29–30). From this aggregate notion of the soul comes, eventually, what we call 'mind.'

The multiple uses of terms and the fragmentation of the soul can be foreign, bizarre, and troubling to us given our penchant for ascribing to a *unified mind* both decision-making and moral responsibility.[10] The various functions of what eventually comes together as soul are in place within Homer, but in its archaic sense, soul is something quite different from our mind. Even so, the early Greeks are highly sensitive to the complexity within human beings. What they begin to formulate is a difference between what goes on in the physical, psychological, and cognitive aspects of humans. While this multiplicity demonstrates an understanding of the complexity of human beings, it does not easily translate into contemporary terminology because what remains absent in the different faculties of psyche, *thymos*, nous is something of critical importance to

[9] For example, with the phrase 'The *thymos* left his bones,' Snell argues that 'since this organ … determines physical motion, it is plausible enough to say that at the point of death the *thymos* leaves the bones and the … limbs with their muscles' (1982, 9–10).

[10] See Robb 1986, 319; Taylor 1989, 118. Or, as Snell explains, 'As soon as we attempt to describe the mental concepts of Homer by means of the catchwords 'organ' and "function" we are bound to encounter terminological difficulties such as always arise for anyone who wishes to reproduce foreign idioms and peculiarities within the terms of his own tongue' (1982, 15).

us: the capacity for autonomous decision-making. As Taylor notes, 'The Greeks were notoriously capable of formulating the injunction "*gnōthiu seauton*"—"know thyself"—but they didn't normally speak of the human agent as "*ho autos*", or use the term in a context which we would translate with the indefinite article' (1989, 113). Homeric man lacks both a sense of self and individual moral responsibility. He is instead pulled and swayed by all sorts of heteronomous influences. Homeric Greeks are not inclined to speak of 'the self,' which is manifested in their lack of moral autonomy. Yet this lack of self also indicates a greater sense of being at home in the world since there is no place else to be.

Although early Greeks have little, if any, concept of an inner life of the mind, this is not as surprising upon reflection as it might initially seem. As Toulmin argues, 'Even the simplest of our mental tasks and procedures are at first performed overtly and publicly' (1979, 3). In explaining this claim, he discusses how the people of Milan took St. Ambrose to be a magician when they saw him *reading to himself*, without speaking out loud. After all, humans don't naturally do things only in their heads. Rather, we learn over time to internalize mental procedures, largely for instrumental reasons, such as the fact that we can think a great deal faster than we can speak. What we ultimately end up with, says Toulmin, is a metaphysical Great Divide: 'an outer world—the public, external world of space and time which is equated with the objective, physical world of material things … [and] an inner world—the subjective, mental world of moral sentiments and personal attitudes which is equated with the private world of inner experience.' In the Homeric world, people had not yet distinguished the inner from the outer world. No gap yet exists between cognition and the object about which one cognizes. Hence, early Greeks are incapable of formulating what we call 'the gaze.'

While Descartes makes seeing a part of the nonphysical soul, Homer's soul is not a unified thing capable of seeing beyond the physiological elements of sight. Homer's account of vision involves the idea not of cognition but of a physical eye apprehending an object. According to Snell, the verb *θεωρείν* (*theōrein*), which is developed from the noun *θεωρός* ('to be a spectator'), comes to mean 'to look on' or 'to contemplate.' He goes on to add that 'it does not reflect an attitude, nor an emotion linked with the sight, nor the viewing of a particular object; instead it represents

an intensification of the normal and essential function of the eyes' (Snell 1982, 4). The focus here is on the eye itself and not the perceiving mind, which makes sense since Homeric Greeks lack the notion of an inner life of the mind to which vision could be attached. There is no one location, and definitely no 'inner realm,' in which representations of an external reality take shape. In other words, there is no single faculty that is solely responsible for vision. As a result, ocular metaphors of the kind Plato uses are not yet possible. Objectification first requires a mind distinct from the world.

The idea of mind as something distinct from a material world does not come quickly. Several thinkers and several centuries stand between Homer and Plato. Aristotle, who is often concerned with philosophical archeology, offers insight into some of these intermediate positions. He notes that his predecessors, particularly Democritus, 'regard respiration as the characteristic mark of life' (Aristotle 1941a, 404a10) which is something he clearly inherits from Homer and which clearly continues to link soul to physical characteristics of the body. In fact, Aristotle dismisses Democritus' failure to identify mind as a 'special faculty dealing with truth' because Democritus 'identifies what appears with what is true' (1941a, 404a27–9). The implication is that the mind remains closely aligned (too closely for Aristotle's liking) with body. Among the pre-Socratics generally, Aristotle tells us that they all relate the nature of soul to their metaphysical views such that 'all those who admit but one cause or element, make the soul also one … while those what admit a multiplicity of principles make the soul also multiple' (1941a, 405b17–20). What occurs in pre-Socratic thinkers is that soul is understood as integrated with a larger metaphysical world.[11] The exception to this rule, according to Aristotle, is Anaxagoras, who holds that the mind 'has nothing in common with anything else.' For Anaxagoras,

> All other things partake in a portion of everything, while *nous* is infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself. … [It] has all knowledge about everything and the greatest strength; and *nous* has power over all things, both greater and smaller, that have soul [*psuch*ē]. (Burnet 1930, Fr. 12)

[11] As Katona explains, 'Besides difficulties of grasping an incorporeal agent, Presocratic thinkers depict the soul of the "individual" as being essentially connected with [or even being a part of] a larger, cosmic order or element outside' (2002, 38).

Mind in this particular case is co-extensive with, but independent of, a larger ontological reality. Still, Anaxagoras is attempting to do something all these pre-Socratic thinkers do: come to terms with soul/mind, both what it is and how it fits in the universe. And that it fits *within* the universe is straightforwardly accepted. Minds are, except for Anaxagoras, very much a part of the world around them. What is not at all straightforward for any of them is that the human soul is a cohesive seat of individual personality or that individual souls may be seen to survive the death of the body.

Greek philosophers, following Homer, continue to use recognizable terms such as *thymos,* psyche, and nous. In Homeric usage, however, these functional aspects of the soul do not survive the death of the body, at least not in the way Socrates describes in the *Apology*.[12]

Along the way from Homer to Socrates, soul becomes something capable of being transformed into a self. In this transition from an archaic to classical understandings of soul lies Heraclitus and his use of '*psyche*.'[13] Of course, Heraclitus remains within the tradition in which soul has a material aspect. As Aristotle tells us, the soul for Heraclitus is 'the "warm exhalation" of which … everything else is composed' (1941a, 405a24).[14] Notwithstanding, he also attributes a psychological component to the soul in a way quite unlike his predecessors—so much so that Heraclitus is often held to be the first to develop an eschatological psyche in which soul is distinct from body and is endowed with qualities distinct from body. What makes Heraclitus a decisive and pivotal figure in this transition is that he appears to be the first to associate 'psyche' with the power of rational thought.[15] Many of Heraclitus' fragments indicate *human* responsibility for actions. At one point, he tells us that 'one should not act or speak as if

[12] *Psyche* does survive death for the archaic Greeks, but since it is not the repository of one's personality, personality does not survive death. See Snell 1982, 14.

[13] According to Robb (1986), Heraclitus is the pivotal figure in the transition between earlier conceptions of soul and the Socratic conception. While Robb explicitly defends a psychological deception of psyche against a physiological one, that he must argue so strongly against physiological interpretations demonstrates how strong the connection between mind and body is during this period in philosophy.

[14] For more on the eschatological aspect of *psyche*, see Snell 1982, 17–19.

[15] I will discuss Fragment 107 shortly, which Kahn claims is the first linkage of psyche with cognition in the extant literature. See Kahn 1979, 107.

he were asleep' (DK B73)[16] and in one of the more notable fragments, he maintains, 'a man's character [*ethos*] is his fate [*daimon*]' (DK B119).[17] That Heraclitus makes statements calling us to act in a certain manner as well as statements concerning the development of character strongly differentiates his view from that of Homer. Homeric action is, says Robb, 'generated from the outside, breathed into the person, or otherwise imposed on him, by a myriad of external forces, gods, and *daimones* whose constant intervention in epic serve to initiate all important human action.'[18] In contrast to this, Heraclitus speaks of searching out himself or diving into himself.[19] The distinction 'is between one who explores his *psyche*, who listens to and explores both internal (psychic) and external (cosmic) *logos*, and Homeric man (*anthropos*) who does neither' (1986, 339). For Heraclitus, the soul is not at the mercy of gods. It is itself a source of action. It is a 'principle of rationality (117, 118) and moral goodness (118) …' (Robinson 1986, 311).[20] It is able to reflect on logos and to assume responsibility for its actions. In his writing is the first sense of mind as an autonomous faculty that understands the world and that utilizes that understanding in guiding action. The distinction he introduces between the qualities of soul and the qualities of body does, however, open the slightest of gaps between cognition and material reality and represents 'a "discovery" which so impressed people's minds that it was thereafter accepted as self-evident' (Snell 1982, 17). In other words, Heraclitus introduces to mind qualities which distinguish it from mere body, and from this point forward, mind is accepted as something exceptional.

Given that Heraclitus begins to explore the inner depths of humans, he is able to understand vision (and hearing) to be more than merely a function of sensory organs. Suddenly, these senses involve a cognitive component. In fact, Heraclitus accepts that the senses can mislead and that they require interpretation. He explains, 'Ears and eyes are poor witnesses for men if their souls do not understand language (literally "if they have

[16] Wheelwright 1959, 20.

[17] Kahn 1979, 81.

[18] Robb 1986, 339.

[19] DK B101 says: *ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν*. Also see DK B45 (Kahn 1979, 45 or Wheelwright 1959, 58).

[20] Also see Robinson 1986, 306.

barbarian souls")' (DK B107).[21] The soul can either comprehend or not, but the mere act of seeing with the eye or hearing with the ears does not entail comprehension. Comprehension requires listening to logos, and according to Robb, 'It is the failure of *anthropoi*, most contemporary Hellenes, to listen to this *logos*, and consequently their inability to participate cognitively and linguistically at a level of discourse demanded by the philosopher …' (Robb 1986, 315). The psyche may still be connected to a wider ontological world, but it is now something that is active *within* a person such that a capable psyche interprets through an understanding of logos.[22] Logos, that which allows our souls to be comprehending, contains a structure that our souls literally breathe in. In this, soul remains connected to body and immersed in a larger reality.[23] Heraclitus has not yet completely broken with past conceptions. His soul retains a dependence on an ontological structure outside of it; yet through his introduction of a connection of psyche to logos, he sets the stage for mind to develop an inner world and to become a more prominent function within soul. In this mingling of physical and cognitive considerations, we find a reflection of both the Homeric sense that soul is an aspect of body and an obvious movement toward a Platonic understanding of the soul, one where soul takes on an active, cognitive component that distinguishes it from mere material existence.

4.2 Plato and the Cartesian Problem

The description of Greek mind thus far is one that probably sounds vaguely familiar but not especially sophisticated. When it comes to the development of the concepts of mind and reason, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of Socrates and Plato. They are the first to decisively separate the mental from the nonmental aspects of soul, and they are the first to codify a theory of the soul as the seat of rational judgment

[21] Kahn 1979, 106. For more on interpretations of this passage see Wilcox 1991. Robb also discusses the interpretive issues at 1986, 327–334.

[22] See DK B50 (Kahn 1979, 45).

[23] See Kahn 1964.

and moral decision-making. They also provide the structure upon which Descartes builds his conception of reason. This is especially significant for my purposes since a Platonic account has much the same difficulty as the Cartesian one: an inability to tolerate diversity. Of course, Plato's motivation for eradicating difference is quite unlike the moderns. After all, subjectivism is of no consequence to Plato. For him, the Forms dictate universally and timelessly what can be truly and objectively thought. As with Heraclitus, there is with Plato a logos to which our souls must respond. The problem is that bodies, which are now distinct from minds, get in the way of 'listening to *logos*,' that is, reason's proper comprehension. To cope with the corrupting influence of body, Plato develops a hierarchical account which allows souls to be better and worse depending on how well they overcome the corrupting influence of material nature. This hierarchy differs from the modern one insofar as Plato rejects not a diversity of thought but rather a diversity of body. In the end, however, his efforts to purify souls of any bodily influence allow for the same sorts of exclusions—and for much the same reasons.

One of the more substantial differences between Socrates and his predecessors on the topic of soul is that, with Socrates, psyche comes to signify the seat of intellect, of morality, and of self. Robb argues that what results from the thought and activity of Socrates is that

> some Greeks began to use *psyche* to designate what may be called a conscious, feeling, thinking, moral, autonomous self, the source in the human person of cognition and moral decision, of personal feelings and of memory, that in a person to which it makes sense to impute praise or blame for the decisions and actions which belong most characteristically to man as man. (1986, 321)

Such a shift signals a radical transition. While Heraclitus offers some sense that the soul is a principle of moral goodness,[24] Socrates takes the idea even further and insists that the soul is a separate, essential part of the self. Says John Burnet, Socrates' exhortation to 'care for one's soul' was in fact a shock to the Athenians since no one had previously claimed

[24] See Robinson 1986, 311.

that 'there is something in us which is capable of attaining goodness and righteousness' (1916, 13). Equally shocking, says Burnet, is that Socrates held the soul to be immortal.[25] Evidence for this so-called shock does exist in Plato's dialogues. In the *Phaedo*, for example, Cebes tells Socrates, 'it requires *no little faith and assurance* to believe that the soul exists after death and retains some active force and intelligence' [italics added] (1961d, 70b).[26] The immortal soul as the seat of moral responsibility and as distinct from the body comes fully to philosophical consciousness from this point forward, and it is this very soul that Descartes transforms into his cogito.

As an early believer in the immortality of the soul, Socrates is also one of the earliest proponents of a strong division between soul and body. These doctrines are made clear in the *Apology*, where Socrates repeatedly explains to the jury that neither they nor his accusers can harm him because they are unable to affect his soul.[27] Certainly the jury may banish him or put him to death, but physical or bodily punishments are not considered by Socrates to be great calamities. As a result, says Socrates, 'death did not matter to me at all … [but] it mattered all the world to me that I should do nothing wrong or wicked' (Plato 1961a, 32d). Of course, since he has done nothing wrong or wicked, he is content that death will also not harm his soul. When it comes to death, Socrates remains officially agnostic about the possibility of an afterlife, but he also explicitly maintains that if the soul is indeed immortal, it retains the identity of the living person when in the underworld.[28] He says, if death is something rather than nothing, then a permanent part of his soul, a part which is the bearer of his personality and which is the bearer of moral responsibility, will continue on as something recognizable as Socrates, both to himself and others. This is quite a distance from Homer, who denies that a soul in Hades is identical with the person who lived.[29] And from Plato onward, this distance only grows.

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[25] See Burnet 1916, 25.

[26] The same sort of amazement is expressed in the *Republic*. See Plato 1961f, 608d.

[27] See Plato 1961a, 30d.

[28] See Plato 1961a, 40d–41b; Plato 1961d 63b-c.

[29] For a summary of Homeric views on life after death, see Katona, who says: 'Immortality in the Homeric sense is not the immortality of a "soul" capable of surviving the body's death, but the

What makes Plato a figure of singular importance in the development of mind is not just the way he pursues Socrates' image of the soul but also the influence his vision has on Descartes' account. Plato takes the somewhat confused concept of soul developed by the pre-Socratics and transforms it into a structured unity with discrete and distinct elements: rational, spirited, and appetitive. Still, as much as Plato may regard the soul as a single entity, his treatment of it reflects the fragmentary nature of earlier accounts.[30] In the *Republic*, he claims that

> a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other and interfere and meddle with one another …, and having harmonized these three principles … and having linked and bound all three together … [he makes] of himself a unity, one man instead of many, self-controlled and in unison…. (Plato 1961e, 443d-e)

In a slightly less clear passage, Plato discusses the relationship of soul to body, to sensation, to pleasure, and to feeling:

> Now, when they [souls] should be implanted in bodies …, it would be necessary that they should all have in them one and the same faculty of sensation, arising out of irresistible impressions; in the second place, they must have love, in which pleasure and pain mingle—also fear and anger, and the feelings which are akin or opposite to them. (Plato 1961f, 42a)

In both these passages, Plato asserts that the soul actually has multiple aspects. Souls are both rational and sensitive; they have appetites and volitions; and these different aspects of the soul function as a single

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translation of the whole person into a new mode of existence shared with gods; the whole person continues living in a new existence' (2002, 35).

[30] That Plato is somewhat ambivalent about the tripartite soul is something I will discuss shortly. However, according to Hall,

> The tripartite doctrine of soul is introduced in a tentative, halting manner (Republic, IV, 435 C-D) indicating its probability rather than certainty. The soul is not divided literally into three separate and distinct parts. [The terms are] used only as a convenient term to describe different aspects or features of the soul. (1963, 69 n1)

For more on the debate over the unity of Platonic soul, see Hall 1963; Gerson 1987; Robinson 1990.

unit, at least when all goes well. The tension, for Plato, appears to lie in the discomforting fact that the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul are associated with body. Even though Socrates argues that body is no longer essential to the continuation of the soul, Plato recognizes that body is not entirely detached from it either—hence, the problem.

At times, Plato distinguishes soul from body quite clearly, as in the *Phaedo*, when he claims 'the soul is most like the divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, and ever self-consistent and invariable, whereas body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, dissoluble, and never self-consistent' (1961d, 80b). At other times, however, he expresses much more doubt concerning the nature of soul and our ability to know that nature. For instance, in the *Republic*, he admits that his arguments constrain him to assert the immortality of the soul. But he goes on to say that 'to know its [the soul's] true nature we must view it not marred by communion with the body … but consider adequately in the light of reason what it is when it is purified' (Plato 1961f, 611c). Herein lies the difficulty: the light of reason by which we know soul—presumably that same source of illumination Descartes uses—is, when intermingled with body, seen only in shadow. To illustrate the tremendous struggle to know truly an embodied soul, Plato continues with the dramatic image of the body's distortion of the soul:

> But though we have stated the truth of its [the soul's] present appearance, its condition as we have now contemplated it resembles that of the sea god Glaucus whose first nature can hardly be made out by those who catch glimpses of him, because the original members of his body are broken off and mutilated and crushed and in every way marred by the waves, and other parts have attached themselves to him, accretions of shells and seaweed and rocks, so that he is more like any wild creature than what he was by nature—even such, I say, is our vision of the soul marred by countless evils. (1961f, 611c-d)

Not only does the soul have ties to the body, these ties are destructive of its true nature. To come to know the soul, we must, using the light of reason, consider what it is when purified of all disfiguring

bodily concerns.[31] After all, the soul best attains truth when it ignores the body—and when it doesn't, it is 'mutilated and crushed.' In Plato's mature view, only the soul is capable of acquaintance with the Forms, and only when mind turns its attention to the immutable and incorporeal Forms does it express its true, divine nature. As we are told in the *Phaedo*, 'in despising the body and avoiding it … the philosopher's soul is ahead of all the rest' (Plato 1961d, 65d).

Unlike Homeric and even Heraclitian conceptions, the Socratic/Platonic soul presents a familiar view, complete with the familiar philosophical distrust of everything bodily. According to the Burnet Hypothesis, 'it was to be his [Socrates'] concept of *psyche*—not … those of Aristotle or the Stoics—which was destined to be stamped on the European consciousness' (Robb 1986, 321). However much he explicitly rejects appeals to philosophical authority, Descartes is quite aware of what these authorities have to say, and it is a Platonic conception of soul that the inventor of modern mind appropriates and refines. Descartes takes Plato's ambivalent attitude toward the tripartite soul, and simplistically speaking, he 'solves' the difficulty by reducing the soul to nothing more than the intellect. Of course, this has the effect of highlighting and enhancing what is already an uncomfortable relationship for Plato, that of mind and body, but it is a price Descartes is willing to pay. Just as Plato joins body, as an inessential element, to soul, so too does Descartes. Just as Plato maintains that body has a corrupting influence on soul, so too does Descartes. Just as Plato maintains that body provides useful but confused information about the physical world, so too does Descartes. The Cartesian interpretation of soul has an obvious foundation in the work of Plato, albeit not a surprising one when we consider how strongly Descartes reacts against Aristotelianism (in the form of medieval scholasticism).

In addition to asserting the need to purify the mind from the corrupting influences of the body, Descartes also follows a Platonic account of innate ideas. In Descartes' case, knowledge of innate ideas is not gained via acquaintance with the Forms but through the natural light of reason, which we can trust through divine guarantee. This is highly similar to the Platonic story. Consider Plato's treatment of the soul in the *Timaeus*:

[31] See Plato 1961a, 30a-b; 1961d, 64e-65a.

> God invented and gave us sight to the end that we might behold the courses of intelligence in the heaven, and apply them to the courses of our own intelligence which are akin to them … that we, learning them and partaking of the natural truth of reason, might imitate the absolutely unerring course of God and regulate our own vagaries. The same may be affirmed of speech and hearing. They have been given by the gods to the same end and for a like reason. (1961h, 47b-c)

Reading this passage brings about an obvious comparison with Descartes in both the third and sixth Meditations. In both, God assures that through reason we can grasp the regularities of nature. In the third Meditation, Descartes tells us that

> by 'God' I mean the very being the idea of whom is within me … who is subject to no defects whatsoever. It is clear enough from this that he cannot be a deceiver, since it is manifest by the natural light that all fraud and deception depend on some defect. (1984, 35)

And in the sixth, he concludes that 'by my own nature in particular I understand nothing other than the totality of things bestowed on me by God' (Descartes 1984, 56). In these passages, and the arguments surrounding them, Descartes argues, as Plato before him, that God assures regularity in the world and has given us both senses and the mind necessary to understand what we sense.

The parallels go even further, however, in that both Plato and Descartes consider God to be the source of the soul or mind. Parents can provide the physical material for the body, but it is God who is the source of intelligent life. Plato says,

> Now of the divine, he himself was the creator, but the creation of the mortal he committed to his offspring. And they, imitating him, received from him the immortal principle of the soul, and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body, and made it to be the vehicle of the soul. … (1961h, 69c)

And again, 'intelligence could not be present in anything which was devoid of soul. … he [the creator] put intelligence in soul, and soul in

body …' (Plato 1961h, 30b). These thoughts are echoed by Descartes who says,

> as regards my parents … it is certainly not they who preserve me; and in so far as I am a thinking thing, they did not even make me; they merely placed certain dispositions in the matter which I have always regarded as containing me, or rather my mind, for that is all I now take myself to be. (1984, 35)

In both cases, God is the source of soul. And in both cases, for the same reason: soul is intelligent, immaterial, and immortal. Material bodies are merely a vessel for—and a corrupting influence on—soul. For Descartes,

> there is within us but one soul, and this soul has within it no diversity of parts: it is at once sensitive and rational too, and all its appetites are volitions. It is an error to identify the different functions of the soul … an error which arises simply from our failure to distinguish properly the functions of the soul from those of the body. (1985, 346)[32]

Now, this passage appears to stand opposed to the concept of a tripartite soul, but, then again, Plato is indecisive in his endorsement of a multifaceted soul given that the spirited and appetitive parts are associated with the body. In the *Phaedo*, Plato claims it is 'natural for body to disintegrate rapidly, but for soul to be quite or very nearly indissoluble' (1961d, 80b), which could imply that parts of the soul associated with the body fail to survive death—and in the *Timaeus*, he actually maintains that only nous is immortal.[33] Whatever Plato's indecision about parts of the soul, Descartes does not share in it. While arguing for the unity of soul, Descartes places the error in failing to distinguish properly the functions of the soul from those of the body. Mind is utterly distinct, but in restricting mind to the rational elements of the soul, Descartes remains solidly in line with Platonic doctrine.

[32] He reiterates this idea in Meditation VI. See Descartes 1984, 59.

[33] See Plato 1961h, 41c-d, 69c-d, 90a. Also consider Descartes, who says in the *Meditations*, 'the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible' (1984, 59).

At this point, what should be evident is how Descartes incorporates into his account of soul rather nonstandard aspects of Greek thinking. Plato is unquestionably an important and influential philosopher, but his somewhat disembodied and ambivalently unified intellect are atypical for his era. Although the robustness of the Greek soul is evident in Plato's work, he eventually diminishes and de-emphasizes most of the material aspects and functions. Insofar as these diverge from intellect, they are either dangerous contaminants or unimportant elements. At times, Plato appears to treat soul simply as nous, but doing so has implications that mirror problems of exclusion in modern accounts of reason. As Plato says in the *Timaeus*, 'The only being which can properly have mind is the invisible soul' (1961h, 46d). Yet as Robert Hall argues, this introduces a significant difficulty. In reducing the immortal soul to mere reason (nous), Plato creates an incompatibility between 'a theory of the personal immortality of the individual … [and] the importance of having in this life the right sort of moral condition for the after life' (1963, 64). That is to say, if the immortal soul is devoid of all desires, emotions, and affections, then personal individuality and moral responsibility dissolve. Why? Because in its immortal condition, nothing could separate it from other rational souls. Individual personality is lost and the *only* thing that remains to possibly distinguish one disembodied soul from another would be numerical differentiation. Notably, this should sound highly reminiscent of feminist and communitarian criticisms made against a Rawlsian original position. Speaking for many of these critics is Susan Moller Okin, who maintains that

> The coherence of Rawls's hypothetical original position, with its unanimity of representative human beings, … is placed in doubt if the kinds of human beings we actually become in society not only differ in respect of interests, superficial opinions, prejudices, and points of view that we can discard for the purpose of formulating principles of justice, but also differ in their basic psychologies, conceptions of self in relation to others, and experiences of moral development. (1987, 69)

In other words, if all we have is modern reason or Platonic nous, we lack any assurance of any personality that demarcates one soul, as opposed to

any other soul, as *mine* or as *yours. Something* has to individuate persons. If soul or mind is associated merely with the narrowly conceived rational element, then we lose all sense of what makes persons different, and if we lose all sense of difference, then we also risk advocating for a universal standard of reason that is anything but universal. Once again, bias invisibly enters with the declaration that difference does not matter.

Of course, Okin is as concerned with how Plato's view of women as property eradicates difference as she with Rawlsian arguments—and for similar reasons. A central aspect of her argument is that in the ideal world of the *Republic*, that very place that begins the demarcation of the human population, in this ideal world, the 'annihilation of traditional sex roles among the guardians is total' (Okin 1977, 358). Of course, this is in some ways a genuine gain for guardian women are freed of the primary responsibility for the family, but the cost is one many feminists are loathe to accept: the radical elimination of women's difference. 'She [the female guardian] must,' says Saxonhouse, 'sacrifice her role as the female of the species' (1976, 202). In other words, while she may be allowed to be a guardian, she is not allowed to be a *woman*. In this case, Plato's lack of essentialism, which can be and often is just as easily praised, manifests itself in that it requires women to act in ways that express masculine ideals, particularly of rational control over the body. In an important way, this is similar to modernism's insistence on everyone reasoning according to the same principles. Granting the equality of a female philosopher-ruler also demands, of necessity, diminishing her status *as a woman* insofar as she acts 'as a woman' she will be unworthy of being a guardian. While virtue may be identical for males and females, the standards of virtue are defined through so-called masculine traits. As a result, virtuous women will, of necessity, fail to reflect those qualities that supposedly make her a woman and instead will reflect mastery over the desires and influences of her body. She will, in other words, act like a man, sharing in masculine virtue and, thus, in a manner superior to lesser classes of persons, whether they be men or women.

Even worse? What Plato gives with one hand, he also takes with the other. His absolute denial of difference (at least in an ideal society) contrasts with other dialogues in which he addresses women quite specifically as female. In these instances, his remarks tend often to focus on the body

and tend to be highly pejorative. Plato is in no way ambivalent about the fact that having a female body is a corrupting influence on the soul. He time and time again describes women as exhibiting qualities unworthy of men—so much so that unworthy men are said to be re-born as women.[34] Given these difficulties, Plato's theory of soul offers little in the way of comfort for those who wish to open reason to diversity. In addition, when Plato, like Descartes after him, denies the significance of difference, it has the effect of making difference invisible since its insignificance means that we need not observe it or otherwise draw our attention to it. Conversely, when Plato does acknowledge difference, he denigrates it, just as Hume and Kant later do. Difference implies better and worse, and philosophers, who are always male and always white, always place themselves at the pinnacle of the comparisons. In other words, Plato is damned if he does assert difference and damned if he does not assert it. 'Classification of human varieties is never innocent' (Larrimore 2008, 342), but in a very binding twist, neither is the refusal to classify.

In addition to the elimination of difference, Hall identifies a further problem with Plato's identification of persons with nous: a truly hierarchical notion of soul. Now, Plato is not actually opposed to hierarchical conceptions and would not himself see this as a problem. As the myths of the *Republic* make clear, not all souls are created equal. Guardians are surely better able to transcend the corrupting influence of body and to ascend to the level of the Forms. What Hall notices in the *Phaedo*, however, is something of an inconsistency. 'Immortality … in its true meaning of the soul's everlasting contemplation of the forms apart from any bodily condition,' says Hall, 'is completely dependent on the soul's attainment of intelligence (*φρόνησις*), presumably knowledge of the forms' (1963, 67). Significantly, just as Kant restricts moral dignity to rationality, the Platonic limiting condition on immortality—namely, intelligence—implies that very few souls actually achieve immortality since most fail to be sufficiently purified. And, as it turns out, Plato does give every appearance of intending to say precisely this. In the *Timaeus*, he maintains that 'Mind is the attribute of the gods and of very few men' (Plato 1961h, 51e). Plato might very well say with Kant, most men lack

[34] See Plato 1961h, 91a; Plato 1961c, 944d-e.

sufficient discipline to insulate mind from body and act solely according to principle, or at least according to an understanding of the Forms.

As with other Platonic doctrines, Descartes willingly follows suit. While discussing the soul, he says that the strongest souls undoubtedly 'belong to those in whom the will by nature can most easily conquer the passions and stop the bodily movements which accompany them. … The weakest souls of all are those whose will … constantly allows itself to be carried away by present passion' (Descartes 1985, 347). Despite his erstwhile inclusiveness in the crediting of reason to all humans, Descartes concurs with Plato: some souls are actually better at reasoning. And, alas, both philosophers end up with much the same result. However weakly Descartes asserts a hierarchical conception of reason, he does assert it. In the hands of his successors, reason comes to be as severely restrictive and contradictory as anything Plato offers. As with Plato, the moderns deny difference when it comes to white, male, European mind, but they emphasize it fully when it comes to the Laplander, the fair sex, or the African.

In addition to its restrictiveness in the attribution of intellect, Plato's idea of a hierarchical conception of the soul is also roundly criticized for introducing a deep tension between mind and body. It's not that Plato entirely rejects the pre-Socratic linkage between mind (or soul) and body, it's that he makes the body out to be a perpetually nefarious influence on the soul. Even the briefest overview of Plato's writings indicate an obvious tug-of-war between body and soul, both within individual humans as we live our lives and within theoretical attempts to explicate soul. The *Phaedrus*' image of the chariot expresses the strain as being between the three parts of the soul. In it we are metaphorically to see not only the tension but how bodily aspects of the soul must be tamed and controlled so that the soul can be properly ordered. This same tension takes place in further dialogues, such as *Gorgias*, in which Plato discusses how soul must engage in a self-discipline of its own desires.[35] For Elizabeth Spelman, this is especially inegalitarian for it supports a differentiation between better and worse souls, which in turn has gender implications.[36] Plato expects

[35] See Plato 1961b, 505b.

[36] See Spelman 1988, 27–31.

souls attached to male bodies to act in appropriately male ways, which are, naturally, superior to female ways of acting. Male souls that fail to act in appropriately male ways are destined to return in their next lives as women. To be later re-incarnated in a male body, which is the far more desirable state, they must overcome the further handicap of having to overcome the negative influences generated by female bodies.

Such attitudes certainly denigrate women, but at least Plato denies gender essentialism. In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of Plato is his uniqueness in the pantheon of the mighty dead: he accepts that it is in principle possible for some women to overcome their bodies and to be ruled by reason.[37] As he tells us, not all men do the same things because they are men, and not all women do the same things because they are women.[38] We are free to act differently than our bodies dictate, and as a result, Plato allows something that almost no other philosopher does: women are actually capable of 'acting like men'—and this is a good thing.[39] For this, he deserves credit. Nevertheless, while some women may be able to purify the soul and achieve intelligence, but most cannot. Yet, neither can most men. He shares with Kant the sense that the majority of people fail to achieve a rationality based on principles. Plato speaks of the differing nature of humans, concluding, on the one hand, that 'different natures should have differing pursuits and that the natures of men and women differ' (1961f, 453e) and, on the other hand, that not all men have the same natures.[40] He maintains that 'if it appears that the male and the female sex have distinct qualifications for any arts or pursuits, we shall affirm that they ought to be assigned respectively to each' (Plato 1961f, 454d). Unfortunately, the commitment to the equality of persons in Plato lends itself quite readily to injustice, at least in our sense of the term, since souls are to be distinguished by their nature and the role they play on the basis of that nature. Clearly, not everyone has an equal or equivalent soul. Of course, since ancient Greek philosophers were in

[37] For example, see Plato 1961f, 395e, 455e; Plato 1961d, 60a; Plato 1961a, 35b; Plato 1961c, 836e, 944d-e; Plato 1961h, 91a.

[38] See Plato 1961f, 455d-e.

[39] Here the contrast with Kant is stark, considering Kant's mockery of women who attempt to act like men by practicing philosophy. Such women 'might as well even have a beard' (Kant 1960, 78).

[40] See Plato 1961f, 454d.

no way committed to egalitarianism, it should not be all that surprising that Plato, like his fellow Greeks, would divide the world into men and women, into Greeks and non-Greeks.[41] He is willing to allow that 'the allocation of social goods and responsibilities reflect natural inequalities in virtue and that these natural inequalities be assessed directly, rather than via any correlated physical traits' (Kamtekar 2002, 1). While he avoids correlating virtue with physical traits (for the most part), his position still simultaneously eliminates and asserts difference in much the same way as the moderns. Difference isn't important—until it is.

This tradition of denying difference and setting up hierarchies may originate with Plato, but as I have indicated, it is unquestionably evident in modernism as well. Recognizing this, Mills specifically makes a case that ancient inegalitarianism carries over fully into the Enlightenment. He says,

> just as the hierarchical ideologies of the ancient and medieval world were multiply-tiered, with different standings (of class) for different sets of human beings, we would be forced to acknowledge that (actual, historical) liberalism also is a two-tiered ideology, with a different status assigned to, and correspondingly differentiated norms prescribed for, whites and non-whites. (Mills 2002, 10)

Even though Descartes appears to take much more seriously the equality of reason, he follows Plato's footsteps in distrusting the body and in taking it to be a corruptor of reason. Even though Descartes allows all men (and perhaps women) to be equally capable of reason, only those souls/minds that can free themselves from the constraints of body achieve genuine knowledge. By the end of the Enlightenment, this need to free oneself from the constraints of body becomes a necessary condition of moral agency; it becomes a necessary condition that women and non-whites can achieve only with great difficulty, if at all. In the case of race, Kant so believes in the unavoidable influence of body (unless one is transcendently white) that race, which is imposed on us through our physical environment, is indicative of mental ability. Race is something

[41] For more on Plato's attitudes toward Greeks versus barbarians, see Kamtekar 2002.

that happens to us. Yet this something that happens to us is not morally neutral for it undermines our rational capacity and, hence, moral standing. The marker of difference, a difference which ultimately lies in the 'special seeds or natural dispositions' of humanity, is imprinted on bodies in the form of skin color much the same way that having a male body or a female body affects the soul for Plato. One difference, however, is that Plato at least allows that there is nothing *essential* that makes women's souls lesser than men's. Still, both Cartesian and Platonic souls are discriminatory in the same way: certain bodily markers are generally indicative of a lesser soul or mind or rational capacity.

In all this concern with difference and hierarchy, Aristotle emerges as an incredibly unlikely hero. After all, given his explicit denigration of women, his argument for slavery, his diminishing of the rational capacities of the working class, he appears as unlikely a candidate as one could find to be reason's savior. If Aristotle is clear about anything, it is that humans are not equal—not politically, not morally. This hardly seems the place from which to begin reconstructing an inclusive account of rationality. Nevertheless, Aristotle's hierarchical (most would say racist and sexist) essentialism does not entail a rejection of body or a diminishing of difference—and therein lies a critical difference. More to the point, Aristotle insists on diversity in a way that neither Plato nor Descartes can tolerate. If the Burnet Hypothesis is correct and it is Plato's, not Aristotle's, notion of soul that we inherit, it behooves us to consider the Aristotelian alternative.

4.3 Aristotle and the Diversity of Soul

As the fragmentary and haphazardly organized soul of the pre-Socratics becomes unified and systematized in Socrates and Plato, so too does soul become distinct from body. This separation of nous from the nutritive and emotive elements leaves it, on Plato's view, purified of the various subjective desires and preferences which can interfere with contemplation of formal reality. By contrast, Aristotle is less enamored with the search for Forms, honoring, as he does, truth before friends. What Plato does do that Aristotle supports, however, is to introduce a hierarchical

understanding of soul. For Plato, souls become better and worse as they overcome (or not) material influences and obtain (or not) knowledge of the world's ontological structure. While Aristotle may reject this detachment of souls from material reality, he does agree with Plato that there is a hierarchy among souls. Aristotle notes, for instance, that the virtues of men, women, children, and slaves are all different.[42] He asks us to recognize and accept that material aspects of the soul make a genuine difference in our lives. In this, Aristotle turns Plato on his head—and seemingly not in a good way. On first glance, Plato actually emerges as the more egalitarian of the two since he allows, in principle, that virtue is virtue, regardless of what body one has. Plato allows that the virtue of a man is no different than the virtue of a woman, even if a woman is at a disadvantage when it comes to achieving that virtue. Conversely, Aristotle maintains that not only are people not equal, this lack of equality is essential. Put simply, difference always matters.

Despite the fact that Aristotle is quick to point out the essential differences among human beings, he still manages to remain a bit more progressive than many moderns insofar as he holds that *all* humans are capable of virtue.[43] *Even slaves are men* and therefore share in rational principle, which is more than what Kant allows some men—and virtually all women.[44] Within Aristotle's recognition of difference lies the understanding that everyone has some capacity for intellectual or moral virtue. The virtue of a woman may be different from that of a man, but she can attain virtue—and *a virtue based on principles*. Despite the fact that Aristotle himself may not be the perfect (or even a good) poster child for inclusion, his account of rationality recognizes human varieties in a manner that demonstrates a sensitivity to differences that goes beyond simply how they deviate from some idealized model. He reintroduces much of the pre-Socratics' understanding of diversity within the soul.

[42] See Aristotle 1941e, 1259b20-60b7.

[43] This may sound counterintuitive given Aristotle's remarks on women and slaves when compared to the moderns 'universal rights of man' talk. As I have already argued, however, the moderns are not as egalitarian as they appear, and as I will argue, an Aristotelian-styled virtue need not be as narrow as Aristotle portrays it. We live in a world that looks out other windows and has other biases. Such differences matter.

[44] Aristotle 1941e, 1259b28-9. Of course, Kant does allow women their own virtue. Less clear is whether non-whites, especially those near the bottom of the hierarchy, are allowed virtue.

The question is whether his approach to reason is capable of guiding us past problematic conceptions of human varieties.

'To attain any assured knowledge about the soul is one of the most difficult things in the world.'[45] Thus begins *De Anima*, Aristotle's most sustained treatment of the soul, with an immediate acknowledgment of the difficulty of the task. What makes matters even more challenging is that the interpretive details relating to Aristotle's connection of body and soul are subject to much debate.[46] Aristotle might be a materialist; he might be a dualist; he might be a functionalist; or he might be none of these things since these terms come with modern connotations that would be foreign to Aristotle. As much as I would hope to get Aristotle right, my primary interest is not whether any particular interpretation captures his arguments most accurately. Rather, I care about how his approach to the soul offers a more expansive window on reason than Plato/Descartes and serves as a model for contemporary thinking concerning rationality. At the end of the day, I believe some instantiation of virtue can solve the problem of reason, although this instantiation cannot remain entirely true to Aristotle given the disparity of biases between his day and ours.

Regardless of how one interprets the fine details of Aristotle's arguments relating to body and soul, he clearly perceives them as interrelated. As Lakoff and Johnson construe the situation, both Plato and Aristotle deny a 'separation between the mind and the world. The difference lies in whether the world takes its shape from ideas (as in Plato) or whether the ideas take their shape from the world (as in Aristotle)' (1999, 374). That there is, for Plato, no such separation of mind and world is somewhat unclear given how Plato ambivalently identifies soul as something that *can be separated* from body (and, of course, the best souls are always free of bodily influence). Not so with Aristotle.[47] In fact, as Rorty points out, 'to show that mind was imaginable apart from body was … an entirely different project from that found in the tradition which stemmed from

[45] Aristotle 1941a, 402a10-11.

[46] A good place to begin in examining interpretations of *De Anima* in particular is Nussbaum and Rorty 1992. For further discussions of the relationship of soul and body in Aristotle, see Sorabji Heinaman, Ackrill, Burnyeat, Whiting, and Barnes.

[47] Aristotle does claim in *De Anima* that nous is immaterial (see 1941a, 413b24). I will discuss this issue shortly.

Aristotle' (1979, 52). The unity of mind and body is, for Aristotle, almost self-evident in its obviousness. Says Aristotle, 'we can wholly dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one: it is as meaningless as to ask whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one' (1941a, 412b6-8). And if the point concerning the unity of soul and body is not clear enough, he thoughtfully considers how soul actualizes body. The most proper and fundamental sense of this unity 'is the relation of an actuality to that of which it is the actuality' (Aristotle 1941a, 412b8-9). He adds that soul is the cause of a living body 'in all three senses which we explicitly recognize. It is (a) the source or origin of movement, it is (b) the end, it is (c) the essence of the whole living body' (Aristotle 1941a, 415b9-11). Any way you want to talk about soul and body, says Aristotle, we come to the same conclusion: soul and body belong together. He could not be more definitive on this point. What he is also definitive about is that souls are tied to *particular* bodies:

> it is the soul by or with which primarily we live, perceive, and think [but] the soul cannot be without a body, while it cannot *be* a body; it is not a body but something relative to a body. That is why it is *in* a body, and a body of a definite kind. (Aristotle 1941a, 414a12-21)

Souls do not go with just any kind of body but are concretely linked to specific bodies. As such, intellect is less bound to some universalizable standard of evaluation than it is for Plato and Descartes. This is significant. As Plato and Descartes demonstrate, universalizability diminishes difference; otherwise, the universal would stand as an unachievable ideal. What Aristotle offers, at least at this point, is an approach that not only rejects the universalizability that is the hallmark of narrow accounts of rationality but also explicitly embraces particularity. Given that bodies express difference, once again, difference matters.

This is very different from the Platonic approach, and it turns out that Aristotle actually finds something of a middle ground between the extremes of his predecessors.[48] As with the pre-Socratics, Aristotle allows

[48] While arguing for a quasi-Wittgensteinian interpretation, Nussbaum explains that

> Aristotle preserves the non-reducibility and … the experienced complexity of intentional phenomena such as perception, belief, and desire, criticizing both materialist reductionism

that soul has bodily aspects. Says Aristotle, 'Since nothing except what is alive can be fed, what is fed is the besouled body and just because it has soul in it. Hence food is essentially related to what has soul in it' (1941a, 416b9-10).[49] As with Plato, he admits that soul cannot be a body and that nous is something 'capable of existence in isolation from all other psychic powers' (Aristotle 1941a, 413b26).[50] The alternative Aristotle comes up with is a view which holds the cognitive power of soul to be distinct while retaining an essential connection to the nutritive aspect of soul. Given the clear interdependence of intellect with the functions of a living body, this middle position makes a great deal of sense. However, this is a view with its own tensions. Aristotle does at one point claim that mind 'seems to be a widely different kind of soul, differing as what is eternal from what is perishable; it alone is capable of existence in isolation from all other psychic powers' (1941a, 413b25-6). In this passage, he indicates that mind may be separable, which sounds more Platonic in outlook. Regardless of whether or not this wildly different kind of soul *requires* the body for its existence, this so-called separable part of the soul itself lacks various qualities that otherwise belong to more bodily aspects of soul. According to Aristotle,

> there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body. … It therefore seems that all the affections of soul involve a body—passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating; in all these there is a concurrent affection of the body. (1941a, 403a5-6; 403a16-18)

Here is visible the full import of the difference between an Aristotelian and a Platonic/Cartesian view on the soul. Not only do these affections all involve the body, but the body is required for the soul to be acted upon. As a result, the tension in Aristotle's account is ameliorated. He may

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and Platonist intellectualism for their inability to offer a causal explanation of motion that captures the richness and relevance of ordinary discourse about motion and action. (Nussbaum and Putnam 1992, 50)

[49] Also see 416b17-20.

[50] Here Aristotle does distinguish nous from body. I will discuss the difficulty of this passage in the following section.

retain a bit of Plato in treating nous as distinct from other parts of the soul, but he is also fully committed to asserting and explaining the integration of nous with other, essentially materialistic, functions of the soul.

However much Aristotle believes in the obviousness of mind/body unity, he rejects the idea that it can be taken for granted. To say that soul is attached to body without being identical to body is one thing; to explain this connection is another thing entirely. And Aristotle knows this. In fact, he specifically rejects Anaxagoras' account of soul because Anaxagoras does not consider 'how or in virtue of what cause can it [i.e., soul] be known?' Nor 'can any answer be inferred from his words' (Aristotle 1941a, 405b20-24). After considering his predecessors' views on soul, Aristotle maintains that they all involve the following absurdity:

> they all join the soul to a body, or place it in a body, without adding any specification of the reason of their union, or of the bodily conditions required for it. Yet such explanation can scarcely be omitted; for some community of nature is presupposed by the fact that the one acts and the other is acted upon, the one moves and the other is moved; interaction always implies a special nature in the two interagents. (1941a, 407b14-21)

We need an explanation of the union of soul and body, but not just any explanation will do; rather, 'the study of the soul must fall within the science of Nature' (Aristotle 1941a, 403a28-29). The naturalistic account Aristotle offers makes soul the form of the material of living bodies.[51] This is Aristotle's hylomorphism.

For Aristotle, soul is essential to matter, not because it is itself matter, but because it provides the form for the material body. In describing this, he says, 'Suppose that what is literally an "organ", like an axe, were a natural body, its "essential whatness," would have been its essence, and so its soul' (1941a, 412b13-14). That is to say, soul is precisely what makes a body the sort of body that it is. From here, Aristotle concludes that 'the soul is inseparable from its body, or at any rate that certain parts of it are (if it has parts)—for the actuality of some of them is nothing but the actualities of their bodily parts …' (1941a, 413a4-5). While Aristotle

[51] See Aristotle 1941a, 412a17-30.

rejects his predecessor's inability to provide a naturalistic explanation of the union of soul and body, he does share their sense that the soul has a variety of parts or functions or capacities, as well as their sense that soul is immersed in the world which surrounds it. Because the soul contains biological functions as well as mental ones, Aristotle offers a much more comprehensive conception than what Descartes offers. Soul is tied to a set of capacities that are unified within a single form but that can nonetheless be distinguished from one another. In *De Anima*, Aristotle determines that the soul is defined by the various powers: of nutrition, of sensation, of thinking, and of producing motion.[52] Obviously, some of these capacities (e.g., nutrition and sensation) will be essentially linked with body, although intellect or thinking is not.[53] Yet this does not mean that the body and soul are discrete. Aristotle reminds us that 'substance' has three meanings,

> form, matter, and the composite of these two; and of these three, matter is potentiality, but form is actuality. So since the living thing is the composite of the two, it is not the body that is the actuality of the soul, but the soul that is the actuality of the body, and of a certain [kind of] body. And, because of this, those who think that the soul does not exist without a body or is not a body of any sort have the right belief. (1941a, 414a15-20)

In this way, Aristotle avoids, or at least attempts to avoid, the difficulty of explaining how the various capacities and parts of the soul work together to form a unity. Since mind (along with nutrition and locomotion) is a form of soul, mind is wedded to body.[54] Aristotle's reason? Because if the mind and body were not unified, we would be unable to explain phenomena such as voluntary movement or sensation.

Such a position seems to be best described in post-Cartesian terms as something in between what we would consider dualism or materialism. It is not dualism because soul, at least in some aspects, is dependent upon body. For example, 'if deprived of food, it must cease to

[52] Sorabji argues that these capacities, as parts of the soul, simply *are* the soul. See Sorabji 1974, 64–65.

[53] See Aristotle 1941a, 413b12–15.

[54] See Aristotle 1941a, 414b17–415a12.

be' (Aristotle 1941a, 416b19). It is not materialism because soul also has parts that are 'capable of existence in isolation of all other psychic powers' (Aristotle 1941a, 413b25-6). Bodies are essentially besouled; souls are integrated with body, but souls are not in every way dependent on the body. The remaining question, then, is how the material and psychic elements of the soul interact. Upon determining that the soul is the substance or actuality of the body, Aristotle claims, 'We have now given an answer to the question, What is soul?—an answer which applies to it in its full extent. It is substance in the sense which corresponds to the definitive formula of a thing's essence' (Aristotle 1941a, 412b10-11). This, of course, follows along the lines of *Metaphysics* Z. In order to answer the question 'what-is-it-to-be-an-X?' one must consider not only the matter and form but also the composite of the two.[55] Aristotle explicitly states in the *Metaphysics* that 'it is clear also that the soul is the primary substance and the body is matter, and man or animal is the compound of both taken universally' (Aristotle 1941c, 1037a5-6). What is significant about this is that Aristotle's explanation of soul does not treat it as something distinct from any other part of reality. That is, soul is treated simply as specific case in the larger theory of the relation of individuals to their species and genus.[56] In Aristotle's own words: 'The affections of soul are inseparable from the material substratum of animal life' (1941a, 403b18-19). An Aristotelian soul is not self-sufficient in the way modern minds come to be. It cannot stand alone as an independently existing thing. In this, Aristotle shares the communal understanding that re-emerges in post-Cartesian philosophy.

One advantage of Aristotelian ways of thinking, at least from a post-Cartesian perspective, is that Aristotle offers a clear alternative to modernism.[57] After all, he is the foil against which modern rationality takes shape. Whether or not Aristotle adequately explains how these various aspects of the soul come together into a unity, he at least offers a useful

[55] See Aristotle 1941c, 1029a3-4.

[56] For more on this, see Nussbaum and Putnam 1992, 30.

[57] Many interpreters of Aristotle believe he offers a clear alternative to Descartes. See Barnes, Kahn, Frede, and Sorabji.

model of soul in which reason is interconnected with the whole of the human being.[58] If nothing else, Aristotle refuses to view the world as divided into mind and matter. Soul is the essence of a living body, and as Michael Frede explains, 'Aristotle thinks that there is no reason to treat the so-called mental functions, things like desiring, thinking, and believing, any differently than the ordinary living functions' (1992, 96). In other words, one of the greatest strengths of his account—and one definitely absent in modern accounts—is that the psychological functions of soul are distinguishable but not distinct from the purely physical or emotional functions. Mind is integral to the living body, but body is also integral to mind.

That being said, one problem with Aristotle's approach is that he includes in *De Anima* an explicit claim that nous is immaterial.[59] In doing this, he opens fissures between mind and body, with all the potential difficulties contained therein. In taking note of this indiscretion, Rorty offers the following disapproving comment, 'even Aristotle, who spent his life pouring cold water on the metaphysical extravagances of his predecessors, suggests that there probably is *something* to the notion that the intellect is "separable," even though nothing else about the soul is' (1979, 40). Even Aristotle, who chastises Anaxagoras for failing to consider what the soul has in common with anything else in the universe (thereby making it knowable), is seduced by Plato's separation of mind and body. Despite this observation, Rorty is uncharacteristically sympathetic with Aristotle on this particular point. As critical as he is of dividing nous from the material world and as critical as he is of ocular imagery, Rorty offers an excuse on Aristotle's behalf, saying,

> There is no point in trying to pin the blame on Aristotle or his interpreters. The metaphor of knowing general truths by internalizing universals, just as the eye of the body knows particulars by internalizing their

[58] What his account really has going for it is that he addresses the problem of mind/body unity head-on. Kahn, in particular, tells us that 'Aristotle offers us the best alternative to the dualist and anti-dualist theories of mind that have plagued philosophy with persistent and fruitless conflict for more than three centuries' (1992, 359). In other words, even if Aristotle's account of the unity of mind and body is ultimately less than satisfactory, it is still more satisfactory than alternative accounts.

[59] See Aristotle 1941a, 413b24.

> individual colors and shapes, was, once suggested, sufficiently powerful to become the intellectual's substitute for the peasant's belief in life among the shades. (1979, 41)

In essence, it's not really Aristotle's fault. After all, once Plato introduces the idea of the intellect as something special, as something capable of grasping universal principles, it is too attractive an idea to abandon. Yet Rorty isn't the only one to notice Aristotle's indiscretion. On this same issue of the immateriality of nous, Charles Kahn argues that it sets up a highly problematic tension between mind and body in Aristotle's thought. The tension exists, of course, because if nous is something *radically* different from body, the question of how they interact, a question with which Aristotle himself is explicitly concerned, becomes seemingly insoluble. Says Kahn, 'I do not see that there is any genuine resolution for this tension within Aristotle's account of the *psuchē*.' But, in a move as sympathetic as Rorty's, he also suggests that 'this is not so much an inconsistency in his theory as a systematic attempt on his part to do justice to our split nature as human beings' (1992, 361). This distinction, says Kahn, is supposedly simply a consequence of our dual nature as physically *and* culturally determined beings. As animals, we have appetites and emotions, but as humans, we possess reason, which includes access to logic, language, and logos. However, Kahn also thinks that allowing humans a dual nature makes unavailable the sort of naturalistic explanation Aristotle desires. The deeper worry is that if Aristotle's account is not amenable to a naturalistic explanation, it has less relevance than naturalistically respectable alternatives. Then again, rescuing Aristotle on this point, this might require a broader view of what counts as a naturalistic explanation than what, say, Enlightenment scientists allow.

My concern is that Rorty's and Kahn's apprehensions fail to do justice to what counts as a naturalistic explanation within Aristotelian science—and to what becomes of Aristotelian essences after Darwin. The latter task, that of considering the impact of evolutionary theory on essentialism, must wait. The prior task, that concerning the scope of naturalistic explanations, has available a perfectly good explanation.[60] Consider the

[60] Aristotelian essences are altered by evolutionary theory, and this will be a topic that I discuss in the following chapter, where I argue for a contemporary account of virtue.

way Aristotle criticizes Anaxagoras for treating nous as a deus ex machina. He says, 'when he [Anaxagoras] is at a loss to tell from what cause something necessarily is, then he drags reason in, but in all other cases ascribes events to anything rather than reason' (Aristotle 1941c, 985a20-1). In contrast, Aristotle makes every effort to account for the relationship of the material and immaterial parts of the soul, and to do so from within his system of physics. Says Lenn Goodman, Aristotle does not treat nous as 'tacked on to nature …. It works in and through the natural principles, as the ultimate cause, the goal of all change: As the principle of pure actuality and perfection, Aristotle's *nous* directs all things toward the good' (1988, 113). Specifically, Aristotle never asks for anything less than a fully naturalistic account of soul. The issue then becomes how nous is integrated with the material world. For Aristotle, explanation includes consideration of a thing's essential or inner nature. In the case of soul, it is the actuality or essence of what is potentially besouled, that is, body.[61]

> Since in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, (1) a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, (2) a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all …, these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul….
>
> Mind in this sense of it is separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature activity (for always the active is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter which it forms). (Aristotle 1941a, 430a10-20)

Explanation requires more than just matter; it requires form. To miss this is to miss a central aspect of Aristotelian science. The problem with contemporary concerns over the immateriality of nous is that these fail to consider the full range of naturalistic explanation, at least they fail to consider what counts as naturalistic for Aristotle. What they miss are the metaphysical aspects of inquiry.

There is more than one way to skin a cat—and there's more than one way to provide a naturalistic explanation. Appeals to atomic particles

[61] See Aristotle 1941a, 414a5-28.

and universal laws of nature, for example, would not be considered sufficient on an Aristotelian view for it ignores everything save efficient causes. Consider for a moment, Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle on body and soul. While addressing this interpretation, John O'Callaghan draws on the way Aquinas links it to a larger issue, namely, act and potency. He says that 'potency and act are in a certain respect one …. And so it is not necessary for them to be united through some bond, like those things which are entirely diverse' (O'Callaghan 1997, 529). Said in more contemporary language, 'The soul is not an "it" housed in the body, but a functional structure in and of matter' (Nussbaum and Putnam 1992, 56). What happens with naturalistic explanations within Aristotelian science is not simply a reduction of everything to basic matter and governing principles. Instead, we must consider formal and material causes, and soul remains the formal cause of body even if is itself immaterial. More poetically, 'Act and potency is the skeleton key to the house of metaphysics. The positivists and scientists who try to make their physical principles the last word in all discussions have never entered the house. They stand and shout in the courtyard' (Van Roo 1940, 1). Basically, to hold Aristotle accountable to current standards of naturalistic explanation is anachronistically unfair. Soul provides a functional structure, but this functional structure is one that has implications for us since it promises a sort of practical explanation of the mind–body relationship. This structure does require some explanation, especially if it is to be taken seriously in our anti-metaphysical approach to philosophical questions, but that such an explanation might be had is plausible. After all, we live in a world that understands the structure of experience to be determined, in part, by a certain conceptual structure. If we can say something about what this conceptual structure is, we may very well have the means to explain the integral aspects of mind and body. And because nous and moral value are, for Aristotle, not transcendent but contained within the natural world, his moral theory offers a different avenue of explanation. What virtue promises to do is to 'restore to the concept of Rationality the richness of which Descartes had deprived the Classical *logos*' (Toulmin 2001, 203).

4.4 The Virtue of Difference

Aristotle's theory of virtue is a complex intermingling of intellectual and practical reasoning that must, of necessity, cope with a situationally sensitive world of experience. In a very important sense, it requires being-in-the-world. After all, virtue exists in the realm of practice and not theory, and being virtuous requires a material and social world that allows us to express our virtue. It also concerns a relationship between intellect and body, between mind and emotion, which can resolve the link between these two capacities.[62] Within Aristotle's theory of soul, which draws on the full complexity of Homeric and pre-Socratic thinking, lies a nested hierarchy of functions, from growth and nutrition, to perception and locomotion, to thought and intellect. These different functions have different roles to play in the acquisition and expression of virtue. The nutritive part of the soul, which is shared by other living beings, including plants, is responsible for nutrition and growth. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle observes that nutrition or appetite 'has no share in reason, [it] does not persuade but simply leads' (2011, 1224b3-4). This aspect of the soul is common to all living beings, and since it does not concern acting according to rational principle, it plays no role in virtue. On the other hand, the sensitive or appetitive part, which is apportioned to animals generally, is responsible for governing inclination and desire. This is a nonrational part of the soul, but it shares in a rational principle and can be trained to follow reason,[63] as such it concerns virtues such as temperance and courage,[64] and in fact, Aristotle identifies moral virtues as those virtues concerned with this part of the soul.[65] Finally, the intellectual part, which humans alone possess, is responsible for guiding the appetitive parts and performing actions conducive to good living. While the appetitive part of the soul supplies the material (i.e., pleasure and pains) with

[62] There is also an argument for the interaction of soul and body based on Aristotle's account of desire as a physiological process, but I will not discuss it here. See Sorabji 1974, 85–86.

[63] See Aristotle 1941d, 1102b13–35.

[64] See Aristotle 1941d, 1103b17–21.

[65] See Aristotle 1941d, 1103a3–6.

which reason must work, 'the rational part,' says Christine Korsgaard, 'exerts through the resulting ideas of the good a causal influence on the passions and dispositions, causing them to take a certain form' (1986, 276). What happens in the case of virtue is the different elements of the soul must work together to promote the overall good not just of the individuals but, ultimately, of the community. The intellectual part can be both theoretical and practical; thus, it guides us toward complete virtue. However, there is no single path to virtue. The variables are too complex for deterministic principles. The rational and appetitive parts of the soul must work in tandem to navigate a complex and changing world.

Virtue, then, is required to be responsive to difference, and consequently, its principles can only be schematically determined in the abstract. Yet whatever their lack of specificity, virtue must have some principles. What constitutes the appropriate response in any given situation cannot simply be a matter of unconscious acumen, even for the person possessing practical wisdom. Korsgaard takes note of something that anyone who has ever taught an ethics class will understand immediately: we cannot 'leave matters to intuition … for the range of cases in which we will find ready and intuitive agreement about the appropriateness of response is not great' (1986, 262). For Aristotle, the way around the amorphousness of intuition and to some guidance in formulating principles is through an appeal to metaphysics. The essential functions of activities are, after all, ontologically determined. The gods might have some say in which goods are to be achieved within each activity, but we mere mortals do not. Theoretically, a virtue approach to ethics may only allow us to schematically describe what it is to pursue the activity or what goods might broadly obtain, but in actual practice, the content of virtue becomes much more evident. Here, however, is a genuine difficulty for contemporary accounts. Aristotle may be allowed a metaphysical explanation, but we are not. To get around this, contemporary proponents of virtue offer alternatives such as a 'social teleology' in which goods are defined within communal practices, or, more notably, in relation to other people.[66] As with Aristotle's version, this makes it so we do not determine or choose our own ends (rationally or otherwise). Ends can be negotiated

[66] See MacIntyre 1981, 191.

since we determine them in communities, but they cannot be made completely new and with no history. Whether such an appeal to communally held definitions of goods and practices can avoid becoming relativistic is a concern, one to which I will return later. For the time being, however, the Aristotelian can at least point to a source of principles that guide our understanding of virtue—and as a source that lies outside of individual agents, it sidesteps the difficulty of epistemic/moral isolation, representation, and subjectivism.

This alternative, communally based, nonmetaphysical interpretation is, of course, highly Wittgensteinian in nature. As with language, we learn virtue in contexts in which success and failure become evident in the course of living. In both cases, it is similar to learning a skill. For example, I can tell you how to go about hitting a baseball, but unless you actually *want* to learn to do it and actually go out and *practice*, the lesson will do you no good. General heuristic principles offer only so much guidance. To become appropriately responsive to all the various factors that go into hitting the ball requires doing it, over and over and over again. Similarly, what constitutes a 'good hit' may be broadly specified in advance based on the goals of the game, but situations within games vary in ways that make a difference. For example, a hitter who always gets singles when no one is on base and strikes out every time a runner is in scoring position may not be considered as good a hitter as the person who does the opposite. A fly ball to right field with a runner on first is not nearly as good an out as when a runner is on third with less than two outs. Nussbaum puts a more theoretical twist on this idea, saying,

> The 'matter of the practical' can be grasped only crudely by rules given in advance and adequately only by a flexible judgment suited to the complexities of the case. He [Aristotle] uses a famous image, The good architect does not measure a complicated structure (e.g., a fluted column) with a straight edge. … Instead, he uses a flexible strip of metal that bends to the shape of the stone and is not fixed (1137b30-32). (1999, 160)

What is appropriate depends on the situation, and the virtuous person needs to understand this and to adjust her actions accordingly. Julia Annas explains that the 'learner in virtue, like the learner in a practical

skill, needs to understand what she is doing, to achieve the ability to do it for herself, and to do it in a way that improves as she meets challenges, rather than coming out with predictable repetition' (2011, 20). The case of virtue demands we be articulate about our reasons in a way not required when acquiring a skill. A good hitter in baseball certainly need not be capable of explaining what he or she does in hitting a ball. As Yogi Berra says, you can't think and hit. But the honest, generous, or courageous person needs more than a 'feel' for performing these actions. She must also act according to right principle. Says Annas, 'the vocabulary of virtue … directs us to the kind of reason relevant to the performance of the action, and the kind of consideration relevant to being someone who performs that kind of action as a matter of character' (2011, 43). We must act according to a right rule and for the right reasons. Otherwise, our actions are not deliberate in a morally appropriate way.

Moral virtues do relate to habit, but not unthinking habit. Because the virtuous person acts with respect to principle, she can suitably alter her behavior when unexpected or unforeseen circumstances arise. She will not simply respond in the way she was taught or do what she has always done, and she will certainly not act with respect to some universalizable principle that is devoid of specific content. Instead, she will demonstrate a capacity for novel, even creative, responses appropriate to the situation.[67] To act virtuously demands nothing less. In particular, virtue absolutely rejects defining rational belief or behavior in terms of purely logical procedures for to do so demonstrates a decided lack of sensitivity to the specificity of circumstances. Consequently, virtue requires something beyond mere habituation and skill.[68] It requires a response appropriate to the situation at hand, which sometimes differs from the response to which one is habituated. The sorts of circumstances to which we must be sensitive include material, emotional, and social aspects of human life. In this way, Aristotelian virtue addresses diversity and difference.

Beyond appetites and rational principles, emotions are an equally important consideration for virtue—and a consideration that further

[67] For a further discussion of this claim, see Annas 2011, 15.

[68] In addition to Annas, MacIntyre also discusses the difference between a mere skill and virtue. See MacIntyre 1981, 193.

enhances appeals to specificity and difference. Emotion, which is thoroughly relegated to the shadows in modern philosophy, is inescapable when it comes to character development. Part of being virtuous is learning to experience pleasures and pains in the right way and toward the right things or actions. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, for example, Aristotle says,

> The best exercises and food produce a good condition of the body, and a good condition of the body enables people to do the best work … therefore virtue too is a sort of disposition generated by the best movement in the soul and is the source of the best functions and emotions of the soul …. Both virtue and vice have to do with pleasant and painful, for punishments are medical remedies, and like other remedies, operate by opposites, in this case, the opposites of pleasure and pain. (2011, 1220a27)

In this case, virtue, a disposition generated by the soul, is the source of emotions—and not just any emotions, the best emotions. In turn, these emotions, like exercise and food in the case of the body, do real work in producing virtue. As Nussbaum explains, Aristotle takes emotion to be 'not blind animal forces, but intelligent and discriminating parts of the personality, closely related to beliefs of a certain sort, and therefore responsive to cognitive modification' (1996, 303). Virtue responds to and shapes our emotional reactions. Obviously, some of the circularity of virtue ethics is evident here: it takes good character to produce good emotions and good emotions to produce good character. But the circularity is not vicious when emotions are considered in the context of cognitive modification. Deborah Achtenberg argues that for Aristotle,

> Emotional development is not development of the capacity to manage basic and brute emotions—to control them, overpower them, suppress them, force them—but is development of the capacity to experience emotion and cognition in accord. … [E]motions are themselves types of cognition for Aristotle, specifically, perception or appearance of certain types of particulars as good or bad. (2002, 44)

For example, part of growing up means learning what emotions are appropriate for what situations. Emotionally shaped behavior that we

would expect and perhaps tolerate in a small child is not something we excuse in an adult. The more mature and, hopefully, more virtuous we become, the more we learn to moderate our emotions in ways that lead to better outcomes, or at least to better self-mastery. Emotions are part of personality, but they are also something we are often expected to develop and transform; thus, they are relevant to acquiring and expressing virtue.

Nowhere is the need to have the right emotions for the right reasons clearer than it is in Aristotle's discussion of friendship. Aristotle asks, 'if one accepts another man as good, and he turns out badly and is seen to do so, must one still love him?' His answer: 'Surely it is impossible, since not everything can be loved, but *only what is good*' [italics added] (1941d, 1165b12-14). Love is not pure feeling but is, or at least should be, responsive to the objects toward which it is directed. That is, we must be receptive to arguments concerning emotion (or, perhaps, the appropriateness of emotion) and be sensitive to how these arguments may shift and change with circumstances. One should love friends, but if a friend comes no longer to be good, the love must be reconsidered. In other words, emotions are more than simple unreflective feelings; they are tied to cognition and cognitive development. Beyond this sort of responsiveness, a further aspect of emotion concerns its relationship to judgment. As we all recognize, people in different emotional states may differ with respect to the judgments they make. If I am happy, I am likely to be more understanding and patient with others, while anger often elicits the opposite reaction. Because emotion has this sort of interplay with judgment, emotions are not always correct.

This is quite different from any modern explanation of emotion, which not only radically distinguishes emotion from cognition but that find emotions, generally speaking, either ethically blameless or irrelevant. Where the moderns view cognition as something distinct from passions and desires, Aristotle views emotions, as well as mere pleasures and pains, as integral to good reasoning. Aristotle explains that 'Emotions are all those feeling that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure' (1941f, 1378a20-21). In addition, these emotions, which are intelligent, are related to certain types of belief about the world and are thereby tied to features of a world outside the

mind. For example, the emotion of pity involves cognition concerning aspects of external reality. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines pity as

> a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon. In order to feel pity, we must obviously be capable of supposing that some evil may happen to us or some friend of ours. … (1941f, 1385b13-18)

Here, Aristotle explicitly states that pity involves a cognitive component, but he becomes even more explicit at the end of the passage when he adds, 'So much for the mental conditions under which we feel pity' (1941f, 1386a4). Nussbaum points out that Aristotle lists occasions when we will pity another person—loss of friends or children, health problems, opportunities. These are things that we esteem. They are things that attach us to a world outside ourselves. Yet the connection between the feeling of pity and the circumstances that produce it depends on a cognitive component. What happens, says Nussbaum, is that 'In pity and fear, we acknowledge our vulnerability before the circumstances of life; we have those emotions, he makes plain, only if we really do think that life can do something to us, and that this something matters' (1996, 312). This is not the Socratic vision of soul as untouched by physical harms.

The story given by Socrates in the *Apology* and Plato in the *Republic* (not to mention Enlightenment philosophers) is that emotion and external circumstances are to be excluded from considerations of virtue. Socrates holds that a good man cannot be harmed by external circumstances. Plato claims that a good person is self-sufficient and 'distinguished from other men in having least need of anybody else' (1961f, 387d-e). He also claims 'nothing among human things is worth much seriousness' (1961f, 604b–604c). These views are closer to Descartes' position that we should be capable of separating our minds from nonrational concerns, even if we are forced to acknowledge that mind can interact with and be affected by body. Aristotle's account in no way suggests this. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he states that *eudaimonia* requires external goods such as friends, riches, political power, good birth, good children, and beauty. That is, we do not live lives that are removed from the material and emotional

conditions of life. Contrary to the moderns, Aristotle's insight into emotion suggests, says Nussbaum, that 'philosophy is not self-sufficient as a shaper of souls' (1996, 319). We have material, institutional, relational lives that shape us for good and for ill. We have parents who love and care for us—or not. We are hungry—or not. We have hopes, fears, expectations. These affect us and the possibilities for our lives.

4.5 Virtue and Representation

One final aspect of Aristotle's account of mind is how it is drawn into debates concerning mental representation. Ocular metaphors and spectator theories of knowledge begin in earnest with Plato, and Aristotle follows suit in making use of such imagery. When discussing the essential nature of vision itself, Aristotle stands in the tradition of Homer: 'If the eye were an animal, its vision would be its soul; for vision is the eye's substance with respect to [the eye's] formula. The eye itself is the matter for vision; and if [vision] departs, there is no eye any longer …' (Aristotle 1941a, 412b18-19). The emphasis on the eye itself is precisely what Homer offers, but it is all Homer can offer. Aristotle, by contrast, has a much richer conception of soul and does not stop with a simple physiological depiction of vision. He further claims that 'the soul is actuality in the sense corresponding to the power of sight …; the body corresponds to what exists in potentiality; as the pupil *plus* the power of sight constitutes the eye, so the soul *plus* the body constitutes the animal' (Aristotle 1941a, 413a1-4). The relation of the soul to the body is that of the relation of sight to the eye. As with Plato and not with Homer, vision is linked to soul.

However, here is where contemporary philosophers find fault and attempt to peg Aristotle as a representationalist—and here is where Aristotle's view may very well come to share in modern difficulties, assuming the accusation stands. In essence, if Aristotle does depict vision as a faculty contained within the Mind's Eye, then, as Dewey notes much later, a spectator theory of knowledge is the unavoidable result. Naturally enough, Dewey does attempt to pin the legacy of representationalism on Aristotle as well as Plato, and perhaps for good reason. Says Dewey,

> The theory of knowing is modeled after what was supposed to take place in the act of vision. The object refracts light to the eye and is seen; it makes a difference to the eye and to the person having an optical apparatus, but none to the thing seen. The real object is the object so fixed in its regal aloofness that it is a king to any beholding mind that may gaze upon it. (1988, 19)

This sounds quite similar to what Aristotle has to say concerning vision, although he does avoid talk of 'regal aloofness.' What Aristotle appears to imply, at least on a semi-modern interpretation, is that the soul corresponds to sight. In this way, he suggests that the mind 'sees' in a way analogous to physical sight. Even more damning, Putnam accuses Aristotle of being a linguistic representationalist. According to Putnam, a Cryptographic model of meaning can be traced back to Aristotle and the opening lines of *De Interpretatione*:

> Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the mental experiences, which these directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images. (Aristotle 1941b, 16a2-7)[69]

What makes this a Cryptographic model is that the mind thinks thoughts in some sort of internal language, such as Mentalese, before coding them in a natural language, such as English, and communicating them to a hearer.[70] According to it, 'when we understand a word or any other "sign," we associate that word with a "concept." This concept determines what the word refers to' (Putnam 1988, 19). On this interpretation, concepts, or internal contents of the mind, determine the referent of words. The words are simply what cracks the code of the mind–world connection. Although not discussing Aristotle directly, Putnam goes on to indicate that 'Etymologically, *meaning* is related to *mind*. To *mean* something was problem, in the oldest usage, just to *have it in mind*' (1988, 19). So, if

[69] For a summary of Putnam's argument and a defense of Aristotle against Putnam's criticisms, see O'Callaghan 1997.

[70] See Putnam 1988, 6.

Aristotle really offers this sort of representationalist account, his view articulates the very inner/outer distinction that gets the moderns into such trouble.

Now, Putnam believes we must reject this so-called Aristotelian model because he thinks that it commits Aristotle (or anyone else who holds it) to the assumption that the mental representation inherently determines its referent. That is, mental experiences are supposed to intrinsically hook onto the world in such a way that the 'hooks' are shared by *all* language users—even if the actual words or symbols used in particular languages are not shared. If so, this certainly solves the problem of the veracity of representations, but the difficulty is that this connection offers a magical and uninformative explanation—of the kind Aristotle expressly rejects when dealing with connection of mind and body. But, of course, this 'magical' theory seems inherently flawed for when we broadly consider issues of representation, it *appears* that mental representations actually lack any sort of intrinsic reference. Instead, what we find is that 'All of the representations we know about have an association with their referent which is contingent, and capable of changing as the culture changes or as the world changes' (Putnam 1988, 21-22). So, if Aristotle really does hold a Cryptographic model of meaning, he not only holds a representational theory of meaning, but also holds one that flies in the face of his own belief and of our best evidence about linguistic reference.

Even though Aristotle's view may lend itself to a representationalist interpretation, the lingering view from modernist-inspired windows is not the only one available to us. As an alternative, O'Callaghan appeals to a nonmodern explanation of Aristotle. And given that Aquinas, the relevant nonmodernist, shares many of the same assumptions as does Aristotle, his is likely a more charitable interpretation than those offered from a contemporary vantage point. On Aquinas' analysis, says O'Callaghan, Aristotle is not committed to a dichotomy between internal appearances and external reality.[71] Rather, Aristotle's view is that concepts are not internal *things* to be 'grasped' or *things* that must be connected to the world; they are ways of talking about the act of conceiving. More technically, 'the concept … is to the intellect as act is to potency' (O'Callaghan 1997, 526).

[71] Another argument that Aristotle is not a representationalist can be found in Esfeld 2000.

Despite the medieval-sounding language, this point can also be made more palatable, by saying, to possess a mental concept is to possess a way of acting in the world.[72] As O'Callaghan recognizes, Aquinas and Wittgenstein sound somewhat similar on this point, which is significant since the latter is more likely to speak to a contemporary ear. Interpreting Aristotle through the lens of a Wittgensteinian approach to language also allows us to recognize more clearly how an Aristotelian account of reason need not be wedded to an antiquated ontology. And, given Aristotle's concern with not simply knowing the good but actually becoming good, we should have little difficulty envisioning an Aristotelian reason that relies on habit and interaction rather than representation.

Another advantage of Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle is that introspectable mental contents are seen not as primary but as secondary, which further aligns Aristotle's view with Wittgenstein's. Aristotle allows, says O'Callaghan, that through 'our cognitive awareness and attention, we are primarily and by nature directed to others, not upon ourselves or our concepts' (1997, 536). In this, an Aristotelian view surely has more in common with post-Cartesian outlooks than it does with Cartesian ones. For Aristotle, it is not the case that there exist in the mind ideas to which we have privileged access or that stand in need of connection to the world. Instead, we first live in the world, and only afterward, come to gain introspective awareness, and this can be seen all the more clearly in Aristotle's ethical thinking and in the concept of virtue. After all, we do not define virtue through some sort of internal intuition, or even through some internally held rational principle. We define virtue through activity in a world. For example, the equitable man is 'The man who chooses *and does* such [equitable] acts' [italics added] (Aristotle 1941d, 1137b35). One can conceptualize all day long, but in the end, it is the activity that matters. Furthermore, even though the action must be one of which the agent is consciously aware, we are told to act *from habit*, which implies the action is one the virtuous person does as a matter of course. With virtue, then, we find a direct connection between the intellect (i.e., the choosing) and the action. We also find that the connection between the intellect and action is not methodological or rigorously, invariably

[72] See O'Callaghan 1997, 527.

rule-governed. Rather, the interpretation of rules is open-ended and relies on the virtuous person's skill in applying them.

In responding to the insights and missteps of his predecessors, Aristotle offers a window on soul that stands in contrast to Platonic ones, and in this way, his outlook on soul presents an alternative to tightly prescribed, methodological Cartesian accounts. His view is one that takes reason to be both theoretical and practical, that places it firmly within a material and social world, and that recognizes within it a multiplicity of functions. When we look at how soul or mind or reason operates in the practical domain, Aristotle is clear that universal rules are unobtainable, even if they are quite attainable in scientific reasoning. Scientific reasoning, however, fails to exhaust what it is we do when we reason. We must also consider how it is we ought to live, even if how we ought to live may be only schematically described in outline. Of course, this is vastly different from modern ways of thinking. Korsgaard tells us that virtue

> is the state in which a human being can perceive correctly, and be motivated by, considerations of what is noble and good, and so can engage in rational activity. The capacity to be motivated by these considerations is the argument-susceptible state, in which desires and emotions are caused by the dictates of reason. What reason dictates is just what maintains this condition; it chooses what is best for itself. The virtuous person prefers and chooses those actions that maintain this condition, and such actions are morally good. (1986, 277)

The connection between soul, virtue, and goal-directed rational activity is complex, and is susceptible to emotional input. The virtuous or reasonable person instrumentally seeks the good, but since the good is substantively and contextually determined, there is a way of 'getting it right.' As a result, the virtuous person will be inclined to be sensitive to circumstances, to consider arguments, and to make sense to herself and others. And, the standards of virtue are ones that are publically available. All of this opens reason to wider considerations and contexts while understanding the good to be determined by considerations outside of itself.

In short, if reason is truly a virtue and not simply a set of procedures to be blindly followed, the foundations of modern exclusivity are fully

undermined. There can be no determining in advance how the process of reasoning is to proceed; thus, there can be no determining in advance that some people are inherently incapable of reasoning better than others. Sure, Aristotle himself is happy to attribute a lesser capacity of reason to some, but his judgment is based on a metaphysically grounded essentialism to which we no longer ascribe. Should we be capable of satisfactorily replacing Aristotelian essentialism, which will be a concern of the following chapter, the standard of competent reasoning becomes one to be negotiated rather than one that is pre-ordained by some transcendent, or even transcendental, standard.

Recovering a balance within reason is a theme that resonates throughout much contemporary thinking on reason. For philosophers who wish to expand the concept of reason beyond the methodological limits set by the modern program, an Aristotelian alternative demonstrates how this can be accomplished. For philosophers who wish to retain the normativity of Enlightenment moral concepts without retaining their exclusionary foundation, an Aristotelian alternative offers a promising option. Nevertheless, Aristotelian alternatives are not always straightforwardly acceptable options. After all, we live on the other side of the Copernican revolution and, thus, on the other side of the shift away from metaphysics and toward epistemology. If it is to be relevant to us, an Aristotelian model of rationality must function without the Greek ontology that modern physics and evolutionary biology overturn—but it also must function within a perspective deeply suspicious of Enlightenment ideas. Just as our physics is not Aristotle's physics, our physics is also not the Enlightenment's physics. What counts as a naturalistic explanation is not quite the same as it used to be, but this speaks in favor of Aristotle, not against. In fact, many of the old ideas of Aristotle are new again. For example, in addressing pragmatism's lineage, Toulmin maintains that it not only stands opposed to the precise mathematical models and the emphasis on theoretical physics, but also has its origin *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Art of Rhetoric*.[73] Elsewhere, Toulmin claims that 'Men demonstrate their rationality, not by ordering their concepts and beliefs in tidy formal structures, but by the preparedness to respond to novel situations with open minds—acknowledging

[73] See Toulmin 2000, 154.

the shortcomings of their former procedures and moving beyond them' (1972, vii–viii). This could not sound more like Aristotelian virtue.

What Aristotle and post-Cartesians share in common is a sense that our primary way of being is as agents *in a lived world*. Particularly in the case of ethics, we come to understand that some activities are more desirable than others, and reason is not simply what allows us to rank them but is also what guides us to achieving the goods of these activities. The epistemological case is not really any different. Certainly, theoretical knowledge is about determining reliable methods for attaining truth, but Aristotle does not treat this task as something distinct from coming to know a world within which we have direct contact. Knowledge of universals is not distinct from the particular objects we experience. What Aristotle shares with post-Cartesians is the refusal to turn inward. Instead, they all focus on the activity of living. What Aristotle adds to the contemporary discussion is a sense of how reason is truly an integrated, balanced set of functions that not only allow for but insist upon difference within unity. Virtue rationality lacks the precision of modern accounts—and happily so.

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5

The Promise of Virtue

The time has finally come to cash the promissory note offered at the beginning: to find a philosophical means of atonement for the concept of reason. I have arrived at the point where reason must prove itself. My argument thus far has focused on how the concept of reason has throughout the history of philosophy narrowed and widened, then narrowed and widened again. I have considered the development of reason as it emerged from a much broader conception of soul, and I have discussed how the constriction of reason limits its function and isolates it from both material bodies and a larger world. I have scrutinized how assumptions underlying modern accounts of reason both masked and assured a systemic marginalization. I have considered the largely epistemic reasons why contemporary philosophers became disenchanted with Cartesianism. And, I have examined the Greek emphasis on diversity within the soul. I pondered how contemporary thinkers have moved beyond modernist assumptions, and I considered how Aristotelian virtue shares much in common with post-Cartesian ways of formulating and resolving philosophical problems. I have suggested that treating rationality as a virtue concept promises a far more expansive view and offers an

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escape from many of the liabilities of modern thinking.[1] The time has come to make good on the promise.

The so-called problem of reason—that is, its ability to 'evoke images of domination, oppression, repression, patriarchy, sterility, violence, totality, totalitarianism, and even terror'—this is a modern problem. While I began with the presumption that for those of us working on this side of the medieval/modern divide, everything begins with the moderns, I refuse to believe that everything ends with the moderns. Cartesianism no longer rules the philosophical roost. Alternative ways of conceiving of philosophical problems are not simply possible but are desirable, and these alternatives allow us to stand outside of modern presumptions and more readily identify that era's biases. The so-called worship of reason, as we have seen, is not evident in early Greek thought. It comes to dominance through the influence of Plato and later Descartes. What results from this ascendency is a hierarchical understanding of souls in the case of Plato and a hierarchical understanding of reason in the case of the moderns. As difference is denied, it invisibly comes to matter all the more. Of course, difference always seems to be tied to material conditions, and the white males who supposedly transcend this difference confer upon themselves epistemic and moral agency, with all the rights and responsibilities contained therein. The rest of us, namely, those have the misfortune of being judged different, are denied agency; we are denied autonomy, denied freedom, and even denied personhood. As this venerated concept of reason reaches the height of its power in the Enlightenment, it is used in precisely the same manner in which Plato uses it—simultaneously to erase differences in gender and race while setting up hierarchies based on gender and race. Whatever pretensions to equality that the moderns tack on as window dressing to the Platonic account, Enlightenment representationalism can represent only certain people as people. The remainder are objectified, controlled, inscribed, and diminished. The result is what Taylor calls '"a dialectic of Enlightenment", in which reason, which promises to be a liberating force, turns into its opposite.' He concludes, as do many contemporary philosophers, that 'We stand in need of liberation from reason' (1989, 116).

[1] Although I have avoided discussing the issue here, I specifically deal with the dichotomous thinking inherent in Enlightenment concepts in Heikes 2012.

Given the moral indiscretions of Enlightenment thinking, the battle over reason does have every appearance of one which pits the forces of darkness and light, of narrowness and inclusion, against one another. On the one hand, tightly circumscribed rationality is normatively forceful, albeit morally exclusive. On the other hand, broadly conceived rationality allows for greater diversity, albeit in a manner that might just leave philosophy as nothing more than cultural criticism. The time has come to navigate this tension. Even if we are not going to be Cartesians, we face, as did Descartes, an unavoidable normative question: how *ought* we understand reason? And understand it we must. The stakes are simply too high. In the absence of reason, we lack substantive arguments for the *actual wrongness*, not just a we-in-our-community-think-it-is-wrong-ness, of exclusion and oppression. Pragmatists and others may be right that justification is more of a social phenomenon than it is a relation between a knowing subject and an object known. Still, the social phenomenon of justification best not be hermeneutical 'all the way down' or else we will, along with Rorty, find that we truly are in a post-Philosophical culture. Of course, we can ask: what's so wrong with post-Philosophical culture? But the answer is not difficult: taking seriously claims of justice means defending a conception of we humans as intellectual and moral beings, and this conception must offer more than what a mere 'intellectual czar' can offer.[2] We need something that can be defended with reasons that don't simply preach to the choir. Put more literally, we need to be able to defend the reality and immorality of oppression against those communities who reject this reality and this immorality. That we will win every argument is unlikely, but that we defend our ground is necessary. We require a rationality that can recognize and atone for its past sins and that can once again elicit associations with autonomy, freedom, justice, equality, happiness, and peace.

As we ask the same question as Descartes, it makes sense that we should also adopt his starting point: humans, this time *literally all humans*, are competent reasoners.[3] Whatever difficulties Descartes had with following through on this assumption, accepting it commits us to

[2] See Rorty 1982, xxxvii–xliv.

[3] Some exceptions obviously exist, such as those with severe mental retardation or advanced forms of dementia. However, these extreme cases need not violate the general principle that human beings able to navigate successfully the daily affairs of life should be counted as rational.

none of —modernism's specific prejudices; it commits us to nothing concerning the actual nature of reason. What it does commit us to is starting our investigation into reason by charitably considering its diversity. The biases of Descartes' day limited his perspective. He was ill-positioned to see how tightly he circumscribed the domain of reason and how this would allow for a fissure between rationality and humanity. This is something our own biases allow us to see clearly and distinctly.[4] Our biases also allow us to see the wisdom of the widespread Greek notion that reason is something *of this world* and something jointly held in common by all humans, even if we possess reason in different ways. Because the immanently active aspects of reason are expressed most fully in the concept of virtue, this concept provides a starting place for thinking about reason not simply as a methodological procedure but as something indistinguishable from human activities and living a human life.

To make such an alternative truly work, to demonstrate how virtue rationality corrects the moral indiscretions of modern rationality, to find plausible this account for a contemporary world, the normative ground it provides for moral concepts must be built on something other than Aristotelian essentialism. The moral story, in other words, can only be convincing if an Aristotelian model of rationality can be separated from ancient ontology. Part of the reason for this is the fact that our own biases are heavily anti-metaphysical, and part of the reason is that essentialism allows for the sort of prejudicial hierarchy that needs to be overcome. With respect to the first point, Aristotle's concept of nous requires an ontological outlook that we simply do not share. As Taylor explains, Aristotle has his own version of Forms which are 'often said to be "in" the things they inform, in contrast to Plato's, because he doesn't allow them an independent existence in some immaterial realm, as Plato seems to do' (1989, 189). This may be an immanent rather than transcendent understanding, but it is one that Taylor believes is absolutely critical for understanding Aristotelian mind. Says Taylor, '*nous* couldn't exist without a world of Forms' (1989, 188). Perhaps Taylor is right. Perhaps Aristotelian mind absolutely requires an ontological foundation. If so,

[4] This is an obvious pun on Descartes' language, but I do not mean these terms in their literal Cartesian interpretation.

virtue fails as a plausible contemporary account of nous or mind or reason. Our conceptions of these concepts are simply not allowed to depend on a world of Forms. Furthermore, it is precisely this sort of ontological appeal that permits essentialism and, hence, much of Aristotle's sexism and racism. Women, for example, are *essentially* different from men, period. Neither Aristotle nor just about any other philosopher around is shy about assigning hierarchical value to *essential* difference. If virtue is to function as a plausible model for an inclusive rationality, nous cannot be ontologically determined in this way. Rather, the plausibility of virtue depends on reconstructing rationality without reference to metaphysics. The tricky aspect of this reconstruction is to jettison ontology without succumbing to the very real threat of relativism. Appeals to something like a social teleology will only get us so far the social aspects of our lives are largely conventional. Remove the metaphysical underpinnings of virtue, and we are seemingly left with cultural criticism 'all the way down.' We need what virtue offers in the way of a diverse, contextually sensitive, and nonmodern alternative account for rationality—but without the ontological foundation.

The task at hand, then, is twofold: first, to transform the concept of rationality (sans metaphysical bedrock), and second, to retain enough normativity to ground moral concepts in something more powerful than community assent. Fortunately, the solution to these difficulties does not require any particularly novel thinking. If reason is, as many claim, an evolutionary adaptation, then philosophical accounts of it already demand a Darwinian perspective that is committed to a nonessentialism. The only trick is to explain how this is compatible with Aristotelian virtue. This is a trick but, again, not an especially difficult one. While Aristotelian biology is specifically overturned by Darwin, the prevalence of evolutionary thinking in contemporary philosophy, quite ironically, makes Aristotle all the more relevant for us. Darwin, in other words, allows ends without essences. When virtue is transformed to fit within an evolutionary framework, rationality as a virtue not only provides a means to resolving the representationalism underlying modernism's latent inequality but also establishes a substantive footing for moral concepts.

The story of this chapter, then, is the redemption of reason. At the same time, the widespread rejection of modern procedural accounts

means that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions available and that the story to be told is likely to be more cumbersome than we philosophers prefer. Despite our ambivalence to the language of modernism, most philosophers still retain some prejudice toward methodological, deterministic, rule-governed approaches. The elegance (or at least the promised elegance) of such approaches is seductive. After all, contextually determined concepts are ambiguously untidy, and all things being equal, closed systems are much easier to deal with than open ones. Of course, neither life nor rationality is a closed system—and, as most of us now realize, forcing the issue produces epistemically and morally questionable results. The alternative, however, does not come in a neatly tied package, which is just a way of saying that virtue rationality is a tad bit messy to describe. The following account has something of an Aristotelian feel in which topics continually circle back upon one another. But they do circle forward. I will begin with the final destruction of the foundations of modern racism; that is, evolution's overtaking of essences. I then discuss how reason becomes an evolutionarily determined concept and how this shift is consistent with the embeddedness and diversity of virtue. The tasks that then remain are, by far, the most important: first, to ground moral concepts such as equality and autonomy in a virtue rationality, and second, to demonstrate how the moral flaws of representationalism can be corrected. Along the way, I consider how virtue rationality incorporates the increasingly popular concept of reasonableness.

When virtue is updated so that it can function as a viable model of rationality, it finally becomes possible to clearly identify—and overturn—the *something* that allows for the invention of race in the eighteenth century. As I have argued, that *something* arises out of modernist efforts to resist subjectivism, but it finds its most complete and destructive expression in the Kantian notion of purposiveness, which provides the theoretical foundation for the invention of race. Because the ground of this purposiveness is entirely undermined by the intellectual transition to Darwinism, it is with purposiveness that I begin circling back on previous arguments; it is with purposiveness that the movement toward an inclusive and morally grounded rationality begins.

5.1 Essentialism and the Darwinian Turn

Kant's understanding of purposiveness is critical to his conception of race; it is critical to his conception of personhood. And, it is a concept that is not taken seriously enough when considering the impact it has on the racing of humans within the Western philosophical tradition. Notwithstanding, 'purposiveness' is anything but a straightforwardly meaningful term by the time Kant comes to use it. The trouble with the concept is that, unlike the Aristotelian world, the Newtonian world has no room for teleological accounts of nature. It has no room for final causes. If nature has some ultimate purpose, it can no longer be naturalistically explained, as it was for Aristotelian thinkers. The scientific revolution reduces the world to material causes only. This does not, however, discourage Kant. He salvages purposiveness by integrating it within a new account of metaphysics, a metaphysics that concerns not some independent and external reality but rather necessary conditions for cognition.[5] By limiting metaphysics to the application of these a priori principles of rational thought, Kant believes that we can say with confidence what the world must be like for creatures like us—and for creatures like us, we find by not-so-lucky-chance that the world conforms to systematic laws within a purposive unity.[6] What happens in this transition is that purposiveness becomes a limiting condition on how experience is constructed. As such, it no longer has its place in nature, as it did an Aristotelian framework, but in reason itself. So what does this have to do with race? Ultimately, and upon reflection, Kant finds that when we observe nature (e.g., when we observe the features that invariably reproduce themselves within humans), we also 'discover' the purposiveness of nature.[7] Voila, invariable and consistently reproducible differences in

[5] Issues of purposiveness and teleology in Kant are highly disputed. For more on this issue, see Genova, Ginsborg, and Guyer.

[6] See Kant 1929, Axxi and Bxxiv.

[7] In the third *Critique*, the purposiveness of nature is actually connected to the purposiveness within organized beings. See Kant 2001, 429.

Further in this section, Kant discusses that developing skill requires an inequality in people and that discipline is a requirement of (German) culture. These remarks are consistent with Kant's

humans must be indicative of a larger purpose. Hence, race points to an essential and metaphysically determined difference in humans. And, of course, purposiveness turns out to be far from a metaphysically neutral or morally innocent concept.

This aspect of Kant's critical philosophy demonstrates that, whatever the successes of the new physics, Aristotelian essentialism continued to retain its hold on scientific thought. Hannah Ginsborg, in fact, argues precisely for a connection between the teleology of Kant and Aristotle, claiming that whatever the scientific differences of the times, 'the chemistry and biology to which Kant was committed remain deeply Aristotelian' (2004, 62). She further maintains that Kant

> agrees with Aristotle in taking the changes undergone by living things, *qua* members of the species to which they belong, as due to irreducible principles of nature. For both philosophers, the study of nature requires the investigation, not only of the regularities governing inorganic matter, but also of the regularities characteristic of each species of living thing. (2004, 62)

The prima facie evidence from his account of the purposiveness of racial differences certainly indicates that Kant does believe the changes undergone by the human species, especially those related to race, are the result of irreducible principles of nature.[8] Kant says, 'The mere ability to reproduce a specific acquired character in just those cases where nothing purposive presents itself is already proof enough that a special seed or natural predisposition is to be found in organic creation' (2000, 14). He continues on, expressing his concern to 'examine the entire human genus … and to specify purposive causes to account for the appearance of deviation in those cases where natural causes are not readily discernable' (2000, 14).

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negative attitude toward non-white races. Kant also goes on to add that 'only culture can be the ultimate end that one has cause to ascribe to nature in regard to the human species' (2001, 431), but this fails to ameliorate his position on race since he agrees with Mr. Hume that non-whites lack civilization and, presumably, culture.

[8] In a manner similar to Ginsborg, Roqué discusses Kant's view of teleology and modern chemistry, and notes: 'Every characteristic preserved by heredity and evolution must be understood to possess final causality because consistent self-organization constitutes a principle of unity that could not come about through mechanistic laws, which … [effect] causal change by means of outside forces …' (1985, 120).

Undoubtedly Kant suggests that *the form or internal structure* of human beings is a part of nature discovered through observation. If this is true, race is very much an essential characteristic of humans. After all, race is part of the 'regularities characteristic of each [sub]-species of living thing' insofar as it is invariably reproduced and insofar as it is indicative of alterations in the 'special seeds or natural dispositions' (i.e., the form) of human being. It also means skin color is essential since it is, according to Kant, an invariable indicator of alteration of form.

Now, the role of biological essentialism within modern philosophy is easy to ignore because even Kant admits purposiveness is a purely metaphysical postulate, not a naturalistic one. For any self-respecting empiricist/logical positivist-type philosopher, metaphysical postulates are simply an embarrassment and something to be actively ignored. So, even if Kant is an essentialist about race, such essentialism, it seems, is part of the metaphysical baggage philosophers no longer consider relevant. Similarly, so-called soft-minded post-Cartesian thinkers are no more likely to take such extravagances seriously for they are opposed to transcendental principles, whether regulative or constitutive. They are equally likely to dismiss any talk of purposiveness. Being-in-the-world or language-games are not amenable to the idea of some ultimate systematic unity. Essentialism about race (or gender) is simply some old-fashioned relic of philosophy past and thus not something to which we need to pay attention.

Yet, to ignore the purposiveness and teleology in Kant without acknowledging the foundational role it plays in denying reason to certain classes of humans is to ignore that which gives rise to powerful exclusions of non-whites and non-males. In other words, purposiveness is what gives the concept of race the traction it has in Kant's moral theory. It is what justifies a racial hierarchy. It is what gives theoretical respectability to the idea of race. After all, it is precisely the idea of purposiveness that allows Kant to argue that humans do have some essential nature. To ignore purposiveness—more importantly, to ignore the theoretical destruction of purposiveness—is to quietly allow the concept of race (and probably of gender) a traction to which it is no longer philosophically allowed. That is, race becomes 'real,' something visible if not to the king, then at least society's power structures, and it becomes visible on the basis of Kantian

arguments. This sort of essentialism is not innocent, and ignoring it does not make its effects go away.

That Kant is, in fact, a somewhat nontraditional essentialist concerning race is only part of the story. A further case can be made that this purposive essentialism has a critical link to a lack of moral standing for non-whites (and women). This argument begins with Eze, who argues that human nature is, for Kant, 'a teleology, a goal, a destiny—or that which humans ought to become' (1997, 125). In other words, Eze accuses Kant of being a *normative essentialist*. What this amounts to, says Eze, is that instead of humans having some 'already given, or ready-made, static essence; they have an ethical one: transcendental, universal, transcultural, and ahistorical' (1997, 126). What Kant does, in other words, is shift from a more naturalistic to ethical essentialism. As I have already argued, Kant certainly appears to say precisely this for the purposiveness of nature and of morality is interconnected such that essences are ethical in nature.[9] In the third *Critique*, for instance, Kant concludes that 'we have sufficient cause to judge the human being … as the ultimate end of nature here on earth, in relation to which all other natural things constitute a system of ends in accordance with fundamental principles of reason …' (2001, 429). To come at the point from a slightly different perspective, Kant makes an explicit connection between the purposive aspects of the development of race[10] and the purposiveness of morality, which Kant calls a 'pure practical teleology.' In the final analysis, not every Kantian soul has the same essence, and it is purposive unity which determines that some humans (i.e., those further from the original lineal stem stock) are simply not as fully capable of complete moral development for they are not fully capable of becoming 'men.' Kant tells us, 'If there is any science man really needs, it is the one I teach, of how to fulfill properly that position in creation which is *assigned* to man, and from which he is able to learn what one must be in order to be a man' [italics added].[11] Implied in this is an almost Platonic notion of a hierarchy of souls. As Kant makes clear, women certainly cannot—and should not—be men, but in the same way,

[9] See Kant 2013, 192.

[10] See Kant 2013, 178.

[11] Quoted in Eze 1997, 130.

he also asserts that non-whites are less capable than whites of 'being men.' That Kant's later anthropology contains often unapologetic denigration of the rational capacities of women and non-whites makes it all the more clear what it is to be a *man* by indicating what is absent in those who are incapable of or entirely unsuited to becoming 'men.' In offering a critique of Kant, Eze believes what is at stake is obvious: '"the struggle over the meaning of man," or the project of defining what it means to be(come) human' (1997, 130). What can, nevertheless, be overlooked is that what it means to be(come) human changes radically as biological essentialism is called into question.

Contemporary philosophers, and in particular analytic philosophers, have often failed to notice the biological essentialism that plays a critical role in Kant's invention of the concept of race and that persists until Darwin. Darwin's challenge of biological essentialism also challenges the grounds of Kant's normative essentialism. What happens is that evolutionary presuppositions undermine appeals to purposiveness, which in turn destabilize the ground for modern accounts of race (and often gender). If Darwin is right and the intelligibility of species can be had, not through inquiry into absolute ends, but through the idea of transition, then natural explanations need not invoke a telos. *This* changes everything with respect to observation and the implications observation has for the purposiveness of racial concepts. Nevertheless, this transformation in thinking does not illicit a rethinking of the concept of race. Quite to the contrary, the concepts of race and gender remain unchanged throughout much of the twentieth century, at which point feminists begin to sound the alarm concerning essentialism. To be sure, part of the invisibility of race and gender occurs as the language of 'universal rights' masks a growing theoretical disconnect. Even the most well-meaning of philosophers often fail to see how modern rationality's reliance on universal procedures gives rise to a hierarchical essentialism. As a result, they fail to see how the loss of that essentialism undermines the racist and sexist attitudes that have, from their origins, always been invisible. To undermine these attitudes requires first making them visible, then demonstrating how their grounds have eroded. It is worth asking what effect this shift of perspective has for a defense of racial categories.

Evolutionarily based explanations are a matter of course these days, and more often than not, reason is assumed to be an evolutionary adaptation rather than some transcendent faculty. Dewey is one of the first philosophers to recognize the import of Darwinian thinking for philosophy. Prior to Darwin, says Dewey, 'purposefulness accounted for the intelligibility of nature and the possibility of science, while the absolute or cosmic character of this purposefulness gave sanction and worth to the moral and religious endeavors of man' (1910, 10). This certainly describes Kant's view—and it is a view he is quite willing to defend against critics like Forster. While Forster believes that Kant is overly attached to his teleological thinking, Kant is unwilling to accept that anything purposive could 'ever be found <in nature> by means of purely empirical groping about without a guiding principle that might direct one's search' (Kant 2013, 174). Put more directly, Kant criticizes Forster for seeking a *mere* description of nature. Yet an evolutionary model asks us to do precisely what Forster asks of Kant: to take seriously empirical uncertainties. After all, the philosophical moral of Darwin's story is that we must abandon the search for necessary, regulative principles and instead search for transitions determined by the environment. Dewey tells us that, following Darwin, 'Philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them' (1910, 13). So what happens if we let go of the teleological framework of regulative principle according to which an investigator *observes* nature? Basically, Kant's argument for race collapses under its own standards. According to the standards Kant sets for his own argument—standards which repeatedly appeal to non-natural and metaphysically postulated principles, such as purposiveness—observation of persistently transmitted characteristics becomes mere empirical groping. Racial divisions can no longer be indicative of a purposive design. Kant's philosophical account of race is no longer justifiable.

Simply put, when Darwin comes along, the idea of a Kantian purposiveness goes out the window. Of course, this idea does not disappear all at once. At times, we still find philosophers taking for granted the unchanging frameworks or 'compulsory skeletons' of the past. Compulsory skeletons need not, and often do not, imply purposiveness, but they can hide regulative requirements. In the end, these 'world-pictures' must hold

together, and Kant definitely knows this. He does not retain the idea of purposiveness unthoughtfully. In his response to Hume, what Kant actually understands perfectly well is that without purposiveness there can indeed be no a priori structure or compulsory framework that intellectual forms *must* take.[12] This is precisely why Kant seeks to establish the *purposive* unity of things as the highest formal unity.[13] When we remove the regulative ideal, all sorts of alternative intellectual frameworks become possible, including frameworks in which race is not an essential feature of human beings. Then again, frameworks in which race is an essential feature of human beings are still possible. Removing regulative ideals does not eliminate racial divisions, even if it does undermine some of their more powerful philosophical underpinnings.

As the search for final ends has been called off, the idea of varying frameworks or conceptual schemes becomes increasingly important. One of the most influential variations on this theme is the Kuhnian idea of scientific paradigms, which has caused us to reconsider how objective science truly is. If our paradigms and the values they contain are inseparable from our theories and data, we can have no external, independent constraint to assure us that our view is somehow *the* right one. No wonder the data supports our theories: what counts as data is determined by the rule of inquiry that we set up for ourselves. Obviously, this is somewhat oversimplified. Science is not entirely a self-fulfilling prophecy—but it is partially so. A similar tension is also evident in moral philosophy. For example, consider Rawls' account of justice. The ends we pursue are not given to us but are chosen by us, at least if the 'us' is composed of rational beings. We may need some structure to define 'justice,' but the ends of this structure are in no way ontologically determined. Of course, Rawls understands how the absence of a metaphysical ground, whether Greek or Kantian, may lead to relativistic interpretations of ends, and he attempts to head off this possibility by retaining a modern conception of reason, stripped of all distinguishing or subjective features. The problem

[12] As I quoted earlier: 'The law of reason which requires us to seeks for this unity, is a necessary law, since without it we should have no reason at all, and without reason no coherent employment of the understanding, and in the absence of this no sufficient criterion of empirical truth.' (Kant 1929, A651/B679)

[13] See Kant 1929, A686/B714.

is, however, that as modern rationality comes to be seen as less objective and less universal, the less objective and less universal appears the dependent conception of justice. What is increasingly evident is that justice can no longer be defined according to a unitary set of standards for the unitary reason on which it stands is no more. A further issue emerges with how Rawls' theory originates with freedom. Here the concern is that the notion of freedom cannot be unfettered since we are in no position to figure out freedom or justice without reflecting on what is actually a desirable way of life. That is, it makes no sense to speak of rational agents in the abstract. Starting with some idealized notion of rational agents lacks sufficient content to say that any choice by any ideal reasoner is a choice *I* would make for I am not an ideal reasoner. I am someone with a particular history. My life has a narrative structure that makes it *mine*. As a result, in the absence of some metaphysical structure, in the absence of some common cognitive constraints, in the absence of particularity that fills in the content of rationality, in the absence of purposiveness, the dual threats of relativism and of empty appeals to universality become serious threats indeed.

The definitive removal of final causes in evolutionary theory, then, is something of a two-edged sword. It undermines the foundations of modern racism by eliminating the Kantian justification for race as an essential category. It asks us to re-examine the issue without the teleological underpinnings. It asks us to *observe without the guiding principle of purposiveness*. It opens the door to the possibility that race and gender are not determiners of rationality, or the lack thereof. However, the absence of final causes also undermines moral concepts such as justice and freedom which are needed to argue for the equal worth of persons. When teleological purposiveness is gone, so too is the idea that *this* (whatever 'this' is) is how cognition must proceed. That is, as we appear to remove the limits on what reason can be, we also appear to remove the normative force provided by reason. And, since modern moral concepts are grounded in the normativity provided by reason, we appear to also lose the normativity of moral concepts which flow from rationality. The loss of normativity is a problem for those who resist oppression.

The bind for race theorists and feminists is particularly dicey. Despite protestations to the contrary, anyone who wishes to criticize racist and

sexist practices cannot afford to be limited to only immanently held standards. The reality and injustice of oppression cannot be merely be a matter of communally held belief. The question is whether a virtue that is not ontologically circumscribed can be defined by anything other than communal standards. If there are no foundational, objective epistemic grounds of reason, relativism is a genuine worry. If rational procedures are open to dialogue and discussion, if they are built on practices and agreement, then, as Ian Hacking asks, 'Is reason … all too self-authenticating?' (Hacking 1982, 49). Of course, for some, self-authenticating reason is all we can hope to have.[14] The difficulty, and it is one that is well discussed, is that societies often let us say racist and sexist things. A rationality built upon such a society's commonly held standards may very well look exactly like the one that Rorty's 'wet liberals' are concerned to overturn—at least there is no way to rule out this possibility. Standing in opposition to the idea that interpretation is thoroughly cultural is a contemporary and evolutionarily sensitive account of virtue. Thus, what I need to do next is explain how virtue fits within an evolutionary framework.

5.2 Reason's Evolution

Given our rejection of final causes, Aristotle once again appears a poor choice of model for rationality in a contemporary world. After all, every bit of Aristotle's philosophical and scientific work relies on final causes, and it is, in fact, precisely his biological theory that Darwin overthrows. And yet, Aristotle's work on virtue is actually considered highly relevant to contemporary philosophical discussion, especially in ethics and the philosophy of mind. One reason for the interest in Aristotle lies in something we do share with him: an emphasis on empirical investigation. Aristotle is just as empirically oriented as we are. Another explanation for this interest is that means-ends reasoning need not be metaphysically determined. In the case of virtue ethics, for example, philosophers

[14] For Rorty, what we should do is replace Philosophy with something he calls 'epistemological behaviorism,' which is marked by 'Explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former' (1979, 174).

believe its focus on the embeddedness of moral agents offers a corrective to universalist moral theories. Given the demise of Greek metaphysics, social practices must be substituted for ontologically determined ends, but in either case, virtue depends on the ends of activities. The advantage of social practices is that we are allowed a conception of 'the good' without needing to be committed to something transcendent.[15] By contrast, any universalist ethic assumes, if not some transcendent ground, then at least the sameness of all moral and epistemic agents. But assuming the sameness of agents only works when the agents are similar in all relevant respects—and gender and skin color are relevant. As the limits of this sort of transcendentalism or universalism have been more clearly identified, it has become increasingly more difficult to maintain that the properties which materially distinguish us from one another are completely irrelevant to moral action, to claims of knowledge, and to the possession of rationality. Even so, virtue ethics has its own difficulties. Overturning the last vestiges of essentialism—the same ones that support the invention of the concept of race—also undermines the moral concepts we wish to use in arguing against racism and sexism. In the absence of a single, unifying, rationally defensible notion of the good life, social practices will only get us so far. What we require is a way to discuss ends that are meaningfully constrained by something outside of convention.

Although contemporary versions of virtue ethics must contend with relativistic concerns, Aristotle himself actually allows for a great deal of critical reflection concerning practices. That he defends an objective account of human good is obvious, but the way he does it actually fits well within an evolutionary framework. What Aristotle does, argues Nussbaum, is recognize the need to criticize existing moral traditions while utilizing reasons that stem from our humanness and not our particular cultural traditions.[16] The way this works requires us to think about what it means to be human. Nussbaum takes note that in his efforts to identify many nameless virtues and vices, what Aristotle does 'is to isolate a sphere of human experience that figures in more or less any human life, and in which more or less any human being will have to

[15] For an example of such an account, see MacIntyre 1981, 190–193.

[16] See Nussbaum 1988, 33.

make some choices rather than others, and act in some way rather than some other' (1988, 35). Some of these areas of life are: bodily appetites, distribution of limited resources, management of personal property, truthfulness in speech, social association, and the planning of one's life and conduct. These aspects of life are so general that '*everyone* makes some choices and acts somehow or other in these spheres …' [italics added] (Nussbaum 1988, 36). Insofar as these aspects of life are commonly shared by all humans, they need not be given a *metaphysically* essentialist interpretation for it is possible to account for these aspects even from evolutionary perspectives. Consequently, his view *should* be able to offer us more than a culturally grounded, relativistic morality—and without introducing any purposive unity or final ends.

We can speak decisively, albeit generally, about what it is to be human. We can speak empirically about how we manage appetites, distribute resources, manage personal property, and so on. We can observe what it is that appears important to us, often regardless of culture. For example, everyone wants to be treated with respect, although what it means to treat someone with respect is highly sensitive to cultural expression. The *specific* content of how one satisfies bodily appetites or how we comport ourselves in social situations requires talk of cultural practices, but that does not entail that there is nothing basic to our humanity. And it is not just Aristotelians who believe this. Louise Antony, who herself defends a somewhat modern form of empiricism, concurs. She says,

> I think there is excellent evidence for the existence of a substantial human nature and virtually no evidence for the alternative, the view that there is no human essence. … . We need to ask ourselves why we ought to believe that human selves are, at the deepest level, 'socially constructed'—the output of a confluence of contingent factors. (2002, 142)

In other words, even when the concept of reason is decoupled from a modern, disembodied understanding, even when it is free of transcendental purposiveness, we still have every reason to believe that there is something it is to be human and that we do not entirely make it up as we go along. The concept of good(s) may be fully and satisfactorily defined only within practices, but this does not commit us to the con-

cept being cultural all the way down. Evolutionary theory does indeed allow that there are stable features of the world and of humans within that world.

The assumption of stable features—an assumption without which evolutionary approaches make no sense—requires some significant rethinking of philosophical problems, especially with respect to modern skepticism. For instance, Nozick believes that intractable philosophical problems remain intractable precisely because reason is something that must assume certain stable facts about the world in which it develops. Put another way, reason, as an evolutionary adaptation, is in no position to question the assumptions upon which its functioning depends. Thus, problems of induction, of other minds, of an external world, and of justifying goals are not susceptible to rational resolution because reason evolves in a context in which these are taken to be stable facts.[17] Skepticism about these facts should not be able to get traction, but when it does get traction, bad things happen—and these bad things have a direct bearing on Kantian racism. Says Nozick, 'the Kantian attempt to make principled behavior the sole ultimate standard of conduct is another extension of rationality beyond its bounds' (1993, 176). Now, Nozick is surely unconcerned with Kant's remarks on race, but his actual concern (i.e., keeping reason within the empirically determined bounds under which it evolves) goes directly to the heart of the purposiveness on which Kant's racial arguments depend. It would be a 'lucky accident,' says Nozick, if rationality could 'demonstrate the truth of *all* of the very conditions it evolved alongside of' (1993, 176). Notably, however, this is precisely what Kant attempts to do at a metaphysical level, namely, to uncover a systematic unity which is far more than simply 'a lucky chance favoring our design.' Nozick would certainly not call the unity of experience a 'lucky chance,' but he would say there is something about this unity that is, in a loose sense, necessary. After all, such unity arises because reason evolves within and adapts to settled conditions. In other words, reason is what it is because the world is what it is—and to question this gets us into trouble. In contrast, Kant maintains that at the outermost limit of science, 'we have to begin with material forces we have personally

[17] See Nozick 1993, xii and 176.

invented <that operate> according to unheard of laws incapable of proof' (2013, 189).[18] We look for forces lying *outside* the natural world. Thus, we look for some purpose for racial divisions rather than just accept them as transformations which occur in the context of environmental factors that are relatively unchanging. What post-Cartesian, evolutionarily situated accounts of reason ask us to do is not to turn to metaphysics, to transcendence, to metanarratives; they instead ask us to cope with the world in which we live, period.

Assuming then that reason is a natural part of the world and that it must respond to this world, no wonder the modern view is so distorted and so unable to account satisfactorily for something as basic as the connection between cognition, emotion, and action. Of course, given reason's role in real-life decision-making and moral action, even the most hard-minded Cartesian allows for the interaction between cognition and action. Emotion, however, is another story. To deliberate in the way Descartes or Kant suggests implies utilizing methods that specifically eliminate emotion as a relevant feature of cognition. Although the categorical imperative is the best known example of this, Descartes' clear and distinct ideas are no different since emotions are neither clear nor distinct to hear him tell it. The most egregious distortions, however, do come from ethics. To focus solely on abstract principle strips actions of their specific content, and while doing this may produce many right actions (e.g., truth-telling), it does not cultivate the sort of sensitivity to circumstances we typically expect from moral agents.[19] Problem is, ideal logical reasoners of the Cartesian variety are incapable of appropriate social interaction with other humans. Consider the neurological insight of Damasio, who describes a patient as dispassionate and logical as the ideal Cartesian reasoner and 'yet his practical reason was so impaired that it produced, in the wanderings of daily life, a succession of mistakes, a

[18] Also see Kant 2013, 190–191.

[19] For example, Kant's absolute prohibition against lying to a potential murderer, even to save a life. The absoluteness, even in the face of what seems to be a far more admirable goal than that of truth-telling—that of saving an innocent life—strikes most reasonable people as just plain wrongheaded. And wrongheaded for a reason that can be easily specified: moral obligations are not equal, and ceteris paribus, saving an innocent human life trumps all others. That the person to whom one has to lie is a potential *murderer* is taken by reasonable people to be a quite relevant consideration.

perpetual violation of what would be considered socially appropriate and personally advantageous' (1994, xi). Stated slightly differently, someone who lacks all emotion is someone most people would find lacking in a quality fundamental to being human.

Among those who adopt post-Cartesian accounts of rationality, whether they be scientists or philosophers, the integration of reason with the full range of lived experience, including emotion, is something we have come to recognize as critical. Along the lines of Damasio and Greenfield. Catherine Elgin states that 'emotion is a facet of reason. It is an avenue of epistemic access …' (2008, 34). According to some phenomenologists, it is 'through our emotions that the world is disclosed to us, that we become present to and make sense of ourselves, and that we relate to an engage with others' (Elpidorou and Freeman 2014, 507). And in the realm of psychology, 'Emotional intelligence marks the intersection between two fundamental components of personality: the cognitive and the emotional systems' (Mayer and Salovey 1995, 197). As I previously discussed, such comments are not unusual or out of place. They are, in fact, quite common. Our current biases allow us to recognize that the cool, calm, deliberate Cartesian reasoner, the person who is impervious to emotion, is someone with a great many problems navigating through life.

The Cartesian image of reason may no longer wield absolute power over our philosophical imagination, but as with all things, old biases don't just die. To illustrate, Audi is an explicit critic of Descartes; he expressly advocates for an account of rationality as a virtue concept; he (ever so briefly) addresses emotion in his account of reasonableness. Nevertheless, he also claims that emotions are especially susceptible to irrationality; he still maintains that 'emotional and attitudinal poverty … is not necessarily a deficiency in rationality, even if it bespeaks truncated humanity and indicates limitations in the quality of rational life' (Audi 2001, 204). Surely this is partially true, but surely it is also a vestige of Cartesianism. Less emotional people are not always irrational or immoral, and overly emotional people can definitely be inclined to a bit of irrationality—but, as any virtue theorist should recognize, it is not the having or not having of emotion that is the marker of rationality/irrationality. The marker is how one nurtures, manipulates, and reacts to emotion. Thus, if we take seriously the link between emotion and virtue, if we take seriously the

demand to cultivate emotion in appropriate ways, emotional poverty *does indeed* speak against one's rationality—or at least one's moral character. What matters though is not having or lacking of a natural disposition toward emotion; what matters are the habits one cultivates and the ways right *feeling* is integrated within those habits. The dispassionate reasoner, the reasoner who fails to see the significance of emotion in circumstances where it is relevant, will be judged to be deficient because, ultimately, a virtue theory asks us to be responsible for responding to and shaping our emotions. Emotional poverty or emotional irrationality suggests that one has not developed the right sorts of habits, and so these are directly relevant to the assessment of one's character, both rational and moral.

The need to bring emotion back into the domain of rational consideration is not just a concern for virtue theories, even if the recognition of emotion may be more begrudging elsewhere. Once again, Nozick is a model for, without meaning to overturn Cartesian thinking, he repeatedly advocates for solidly non-Cartesian claims. In the case of emotion, he suggests that rationality *can pursue emotion*, passion, and spontaneity. He says, 'Even decision-theoretic rationality can recommend henceforth making many decisions without thought or calculation … if the process of calculation itself would interfere with the nature of other valued relationships, such as love and trust' (Nozick 1993, 106). This is not the most ringing-endorsement of the relevance of emotion, but it is an endorsement nonetheless. In addition, Nozick explains that although symbolic utility is often thought of as irrational, it is anything but. For instance, all of us occasionally have disproportionate emotional responses to events. When this happens, it may be that the event that triggers the response 'stands for other events or occasions to which the emotions are more suited' (Nozick 1993, 27). What this means is that, despite the seeming irrationality, we humans actually do hold some things to symbolically represent others and a decision-theoretic calculus that does not take this into account will miss something important.

The growing realization that rationality is impoverished when it operates in isolation from emotion leads nicely to an Aristotelian understanding. In fact, emotion is relevant to any virtue account since, as MacIntyre reminds us, 'virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to *feel* in particular ways' [italics added] (1981, 149). We must

act for the right reason and feel in the right way. Nicholas Burbules, who also defends a virtue account, argues for incorporating 'into the very idea of reason the elements of personal characteristics, context, and social relations that support and motivate reasonable thought and conduct' (1992, 218). Emotion will be among these elements if for no other reason than social relations cannot exist in the absence of emotional understanding. Emotions may not provide infallible information about the world, but we cannot get by without incorporating them into our habits and activities. They are part of what Elgin considers a reflective equilibrium which requires mutual support among components.[20] In short, what we discover when we observe reason in actual contexts is that cognition, emotion, and action work in tandem with one another. Rationality is not a faculty distinct from emotion or from body, nor is it a faulty that in our everyday lives we view as distinct from emotion or body. And if we take seriously the relevance of emotion for rational cognition and decision-making, we must also take seriously that emotion, and our reactions to it, is something that requires sensitivities to quite particular circumstances.

As the details of what it means to be rational come to matter more than universal principles, the door opens to difference and diversity. Conversely, accepting diversity and difference condemns us to perspectivalism.[21] That is, if we consider reason to be a faculty that responds to actual circumstances in an actual world, we must also consider it to have an inherently limited perspective on the world. After all, a reason that is integrated with the world is someplace specific within that world. As such, this sort of rationality is necessarily incapable of metanarratives or God's eye perspectives. It is also incapable of transcending cultural bias. More accurately, a rational agent might shift biases or perspectives within a range of alternatives, but she could not escape every bias or perspective. What this means is that social practices provide the content of rationality and will, in part, determine the range of possibilities for rational belief and action. This is great for freeing rationality from modern limitations; this is not so great for discovering substantive normativity of the sort that

[20] See Elgin 2008, 34.

[21] Of course, as any good standpoint epistemologist would say, accepting universalism also condemns us to perspectivalism—but far less honestly. Denying bias doesn't make it so.

can tell us that a community's agreed-upon racist practices are wrong. Yet these social practices are not generated ex nihilo. They are constrained by factors such as bodily appetites, distribution of limited resources, management of personal property, truthfulness in speech, social association, and the planning of one's life and conduct—namely, those aspects of life that are common to humans. The content of these parts of being human are, of course, subject to interpretation, but this interpretation has limits. Even if we can't quite say what the world is *in itself*, there is a world with which we must cope. And because we don't get to make it all up, the limits we encounter come, as Kant might say, to be built into the nature of rationality itself—but in a quite un-Kantian manner. In contemporary parlance, the limits on rationality, those stable facts surrounding reason, are limits because rationality develops only in conjunction with them. Rationality 'depends on changing and evolving institutions, practices, and human relations' (Burbules 1991, 252), but this makes it adaptive to something more than simply pre-ordained purposes (whether they be pre-ordained by God or man). It requires instead a sensitivity to being in both a material and social world.

Due to the particular axe I am attempting to grind, it surely sounds as if I am entirely eliminating principles from the domain of rationality. Nothing could be further from the case. Whereas reason works with desires and goals that we imminently determine and whereas it incorporates the symbolic meanings of actions for creatures like us, it still does so procedurally, albeit in a less rigorously determined fashion. Taylor matter-of-factly observes, 'In spite of the wide disagreements over the nature of the procedure [reason should follow], and despite all the scorn which has been heaped on him [Descartes] from the dominant empiricist trend in modern, scientific culture, *the conception of reason remains procedural*' [italics added] (1989, 156). And that it remains procedural makes sense. After all, 'that we must act according to the right rule is a common principle and must be assumed,' or so says Aristotle (1941, 1103b34-5). To reject in toto procedural notions creates problems, at least if nothing else is put in its place to guide the regularity of belief and action. Nonetheless, procedures are not as powerful as they once were—or, perhaps more accurately, the kinds of procedures considered to be rational is widening. For instance, whatever sense of proceduralism he retains,

Audi explicitly rejects Cartesian epistemic grounds and argues that 'the requirements for justified belief do not impose on our cognitive systems any single pattern or any fixed structure' (2001, 40). He adds, much like Aristotle, that 'the proper weighting of conflicting sources of rationality cannot always be formulated in precise principles' (2001, 185). Note: there are principles, just not always precise ones. The emphasis with virtue is not on eradicating principles but on adopting an openness about their role in cognition and about the ways in which they are evaluated against each other. In other words, what virtue stands opposed to is not rational principles; what it stands opposed to is narrow restrictions on how principles operate and on what sorts of evidence, data, or justificatory grounds we are allowed. The virtuous person still acts according to right principle, but the interpretation of the principle is sensitive to the details of contexts and practices.

Rationality should remain sensitive to broadly understood principles while consciously allowing for the sort of diversity and particularity that the moderns rejected. In other words, unlike the moderns, who offer a fairly unified and constrained vision of what rationality ought to be, we post-Cartesians are instead eager to articulate a rationality that is, as Eze describes, diversely universal. We are eager to articulate the 'many universal languages of reason' (Eze 2008, 9). The operative word here is, surprisingly, 'universal.' If reason dissolves into diversity, if it must somehow be everything to everyone, it cannot be something substantively normative. Openness about method is all fine and good, but it can make it difficult to come to consensus, at which point the result can be 'widespread fratricidal disagreement among anti-Cartesians about what, if anything, to say about the mind' (Rorty 1979, 213). The goal is not simply to overturn modern accounts; the goal is also to provide a satisfactory ground for important moral concepts—equality, justice, freedom, autonomy, and so on. The trick is to take the insights of an evolutionarily grounded virtue account and construct a story of reason that can respect diversity while transcending particular biases and perspectives, that can speak normatively from within a lived world. From this, we should then find the foundation for moral concepts and for the recognition that all rational agents are persons deserving of the moral respect.

5.3 The Virtue of Moral Grounds

Modern rationality is burdened by the erasure of difference and is thereby committed to the inequality of human beings, or at least of human beings who are different. Given that modern moral theories are grounded in this conception of rationality, they are likewise committed to the erasure of difference. Whether deontological or utilitarian, these theories require ceteris paribus clauses that are difficult to specify and that can leave one more bound to an abstract principle or rule than to the people to whom one owes an obligation. On modern accounts, the moral obligations I have, whether to myself or others, are ultimately *not* grounded in flesh and blood human beings with families, friends, lives, desires, emotions, and so on. These obligations stem from pure rationality or, perhaps, a generalized requirement to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Either way, obligations are structured by a moral reasoning that makes no reference to specific content. And if I am only required to consider others insofar as they are *exactly* like me, then I have no strong reason to believe or to feel that I am morally bound to those who are different. From a modern perspective, it becomes a simple matter for morality to function as an empty set of formal requirements established by a particular set of people for a particular set of people. For those whose particularity and subjectivity lie outside the established limits, assimilation or exclusion is essentially guaranteed.

The question at this point is whether a virtue rationality can do any better. Obviously, virtue accounts of morality avoid many of the difficulties with modernism. In contrast with modern accounts, virtue is not amenable to universalizing conditions for believing or acting correctly, and it is not possible to isolate epistemic and moral agents from the conditions within which they live their lives. In the absence of concrete content, thinking and action are utterly meaningless, and is impossible to say in advance what the right thing to do in any given situation is because the means for which we strive are relative. In the end, virtue links obligation to other flesh and blood human beings, most notably in the case of friendship.

In Aristotelian virtue ethics, we find a categorization of the types of friendships in which we engage, and, similar to an ethics of care, the

various obligations we have to people are based on both their virtue and the ways in which they fit within our social realms (e.g., friends based on utility or pleasure). With genuine friendship, that is friendship of the highest order, I desire the good for my friend at least as much as I desire it for myself. The reason, however, is not some blind loyalty or some commitment to an abstract principle. The partiality of friendship is based not in the friendship itself but in the virtue of our friends. As the best flutes should go to the best flute players, the best actions should be directed toward the best people—and a virtuous friend allows me to express my own virtue. As a result, what we owe others is not an abstract question but one that requires a responsiveness to circumstances that we can get right or wrong. Unlike universalist moral theories, virtue is sensitive to the need for sociality, and it is sensitive to the different roles people play in our lives.

Nevertheless, such sensitivity to difference is deeply problematic for it commits us in important ways to a fundamental inequality of human beings. In spite of this, the situation is both better and worse than it first appears. Inequality does not necessarily negate moral standing. When it comes to our obligations to others, the virtuous person cannot act viciously toward someone simply because that person falls outside 'circles of caring.' What I owe others is determined not just by friendship but also by the virtue of the other person, independently of my particular relationship to that individual. In other words, friendship cannot be a necessary condition for having a moral obligation to another human. Furthermore, Aristotle may in the *Nicomachean Ethics* ask us to evaluate the worth of a person, but he certainly does not condone evaluating another's moral worth on the basis of involuntary characteristics—unless, of course, those involuntary characteristics relate to essential differences concerning the ability to act according to principle. Herein lies the rub. Historically, virtue has a hierarchical component. The virtue of a man is not the virtue of a woman is not the virtue of a child. These different types of virtues are judged and evaluated based on one's capacity for reason, which is unequal. Surely, this must be taken seriously.

Fortunately, once an Aristotelian view is divorced from an ontologically grounded essentialism, that is, once we place virtue in an evolutionary framework, we remove the underlying support for Aristotle's

distinctions. This shift radically changes the debate for unlike the partiality of friendship, which is only justified if the person is morally worthy of such treatment, it is simply not possible to maintain these other sorts of hierarchical distinctions in the case of virtue simpliciter. On an evolutionary-styled account, there is nothing *essentially* that makes one type of person a less competent reasoner than another. If the virtue of a man or a woman is different, if the virtue of a white-skinned or black-skinned person is different, it will be on the basis of something other than their intrinsic natures. And, since no one is to be judged on the basis of involuntary characteristics, gender and race are irrelevant to moral standing. In the final analysis, whether a difference counts as a morally relevant difference is to be determined by the community in conjunction with the limiting conditions on what it means to live a fulfilling human life. Questions of difference—of the significance, of the worth, of the relevance of difference—have no pre-ordained or purposive answers. Still, the difficulty does not entirely disappear. The unfortunate aspect of giving up on ontological essentialism is that we also strip virtue of much of its normative force. The post-Cartesian sense of engaging in social practices does not guarantee equality is worthwhile or valuable; it does not tell us that we *ought* to value equality in the face of contradictory commitments. *For us* it might well be the case that virtue allows us to treat people unequally as long as we don't treat them unfairly. Should others adopt this view as well? The real difficulty lies in grounding such claims. How are we to establish the genuine moral equality of persons in a world imbued with diversity and nonmoral inequalities?

At this point, the differences between thinking about rationality and morality as virtue concepts and thinking about them in their modern connotations should be relatively obvious. In rejecting universalizability, virtue allows that both reason and morality are determined by the time and the culture in which they reside. In appealing to the material and social limitations on human life, it requires that rationality and morality respond to something outside of merely communal agreement. Thus, virtue can justify the importance of freedom, of self-determination, of autonomy, of equality, of justice. It can, in other words, explain why these are goods for all humans, and it can do so without transcendental metaphysics. Schematically, we can say what sorts of actions and what

sorts of principles lead to better outcomes. What we cannot do is fill out in advance the content of morality or the rules for correct application of principles. When we observe humans and human society, we discover that they do better, live happier lives, are more content when they are free to pursue their own goals. We also discover, however, that this freedom is not absolute since some people or societies do choose their goals poorly and since some goals affect the rights and well-being of others. And virtue can defend the moral demand for rights given that the conferral of rights is essential to flourishing, at least in the long term.

In an important sense, this is simply an application of Peirce's pragmatic maxim: 'Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object' (Peirce 1934, 5.402). On a virtue account, rationality and morality are not isolated from the lived world, and when we formulate beliefs or actions, we must consider the effects. Because virtue requires awareness of what one is doing, we are to be held responsible for deliberating well or poorly concerning both beliefs and actions.[22] Ignorance is no excuse. We are responsible for knowing the relevant circumstances—and for understanding their relevance. That is, we are responsible for getting our facts right. Sure, one can be ignorant of 'what he is doing, what or whom he is acting on, and sometimes also what … he is doing it with, and to what end …, and how he is doing it …,' but no reasonable person can be ignorant of all of this (Aristotle 1941, 1111a4-7). Sure, we can get away with some ignorance, but not a lot. And certainly we are not allowed willful ignorance, which is especially blameworthy for it entails a deliberate attempt to remain ignorant. But even in cases where the ignorance is not willful or negligent, it is still something for which we can be held accountable. Aristotle adds that 'the doing of an act that is called involuntary in virtue of ignorance … must be painful and involve repentance' (1941, 1111a19-20). We should feel badly about our failures because the virtuous person is expected to demonstrate an appropriate awareness of both principles and circumstances.

[22] See Aristotle 1941, 1111a2-1113a14.

In a way, all this differs little from the Cartesian requirement of clarity and completeness of thought. However, the motivation for the requirement is quite different in each case. For the moderns, the concern was simply epistemic. For the Greeks, the concern was to produce an entrenched trait or stable state of character that reliably produces appropriate *behavior* across a wide variety of situations—this can only be done if we are actually aware of what we are doing under the circumstances we are doing it. Interpreted from within the context of the pragmatic maxim, then, Kant's moral conception falls woefully short. Kantian ethics is supposedly universal. But consider the practical effects of Kant's moral beliefs, which even he understood limited the moral standing of those incapable of acting from principle. Something must be wrong with a universalist ethic that has the practical effect of limiting the universal application of ethics. In the case of moral concepts, then, the Peircean maxim speaks strongly against Kantian moral attitudes, at least if we also hold Kant to be committed to moral equality. Of course, an easy solution exists: drop the language of universal rights and dignity; acknowledge that some humans are not persons. Of course, this hardly seems like a solution since it forces into the light the prejudice and bias of modern moral discourse. Either way—that is, with or without the language of universal rights—the conceivable effects of modernism include inequality.

The failure of modern moral theories, however, does not absolve virtue theory of finding a means of grounding the notion of moral equality, and more can certainly be said about this ground. Virtue requires habits, but not just any sort of habits will do—and the practical effects of habits are relevant to judging their moral worth. So, how do we learn what it means to treat others equally? More generally, how do we develop correct habits of action? Because virtue is open-ended and lacks a commitment to deterministic rules, it may not allow us to establish some generalized commitment to equality, but it nevertheless does require possession of right principles and, just as importantly, requires the correct application of those principles. More to the point, habits that demonstrate a hierarchical conception of the worth of persons simply will not do, not simply because *we* (whoever 'we' are) disapprove, but because some ways of acting are not conductive to a well-lived human life. The effects of hierarchical conceptions are to narrow the possibilities for people's lives in ways we can both

schematically and specifically understand as undesirable. We can schematically state why equality is useful to living a full life, but we can also show in concrete cases how the general principle succeeds or fails.[23] In other words, we can point to the practical bearings of our actions. Nevertheless, these same practical bearings are likely to also reveal the inappropriateness of treating everyone identically à la universalist ethics. Because virtue must be expressed in a variety of situations and has to adapt to these situations, acting consistently with virtue requires more than treating everyone the same, just as it requires more than learning to do something by rote.

Consider the simple rule-following of language-games. Language-use might not have the same depth of function or expansiveness, but it is similar to virtue. And, much like Peirce, Wittgenstein thinks that the actual answer to how we come to apply rules correctly stems from the fact that beliefs involve habits of action and that meaning is related to what we actually *do*. In the opening section of the *Investigations*, for example, Wittgenstein discusses a shopkeeper and a piece of paper that says 'five red apples.' The shopkeeper can go to the drawer marked 'apples,' he can look up a color chart for 'red,' and he can count up to five—but, as Wittgenstein wants us to see, this is not everything that is involved in the meaning of the expression. Practices, social customs, and habits surround the activity of giving shopkeepers lists. Any shopkeeper who is going to make sense of a list needs to understand these practices. There are always new and novel circumstances to which rules apply, and we must be capable of figuring out how to apply them to future cases. Presumably, we learn how to extrapolate from what we have experienced to new cases, but of course, we can do this better and worse.

In this way, rule-following—or virtue—is actually related to acquiring a skill—and, as it turns out, learning what it means to treat others equally will be somewhat analogous to learning a skill.[24] Both skills and virtues

[23] For example, Iris Marion Young argues that because society in the USA has expressed an oppressive race and gender consciousness, we actually should privilege those who have suffered systematic inequalities. In other words, she explicitly opposes a generalized commitment to equality (in its modern sense)—and all in the name of equality. See Young 1990, 129–135.

[24] Discussions of virtue and skill can be found in Annas 2011, 16–40, as well as in Rees and Webber 2014. Rees and Webber are particularly interested in the way in which virtue requires appropriate motivation and skill does not.

involve an ability to do something and to do it well. Both skills and virtues require practice. One does not acquire a skill or a virtue without doing. Furthermore, both skills and virtues require the ability to articulate, if not principles, then reasons. As Annas explains, 'The learner in virtue, like the learner in a [aspirational] practical skill, needs to understand what she is doing, to achieve the ability to do it for herself, and to do it in a way that improves as she meets the challenges, rather than coming out with predictable repetition' (2011, 20). More to the point, because the teaching or mastery of virtue requires us to provide or at least to understand explanations, virtue will involve an articulation of reasons that work across various embedded contexts and situations. Specifically, in the case of a moral concept like equality, the virtuous person can be expected to consider the practical bearings on others when applying the concept. The reasons or explanations for her actions must be defensible on the basis of these effects, and when these effects are challenged, the explanations that are almost sure to fail are ones that assert, in principle or action, the moral inequality of persons.[25] Much more likely to succeed are explanations that rely on at least some commitment to a notion of fairness, if not absolute equality.

Basically, the rules are always open to interpretation, but they are not *thoroughly* open to interpretation. There are constraints. For example, in an introduction of philosophy course, I could likely defend holding better students to a higher standard; what I cannot defend is holding any of my students to professional standards. In equality as in grading, we must act in ways that we can defend if necessary, but the defense offered must demonstrate sensitivity to situation, to communal standards, and to *the basic conditions of being human*. In other words, if you're going to treat people unequally, you'd better have a good reason—and be able to articulate that reason so others will understand and accept it. The fault with racism and sexism is not that they fail some abstract, generalized moral standard; it is that their practical bearings have proven to work

[25] Exceptions for particular contexts, like the one Young argues for (1990, 129–135), are certainly possible, but my point is that arguments for the inequality of persons are highly likely to fail across contexts. To put the matter slightly differently, invocations to equality, justices, truth-telling, and so on are much more plausibly defensible as schematic guides for conduct for the actions they produce will be much more likely to lead to human flourishing.

badly across a great many embedded contexts. As a result, the prima facie judgment within virtue ethics should be to reject the moral permissibility of such practices, although such a judgment remains open to further discussion and evaluation.

Now, this may seem a very unsatisfactory answer. As John McDowell notes, we have a 'deep-rooted prejudice about rationality' that makes it difficult for us to accept that we could specify moral virtue only in outline (1979, 337). Yes, Aristotle tells us that virtue cannot be a matter of strict rule-following and that whatever rules there are can be given only in a rough sketch, but that does not make it any easier to accept. If the defense of ethical concepts I have thus far offered seems unsatisfying, our resistance to mere outlines, which is part of the legacy of modernism, is certainly a factor in this dissatisfaction. Virtue accounts can allow that justice, fairness, freedom, or autonomy are worthwhile concepts, but, as with the case of equality, they cannot offer the theoretical precision of modern accounts. For instance, the case of autonomy is especially problematic. Autonomy is worthwhile, even on a virtue account, but a virtue account cannot allow that autonomy entails isolation or absolute independence. To do so would violate our basic understanding of the social nature of our lives, a nature to which virtue requires us to be sensitive. Because Descartes' methodological account of rationality is so influential, however, we tend to believe that rationality requires a consistency and a detachment that can be specified in principles and pursued autonomously. To defeat this, McDowell attempts to provide a corrective for he notes that Cartesianism demands a distance and detachment that we are actually not capable of achieving.

McDowell's argument concerns Wittgenstein's use of the rule 'add 2.'[26] According to McDowell, the point Wittgenstein makes in this argument is *not* that we should be skeptical about our ability to know that we are correctly following a rule. Rather, the argument aims at changing 'our conception of its [the rule's] ground and nature' (McDowell 1979, 338). Straightforwardly stated, we *know* that the rule 'add 2' precludes adding 4 after we reach 1000. The question is: how do we know this? What assurance can we have that rules will be followed correctly? To answer this

[26] See Wittgenstein 1958, §185–187.

question, McDowell offers a long quote from Stanley Cavell that is worth repeating here for it highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of rule-following—a complex and multifaceted nature that equally applies to virtue.

> We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place … just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, sense of humour and of significance and of fulfilment, or what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation—all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls 'forms of life.' Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying. (Cavell 2002, 52)

The appeal here is to Wittgensteinian 'forms of life,' but it could just as easily be to Heideggerian *zuhanden*, the 'ready to hand,' or to virtue (in its essence-less form). Language-use, being-in-the-world, virtue require us to be engaged wholeheartedly in the 'whirl of organism.' In short, we must be nontheoretically engaged. Our prejudice toward a methodological, rule-governed, deductively determined reason is, for McDowell, the very same prejudice that interferes with our willingness to allow for a noncodified conception of virtue. But this prejudice is untenable. 'We cannot,' says McDowell, 'be whole-heartedly engaged in the relevant parts of the "whirl of organism," and at the same time achieve the detachment necessary in order to query whether our unreflective view of what we are doing is illusory' (1979, 341). Put simply: give up the idea that the world can be known or understood through some external standpoint. What we have are the practices, the 'forms of life,' in which we are immersed. Give up the idea that virtue can be specified (in advance) in any precise way. What we have are virtuous people providing a model for how to be appropriately sensitive to the context and situation such that the outcome of their actions promotes human flourishing in the world in which we actually live. Our inability to offer a precise formulation of virtue

may be frustrating at times, but virtue is not random, not capricious, not tacit. We can indeed specify general conditions for what constitutes a good human life (e.g., bodily appetites, distribution of limited resources, management of personal property, truthfulness in speech, social association, the planning of one's life and conduct), and these conditions, along with the brute and unchangeable features of the world, provide limits on virtuous belief and action. In the final analysis, modern reason has given way to a much broader, much more ethically diverse concept, a concept which may lack necessary and sufficient conditions but about which we can still say a great deal.

5.4 Reasonableness

When considered as a virtue, rationality is involved in the 'whirl of organism' in a way that incorporates an integrated set of abilities which are often understood to be central to a concept that is much less methodologically narrow, that of reasonableness. Reasonableness is a dispositional quality that manifests itself in behavior and the tendency to act. It is also a concept that is not just more substantive and inclusive but also far less permissive than is reason: reasonableness is restricted to cases where reasoning is done well. Reasonableness actually begins with the Greek notion that human minds are not simply a diverse set of faculties but are also part of a world that limits their application. Because of its ancient origins, the concept is especially relevant to anti-modern approaches to reason, and it is a concept that has recently been brought back into fashion by philosophers such as Audi, Toulmin, Burbules, Harvey Siegel, Rebecca Kukla, and Laura Ruetsche. What reasonableness entails can be summarized as follows:

> It is not enough that a person be *able* to assess reasons properly; to be a critical thinker she must *actually engage* in competent reason assessment, and be generally disposed to do so. She must habitually seek reasons on which to base belief and action, and she must genuinely base belief, judgment and action on such reasons. She must, that is, be appropriately moved by reasons: given that there are compelling reasons to believe, judge or act

> in a certain way, the critical thinker must be moved by such reasons to so believe, judge or act. She must, that is, have habits of mind which make routine the search for reasons; she must, moreover, be disposed to base belief, judgment and action on reasons according to which they are sanctioned. The critical thinker must value reasons and the warrant they provide. She must, attendantly, be disposed to reject arbitrariness and partiality; she must care about reasons, reasoning, and living a life in which reasons play a central role. (Siegel 1997, 3)

This is a complicated and demanding list. It is a list that highlights why the content of morality cannot be specified in advance. And it is a far cry from the modern understanding that we are to accept as true only what is indubitable; to divide questions into manageable parts; to begin with the simplest elements and move to the more complex; and to review frequently so as retain the whole argument at once.

Reasonableness offers several advantages over modern thinking, but perhaps the most significant is that it asks us to moderate the influence of bias. Moderns not only fail to consider bias but also are incapable of doing so, at least if objectivity is to be retained. After all, they cannot for one second allow that properly executed reason contains bias for if they do, the jig is up and the slippery slope to subjectivism becomes well-nigh impossible to stop. In our day, concerns over bias translate to talk of the social situatedness of knowledge claims. For standpoint epistemologists in particular, what happens when those in power fail to consider the advantages of their social situation is a failure to generate an appropriately critical knowledge.[27] Stated differently, unless those with the power to establish their beliefs as knowledge (e.g., Enlightenment philosophers, white men, Europeans) must be willing to examine the biases that go into constructing their knowledge claims; otherwise, they end up with distorted, and thereby lesser, epistemologies. Harding speaks for all standpoint epistemologists in saying, 'one's social situation enables and sets limits on what one can know' (1993, 54–55). And the more epistemic authority one has, the more blind one tends to be to the limits of social situatedness and the less clearly one sees that there are

[27] See Harding 1993, 54.

other windows from which we can view reason or rationality or, even, reasonableness.

Those who discuss reasonableness tend to do so from an epistemic perspective, so what virtue adds to the discussion is a *moral* requirement to understand the circumstances that go into the generation of knowledge. Virtue prohibits the willful ignorance of the moderns. In its stead, virtue requires us to be knowledgeable concerning the circumstances surrounding the formation of beliefs and of actions performed on the basis of them, and it requires us to be responsive to a variety of principles. We may not always be fully able to formulate the reasons for our actions, we may not always be aware of the bias that enters our thinking, but that is no excuse. Virtue demands that we attempt to overcome ignorance, especially when it is made evident to us. Virtue demands we make an effort to articulate why we act. Virtue demands that we defend biases we believe to be better than others. Ignorance is not always innocent, and on virtue accounts, ignorance does impinge upon one's reasonableness.

Given this concern for the diversity of rationality and given the fragmentation of different aspects of soul in an Aristotelian account, one final aspect to consider concerning virtue is how well it 'hangs together,' so to speak. Do virtues, intellectual or moral, need to be integrated? Should one fail to exhibit virtue in every domain, can we then say that the person lacks virtue, or lacks reason, entirely? Does the reasonable person need to act reasonably across the board, or are there circumstances when unreasonableness is permissible? Despite the modern emphasis on the unity of reason (gained at the expense of every other aspect of pre-modern soul), universalist moral theories require far less integration of judgment and action than does a virtue account or does reasonableness. For example, both deontology and utilitarianism evaluate the rightness and wrongness of each action in a largely independent manner. Each theory references the character of moral agents, but the focus is on individual, isolated action—actions that are each intellectually solitary, purged of emotion, and detached from the world. On the other hand, virtues integrate intellectual and emotional elements so that we deliberate, feel, *and* act rightly. Aristotle himself sometimes speaks as if virtues must be evaluatively integrated, that is, as if one must possess all the virtues to be virtuous. For example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he

considers, and rejects, the possibility that virtues might exist separately from each other.

> But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. (Aristotle 1941, 1144b32–1145a2)

Here it seems that moral virtue is an all-or-nothing affair. But at other times, Aristotle appears to recognize that we are, after all, just human and that perfection is too high a standard.[28] The issue of evaluative integration is one which also applies in the intellectual realm. McDowell explains that 'the specialized sensitivities which are to be equated with particular virtues … are actually not available one by one for a series of separate identifications' (1979, 332). As with language, virtue, whether intellectual or moral, is not the sort of thing where one can acquire the flexible, context-sensitive abilities necessary to master one part of the activity and lack the ability to perform well in other areas. Being virtuous may not require perfection, but it does demand that overall one makes good decisions and performs good actions.

In the end, virtue's integration aids it in avoiding one final and deeply problematic aspect of modern rationality: its ability to compartmentalize moral judgments. Berkeley could own slaves, Locke could grant absolute power and authority to slaveholders, and Kant could call people 'stupid' on the basis of skin color—and none of this counts against them morally, despite the fact that they offer lip service to the universal rights of *man*. Such lapses in moral thinking, however, are only possible because the biases of their time allowed them. When we shift perspectives and view rationality as something that demands appropriately informed, consistent, habitual beliefs and actions that are sensitive to context and social

[28] See Aristotle 1941, 1109b14-16, 1109b35-1110a35, 1120b-1126a. In these passages, Aristotle gives multiple examples that indicate one need not be perfectly virtuous in order to possess virtue.

situatedness, everything changes. To step back and to examine reason through a different window highlights how exclusionary and oppressive modern concepts truly are, but it also offers the opportunity to correct past mistakes and re-claim a more flexible and open understanding of what it is to be rational.

5.5 Beyond Representationalism

Assuming we are willing to accept a context-sensitive, flexible ground, virtue rationality does offer a substantive ground for the moral concepts we inherit from the Enlightenment. Yet one final issue is yet to be resolved: representationalism. Clearly, representationalism does not survive intact the shift to reasonableness, but given that some of the most egregious sins of modern reason are built upon the objectification of people, it is worth discussing what becomes of representationalist epistemologies when reasonableness comes into focus. Modern representationalism is something rather distinct in the philosophical cannon, and the skepticism it gives rise to tends to mask the negative effects of objectification. Descartes both creates (with the dream hypothesis) and exacerbates (with the evil deceiver hypothesis) questions concerning knowing the world through direct and accurate access to the contents of one's own mind. In the end, his shift toward a representational framework makes it well-nigh impossible for us to know these representations to accurately reflect the world, even when our cognitive processes are not subject to radical doubt. But this is simply the epistemic end of the difficulty. The skepticism that results from the inward turn makes it all the more imperative that cognition become uniform, and it makes it all the more likely that divergences from norms are treated not just as aberrations but as failures of reasoning. Thus, once differences are attributed to anyone who is not like the 'us,' the 'us' that has the power to set epistemic standards, these differences come to be indicative of a miscarriage of rationality and morality. Representationalism, then, creates not just epistemic problems but also moral ones. The effect of undermining representationalism is to allow for a greater emphasis on activity and upon the diversity of ways we encounter the world, which

in turn allows for a greater emphasis on character than on mere physical characteristics.

The issue, then, that remains is how to overcome objectification and to expand our understanding of reason so that it allows for a wider range of phenomena and people to be included within its domain. This is a variation on a theme discussed by Eze, who believes that reason 'can be accurately characterized as internally diverse and externally pluralistic' (2008, 24). The question at hand is how best to formulate such a characterization. We must, as Eze notes, avoid false universalizations of the sort we find in Hume and Kant, but he also recognizes the problem of diversity—'everyday reasoning requires the individual to engage in processes of subsuming diversity and difference under actual and possible unities of general experience' (2008, 20). In other words, we need a rationality that can support diversity of experience and of reasoning, that can ground moral claims of justice, and that can serve as a 'bridge over a breech.' It must function as 'a practical response to the difficult condition of thought in the world, and of experience in history' (Eze 2008, 21). It must, in other words, avoid the difficulties of modern representationalism.

When considering inwardness and its representational stance, what most post-Cartesians worry about is the ways in which the world recedes from cognition. This is a phenomenon well-analogized by Toulmin, who claims that the philosophical problem of adequately representing an external world is similar to the one confronting a 'a lifelong prisoner in solitary confinement who has no way of finding out what is going on in the world beyond the prison walls, aside from the sounds and pictures reaching him via a television set in his cell' (1979, 5). This image has historically been a powerful one, but it is in no way necessary. Even before post-Cartesian philosophers, a long tradition existed in which the gap between mind/world, concept/intuition, and scheme/content was not allowed to gain traction—all the way from Heraclitus' breathing in of logos to Plato's direct acquaintance with the Forms to Heidgegger's ready-to-hand to Wittgenstein's forms of life. To adopt any of these approaches is to commit to an engagement with, instead of a separation from, the world (albeit Plato's world is Formal). And such engagement is far more prominent in the canon on either side of the modern period.

The result is that not all philosophers find representationalism's skeptical dilemma convincing, and some of the most notable skeptics concerning skepticism are the pragmatists. Peirce, for example, tells us that we really have no choice but to accept our senses, at least in their totality. Sure, individual sensory impressions may give rise to doubt in concrete cases, but overall, we are simply unable to go around doubting everything our senses tell us.[29] And even if we could, such doubt could never be genuine for it would never generate any action. After all, to take such doubt seriously *affects our very ability to do anything in the world*. The pragmatist, and more broadly post-Cartesian, response is to focus on activity within the world. In a sense, then, the pragmatist response to modernist debates is not to give a damn. We can't distinguish 'the world' from our conceptual frameworks—and that's okay. After all, what really matters is our ability to interact with the world in which we live, not our ability to step outside that world for a theoretical understanding.

When we focus on habit or activity, the emphasis is on lived reality. This, in turn, undermines the objectification of objects and of people for what matters is not some theoretical understanding but what it is we *do* with our beliefs. As Heidegger reminds us, a metaphysics of presence loses the forest for the trees, literally. What we perceive is not individual sights or sounds, for example, but the forest or the roar of a motorcycle. Similarly, Wittgenstein, via language-games, emphasizes practices and in doing so emphasizes the role of praxis into epistemology. It is precisely the difference between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' that he wants us to see. Think, for example, of the claim that when I reach bedrock and my spade is turned, this is simply what I *do*. Activity, habit, virtue—these are not passive. They concern how we come to have tendencies to reason, act, and react; they concern the way active beings, through experience and education, develop character. And to develop character requires engaging with the world in such a way that we formulate ends and to actively pursue them.

[29] Even Descartes understands this. At the end of Meditation I, he acknowledges how difficult it is to maintain his radical doubt, and in trusting his senses, he likens himself to a prisoner who does not wish to awaken from a pleasant dream.

Such an appeal to ends is an important aspect of a normative conception of rationality, one that is necessary to support substantive ethical claims. Without ends to guide our activities, we lose the ability to evaluate how successful (or not) is our pursuit of those ends. It is significant, then, that evolutionary accounts do not do away with ends, which is something even Rorty notes:

> our judgment as to how rationally evolution has designed us, or how rational evolution has managed to make us, must be made by reference to our views on the ends we are to serve. Knowledge of how our mind works is not more relevant than knowledge of how our glands or our molecules work to the development or correction of such views. (1979, 251)

Leave it to Rorty, of course, not just to note the evolutionarily determined nature of ends but also to grant to the canons of rationality merely the same level of importance as basic biology or chemistry. His intent is obviously to dismiss rationality as something capable of more than heteronomously determined and instrumental pursuits—that is, to knock rationality off its pedestal as something special. But he loses sight of the bigger picture. Our minds are slightly more complex than molecules for we are creatures capable of symbolism, abstract thinking, and planning; we are creatures who project meaning onto the world. These are qualities of human life that give it depth. Insofar as humans have freewill, we possess at least two sorts of ends: those necessary to our continued survival or well-being and those chosen to serve other ends (whether those ends be communally or autonomously chosen). The former ends provide a very real constraint on the latter ones, but we do have the latter ones.

Without doubt, this draws upon the well-worn idea that the mind structures reality—but it does not do so ex nihilo. That there are features of the world we do not make up is something that an evolutionary framework recognizes as well as any. For example, my grandmother was fond of the saying, 'You can't fight city hall.' Surely, 'city hall' is as social and cultural a phenomenon as anything, but the rules and regulations, the laws and courts, of a community are also as real as rocks and trees. Anyone who has ever taken on city hall, or watched others do it, cannot help but notice the effects. It is a battle with consequences that go beyond

socially constructed ones, especially when the fight is one that drains a person of her strength, happiness, joy, peace of mind. The human need for health, contentment, respect, and so on—the need for these things is not socially constructed. Satisfying such needs is, rather, part of what it is to live a good human life. Similar limitations on rationality are discussed more abstractly by Toulmin, who points out that

> the everyday framework of concepts, categories and intellectual forms—which provides the common fabric of our ordinary life and thought, as expressed in the familiar language of space and time, causes and effects, etc.—will simply represent a particularly stable and well-adapted plateau in the development of men's intellectual activities and conceptual equipment. (1972, 415)

The emphasis here is on the stable social elements of our lives, but we also find stable features of our environment in which our rational capacities develop. Insofar as these features remain stable, which they appear to have done for millennia, so too will our sense of what it means to rationally or reasonably cope with the world. Empirical facts exist about what it is to be human and about how stable features of the world impact our continued survival and well-being. Where old-fashioned, Kantian-styled representationalism divorces ding an sich reality and appearance, post-Cartesian, evolutionarily influenced virtue rationality gives us habits of action formed within stable environments. What happens with evolutionarily shaped ends is that material and social 'givens' come together in ways that allow normativity within the diversity of rationality—and without representation. As a result, even if the ways we construct ends may differ radically, there are ways of specifying the ends we are to serve that find the golden mean between an ontological given and a thoroughgoing social construct. What evolutionary approaches provide is an alternative to essentialism that allows us to keep nonpurposive ends without making them entirely cultural. Yet these ends must be responsive to many different inputs and grounds.

The kind of responsiveness that reasonableness demands is necessarily open-ended. Logic is one means of evaluating the rationality of belief or behavior, but it is not the only means. No system of thinking is irrational

merely because it is nonlogical (e.g., poetry, myth, mysticism). Virtue does much the same. It requires us to act reasonably, and this means responding to a full range of data in a manner which is sensitive to shifting standards of appropriateness. The ways in which difference must be taken into account vary, but at the very least, we need to look beyond internal coherence of the ideas involved and consider the real-life implications of beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Says Burbules, 'A person who is reasonable wants to make sense, wants to be fair to alternative points of view, wants to be careful and prudent in the adoptions of important positions in life, is willing to admit when he or she has made a mistake, and so on' (1995, 86). By including the contextuality, reasonableness avoids appealing solely to bloodless, formal reason.[30] Reasonableness 'reflects a tolerance for uncertainty, imperfection, and incompleteness as the existential conditions of human thought and action' (Burbules 1995, 94). To accept reasonableness, to expand the realm of rationality, to view rationality as a virtue concept, forces reason into a lived world in which difference exists and must be taken into account.

Yet this also brings us to an area of concern for Eze: the relationship of diversity to unity. To get to the heart of the matter, the doctrine of race is one that divides humans into diverse categories. It is also a doctrine that 'when applied to humanity, makes a mockery of much of what we call rationality' (Eze 2008, 159). Here, again, is a significant tension: we need to recognize diversity—the problems with not doing so are well documented—but we need to find some common elements of humanity. This captures the tension of relating, comparing, and judging various communities' epistemic and moral standards. It is also a tension between the freedom to be an individual and the need to exist within a community as it is anything else. And for Eze in particular, it is a tension with how in the '"racing" and "gendering" of individuals, one faction in society supposes

[30] Toulmin offers two excellent examples of how appeals to bloodless, universal principles are flawed when they have to encounter problems in the real world that their abstractness makes them ill-suited to handle. These examples are the prohibition of traditional irrigation practices in Bali and the expansion by Mohammed Yunus of economic theories to include 'social capital.' Toulmin concludes that both cases' 'reliance on pure economic theory was empirically empty without consideration of the social, cultural or historical conditions of its application' and that what it highlighted was 'the need to consider those social, cultural and historical conditions explicitly' (2000, 159).

itself judge on the scope of the freedom of the other' (2008, 165). To be in any way reflectively aware of racing and gendering is to understand that, whether they are philosophically grounded or not, these practices do exist and are deeply oppressive. The solution cannot be simply to ignore the practices or to allow them to remain invisible. Ignorance does not make the problem go away, and the refusal to acknowledge diversity of race and gender is itself destructive of freedom. Different races and genders have different historical circumstances and narratives that make a difference to their epistemic and moral lives. The problem is determining how to navigate the need for diversity within unity.

One way of doing this is to insist on standards of reasonableness that are explicitly sensitive to the context that create and are created by practices of racing and gendering. Because rationality is developed in specific contexts, it is shaped by the activities in those contexts and by the standards developed by the decisions and judgments of those considered reasonable. In the case of moral virtues, which are directly relevant to our everyday treatment of others, we already possess at least some of them by the time we are able to think or talk about them. Because our initial encounters with these virtues are lived encounters, how we deal with race and gender is normally focused not on theory but on action. Thus, in addressing the problem, if inclusion and exclusion, it makes little sense to seek abstract solutions. Instead, we must consider and even negotiate the approach reasonable people adopt.

The same holds true for considerations of rationality more globally: by the time we can reflect on reasoning well or poorly, we already make use of it in living our lives. Of course, how we do this is not uniform. Reasonable people, like virtuous ones, do make use of principles, but those principles do not interpret themselves. We may start with interpretations we are taught, but if we are truly reasonable, we will not simply respond to every situation by mechanically applying what we were taught. Burbules tells us, 'while there are some general standards of good reasoning, there is an unavoidable judging component as well, and hence an *inherent personal, idiosyncratic, and indeterminate character* to what it will mean to be rational (I would say "reasonable") for any particular person in any particular circumstance' [italics added] (1991, 249). To solve the problem of reason's diversity by considering what it means to be

rational in particular circumstances evidently brings us back to a familiar problem: relativism or, if taken literally, even subjectivism. In other words, while it may be true that judging involves inherent personal idiosyncrasies, to admit to this is to take a giant leap into some dangerously relativistic waters. It is one thing to assert a contextual element of rationality; it is another thing entirely to infer that this contextuality makes reason not simply indeterminate but *idiosyncratic*.

Unfortunately, Burbules is not the only one who takes this leap. Toulmin's appeals to reasonableness allow the same sort of relativism. He identifies two features of human cognition that can allow for the same sort of relativism: first, that we use language to solve problems; second that to better solve problems, our cognitive routines and principles should be criticized and reworked in light of experience.[31] This may not sound problematically relativistic, but language is a social phenomenon. To depend on it suggests the possibility that reasonableness may be thoroughly cultural—and Toulmin explicitly recognizes this. He says, 'Once a philosopher considers seriously the intelligibility of actual human languages, rather than the *a priori* character of any rational thought, he does what Kant was most anxious to avoid doing: viz., he exposes his flank to the historians and anthropologists' (1972, 426). Naturally, someone like Rorty is unconcerned with exposing his flank for he is entirely comfortable with the possibility of alternative conceptual schemes. Using the image of Neurath's boat, Rorty discusses how the planks of our boat have shifted since the time of the ancient Greeks, but he also hypothesizes how they might shift to a Galactic civilization of the future. While he allows that each and every conceptual shift along the way can be 'rational' (whatever it is Rorty means by 'rational'), the gap between us and our Galactic descendants may be so great that we could not recognize them as rational beings according to our standards.[32] It may very well be that we can, over a long enough period of time, come to have incommensurable schemes, even though schemes temporally close enough to one another are in fact commensurable. This sounds less dangerous than it is, until the image lights upon the ethical dimensions of such a transition.

[31] See Toulmin 1972, 494.

[32] See Rorty 1982, 8–9.

The fact is that plenty of cultures engage in racing and gendering. Plenty of cultures attach to these activities behaviors *we* find immoral. Yet these cultures should not be given a pass because the transitions to them were rational at every step of the way or because we have exposed our flank to anthropology (which in a Kantian instantiation is especially worrisome). We should not be willing to allow others to escape reprobation simply because rationality has an indeterminate, idiosyncratic character or because the conceptual shifts that give rise to these beliefs and actions are rational along the way.

Ironically, Kant here appears to have the upper hand in the evaluation of practices. In contrast to our more socially determined world, Kant could assume one and only one set of a priori concepts for rational thinkers; he could assume *the* categorical imperative as a mandatory principle. Such assumptions are not options for us. As we have moved away from Kant's a priori rational structures and toward evolutionarily developed, empirical ones, the possibility of other conceptual schemes is a live skeptical concern. If we have learned anything, it is that there are always alternative ways of rule-following or conceptual organization. Given that there is some stable furniture of the world and some constancy to what it means to be human, we can find common ground to discuss and debate conceptual schemes. In the end, reasonableness can come about:

> Only if each party to an argument recognizes himself, and believes the other, to be subject to *the common tribunal of reason*, in the sense that each would rather reach the right solution than merely have his own way, is it worth while [*sic*] arguing at all. There is an essential non-egocentricity which being reasonable requires, and which also is a *sine qua non* of a man's engaging in any common pursuit [italics added]. (Lucas 1963, 104–105)

Of course, this entails that we must ask primarily the same question Kant asked: what is this common tribunal of reason? However, our answer can and should be more than whatever we agree to '*under a chosen description*' (Rorty 1982, xxxix).

What constitutes reasonable behavior does undoubtedly have a cultural element, but the unreasonable person bumps into tables and chairs as much (perhaps more) than the reasonable one. In other words, there

are stable material and social facts that we must deal with. The emphasis on lived experience and on activity in a world not of our own making offers a brake on how relative rationality can be. Reasonableness can require us to conform to social norms of cognition and action, but it does not thereby imply a fatalism about them. Quite the contrary, it requires us to be reflective about these norms. In other words, we might sometimes be right to fight city hall, especially when governments act unfairly, unequally, unjustly. Not just anything goes in the realm of human activity, even if the limits cannot be specified in advance. The evolutionary interpretation of virtue still allows that stable facts about human lives limit the narratives we can tell and the principles we can adopt, that is, if we are to thrive. The reasonable person can critically assess what are the best ways to live, but she cannot by fiat determine this in the absence of the social and *material* facts about our lives.

What, then, becomes of representationalism from within the structure of reasonableness or within the structure of virtue? At the very least, it loses its modern form and structure. We may still 'represent' bits of experience for particular purposes, but we lose the sense that we stand essentially apart from the world, able to capture it fully and objectively from within our own isolated minds. We also lose the sense that some parts of our lives are unimportant or irrelevant to epistemic and moral conversations. The representation within Cartesian perspectives relies on an observational model from the physical sciences which entails that significant aspects of our lives will be partially represented, if at all, for it calls for so-called objective investigators to ask for just the facts. But epistemic isolation is not the only condition—and it is no way a natural condition—for humans. As Aristotle observes, man (and woman) is fundamentally social, and our goal in becoming virtuous is not to understand virtue theoretically but practically. We are required to come to terms with the world, not to know it in some logically defined manner, but to live within it in ways that show us to make sense, to be fair to alternative points of view, to be careful and prudent in the adoptions of important positions in life—including positions concerning the 'racing' and 'sexing' of fellow members of our community. Reasonableness does not ask us simply to simply link up ideas with features of the world so that we come to understand the phenomenon; rather it asks us to live lives that are

responsive to it in ways that critically reflect on communal values and the facts of living in world that discriminates among people.

5.6 The Virtue of Virtue

I began with the premise that rationality is something enigmatic and mysterious, something to be understood at only the most general levels. I have also attempted to make reason slightly less mysterious. Reason is a tool used for particular purposes. It is not a thing but rather an activity, a network of overlapping functions and abilities that may be impossible to capture in any theoretically precise manner, but we can nevertheless capture it imprecisely. And what we can imprecisely say about it is that it is, at heart, a communal notion. It exists in concrete interactions with objects and with other people. It shapes our practices of inquiry and is shaped by them. It gives us the ability to acquire and revise our cognitive attitudes. Because rationality is something complex and sensitive to context, we can map its features in different ways, just as we can map terrain in different ways. It all depends on our purposes. We humans order our lives socially and symbolically, and rationality must address social intelligence. Our behavior is mediated by symbolism. And this symbolism can be made to work for good or for ill. What the moderns accomplished was to provide an incredibly accurate map of reason's logical procedures. What they failed to accomplish was to recognize that was only one way of mapping the functions of rationality. What didn't fit on their maps was declared irrelevant and was banished from the realm of what mattered. Among the things that found no place on the terrain of reason were women and non-white men—and these exclusions were no accident. What post-Cartesian thinking has done is to open space for considering social and symbolic meaning, for consider a diversity of approaches toward this meaning, and for recognizing that a rationality insensitive to such variety is impoverished and misleading. It has discovered terrain within the domain of the rational to which non-whites and non-males can lay claim. What the Greeks understood clearly and what we are coming to see again is that we humans are beings that are more than just intellectual; we are

physical and emotional beings as well. Our understanding of reason should encompass all of these.

Reasonableness does this, but the tale of how it is a concept that was once lost but now is found is a tale that says a great deal about the closing and opening of possibilities. The notion of what is reasonable to do in a particular situation is one that has a history going back to at least as far as Aristotle and continuing through to the present day with English common law's appeal to 'the reasonable person.' The Enlightenment may have succeeded in proceduralizing reason, but the concept of reasonableness has avoided being tied to particular principles or rules. And since the reasonable person is not wedded to certainty in the realm of belief, it turned out to be a poor candidate for grabbing the attention of the moderns. Reasonableness is simply not an option in a world closed off to the diversity of reasoning. The result is that it lost much of its philosophical credibility in the Enlightenment. It receded into the shadows. But, as we now recognize, formal solutions to the problems of life are few and far between, and in social situations, we rarely appeal to formal decision procedures, opting instead for informal solutions in which we both implicitly and explicitly appeal to what is 'reasonable to believe.' When rationality is broadened in this way, when it is broadened beyond the limits of modern science, it allows for responsiveness to reasons and to a variety of epistemic grounds—it also allows for a variety of ends. Instead of shutting off possibilities that lie beyond rule-governed explanations, the reasonable person must be sensitive to the circumstances in which she finds herself.

While an emphasis on reasonableness expands our understanding of rationality, the motivation to return to this concept comes from postmodern and broadly nonmodern criticisms of and approaches to rationality. These criticisms have further changed our understanding of the landscape. Contemporary rationality and reasonableness are not the relatively simple concepts that modern reason is. They are messily diverse in precisely the manner that feminists and race theorists have asked them to be. They incorporate body and emotion; they recognize different procedures and interpretations of procedures; and they require critical self-reflection on both goals and our methods of achieving them. The standards of normativity provided by rationality and reasonableness are

ones that depend upon the world in which we live but that also require negotiation among communities. Some aspects of our lives are 'given'; others must be developed socially.

Of course, philosophers are not the only ones who recognize the importance of symbol and of culture. This emphasis on the symbolic and the social is of particular concern within anthropology. This work is highly detailed and empirical, with the goal of identifying what makes humans distinct from other species (a quite Aristotelian thing to do).[33] Many of the criteria used to distinguish early humans from other hominids focuses on social intelligence and a multiplicity of traits such as abstract thinking, planning depth, innovativeness, and symbolic behavior.[34] What this shows is a significant cultural role within what it means to be rational. When Wittgenstein says, 'If a lion could speak, we could not understand him' (Wittgenstein 1958, 223), it is much the same idea. To be understood to be a rational being means to share practices within which I can be understood to be rational. For this reason, a priori investigations can never give us the content of rationality. Despite the cultural element, rationality remains a normative term that governs systems of beliefs. Unlike procedural accounts, however, a structural account of rationality does not require any specific belief, desire, or action. Instead, it recognizes rationality as adaptive to the various grounds and content available to it. Experience provides a normative constraint on belief, desire, and action. Of course, experience is not straightforwardly clear concept.

Eze tells us that 'it is pointless to reject the idea that humanity is shared across cultures,' and he rhetorically asks, 'who could engage in such a denial?' (2001, 203). He is right on both counts. Even Kant allows that all humans are human, regardless of race or gender. What Kant and others lose sight of, however, is the need to critically evaluate their own understanding of rationality against others. A reasonable person may want 'to make sense, … to be fair to alternative points of view, … to be careful and prudent in the adoption of important positions in life, … and so on' (Burbules 1995, 86), but modern philosophers were not reasonable. They had no intention of being reasonable since reasonableness is

[33] For a summary list of these the evidence and traits, see Henshilwood and Marean 2003, 628.

[34] See Henshilwood and Marean 2003.

incapable of rigorous methodology and, for that reason, seemingly chaotic. Instead, they chose to make sense only to those who already thought like them. The alternative points of view to which they were willing to be fair shared precisely the same assumptions concerning the procedures to be followed. And these procedures worked well, but only for those who shared them. The alternative conception for which I have argued may not work well for everyone, but it has a much greater chance of recognizing not only the humanity but the personhood of all.

The return to rationality and to reasonableness opens the domain of rationality to all humans for it takes seriously the ordinary meanings of 'reason.' Humanity is shared across culture, and our use of terms like 'reason' must reflect this. The appeal to ordinary language in our understanding of reasonableness also allows for a certain critical self-reflection within rationality, and this, in turn, requires us to rethink many of the conditions that have led to modern forms of racism and sexism. Reasonableness demands that we consider the full range of activities in which humans engage. It demands that we consider the diversity of people and ways of living. It demands that we consider what fosters and impedes the acquisition of intellectual and moral virtues. And it demands that we reflect not only on how we are to achieve the ideals we set for ourselves but also on our choice of ideals. The result is that the reasonable person is no longer permitted an unreflective loyalty to a particular window on reason. The virtue of reasonableness is that it focuses on the activity of living, and in doing so, it makes visible and relevant those aspects of life that the moderns dismiss. It makes visible and relevant those *persons* who the moderns dismiss.

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