

PHILOSOPHY AND THE RETURN TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

BY

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CHAPTER ONE: BARBARISM OF REFLECTION

Finally, they chased the gods out in order
to live in the temples themselves.

Rousseau

In the conclusion to his *Principles of New Science Concerning the Common Nature of the Nations* (1730, 1744) Giambattista Vico says: "If the peoples are rotting in that ultimate civil disease and cannot agree on a monarch from within, and are not conquered and preserved by better nations from without, then providence for their extreme ill has its extreme remedy at hand."¹ A nation may correct itself or it may be corrected by a better nation. If these remedies do not occur, providence, the eternal order of history itself, will bring the cycle of the nation's life to an end.

"For such peoples," Vico continues, "like so many beasts, have fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests and have reached the extreme of delicacy, or better of pride, in which like wild animals they bristle and lash out at the slightest

displeasure." They have reached this state of ultimate civil disease through unrestrained passions and become slaves to luxury, effeminacy, envy, pride, and vanity. They are unable to withstand any adversity or displeasure. Each individual is easily offended by anything he does not wish to see or hear.

"Thus no matter how great the throng and press of their bodies, they live like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit and will, scarcely any two being able to agree since each follows his own pleasure or caprice." In order for each to follow his own caprice, they have become liars, tricksters, calumniators, thieves, cowards, and pretenders. Assemblies are not societies, and when many bodies come together the solitude of the individual is often the greatest. Cicero says: "Who does not believe that those are more alone who, though in the crowded forum, have no one with whom they care to talk" (*De re pub.* I.18.28). Spirit and will go to sleep in the crowd and all that is left is desire and gain.

"By reason of all this, providence decrees that, through obstinate factions and desperate civil wars, they shall turn their cities into forests and the forests into dens and lairs of men." The throngs, driven by their desires and masquerading as society, are human forests, placeless and without virtues or purpose. All nations arise from the forest, and they return to the forest in an eternal cycle of history governed by providence.² Providence is just this cycle of rise, maturity, decline, and fall that we find in the life of any nation. When a people declines there is

an overgrowth of the self by the passions. The individual becomes a lair of the passions, rather than a force of character directing them.

"In this way, through long centuries of barbarism, rust will consume the misbegotten subtleties of malicious wits [*degl'ingegno maliziosi*] that have turned them into beasts made more inhuman by the barbarism of reflection [*la barbarie della riflessione*] than the first men had been made by the barbarism of sense [*la barbarie del senso*]." The return to barbarism is not simply yielding to the baser passions. It involves a corruption of the highest faculties of the soul—*memoria*, *fantasia* (imagination), and *ingegno* (wit, ingenuity).³ In the barbarism of reflection we become beasts of the intellect formed as an instrument of desire. The powers of the mind are put in the service of the passions in order to lie, trick, misrepresent, steal, hide, and deceive. All life becomes politics.

"The barbarism of sense displayed a generous savagery, against which one could defend oneself or take flight or be on one's guard; but the barbarism of reflection, with a vile savagery, under soft words and embraces, plots against the life and fortune of friends and intimates." The first men are all body and think with their senses. They are motivated by their passions both good and bad, without subtlety. Their savagery is generous because it is evident, and ordinary prudence is what is required to protect oneself from it.

The barbarism of reflection that is typical of the end of a nation's life is like that at the lowest level of Dante's *Inferno* (cantos 30–34). Those who have committed sins of the body or sins of violent greed are not at this level; at this lowest level are those who violate humanity itself by poisoning the common confidences necessary to human society. They turn their *ingegno* into *insidia*. They live like the *lonza* (“leopard”), the third of the three beasts that impede Dante's way at the beginning of the *Divina commedia*. They are the falsifiers in words and deeds, the corrupters of the social fabric. At this level the social nature of humanity is eroded by fraud, by treacheries against guests and hosts, friends and intimates, and relatives. The barbarians of reflection are the last men, who have turned the intellect into an insidious instrument, devoid of virtue and full of desire.

"Peoples who have reached this point of reflective malice [*riflessiva malizia*], when they receive this last remedy of providence and are thereby stunned and brutalized, are sensible no longer of comforts, delicacies, pleasures, and pomp, but only of the sheer necessities of life." Providence or history is the great judge. When a society is infected with reflective malice it cannot sustain itself, and the communal sense that holds a true society together comes apart. It comes as a surprise to the barbarians of reflection to discover they are not the owners of history. Things fall apart quickly. The social fabric unravels rapidly because the weave disintegrated long ago. Social life was a sham held together only

by the weakest of conventions which covered the corruption of the times. Suddenly history shows its power to bring this form of society to an end, and the last men are stunned to see their lack of mastery of events.

"The few survivors in the midst of an abundance of the things necessary for life naturally become sociable and, returning to the primitive simplicity of the first world of peoples, are again religious, truthful, and faithful." The primitive simplicity of the return to the first world, the conditions of the nation's birth, jars the soul back toward its natural state of justice. Necessity, as the Spanish Humanist Juan Luis Vives emphasizes, is the mother of invention, and life governed by necessity directs *ingenium* toward what is natural to the soul: "the first invention of things comes to the aid of necessity; for necessity wonderfully sharpens ingenuity."⁴ The new first men, having been brought to their natural sense of virtue, can begin once again to exercise rightly their faculty of ingenuity. For the last men, ingenuity is a power in itself, directed by nothing and bent simply on furthering its own power to combine and manipulate events. In this way wit becomes malicious.

"Thus," Vico concludes, "providence brings back among them the piety, faith, and truth which are the natural foundations of justice as well as the graces and beauties of the eternal order of God." The reduction to nature makes these last men into first men by reestablishing their own human nature. The absence of pleasure and luxury brings humanity back to a concern with the relation between

things human and divine, which is the essence of wisdom. Providence begins to teach its lesson all over again in the form of a *ricorso* of the nation. The nation is now reborn into another cycle.

Machiavelli in the *Discourses* says that all republics are destined to run through such a cycle if they are not conquered from without, although he does not speak of a necessary stage of feral wandering.⁵ Such a cycle is in Plato's *Republic* (books 8–9) and in the stages of the development of the state in the *Laws* (book 3, 676A–682E). To know the truth about the human condition we must grasp the connection between decline and rebirth. The perfect motion of the circle is the general motion of human affairs. The civil world is forever round.

The sentences upon which I have commented are Vico's condensed portrait of modern life. I wish to consider how the barbarism of reflection develops within modern thought from the Promethean nature of Descartes' method, that is, the pursuit of method that brings with it control of the object but does not bring with it civil wisdom. *Reflection* is not a term that develops on its own within modern thought but is taken over from the development of modern optics. The barbarism of reflection is not simply a form of modern thought; it is also a life-form involving a conception of the human self and its action in society.

Vico organizes his conclusion to the *New Science*, from which the above sentences are taken, in four paragraphs. These paragraphs follow the division of legal forensics in book 4 of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.

In most modern editions of the *New Science* this order is blurred by Fausto Nicolini's division of Vico's conclusion into sixteen numbered paragraphs. Vico's original four paragraphs approximate the four-part structure of an address to the judges of a legal case, who in this instance are his readers: *exordium*, *statement of facts*, *proofs*, and *peroration*. The sentences quoted above describing the decline of society are the final sentences of Vico's statement of facts. They are the turning point in his argument before he enters his proofs and peroration; they describe the current state of history in which we moderns find ourselves. We share with Vico a life in corrupt times.

Vico looks at history and never smiles. There is no progress in history.⁶ A "nation" is a "birth" (*nazione*, "nation"; *nascere*, "to be born"). Each nation has a beginning, middle, and end, a rise, maturity, and fall. As youth, adulthood, and old age are the universal stages of an individual human life lived through its natural course, so each nation in the world of nations moves through the stages of its life in its own way. Vico calls this life cycle of nations "ideal eternal history" (*storia ideale eterna*). Because each human life and each nation enacts this common pattern of stages in a particular way, the pattern itself is "ideal." The particular history of any human life and the particular history of any nation is never exactly the same as any other. What make it a human life or a nation's life are the features it holds in common with all other lives or nations. The principles of these commonalities of the world of

nations are the subject matter of the philosophical science of history. To discover these principles requires the eye of providence.

The Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini says in his *Ricordi*: "All that which has been in the past and is at present will be again in the future. But both the names and the appearances of things change, so that he who does not have a good eye will not recognize them. Nor will he know how to grasp a norm of conduct or make a judgment by means of observation."⁷ Guicciardini's "good eye," his *buono occhio*, is the key to understanding particular human affairs and to understanding human history. It is the ability to see the commonalities in human events over time. Vico's "new science concerning the common nature of nations" is based on this ability to see the repetition in human events and to formulate their principles.

Vichian history is Stephen's nightmare in *Ulysses*, from which he is trying to awake.⁸ On Vico's view, men do not literally make history. Men make history only within the providential order of history, which is given as the cycle of ideal eternal history.⁹ The life cycle of any nation passes through an age of gods, in which the world is ordered in terms of gods; an age of heroes, in which virtues necessary to conduct and society are personified; and an age of humans, in which experience is ordered by logical concepts and society is based on written laws.

Ideal eternal history is a divine order, and providence is in this respect the demiurge of the forms of those ages. Providence is the divine

cyclical order of history, but the divine itself transcends history and has its own reality beyond the human. History is a melancholic process, and the knowledge of its cycle is a melancholic wisdom. The nightmare of history is to think it could be otherwise, to think history could be progress without end. To live this illusion is as false to real conditions as it is to believe that a human life could continue without end. To believe that a nation is eternal is as monstrous as to believe that all men are not necessarily mortal. The providential cycle is given as a certainty. The Vichian scientist of history sets about discovering the presence of this cycle in the commonalities of those things present in "the languages, customs, and deeds of peoples in war and peace."¹⁰

In writing to Abbé Esperti in Rome in 1726, regarding the very limited reception received by the first version of his *New Science* (1725), Vico says a work such as this cannot expect universal applause because it goes against the corrupt spirit of the times.¹¹ He plays upon a line in which Tacitus criticizes the customs of the Romans in contraposition to those of the barbaric but virtuous Germans (*Germania*, 19). Vico glosses this sentiment of Tacitus in the 1730 and 1744 editions of the *New Science*. He says that Roman emperors, when they wished to give reasons for the ordinances they issued, claimed to have been guided by the "sect of their times" (*sètte de' loro tempi*).

Vico says "the customs of the age are the school of princes, to use the term applied by Tacitus to the decayed sect of his own times, where,

he says, *Corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur*—"They call it the spirit of the age to seduce and be seduced"—or, as we would now say, the fashion."¹² When the intellectual virtues are corrupted into the fashion of witticism and falsity in thought, there is a parallel corruption in social life in which the moral virtues are corrupted into flattery, soft embraces, and plots against intimates and friends. Man as rational animal and man as social animal are corrupted together.

In the 1730 edition of the *New Science*, the following statement appears in the middle of the passage quoted above from Vico's conclusion to the 1744 edition: "Because, unlike in the time of the barbarism of sense, the barbarism of reflection pays attention only to the words and not to the spirit of the laws and regulations; even worse, whatever might have been claimed in these empty sounds of words is believed to be just. In this way the barbarism of reflection claims to recognize and know the just, what the regulations and laws intend, and endeavors to defraud them through the superstition of words."¹³ In the 1744 edition this statement is replaced by the observation, quoted above, comparing the generous savagery of the barbarism of sense with the vile savagery of the barbarism of reflection.

In the age of ultimate civil disease, the law, which makes man a social animal, is corrupted into a "superstition of words." The law unconnected to justice becomes a repository of wit. The law can be whatever anyone clever enough with words can convince us it is. This is

a world without reason or shame. In his revision of this original statement for the 1744 edition of the *New Science*, Vico moves from simply making a point about the corruption of the law and the willful defrauding of its meaning to a characterization of the corruption of the soul that would be necessary for such fraud.

In the decline of society depicted in both editions, Vico presents modernity in uncompromising terms. Modern life is injustice. Modernity is a state in which the soul has lost the internal proportion of its faculties. The intellect and wit walk the world without natural connections to images formed by the imagination, the passions arising in the body, and the turns of events caused by the gods. The senses and the spirit are indulged but are not involved in life as sources that guide it. The intellect has become perverse, living off its own reality of facts and thoughts, seeing only itself in the world. In society this becomes a quest for certainty and luxury, for strategies of the ego, careers, and means of control and accomplishment. The barbarian within is released through the circuits of critical reflection that run through all forms of thought and evaluate all forms of conduct. It is a joyless business. It is a shallow heart.

How did this barbarism of reflection come about in our time? How is it that the mind's relation to itself came to be understood as "reflection"? How is this characterization of thought connected to the ultimate civil disease, in which the social fabric of laws and language are

turned into mere instruments of intellect that upset and defraud the natural order of the soul?

Descartes is the first philosopher of reflection. His *Discourse on Method* (1637) is the historical source in French for the philosophical meaning of *réflexion*.¹⁴ In part 5 of the *Discourse* Descartes uses the phrase "après y avoir fait assez de réflexion" in claiming that certain laws that God has established in nature have also been implanted in our minds: "After adequate reflection we cannot doubt that they are exactly observed in everything which exists or occurs in the world."¹⁵ In his proof for the existence of God in part 4, Descartes employs the term *reflection* in arguing from doubt as part of the proof of his own existence to the existence of God: "reflecting upon the fact that I was doubting" (*faisant réflexion sur ce que je doutais*).¹⁶ Descartes proceeds to present his *Dubito, ergo Deus est*.

In a letter written for Arnauld on July 29, 1648, answering objections raised to some of his views in the *Principles*, Descartes writes: "we make a distinction between direct and reflective thoughts corresponding to the distinction we make between direct and reflective vision, one depending on the first impact of the rays and the other on the second." Descartes says the simple thoughts of infants are direct and not reflective, such as when they have feelings of pain or pleasure originating in the body. Reflection can occur in adults. "But when an adult feels something, and simultaneously perceives that he has not felt

it before, I call this second perception *reflection* [*hanc secundam perceptionem reflexionem appello*], and attribute it to the intellect alone, in spite of its being so linked to sensation that the two occur together and appear to be indistinguishable from each other."¹⁷ In this passage Descartes draws the analogy that is the basis of the modern conception of reflection. He compares the reflection of light in perception, the subject of optics, with reflection in the intellect, the subject of mental philosophy.

Reflection is a modern term. There is no cognate term in ancient Greek for the modern sense of *reflection* as a philosophical and psychological term.¹⁸ Image in the sense of *eidolon* or *eikon* and *phantasia*, as a power associated with images, is the subject of discussion in Greek philosophy, as are the physical phenomena of mirrors, the reflection of light, and the visual perception of objects.¹⁹ The Atomists regard visual perception as the reception in the pores of the viewer of an image emitted by the object and having its same shape; the Epicureans regard such shapes as entering into the senses whether a person is awake or asleep.

The figure who leaves Plato's Cave for the sun first looks on the world above as shadows, phantoms, and reflections of things in water (*Rep.* 509E). On the divided line the lowest segment is *eikasia*, the perceiving of images and reflections (*Rep.* 509E). In the *Sophist* Plato divides *eidolon* into "likeness" (*eikon*) and "semblance" (*phantasma*)

(236A–236B). For Aristotle *phantasia* (imagination) is between *aisthesis* (perceiving) and *noēsis* (thinking). *Phantasia* is a motion of the soul originated by sensation that forms and can retain an image after the dispersal of the sensing (*De an.* 427b–429a). Knowledge involves sight, images, *nous*, the metaphor of light, but there is no term in Greek philosophy for the self-optics of the intellect designated by the modern term *reflection*.

In Latin, *reflectere* occurs as a term among classical authors, carrying meanings of "to bend back" (for example, parts of the body), "to turn around" (for example, to retrace one's steps), "to turn away" (for example, the face or gaze), and "to turn back or reverse" (such as a person, or a person's mind) from a course of action.²⁰ Cicero in *De oratore* speaks of the need for the orator to develop insight into human nature and motives, "whereby our souls are spurred on or turned back [*quibus mentes aut incitantur, aut reflectuntur*]" (*De orat.* I.53). In the tenth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, when Juno is appealing to Jupiter concerning the fate of Turnus, Jupiter suspects that she hopes the whole course of the war may also be altered. He informs her that her hope is idle. Juno departs straightaway, saying "Thou, who canst, wouldst bend thy purposes to a better end! [*In melius tua, qui potes, orsa reflectas!*]" (X. 632). As a classical Latin term, *reflectere* carries none of the meaning of the mind thinking itself.

The philosophical meaning of *reflection* enters modern languages from late Latin. *Reflexio* is not used in the sense of "self-knowledge" prior to the thirteenth century.²¹ In his psychology Roger Bacon refers to the power of the intellect to reflect on the contents of consciousness.²² In his optics, the fifth part of his *Opus majus*, Bacon describes the effects of the reflection and refraction of light and of color on vision. He considers the phenomena of direct perceptions and the similitude perceived between present and past sensations. Then he says: "But there is still a third perception, which cannot take place by the sense alone, and does not depend on a comparison with previous vision, but without limitation considers the thing present. For its perceptions several things are required, and the process is like a kind of reasoning."²³

This kind of reasoning, Bacon says, goes on so instantaneously that we are normally not aware of it. The optical process is described as a kind of reasoning. It is a short step for us to entertain the converse of this proposition: that reasoning is like an optical process carried on internally. In the conclusion of his optics Bacon employs *reflection* as a key to the state of the soul: "Man has a three-fold vision: one perfect, which will come in a state of glory after the resurrection; the second in the soul separated from the body in heaven until the resurrection, which is weaker; the third in this life, which is the weakest, and this is correctly said to be by reflection." Bacon reminds us that "the apostle says, 'We now see by means of a glass darkly, but in glory face to face'" (1

Corinthians 13.12). Bacon says that God judges by reflection, for the apostle James says this judgment is like "a man beholding his natural face in a glass."²⁴

Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa theologica* employs *reflexio* in reference to the specific operation of the intellect in our knowledge of material things. He says: "That by which the sight sees is the likeness of the visible thing; and the likeness of the thing understood, that is, the intelligible species, is the form by which the intellect understands. But since the intellect reflects upon itself, by such reflection it understands both its own act of understanding and the species by which it understands."²⁵ He also describes the intellect itself in reflective terms, basing his comments on Augustine's "I understand that I understand" (*De Trin.*, X.11).

Thomas says that the first thing for the intellect to understand is its own act of understanding. He says that this occurs differently in different intellects; the divine and the angelic differ from the human. In the divine intellect essence and act are one, and in the angelic the first object of the act is the angelic essence. In the human intellect the first object of the intellect is the nature of the material thing: "that which is first known by the human intellect is an object of this kind [a material object], and that which is known secondarily is the act by which that object is known; and through the act the intellect itself is known, whose perfection is the act itself of understanding."²⁶ Although *reflection* occurs

in Thomas's texts, it is a term of limited use in them, and in Scholasticism generally.

The source of *reflection* as the key term of modern philosophical thought is Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690).²⁷ although the term *reflection* exists in English before Locke, his *Essay* is the historical source for the use of *reflection* as a philosophical term.²⁸ In describing the origin of our ideas, Locke distinguishes between those from external, sensible objects and those from the internal operations of our minds. He says, "These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."²⁹ Locke says that one source of what is in the mind is what the senses convey to it from external objects (for example, yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet): "this great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION."³⁰

The other source of ideas is the experience our own mind has of its operations, which cannot be had from without (for example, perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing). Locke says: "This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called *internal sense*. But as I call the other Sensation, so I call this REFLECTION, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself."³¹

In French the step beyond Descartes' use of *reflection* is Condillac's reworking of Locke's views in his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1746)³² and Leibniz's criticism of Locke in the *Nouveaux essais* (1765). Leibniz says, "reflection is nothing but attention to what is within us, and the senses do not give us what we carry with us already."³³ *Riflessione* as a philosophical term enters Italian from Locke.³⁴ Its general use in Italian in various senses parallels that of English and French and is derived from the Latin original. The case is much the same in Spanish.³⁵

Locke's *Essay* was translated into Latin in 1701 and into French in 1735. The Latin edition, *De intellectu humano*, was widely employed.³⁶ Locke's conception of reflection, and Descartes' for that matter, is anticipated by the Venetian Paolo Sarpi (1551–1623), who observes that no one can be acquainted with the knowing of knowing without engaging in reflection ("niun conoscente conosce di conoscere se non facendovi riflessioni").³⁷ In *L'arte di ben pensare* (The art of thinking well), the original of which is lost, Sarpi appears to have developed views very like Locke's concerning the distinction between sensation and reflection, the use of words, and so on—all about one hundred years before Locke's *Essay* appeared.³⁸

Kant's critique is the successor to Descartes' methodological employment of reflection as a means to certainty and Locke's opposition of *reflection* to *sensation* as one of the two terms that exhaust the nature

of human understanding. Descartes from his rationalist position employs reflection; Locke through his psychological approach gives it an identity; Kant equates philosophy itself with it. Kant establishes the firm connection between reflection and the nature of the Understanding (*Verstand*).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant criticizes both Locke and Leibniz on the basis of "transcendental reflection." Kant states: "The act by which I confront the comparison of representations with the cognitive faculty to which it belongs, and by means of which I distinguish whether it is as belonging to the pure understanding or to sensible intuition that they are to be compared with each other, I call *transcendental reflection*."³⁹ In the "Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection" (*Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe*), Kant claims that both Locke and Leibniz lack a transcendental conception of reflection by which they would be able to distinguish what belongs rightfully to the pure Understanding and what is given in appearance by sensibility. Locke would reduce all objects to what appears in sensibility, and Leibniz would attempt to obtain the inner nature of things by comparing all objects to the Understanding.

Transcendental reflection is the proper operation of the Understanding, of the knowing subject delineating the conditions of its own knowing so that its powers to sense the object are held in proper relation to its powers to form logically what is sensed. The knowing subject reflects on its own operations both sensible and conceptual and

grasps the conditions under which it has an object that it knows. Reflection becomes the form of the Understanding. Transcendental reflection is a synonym for critique. Critique or criticism is the reflection of the knower on the conditions of the possibility of the object known. The project of philosophy is defined as the encounter of the mind with its own operations, as the ability to say with certainty how the phenomenal object can be known by the knower: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."⁴⁰

In the one passage in the first *Critique* in which Kant becomes poetic he extols the merit of the pure Understanding. He says he has considered everything in the territory of the pure Understanding and assigned everything to its rightful place. He says "This domain [the pure Understanding] is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth—enchancing name!—surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he never can abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion."⁴¹ Kant's "land of truth" is the kingdom of Prester John in epistemological form.

What we might have thought a fiction is alleged by critique to be not fiction but a land of truth. The fictitious is what beckons out beyond it; it may delude us with empty prospects and projects that we can never

complete ("niemals zu Ende bringen kann"). Kant's last sentence is Descartes' warning to those who would listen to fictitious narratives. Those who would allow themselves to be influenced by such stories, Descartes says, "are liable to fall into the excesses of the knights-errant in our tales of chivalry, and to conceive plans beyond their powers."⁴² To seek the realm of Ideas is to seek the *Abenteur* of deluded seafarers or the *extravagance* of paladins tilting at windmills, engaging in fictions as if they were real life.

Critique supplies an absolute standard for human action arrived at by the agent's reflection on the necessary presupposition of the agent's own moral action. In practical reason, the categorical imperative expresses as a certainty the one presupposition of any moral act, but it leaves in doubt whether the act has truly lived up to its absolute presupposition. Whether the moral has been done is never fully known. The engine that drives the categorical imperative in human affairs is guilt, or *Schuld*. The agent is uncertain that the presupposition of the act has been perfectly aligned with the act itself, thus guaranteeing its morality. In Kant's ethics we always fall short, so we resolve to step up our will to perfection the next time we act.

Kant says: "For men and all rational creatures, the moral necessity is a constraint, an obligation. Every action based on it is to be considered as duty, not as a manner of acting which we naturally favor or which we sometime might so favor." Our duty is not a pleasant thing.

It is a crucible of the will and of the human spirit. Kant continues: "This would be tantamount to believing we could finally bring it about that, without respect for the law (which is always connected with fear or at least apprehension that we might transgress it) we, like the independent deity, might come into possession of holiness of will through irrefragable agreement of the will with the pure moral law becoming, as it were, our very nature. This pure law, if we could never be tempted to be untrue to it, would finally cease altogether to be a command for us."⁴³ Kant's conception of duty has taken Descartes' conception of the will one step further. In *The Passions of the Soul* Descartes says of the free will: "it renders us in a certain way like God by making us masters of ourselves, provided we do not lose the rights it gives us through timidity."⁴⁴

Critical reflection can never generate virtue. It can judge actions in regard to virtue, but it cannot arrive at virtues themselves through its criticism. Virtues originate in myths that present their embodiments in heroes. Valor is first known through the actions of Achilles, wisdom through the powers of Ulysses as presented by Homer, and the same kinds of heroic embodiments can be said to take place in all cultures. Virtues and that which they are ultimately about, the Good, are human realities that lie beyond the island of the Understanding. They lie in Kant's fog banks of illusion.

Virtues can be understood and enacted within experience, but they do not wholly reside within it. The best life attempts to bring virtues into

human actions and into civic affairs. Virtues are always something speculative, something to be seen with the soul and to be brought forth with reason into the human world. Virtues do not exist in a realm beyond the critical reflections of understanding as an order of hypotheticals. When we seek justice we do not act "as if" there were justice; we seek justice as a reality to be found in the order of things by our highest human powers.

In contrast to Kant, Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* understands well that justice is not created through an act of reflective thought: "No principle of the human mind is more natural than a sense of virtue; so no virtue is more natural than justice. Mankind is an inventive species; and where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as any thing that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflexion."⁴⁵ To raise a child on the basis of virtues learned as habits of conduct is to produce an adult with character, a citizen. To raise a child as a seeker of rights, based on powers of critical reflection, is to produce a monster, an adult without a center, ridden by guilt, argument, and contentiousness in human affairs.

Kant does not see virtue or the good as first in morals. Kant says it is "not that the concept of good as an object of the moral law determines the latter and makes it possible but rather the reverse, i.e., that the moral law is that which first defines the concept of the good —

so far as it absolutely deserves this name — and makes it possible." Kant says the supporters of virtue have inverted the real order of morals. He continues: "This remark, which refers only to the method of the deepest moral investigations, is important. It explains once and for all the reasons which occasion all the confusions of philosophers concerning the supreme principle of morals. For they sought an object of the will in order to make it into the material and the foundation of a law (which would then be not the directly determining ground of the will, but only by means of that object referred to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure); instead, they should have looked for a law which directly determined the will a priori and only then sought the object suitable to it."⁴⁶ It is Kant who has it backward. It is because he has dismissed rhetoric.

Intellectually, morals require training in *ars topica*: in metaphor, memory, and commonplaces. Kant says the *ars oratoria* (which depends upon the *ars topica*) deserves no respect whatsoever ("ist gar keiner Actung würdig").⁴⁷ "Topics," which Aristotle as well as the Renaissance humanists saw as part of the organon of thought, is necessary for the self to form images of itself and to recall the great truths of conduct achieved in culture. Our access to virtue is our power to draw forth the outlines of virtue and virtuous action in speech built upon the commonplaces we share with others.

Only when these parts of the communal sense of humanity are produced before us as models of conduct can the *ars critica* of reflection

be set in motion. Otherwise, the *ars critica* has no subject matter on which to do its work of understanding and evaluating. Reflection reflects; it has no power to set its own starting points. Modern philosophy has bound itself to the Caucasus of reflection. Reflection, reflective thinking, approaching a question reflectively, is regarded as a good in itself. The dictum to think reflectively, which means to think critically, replaces the dictum to know thyself. It appears to make this ancient dictum unnecessary.

In the third *Critique* Kant attempts to complete his conception of reflection by delineating a second kind of judgment that is not analyzed in the earlier parts of his philosophy. He makes it clear that the faculty of judgment in a system of pure philosophy built on critique would not be a separate kind of knowing, residing between the theoretical and the practical, "but can be annexed when needful to one or both as occasion requires."⁴⁸ Judgment in general, for Kant, is thinking the particular under the universal, and this, he says in the third *Critique*, can occur in two ways: as determinant or as reflective judgment: "If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) be given, the judgment which subsumes the particular under it (even if, as transcendental judgment, it furnishes, *a priori*, the conditions in conformity with which subsumption under that universal is alone possible) is *determinant*." The determinate judgment is what science excels in and is what is desired in ethics. Kant continues,

"but if only the particular be given for which the universal has to be found, the judgment is merely *reflective*."⁴⁹

Cassirer, in the best discussion to date on the meaning of the third *Critique*, shows how Kant's conception of the *reflectierende Urteilskraft*, the "reflective power of judgment," embodies a conception of form that is to be found in both the aesthetic and the organic, thus tying the two halves of the third *Critique* together.⁵⁰ The reflective judgment is the notion of how to think something as a whole, for example, something that is not an instance of a law but is a law of itself. Such form requires the notion of *Zweckmässigkeit* ("purposiveness"). The elements of an art work are specific moments in its particular totality.

Susanne Langer points out that one cannot assign individual meanings to the elements of a work of art and translate one work into another, as can be done with languages.⁵¹ There are not "parts" of a work of art that have status apart from their function in the whole, yet the whole as a whole has a universal meaning. An organic natural form, an organism, has parts, that is, appendages and organs, that can to an extent be subtracted from the organism, but the organism is an order of these parts, and they do not have meaning independent from this order. Such order is unique to the inner form of the particular organism.

In the third *Critique* Kant comes close to passing beyond the bounds of the critical philosophy. Kant does this by means of his conception of taste as "the subjective principle of judgment in general" in

his discussion of the *sensus communis* and in his analysis of the sublime.⁵² But he falls victim to his commitment to the Understanding as the standard for discovering the basis of experience. "Taste, then," Kant says, "as subjective judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under concepts, but of the *faculty* of intuitions or presentations (i.e., imagination [*Einbildungskraft*]), so far as the former *in its freedom* harmonizes with the latter *in its conformity to law*."⁵³ Kant sees taste to rest on our release of the cognitive faculty into its "free play" (*freie Spiel*). The "freedom of the imagination consists in the fact that it schematizes without any concept," and the judgment of taste depends upon a reciprocal activity between the freedom of the imagination and the law-bound nature of the Understanding.⁵⁴

Kant can orchestrate the dance of the faculties, but that is all. He cannot allow the imagination full access to the object. In the schematism of the first *Critique* the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) is the source of the schema, but here the imagination is bound within the determinate judgment, as its faithful servant. In the third *Critique* the imagination is released into its own sphere, but it is not put on its own recognizance. It is tied to a new sense of reflection that requires it to be in harmony with the Understanding. Its freedom has a stoogelike quality, ready to be the shill for the "I think" of the categories of the Understanding as it works the crowd.

Kant was unable to see what Vico saw: the origin of all knowledge and experience is in the myth. Because of his commitment to the categories of the Understanding, Kant could not allow the "concepts" of fortune and fate that govern the world of myth to have a rightful place in thought. In his explanation of the categories, Kant says: "But there are also usurpatory concepts such as *fortune, fate*, which, though allowed to circulate by almost universal indulgence, are yet from time to time challenged by the question: *quid juris*."⁵⁵ Kant asks these travelers in the world, fortune and fate (*Glück* and *Schicksal*), for their papers, and discovers that they have not been issued papers by any known authority, especially not by the intellect. He finds them wanting in regard to a legal "deduction" and declares that they have no right to be abroad.

Myth is the origin of both the aesthetic and the organic formations of experience. Myth is the product of what Vico calls *fantasia*, or the "making imagination." Through *fantasia*, as a primordial power, the world is formed in terms of gods and heroes, and these are, in Vico's term, "imaginative universals" (*universali fantastici*).⁵⁶ Imaginative universals are the primal thought-form of what Vico regards as *il senso comune* (*sensus communis*). *Sensus communis*, for Vico, as for Shaftesbury, is communal sense, the sense that is made by man as a knowing, social, and image-making animal, acting in the world.⁵⁷ It is the result of human beings making sense together. The first form that this sense takes is the metaphor or imaginative universal.

Before the world is reflected upon, before it is understood, it is narrated in the myth. The world is populated with benign and malignant forces that create orders of sacred and profane. Kant's attention to the *sensus communis* in his doctrine of taste is very close to what is needed, but it misses the mark. To miss the mark here is the same as to hit nothing. Vico says that *sensus communis* is "judgment without reflection" (*giudizio senz'alcuna riflessione*).⁵⁸ This is decisive. Kant has the wrong metaphor. When this occurs in philosophy, thought never recovers, or recovers only by doing what Kant himself advises when things have gone wrong: it is never too late to raze the building.⁵⁹ Kant has the wrong sense of light. He understands this nondeterminate form of judgment, that is not made directly by the Understanding but in harmony with it, to be like *reflected light*, which is light received at a distance by the knower, giving the knower contact with the object known. The object is indirectly seen.

Vico's *universale fantastico* is also based on the metaphor of light. Imagination is itself light. As Aristotle says, "the name *phantasia* (imagination) has been formed from *phaos* (light)" (*De an.* 429a). Literally *phantasia* is "a making visible." Vico's *fantasia* is not reflected light, it is illumination in which the knower and the known are not differentiated as subject-object. The mind is in the world, not simply in the knower. The world is actually made through *fantasia*; it is not simply understood. *Fantasia* is judgment without reflection. The object is not reflected upon

by the mind but is felt as a thou and acted on bodily.⁶⁰ Feeling here is not Kant's aesthetic or sublime sense of feeling. The first humans, Vico says, thought and spoke with their bodies. Thus when the protohumans, the *giganti*, experience thunder for the first time, they shake in fear and run into caves, and they feel ashamed to copulate out in the open.

The first humans' experience of Jove is sublime, but not Kant's sublime. It is not Kant's looking on a scene of which no concept can be completely formed. As Vico says, it is a fear, "not a fear awakened in men by other men, but fear awakened in men by themselves."⁶¹ This is not Kant's fear that we might transgress the pure moral law. Fear is the generation of *fantasia*. Through fear, the first men form the thunderous sky as the body of Jove and bring about the distinction between the human and the divine that is the beginning of wisdom. In East Prussia, the light is thin; the world is seen in *Abglanz*. In Naples, *c'è sempre il sole* (there is always the sun).

On his thirty-first birthday, August 27, 1801, Hegel publicly defended twelve theses at the University of Jena as part of his qualification for the license to teach. The seventh of these theses was: "Critical philosophy lacks Ideas; it is an imperfect form of Scepticism."⁶² Critical philosophy, or critique, as Kant calls it, is a philosophy committed to the Understanding (*Verstand*). Commitment to philosophy as criticism is commitment to that power of mind that has its seat in the

Understanding: reflection. The two terms can be joined: critical reflection.

The Understanding (reflective thinking) approaches the world and the self in terms of theories and facts, concepts and perceptions. Ideas, as Hegel notes, are lacking in the Understanding. Ideas can exist for the Understanding only as hypotheticals, potential sources of hypotheses or viable presuppositions. Ideas can be employed reflectively as centers of "as if" thinking. They cannot be apprehended as genuine realities. This is the teaching of Kantianism both in epistemology and in ethics. Critical philosophy is an imperfect skepticism because it excludes speculation.

Speculation is not a form of reflection. It is the opposite of reflection. At times *reflection* is used in ordinary intellectual speech and in philosophy to mean speculation. Rightly conceived, speculation is a philosophical power of mind having its seat in Reason (*Vernunft*), as Hegel claims. Reflection reveals to us only the surface of things, including the surface of ourselves, what in ordinary terms is called psychology. Speculation is a process that is both inner and outer at once; it takes us both within ourselves and without ourselves. It takes us to the "inner form" of the object of thought.

Kant's philosophy is an encyclopedia of distinctions with a term for each. The essence of Kant's philosophy is making distinctions. In the first *Critique* Kant simply begins by making distinctions and never stops, continuing the process through the next two *Critiques*. There is no

greater set of distinctions purporting to be systematic in the history of philosophy. Kant begins the system by simply asserting that there are four kinds of judgments. When Kant faces a problem, he makes several more distinctions and then proceeds to relate them to others. Critical philosophy is imperfect skepticism because it is architectonic. In architectonic something is always left out. The ultimate thing left out in Kant's architectonic is the "thing-in-itself," and it becomes a ghost that Kant cannot keep out of his machine.

The concern of critique is to delineate the principles by which truth can be distinguished from error. The concern of speculation is to find the realities from which all else can be thought and the True itself can be found. A true philosophy of experience would claim to answer the skepticism of Sextus Empiricus or the "historical Pyrrhonism" of Pierre Bayle. But a philosophy dedicated only to the Understanding leaves us as knowers on the terra firma of its island and skeptics about all else that we see in the distance. Starting from a doctrine of judgment derived from the sciences, we can never get to Ideas except in the negative sense of thought projecting its own limits.

Kant has no sense of what Hegel, in his preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, calls the speculative sentence (*der spekulative Satz*) or the philosophical sentence (*der philosophische Satz*).⁶³ Hegel uses both names for the same process of interrelationship of subject and predicate. When Kant moves from General Logic to Transcendental Logic

he connects logic to experience, but he fails to discover a way to think the presence of Ideas in the world.⁶⁴ They remain the shapes in the fog banks surrounding the blessed isle of the Understanding. Through the reflective powers of the Understanding Kant can illuminate the object in experience, but he cannot reach the actual presence of Reason (*Vernunft*) in the world.

Kant is hoisted on his own petard of transcendental certainty. He cannot conceive of a way to think directly the "inner form" of the object. In Kant's reflective sentence the subject remains externally connected to the predicate, and he offers us only a table of contents of experience. Kant suffers from the fact that his thought is not musical. Hegel's *Begriff* (Concept, Notion) destroys the distinction of subject and predicate, thought that critical reflection thinks to be permanent. Hegel says the "conflict between the general form of a proposition and the unity of the *Begriff* which destroys it is similar to the conflict that occurs in rhythm between metre and accent. Rhythm results from the floating centre and the unification of the two."⁶⁵ The speculative sentence is musical.

Hegel offers the example "God is being." He points out that being is meant to be not a predicate but the essence of God. God ceases to be a fixed subject in this case and is what is expressed in the predicate. Instead of making progress in thought from subject to predicate, we are thrown back on the subject as what is expressed in the predicate. Hegel concludes: "Thinking therefore loses the firm objective basis it had in the

subject when, in the predicate, it is thrown back on to the subject, and when, in the predicate, it does not return into itself, but to the subject of the content."⁶⁶ The world has a rhythm that can be captured in the philosophical sentence that stems from thinking the inner motion of the object. The inner motion of the object is governed by an Idea or form of its reality.

Reflection requires the metaphor of the mirror. In transcendental reflection the mind can mirror to itself its own operations that are at the basis of understanding. These are the conditions necessary for the formulation of propositions and syllogisms about what is in experience. Speculation calls up the notion of the mirror (*speculum*), but it also calls up *specere*, to observe, to look; to spy out. Speculation couples the sight of the object with insight into what it is itself. The speculator is a spectator, in the sense of one who can see into the movements of opposites residing in the objects that make up its life. The speculator is not an intellectual optician who orders the categorical lenses through which the object is formed in reflective judgment. The speculative thinker can present these dialectical movements in speech, having seen how in the logical order of the sentence the subject and predicate cannot be kept from moving from their places when an Idea is involved.

Dante, in canto I of the *Paradiso*, describes seeing *per speculum*: "The lamp of the world rises to mortals through different passages" (lines 37–38).⁶⁷ Beatrice turns to her left and looks at the sun. Dante also is

able to see its light: "Thus of her action, infused through the eyes into my imagination, mine was made, and I fixed my eyes on the sun beyond our wont. Much is granted to our faculties there that is not granted here, by virtue of the place made for humankind as its proper abode" (lines 52–57). Having seen that the sun is there, Dante turns his gaze from the sun to its light reflected in Beatrice: "Beatrice was standing with her eyes all fixed upon the eternal wheels, and I fixed mine on her, withdrawn from there above" (lines 64–66). In this second light one sees *per speculum*. In the first light, as mentioned above in connection with Roger Bacon, one sees *facie ad faciem*. Beatrice is the intermediary of the divine light. Dante sees by means of the second light as it is exchanged between himself and Beatrice. Beatrice is his guide.

The speculative act is not separate from reflection in the two senses just described. Speculation involves the presence of the absolute for its act of thought to take place. The speculative act sees in reflected light, but the source of the reflection is not the phenomena of the world or the cognitive relation of the mind to itself. Speculation requires the notion of "seeing beyond," of a divine or noetic vision that begins and then informs its reasonings. Seeing *per speculum* stands in a dialectical relationship to seeing *facie ad faciem*. One accompanies and presupposes the other.

Vico said of Descartes, and could have said of transcendental philosophy, that to approach the object only in cognitive terms is to see

as if at night by lamplight; the object can be seen, but its background is cut off. That is the problem with seeing in terms of clear and distinct ideas. The speculative metaphysician attempts to see the daylight of the divine through the opacity of the bodies of the world. Vico says: "Metaphysical truths are illuminating because they cannot be bounded by any limit and distinguished by any formed body."⁶⁸ Speculative reason begins with the attempt by the metaphysician to see the world by the sun and connect it to the second light of the mind's eye of reason. This is to see with the divine eye of providence.

In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel says that ancient metaphysics believed thought could achieve a true knowledge of things, "but *reflective* understanding took possession of philosophy" (*aber der reflektierende Verstand bemächtigte sich der Philosophie*).⁶⁹ He says the view that philosophy is essentially reflective has become a slogan (*Schlagwort*). What Hegel identifies as a slogan in his day has become the dominant concern of philosophy as practiced in ours by thinkers from Husserl to Gadamer. Husserl places reflection at the center of phenomenology. He says: "The phenomenological method operates exclusively in acts of reflection."⁷⁰ Gadamer identifies all philosophy with "hermeneutic reflection," to which, in a wider vision than Husserl, he hopes to connect rhetoric, tradition, and practice. Gadamer says: "What role does reason play in the context of human practice? In every case it takes the general form of reflection."⁷¹

Merleau-Ponty attempts to get beyond both the impregnable *cogito* of Cartesian thought and the emptiness of the transcendental ego of Kantian philosophy by a more vital or radical pursuit of reflection in which individual life constitutes itself. To this end he says: "Reflection is truly reflection only if it is not carried outside itself, only if it knows itself as reflection-on-an unreflective-experience, and consequently as a change in structure of our existence."⁷² Marvin Farber, in an article "Modes of Reflection" says: "Every philosophy that is concerned with experience is reflective, more or less. A thoroughly reflective philosophy is an ideal. That would mean the complete examination of the contents, grounds, motives, and aims of experience."⁷³ Farber needs no justification for this, as he is easily stating the obvious. Hegel's notice that reflection has become a slogan was prophetic.

The source of the turn to the idea of reflection in modern philosophy lies in modern optics. Modern optics is the analogue for the modern conception of the intellect as a source of "reflective" knowledge. Thought is connected with light. The eye is the organ of sight. The mind's eye is that by which we see a truth. Because it makes the object visible, reflection is the key property of light, followed by refraction and color—mirrors, lens, and prisms. For the Greeks, the meaning of the word *optics* was limited to questions concerning vision and the nature of light. Greek optics concentrated on reflection; the basic phenomena of refraction were known, but the quantitative law of refraction was not

known until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Greeks devoted their energies to questions concerning the philosophical significance of light itself, to how an object was seen and to what its color was due. The ancients were generally concerned with reflection as it plays a role in sensation and in the emission and reception of the image.

In modern optics the philosophical questions concerning light, reflection, and perception have remained, but light has become the subject of experimental science: Newton's study of white light and the spectrum of colors, for example, and the invention of the Dutch or Galilean telescope, the microscope, and binoculars. Most important philosophically is the modern study of dioptrics. That one of the three essays Descartes attaches to the *Discours* is "Dioptrique" is not only significant in the history of the science of light, but is philosophically symbolic. Descartes begins this essay with the assertion that "the conduct of our life depends entirely on our senses" and that "sight is the noblest and most comprehensive" of them.⁷⁴

Dioptric, the study of refraction, and the discovery of laws of such phenomena change the understanding of the object. Huygens greatly improved the grinding of spherical lenses. Lenses were known to the ancients, and spectacles were probably in use as early as the thirteenth century. Hobbes wrote a treatise on optics published by Mersenne in 1644.⁷⁵ The laws of reflection and refraction, which merely described the observed effects of light on surfaces, were combined in a general law

announced in about 1665 by the French philosopher Pierre de Fermat: the actual path pursued by light in going from one point to another is the route that, under the given conditions, requires the least time.⁷⁶ Light is a phenomenon of pure efficiency, and sight can be manipulated in any way we wish.

In the letter that Descartes wrote to Arnauld in 1648, which I mentioned earlier, we find Descartes drawing an analogy between the reflection of light and the intellect's reflection of itself. The intellect receives a sensation and then perceives that it has a sensation. This second perception is a reflection of the first, which occurs wholly within the intellect. This is an internal optics. Locke speaks of reflection as an "*internal sense*."⁷⁷ A. C. Fraser notes in his edition of the *Essay* that it is left to Locke's interpreter to consider whether reflection should be interpreted empirically or intellectually. Fraser says that the answer depends upon whether this operation of the mind "includes *reflex consciousness of reason proper*."⁷⁸ Reflection is a kind of internal sight, but it remains ambiguous as to whether it is an empirical or wholly intellectual operation of the mind.

Berkeley's *New Theory of Vision* is not an optics but a philosophy of vision that generates a metaphysics of the perceived object.⁷⁹ Berkeley brings the implications of modern optics fully into philosophy. Because of telescopic and microscopic lenses, refractions, and prisms, the object can be seen in an indefinite number of ways. With the invention of

modern lenses, the object can be perceptually changed in any way we wish. The eye itself is understood to be a lens. What Berkeley explores of the perception of objects of sense is even more true of the second perception or internal sense: reflection as the operation of the intellect on itself.

The modern lens lets us see the object any way we wish. Once the mind is conceived in terms of a specific function—reflection—the mind can reflect and refract itself as an object in an infinite number of ways. The mind is whatever it can reflect itself to be. It is not accidental that Roger Bacon is a source in his psychology for the first use of the term *reflection* in the sense of "self-knowledge" and that he is also the author of the most important treatise on optics in the Middle Ages. But Bacon, unlike the moderns, does not regard the intellect as purely functional. Although the intellect can take itself as its object, it does so in order to grasp its essence as the reflection of the divine.

The power of the lens to let us see the object in any way we wish is parallel to the power of the mind to construct the appearance of the object and the object's relation to the mind. Phenomenology, or the science of appearance, has its origin in this functional power of the mind to form itself and the object together. In 1764 Johann Heinrich Lambert published a work entitled *Neues Organon oder Gedanken über die Erforschung und Bezeichnung des Wahren und dessen Unterscheidung von Irrtum und Schein* (New organon, or thoughts on the investigation

and indication of truth and the distinction between error and appearance).⁸⁰ Lambert was influenced by Francis Bacon's doctrine of the idols and Locke's conception of human understanding wherein the "mind can learn various truths." Lambert called the fourth part of his treatise "Phänomenologie oder Lehre von dem Schein" (Phenomenology or the doctrine of appearance). He called his phenomenology a "transzendente Optik" (transcendent optics).⁸¹ This "optics" allows us to see through the forms of appearance, avoid error, and employ human understanding.

Kant was greatly interested in Lambert's conception. On September 2, 1770, Kant wrote to Lambert: "A quite special, though purely negative science, general phenomenology (*phaenomenologia generalis*), seems to be presupposed by metaphysics. In it the principles of sensibility, their validity and their limitations, would be determined, so that these principles could not be confusedly applied to objects of pure reason, as heretofore almost always has happened."⁸² In a letter to Marcus Herz dated February 21, 1772, Kant wrote that he planned to produce such a general phenomenology as the first part of a metaphysics.⁸³ Kant did not carry through this plan as such, but the sense of optics is carried on into critique as a doctrine of "transcendental reflection." Hegel retrieves the term *phenomenology* and employs it in his announcement of lectures for the winter semester at Jena in 1806.

Hegel connects this term not with critique but with speculative thinking and his "System der Wissenschaft."⁸⁴

From the reflection of Narcissus to the reflections seen outside Plato's cave to the analogue of the Sun and the Good, light is the medium of knowledge, our primary access to the objects of the world. The eye, being the organ of sight, is the primary sense for knowing. The ancient notion of the inner and the outer eye is tied to the phenomenon of light. The mind, the *mens*, is most like the eye. Like the divine *mens*, it can see ideas. The divine *mens* is omniscient, and it is all-seeing. The human *mens* depends upon the object as conveyed by light. Light transports the image. The power of light is to reflect and refract what is there. Light reflects and makes the unseen seen. It is epistemic and metaphysical power. For the modern, to produce mirrors, prisms, and lenses and, through them, to describe light and formulate its laws is to be at the basis of knowledge and reality itself.

This is the modern project of the new Narcissus. Our knowledge of the physical object is dependent upon light and how the object's presence is reflected to the senses. With the modern production and experimental use of mirrors, lenses, and prisms, the object can be manipulated in an indefinite number of ways. Narcissus now does not simply see his reflection, he can see it as he wishes. Reflection is not determined by the object. Reflection is now a process between the knower and the object. This freedom in relation to the object is

analogous to the power attributed to reflection as a faculty of human understanding. When thought takes its own activity as its object, it has the power to reflect or refract its activity in an indefinite number of ways. In modern optics nothing of the object is closed to sight. In modern critics nothing of the mind is closed to itself.

Collingwood has stated this modern sense of reflection as:

"I.72. Any form of consciousness may be reflected upon; that is, it may become the object of another form of consciousness.

"I.73. Let a man have a certain form of consciousness, C1. Let him reflect on this; let him, that is to say, call into being in himself another form of consciousness, C2, the consciousness of C1.

"I.74. Whatever a science of mind can tell him about C1 is something of which he was already conscious in the state of C2."

Collingwood continues, using the metaphor of the eye:

"I.76 But when it has been thus worked up every element in the resulting product is derived from the original raw material; for every question has been asked and answered 'with your eye on the object,' where the object is C1 and the eye C2."

Collingwood concludes that what a man is in respect to his "capacity of mind" need not be answered by specialists:

"I.88. The general form of answer to many such questions is: *In teipsum redi*. You have the makings of the answer in your own consciousness. Reflect, and you will find what it is."⁸⁵

Collingwood's formulation of reflection shows how far *Verstand* is from *nous* and how much the doctrine of reflective self-consciousness has become the replacement for the ancient doctrine of self-knowledge: *In teipsum redi* instead of *Temet nosce*. Reflection makes thought a circle of itself, an eye that sees itself through its own light. Thought becomes transcendental optics. The ancient definition of wisdom is replaced by this perfect optics.

In the *Charmides*, Socrates speaks with Critias about self-knowledge. Socrates agrees with Critias that wisdom is the science of man's self. Critias understands this self-knowledge to be the knowledge of knowledge or the science of science. Socrates says: "I will admit that there is a science of science. Can this do more than determine that of two things one is and the other is not science or knowledge?" (170A). Socrates is concerned to know what art or subject matter the possessor of self-knowledge, understood as a knowledge of knowledge, would command. Would it be to command, for example, the art of medicine, or the art of music, or the art of building? No, a knowledge of knowledge would not offer us a knowledge of such subjects. We might have knowledge of such subjects or others like them, but we would not require a knowledge of knowledge to possess such specific knowledge.

Socrates says, "Then wisdom or being wise appears to be not the knowledge of the things which we do or do not know, but only the knowledge that we know or do not know" (170D). Critias agrees this is

the inference to be drawn, and Socrates concludes: "Then he who has this knowledge will not be able to establish whether a claimant knows or does not know that which he says that he knows; he will only know that he has a knowledge of some kind, but wisdom will not show him of what the knowledge is?" (ibid.) This is, in effect, a refutation of critique or transcendental reflection as a doctrine of self-knowledge. To establish the necessary conditions for the possibility of knowledge is to learn nothing of the most important aim of philosophy: the Delphic inscription "know thyself."

"Know thyself" is unintelligible apart from the second Delphic inscription: "nothing too much." Self-knowledge is tied to *sophrosynē*, which is the opposite of arrogance, that vice of character so detested by the Greeks. We have lost the meaning of *sophrosynē*, perhaps because we have also lost the fundamental sense of self-knowledge that is at the center of Socratic philosophy. *Sophrosynē* means the acceptance of the limits of excellence that are present in human nature and requires control of the impulse to unrestricted freedom and excess. *Sophrosynē* thus goes against the impulse that dominates modernity; it requires the individual to obey the inner laws of harmony and proportion in the human.⁸⁶

Sophrosynē is not a right derived by reflection; it is a virtue grasped by a metaphysical account of human nature and insight into how to obey the inner laws of harmony and proportion. *Sophrosynē*

requires a knowledge of the polis and the gods, the order of things human and divine. Socrates concludes in the *Charmides* that we cannot at the moment say what *sophrosynē* is. He suggests that Charmides may have such in himself, as a gift. There is a dialectic between the two Delphic sayings. "Know thyself" suggests the need for a meditative wisdom that can, in Socratic manner, be sought through discussion among friends, and the other, "nothing too much," refers to what may guide our actions in the world of the city.

In the *Phaedrus* Socrates says he has no time for clever theories concerning the truth of various common views or for the critical evaluation of such theories. Socrates says: "I myself have certainly no time for the business, and I'll tell you why, my friend. I can't as yet 'know myself,' as the inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters. Consequently I don't bother about such things, but accept the current beliefs about them, and direct my inquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself, to discover whether I really am a more complex creature and more puffed up with pride than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet un-Typhonic nature" (229E–230A).

Critique or transcendental reflection goes hand in hand with the conception of knowledge as theory making and theory testing. This is true in modern ethics, in which theories of justice, right, contract, and

moral decision are pursued and evaluated. Critical philosophy that pursues the knowledge of knowledge can offer only the Kantian "I think," the "transcendental unity of apperception"⁸⁷ to stand in the place of the Pythia's "know thyself." Kant says: "The principle of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge."⁸⁸ Kant's "I think" is Descartes' *cogito* in a new suit, but it cannot help us with the problem of the examined life.

Self-knowledge pursues the question of what a human being is, and the answer entails the metaphysical grasp of the interrelation of the human and the divine. This knowledge is the basis for conduct in the world of civil things. Self-reflection masquerades as this, and becomes its modern substitute. Self-reflection simulates self-knowledge because the knower takes knowledge itself as his object. This internal relationship, as Socrates suggests, is empty. It never offers more than the necessary condition of the "I think." Even though the "I think" may be dressed up in various theoretical clothes it is still empty in itself.

One honest answer to the barbarism of the replacement of self-knowledge with self-reflection appears in Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of Mind*. In a chapter on "Self-Knowledge" Ryle abandons all pretense to the ancient pursuit of self-knowledge and reduces the quest to the proper use of the pronoun *I*. Ryle says: "When a person utters an 'I' sentence, his utterance of it may be part of a higher order performance, namely one, perhaps of self-reporting, self-exhortation or self-commiseration,

and this performance itself is not dealt with in the operation which it itself is."⁸⁹ Ryle concludes: "'I' is like my own shadow; I can never get away from it, as I can get away from your shadow. There is no mystery about this constancy, but I mention it because it seems to endow 'I' with a mystifying uniqueness and adhesiveness."⁹⁰ William James points out in *The Principles of Psychology* that the "I" of Kant can never have any content: "To sum up, then, my own opinion of the transcendentalist school, it is . . . a school in which psychology at least has naught to learn, and whose deliverances about the Ego in particular in no wise oblige us to revise our own formulation of the Stream of Thought."⁹¹

Vico's "barbarism of reflection" is not only a barbarism of mind and reason but also a barbarism of practice and society. Success in life in corrupt times depends not upon virtue, piety, faith, and truth but on the simulation of these attributes by wit. The self, unable to know the nature of its own humanity by its powers of reflection, develops patterns of action and ways of using language that simulate a social animal. Modern peoples live, not through an ingenuity that responds to necessities forced upon them by nature, but through an ingenuity in social relations that aids in their quest for luxury. In *Momus*, Leon Baptista Alberti offers a picture of the humanist turned vagabond that is an archetype for Vico's last men.⁹²

The vagabond is the modern barbarian, who has given up on any sense of the ancient pursuit of self-knowledge. He has discovered that

what is required is not virtue in human affairs, or the just order of the soul, but the power to reflect critically on the dynamics of any situation and to simulate what is required in order to satisfy his desires or to gain from it. The vagabond is a man without qualities who is engaged in the art of appearing to have them, transforming himself into whatever persona will work. He is the artful pragmatist. He has learned from the humanist the art of wit or *ingenium* as the key to human affairs, but he puts this power into effect without any concern for moral principles except to simulate them if the occasion requires.

Since critical reflection, the Understanding, cannot give us wisdom or self-knowledge, we are left with a world of rights, decision procedures, and positive law unsupported by custom or character. Society is a throng of individuals out for what each may get by his wits from the others, each, as Vico says, "thinking only of his own private interests" and capable of lashing out "at the slightest displeasure." Alberti's conception of the god Momus and its connection to his unique version of the tale of Prometheus illuminates Vico's state of "ultimate civil disease."

Hesiod classifies Momus among the children of Night; Momus is the personification of "blame" or "censure" (μῶμος) (*Theog.* 214). Homer seems not to have known of Momus. He is scarcely referred to in Greek literature until he appears in the work of Lucian. *Momus* was a satyr play by Sophocles, of which little is known.⁹³ Momus is alluded to by Plato (*Rep.* 487A) and Aristotle (*Parts of Animals* III.2). In Lucian's

Hermotimus, Lycinus and Hermotimus discuss the marks by which the true philosopher might be distinguished from the false. Lycinus recalls the story of the faults Momus found with Hephaestus: "The story goes that Athena, Poseidon, and Hephaestus were quarrelling over which of them was the best artist. Poseidon modeled a bull. Athena designed a house, while Hephaestus, it seems, put together a man. When they came to Momus, whom they had appointed judge, he examined the work of each" (*Herm.* 20).

Lucian does not relate here the faults Momus finds with the first two, but according to the general tradition of the story Momus criticizes Poseidon for not putting the horns of the bull beneath its eyes so that it could better see where it struck (see also *Nigr.* 32, *True Hist.* II.3), and criticizes Athena for not putting iron wheels on the house so it could be moved with the owners when they went out of town. Momus, Lucian continues, criticized Hephaestus's creation of a man because "he had not made windows in his chest which could be opened to let everyone see his desires and thoughts and if he were lying or telling the truth" (*Herm.* 20). Lycinus says he believes that, even without such windows, Hermotimus has the ability to see through the chest of each man and know what each man wants or thinks, and whether he is better or worse in character.

Lucian is the source for Alberti's *Momus*. The story as told by Lucian of the three creations, bull, house, and man, is also told with variations by Babrius and Aesop. In Babrius's fable "Momus the Fault-

Finder" it is Zeus, not Hephaestus, who is the maker of man, and he is criticized by Momus for a lack of windows in man's chest (*Fab.* 59). In the *Aesopica* are two tales of Momus, one in which he has difficulty finding fault with any aspect of Aphrodite's beauty and finally makes fun of her sandal (455), and another which tells the tale of the bull, house, and man (100). In this version Zeus creates the bull and Athena the house, but it is Prometheus who creates the man, and Prometheus is criticized by Momus for not making man so we can see immediately what he has in his mind. Zeus, vexed by the fault-finding, banishes Momus from Olympus.⁹⁴

In some accounts Prometheus steals fire from Olympus, by others he steals it from the forge of Hephaestus, and there are other accounts in which Prometheus, not Zeus, is the maker of man. These aspects of the Prometheus myth are played upon loosely in the telling of the Momus fable. In all versions of the fable, Momus emerges as the critic who with his comments can limit the power of the gods. Whether they devise something natural (the bull), artificial (the house), or human (the man), Momus can find its imperfection. He has a power of insight the other gods do not possess. In his ability to limit the power of the gods he is like Prometheus, who angers Zeus and limits his power by giving fire to man.

Lucian's telling of the fable glosses Plato's *Republic* VI, in which the question of who the philosophers are and who they are not is summed

up (484A). Plato is engaged in the Promethean task of making the true philosopher's nature through his system of education. Having delineated the properties of the soul necessary to such a person, Plato says: "Momus himself could not find fault with such a combination" (48A). Plato seems to be aware of the principle of Momus's criticism: the need to see into the soul to know what man truly is. Plato has taken on the task to employ his own art of seeing in order to show what the window would have shown were man so created. For those with an eye to see, Plato has offered the window that Momus requires. In Lucian's account, Hermotimus is credited with this power of the philosophical eye, the ability to distinguish the true philosopher from the false and the good and the just nature from the unjust, the crucial ability for ruling the state or the conduct of human affairs in general.

Alberti's *Momus* opens with the creation of the world. Jove expects to relax, to observe and enjoy the order of gods and the obedience of man to him. Instead, Prometheus steals the sacred fire, and all the potentially peaceful order of creation is disrupted. Before relating the theft by Prometheus, Alberti relates the tale of the creation of the bull, house, and man. In Alberti's telling, Prometheus is the creator of man, and Momus advances his criticisms of each, noting that man is an image of the gods.⁹⁵ Alberti's version of the Prometheus story differs from other versions, and it forges a new key to the nature of modern society and the modern individual.

In Alberti's version of the Prometheus story, the sacred fire was eternal; it had the extraordinary property to reignite itself without the addition of any liquid or other substance. The sacred fire was held among the threads of a material made by the goddess Virtue. These threads were on top of the forehead of all the gods holding within them this sacred fire; those who have the element of the fire have the power to transform themselves into any form they wish.⁹⁶ In Alberti's version, what is stolen from the gods and given to man is not the power of fire to dominate the physical world and the other creatures that walk the earth, but a power whereby the individual can move through human society like a god, assuming any shape he wishes. The version of the Prometheus myth found in Plato's *Protagoras* (320D–322A) and other places contains the warning that the gift of Prometheus does not bring with it civil wisdom.

Alberti's version of the Prometheus myth is the imparting to man of a false civil wisdom. The power that Prometheus takes from the gods and gives to man is the power of simulation (*simulatio, simulare*). Not only does man have the image of god, but he can act as a god to transform himself into whatever sort of person a situation might require. Human beings quickly abuse this new power, even going so far as to simulate the gods themselves. For his theft Prometheus is chained to the Caucasus. For his criticism of Jupiter's rule of the celestial order Momus

is expelled from the gods and forced to live among mortals, who now possess the power of simulation.⁹⁷

In Alberti's fable Momus is not simply the critic of man, as Plato refers to him; he is a manipulator of man and a model of deception among mortals. In the theft of the sacred fire of simulation the connection of the fire with Virtue is severed, so this power can be used for whatever the individual desires. As the modern individual can reflect the object of perception in any way he wishes through the power of the lens, so he can reflect himself as an "I think" into any persona he desires, once he receives Prometheus's stolen gift.

Not only is Momus the embodiment of Promethean simulation, but he is also like Narcissus, the god of reflection, whom Alberti regards in the *De pictura* as the inventor of painting.⁹⁸ Narcissus can only admire his image, but Momus, because of his powers of critical insight, can transform his image and make himself appear as he wishes. In Alberti's tale Momus goes about among mortals showing them arts of deception, even offering instruction in the art of cosmetics. Alberti likely has in mind the myth of the ring of Gyges, as Plato relates it in *Republic II*. When turned, the ring makes its wearer invisible, able to move about the world filling his every desire without consequences. Plato asks, Would not even the just man, with the ring of Gyges, help himself to anything he might choose, sleep with whomever he chose, and kill or release from prison whomever he wished? Plato asks, Would not the possessor of

such a ring "in a word go about among men with the powers of a god?" (360C).

Momus is the master purveyor of the ultimate art form of *savoir vivre*, the ability to simulate whatever sort of persona is required to succeed in a situation. Alberti creates what he calls the vagabond (*erro*). Modern man is the practitioner of vagabondism. The vagabond is the humanist without virtue. The vagabond is an aesthetic lifestyle, one practiced by all modern individuals. It is a life of spiritual homelessness that depends upon the practice of pure wit or *ingenium* directed by no goals except the satisfaction of desire. Momus explains that vagabondism is not an art like geometry or other arts that require a period of formal study, in which rules and their applications are learned. The vagabond need only act at his own convenience: "This art stands on the ground of complete indifference to all those things that are held indispensable in other arts."⁹⁹

Momus says: "Feign and yet do not [appear to be feigning]. . . . The essential principle is this one only; namely, that there is no feeling that one cannot cover with perfection under the appearance of honesty and innocence." The simulation of virtue can be the ring of Gyges if this power is taken up without any reservation or shame. Momus continues: "Adapting our words, we will brilliantly attain our image, and whatever particular externality of our persona, in a manner that seems to be similar to those who are believed to be beautiful and moderate." The

vagabond is engaged in an ultimate aesthetic in which appearance is all that is ever needed in human affairs. He needs only to speak and act well as required by the moment, not as required by virtue. Momus concludes: "What a splendid thing it is to know how to hide the more secret thoughts with the wise artifice of colorful and deceptive fiction."¹⁰⁰

In his autobiography, Vico says he "will not here feign [*fingere*] what René Descartes craftily feigned as to the method of his studies simply in order to exalt his own philosophy and mathematics and degrade all other studies included in divine and human erudition."¹⁰¹ Vico says he will relate his studies plainly, step-by-step, as a historian. We are reminded of Descartes' claim, in his *Cogitationes privatae*, that he steps upon the theater of the world in a mask.¹⁰² Descartes' mask is language. He must practice a "many-tonguedness" (*versipellem*) because he must employ rhetoric, topics, memory, metaphor—erudition of all kinds—to accomplish his point while at the same time degrading such studies as practiced by the humanist and historian.¹⁰³ Vico conveys his largest truths in the form of the fable, but unlike Descartes, he does not falsely claim that what he says could just as easily be spoken in *bas breton*. Vico always strove for the humanist ideal of wise, eloquent, and prudent speech.¹⁰⁴

In a world governed by critical reflection as the standard for thought, in which eloquence and wisdom have no place, language, that medium which holds society together, dissolves into flattery and

witticism. The law becomes a superstition of words; jurisprudence becomes whatever the words of the law can cleverly be made out to mean. In his barbarism of reflection, Vico says we are left with "soft words" and "malicious wits." This is a world without fear and without shame. It is without fear because no starting points are required.

Critical reflective thought begins with a given and proceeds methodologically to understand and to sort out truth from error. For Vico the starting points in human thought and life require the recapitulation of the original moment of fear, in which the first humans flee from the thunderous sky, which they form as Jove. The aesthetic existence of the vagabond is fearless, without starting point or shame, because all that is needed is the ingenious response to the given moment. For Vico shame is a civilizing passion; it causes us to orient ourselves to a standard of virtue. The success of the fiction prevents shame from ever arising for the vagabond.

The vagabond as a figure of modern life is not Odysseus, using his wit to master any situation and move closer to Ithaca, his home. Odysseus is on a journey; the vagabond is just traveling. The vagabond is only seeking a comfortable spot. He does not know that he is a vagabond. Odysseus feels the adversity of his situation. He is cut off from himself because he is cut off from his home. The vagabond moves with the sense of the times, which is to seduce and to be seduced, and proceeds to feign whatever is needed. In a world governed by civil

wisdom, the individual can move about on the basis of character. In a world governed by procedures and situations, the individual can move about by means of flattery. Flattery is shameless speech, language put wholly at the service of the ego in its career of self-movement.

Modern life is essentially aesthetic. In modern life, all forms of life can be indulged. The individual who is not simply submerged in the mass is free to cultivate all sorts of aims; one is as good as another for there is no traditional order present in society that sets a standard of the good citizen. In place of character the individual may develop the appearance of character, for what is character anyway? It is not known. Aesthetic in this respect is not true aesthetic, for the truly aesthetic in human experience requires that a sense of absolute beauty be revealed in the aesthetic. Aesthetic in this respect is the aesthetic of the anarchist and of Felix Krull, confidence man.

Hegel speaks of a world of "pure culture" (*die reine Bildung*) in which all is inverted and alienated from the actual world and from thought. It is the world of Enlightenment speech. In this *Verkehrung*, anything is possible. The thoughts of good and bad are inverted: "what is characterized as good is bad, and vice versa, . . . the consciousness judged as noble and ignoble, are rather in their truth just as much the reverse of what these characterizations are supposed to be."¹⁰⁵ Hegel says that in this kind of world everything the mind says about itself is a perversion and a deception. Its language is clever and witty (*geistreich*).

Parallel with Alberti's vagabond, Hegel speaks of a spirit whose existence is all talk and devastating judgment which appears as truth because everything else is overwhelmed by it. He speaks of "the shamelessness [*die Shamlosigkeit*] which gives utterance to this deception."¹⁰⁶ Quoting Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*, Hegel says: "This kind of talk is the madness of the musician 'who heaped up and mixed together thirty arias, Italian, French, tragic, comic, of every sort; now with a deep bass he descended into hell, then, contracting his throat, he rent the vaults of heaven with a falsetto tone, frantic and soothed, imperious and mocking, by turns.'"¹⁰⁷ Hegel says that to the tranquil and honest consciousness, "this talk appears as a 'rigamarole of wisdom and folly.'" The *Bildung* of the vagabond is many-tongued; his ability to change form is his stock-in-trade.

In the state of the thirty arias, we cannot tell the difference between true and false philosophy. The humanist ideal has no center and is out of control. The moving image becomes reality. We are in the reflected light of the fire in Plato's cave, without the promise of the sun. We are in Vico's cycles of history, without the eye of providence. All is simulation, taught by the mocker. Carl Sandburg says:

I wonder, Momus,
Whether shadows of the dead sit somewhere and look
with deep laughter
On men who play in terrible earnest the old, known,

solemn repetitions of history.¹⁰⁸

Life lived within a world of simulation is a life of technological desire. Here I have only suggested the elements of desire unconnected to virtue or to the pursuit of self-knowledge in the figure of the modern Momus. The technological world is a world of “terrible earnest” in which technology advances itself by repeating itself in all areas of human life.

What can affect this process and allow consciousness to open itself to itself? Is it possible to see beyond the object formed by reflection and the life formed by simulation? For this something radical is required that cannot come directly from thought itself. It can come from a phenomenon that is directly human and in which the human is uniquely in touch with itself and its own spirit. For this we must understand folly.

NOTES

1. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), par. 1106.
2. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
3. On the "barbarism of reflection," see Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), chap. 7; and Alain Pons, "Vico et la 'barbarie de la réflexion,'" in *La Pensée politique (revue annuelle)*, ed. Marcel Gauchet, Pierre Manent, and Pierre Ronsanvallon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 178–97.
4. Juan Luis Vives, *De disciplinis*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 6 (London: Gregg Press, 1964), 8. My translation.
5. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, in *The Chief Works and Others*, trans. Allan Gilbert, vol. 1 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), bk. 1, chap. 2.
6. Vico, *New Science*, par. 241.
7. Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1977), 131. My translation.
8. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960), 42.
9. See Donald Phillip Verene, "Imaginative Universals and Narrative Truth," *New Vico Studies* 6 (1988): 1–19.
10. Vico, *New Science*, par. 7.

11. Vico, "All'Abate Esperti in Roma," in *Autobiografia, seguita da una scelta di lettere, orazioni e rime*, ed. Mario Fubini (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), 109–12.
12. Vico, *New Science*, par. 979.
13. *Cinque libri di Giambattista Vico de' principj d'una scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni* (Naples: Felice Mosca, 1730), 457. My translation.
14. *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, 12th ed., vol. 8 (Paris: Robert, 1985), 148, s.v. *réflexion*.
15. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1991), 1:131; Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Adam and Tannery, 12 vols. and Suppl. (Paris: Cerf, 1897–1913), 6:41.
16. *Ibid.*, 1:127; 6:33. Descartes uses *réflexion* in the *Discours* to refer to mental activity in three places other than those discussed above (see *ibid.*, 1:115, 125, 143; 6:9, 28, 63).
17. *Ibid.*, 3:357; 5:220–21.
18. For corresponding expressions in going from English to Greek, see S. C. Woodhouse, *English-Greek Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Attic Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), s.vv. *reflect*, *reflection*.

19. See, e.g., Plato, *Republic* 510A, *Sophist* 266B, and *Timaeus* 71B; Aristotle, *Meteorology*, bk. 1, chaps. 5–8, bk. 2, chap. 9, and bk. 3, chap. 4; Aristotle, *De anima* bk. 2, chap. 8 and bk. 3, chap. 12; Aristotle, *Sense and Sensibilia*, chap. 2.

20. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), s.v. *reflecto*.

21. *The Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, prepared by R. E. Latham (London: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1965), s.v. *reflexio*.

22. "The power of reflecting on the contents of consciousness is more fully described in the passage: 'In anima . . . reflexio potest fieri vel conversio intellectus supra speciem absolute, non considerando cuius rei sit illa species vel ymago, et sic fit pura apprehensio speciei et non memoria, vel potest fieri reflexio supra illam considerando cuius rei sit, et conferendo ad rem cuius est, et sic fit cum apprehensione memoria.' *Quaest. Met.*, xi, p. 88:25." E. D. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 165.

23. *The Opus majus of Roger Bacon*, trans. Robert Belle Burke, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928), 499.

24. *Ibid.*, 580.

25. *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Anton C. Pegis, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1945), 817 (Q.85, art. 2). See also 830 (Q.86, art. 2).

26. Ibid., vol. 1, 841 (Q.87, art. 4).
27. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894).
28. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., vol. 13 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), s.v. *reflection* (8.c).
29. Locke, *Essay*, 1:122.
30. Ibid., 1:123.
31. Ibid., 1:123–24.
32. *Oeuvres philosophiques de Condillac*, ed. Georges Le Roy, vol. 1 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947–51), 21–23.
33. G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 51.
34. Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 16 (Turin: UTET, 1992), s.v. *riflessione*.
35. José Ferrater Mora, ed., *Diccionario de filosofía*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Alianza, 1979), 2807–11. *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, vol. 5 (Madrid: La Real Academia Española, 1737) contains the following passage that connects light, reflection, and reason: "No sus luces, sus refléxos/solo es razón que te copie,/que no es tratable la llama,/por no es los resplandóres," (s.v. *reflexo*).
36. Locke, *De intellectu humano*, trans. Ezekiel Burridge (London, 1701), was reviewed in the *Acta eruditorum* in 1702 and reprinted in Leipzig

(1709) and Amsterdam (1729). Vico used the Latin edition of Locke's *Essay*; see Gustavo Costa, "Vico e Locke," *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 3 (1970): 344–61, and Costa, *Vico e l'europa: Contro la "boria delle nazioni"* (Milan: Guerini, 1996), chap. 2.

37. Paolo Sarpi, *Scritti filosofici e teologici*, ed. R. Amerio (Bari: Laterza, 1951), 130.

38. Alexander Robertson, *Fra Paolo Sarpi*, 2d ed. (London: Sampson Low Marston, 1894), 53.

39. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1958), A262; B317; Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1956), A262; B317. Kant's term for reflection here is *Überlegung*, which he is using as the equivalent for the Latin *reflexio*. He makes this clear in the first sentence of the "Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection": "Die Überlegung (*reflexio*) hat es nicht mit den Gegenständen selbst zu tun . . ." (A260; B316).

40. Ibid. A51; B75.

41. Ibid. A235–36; B294–95.

42. Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, 1:114; Descartes, *Oeuvres*, 6:7.

43. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 188–89; Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, in *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. Ernst Cassirer, vol. 5 (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1922), 90.

44. Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, 1:384; Descartes, *Oeuvres*, 11:445.
45. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 484.
46. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 172–73; Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 71.
47. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), 172 n. 50; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in *Kants Werke*, vol. 5, 404n.
48. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 4; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 236.
49. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 15; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 248.
50. Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Work*, trans. James Haden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), chap. 6.
51. Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Penguin, 1948), 75–79.
52. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 128–29, 135–38; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 360–61, 367–70.
53. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 129; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 361.
54. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 129; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 361.
55. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A84; B117.
56. See Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1981), chap. 3.
57. Anthony Ashley Cooper, third earl of Shaftesbury, "Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor," *Treatise 2 of*

Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, ed. John M. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

58. Vico, *New Science*, par. 142.

59. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, Liberal Arts Press, 1950), 4.

60. See Donald Phillip Verene, "The Bodily Logic of Vico's *universalis fantastici*," in *Vico und die Zeichen, Vico e i segni*, ed. Jürgen Trabant (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1995), 93–100.

61. Vico, *New Science*, par. 382. See also the discussion of the Jove experience in Chap. 4.

62. Pierre Adler, "G. W. F. Hegel: Philosophical Dissertation on the Orbits of the Planets (1801), Preceded by the 12 Theses Defended on August 27, 1801," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 12 (1987): 269–309.

63. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 38; Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister, 6th ed. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952), 51.

64. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A50–64; B74–88.

65. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 38; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 51.

66. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 39; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 52.

67. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Italian-English) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

68. Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language, Including the Disputation with the Giornale*

de' letterati d'Italia, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 77.

69. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), 45; G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Georg Lasson, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1971), 26.

70. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. Fred Kersten, in *Collected Works*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), sec. 77.

71. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2d rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 569.

72. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 62.

73. Marvin Farber, "Modes of Reflection," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 8 (1947-48): 588.

74. Descartes, *Philos. Writings*, 1:152; Descartes, *Oeuvres*, 6:81.

75. Thomas Hobbes, "Tractatus opticus," in *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis opera philosophica quae Latine scripsit omnia*, ed. William Molesworth, vol. 5 (London: John Bohn, 1845), 215-48. Hobbes's "Tractatus" was published in Mersenne's *Cogitata physico-mathematica*.

76. James P. C. Southall, *Mirrors, Prisms and Lenses: A Textbook of Geometrical Optics*, 3d ed. (New York: Dover, 1964; 1918), 86.

77. Locke, *Essay*, 1:123.

78. *Ibid.*, 1:124.

79. *The Works of George Berkeley*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, vol. 1 (London: Nelson, 1948). Note Berkeley's use of Descartes in the Appendix, 237–38.
80. See Johannes Hoffmeister's "Einleitung" to Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vii.
81. *Ibid.*, viii.
82. *Ibid.*, xiii. My translation.
83. *Ibid.*, xiv.
84. See Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).
85. R. G. Collingwood, *The New Leviathan or Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism*, ed. David Boucher, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 6–7.
86. On *sophrosynē*, see Stanley Rosen, *The Ancients and the Moderns: Rethinking Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 83–106.
87. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A108.
88. *Ibid.*, B135.
89. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 197–98.
90. *Ibid.*, 198.
91. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, auth. ed., vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1950), 370.

92. Leon Battista Alberti, *Momo o del principe* (Latin and Italian texts), ed. Rino Consolo (Genoa: Costa and Nolan, 1986). As the second part of the title indicates, Alberti's fable of Momus is a treatise on government. My remarks are not intended to comment on the larger purpose of this complex work, but only to focus on the figure of the vagabond. For another treatment of Momus, see Thomas Carew, "Coelum Britannicum: A Masque at Whitehall in the Banqueting House on Shrove Tuesday Night the 18th of February, 1634," in *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments, 1605–1640*, ed. David Lindley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 168–86. In this play Momus engages in a series of satirical exchanges with Mercury.

93. *The Fragments of Sophocles*, ed. A. C. Pearson, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1963), 77–78 (no. 418).

94. *Aesopica*, vol. 1 (Greek-Latin), ed. Ben Edwin Perry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), 360.

95. Alberti, *Momo*, 34–35.

96. *Ibid.*, 38–39.

97. On the expulsion of Momus, see Ernesto Grassi, *Renaissance Humanism: Studies in Philosophy and Poetics*, trans. Walter F. Veit (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1988), 97–100.

98. Alberti, *On Painting and on Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De pictura and De statua*, ed. and trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon, 1972), 61.

99. Alberti, *Momo*, 122–23. My translation.
100. Ibid., 100–101. Translation of these lines is from Mark Jarzombek, *On Leon Baptista Alberti: His Literary and Aesthetic Theories* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 165.
101. *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 113. See Donald Phillip Verene, *The New Art of Autobiography: An Essay on the Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), chap. 6.
102. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, 10:213. See also my remarks on Descartes' mask in the Introduction.
103. Jarzombek, *Alberti*, 165.
104. Vico, *Autobiography*, 199.
105. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 317; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 371.
106. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 317; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 372.
107. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 317–18; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 372–73.
108. Carl Sandburg, "Momus," in *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*, rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 45.