

## PART TWO: REALITIES

Now reason enjoins its prescriptions relentlessly, without holding out any prospect to inclination; therefore, so to speak, with disregard and neglect of these impetuous and therewith so seemingly humble claims (which refuse to be subdued by any command). From this there arises a natural dialectic, that is, a propensity to pseudorationalize [*vernünfteln*] these strict laws of duty – to call into doubt their validity or at least their purity and rigor, and where possible to make them more accommodating to our wishes and inclinations; that is, basically to corrupt them and destroy their entire dignity, which in the end even ordinary practical reason itself cannot approve. [G, Ak. 405]

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With the ideals of transpersonal rationality, consistency, and moral motivation now in place, I turn next to extended discussion of the non-ideal realities in which these ideals serve – psychologically, morally and socially – as distant reminders of the standards of performance to which we naturally aspire. This second part of the discussion recapitulates and develops analysis of the conflict between transpersonal and egocentric rationality detailed in Chapter I – with closer attention now to the practice of philosophy itself on which that Chapter focused – by extending further the exploration of motivationally ineffective intellect begun in Chapter V.4.2.1. That analysis of moral motivation was placed in Part I because it disregarded familiar, real-world impediments to enacting the dictates of reason, including moral dictates. Part II takes those impediments for granted, and focuses on the downward cognitive and psychological accommodations we make to the reality of our rational and moral insufficiencies. Just as the concepts of horizontal and vertical consistency are key to understanding how reason guides action under ideal circumstances, the concepts of literal self-preservation introduced in Chapter V.2, and of pseudorationality introduced in Chapter VII below, are key to understanding how reason guides action under actual circumstances. So they figure prominently in subsequent chapters.

Chapter VIII.4 surveys selectively some of the accounts of pseudorationality furnished by the history of philosophy, of course with particular attention to Kant. All of these historical accounts identify systematic deviations from an ideal of rational integrity that is implicit in classical logic and presupposed by Aristotle, Kant and Nietzsche. But all of the accounts themselves are scattered and cursory rather than systematic. Consequently, I intend my account of pseudorationality first to consolidate and build on some of these historical accounts; and second, to offer very tentative preliminary guidelines for more systematic, in-depth investigation of rule-governed deviations from theoretical rationality, analogously to the way in which

Tversky and Kahnemann's work provided the foundations for investigating rule-governed deviations from instrumental rationality.

In the case of theoretical rationality, the primary act of cognitive distortion is the distortion of theory itself – whether of ourselves or of reality – in order to defend it against the many anomalies that threaten its explanatory sufficiency. The passage above from the *Groundwork* describes one kind of anomaly: a first-personal, internal object of desire or impulse that is inconsistent with the moral theory in which we purport to recognize ourselves, and to which we therefore accommodate our theory through rationalization, i.e. by warping its scope of application so as to include it. A second is the type of anomaly described in the first *Critique* at A 112: a third-personal, external object of perception that is inconsistent with the conceptual scheme that structures the unity of the self, and that we therefore exclude through denial or dissociation. In this case, by thus warping the scope of application of our theory, we thereby warp the structure and crush the healthy functioning of the self, engendering internal blindness, bias, and fear.

These two types of anomaly can be distinguished conceptually, but they work in tandem when one's personal investment in a theory is very deep. This is the case that forms the primary target of the following discussion, because our personal investments in our favored moral theories are, in fact, often that deep. I try to show how the dynamics of this case can explain a wide variety of moral dereliction, and also why we respond so sluggishly to the imperative to ameliorate it. Following this systematic and rather extensive cataloguing of our moral failings, however, is a reconsideration of Kant's account of theoretical reason in the *Dialectic* of the first *Critique* that leads finally to the conclusion that the very same intellectual capacities that inevitably propel us into the many vices of pseudorationality also contain very powerful resources for reforming them.