CHAPTER 11
IDEALISTIC AMBITIONS

We cannot appear to derive satisfactory empiric guidance from others on what will make us happy. Studying the behavior or advice of other humans does not provide reliable guidance because they are likely to possess different concepts of happiness. The apparent anarchy of pursuits and the dearth of efficient guidance from empiric explorations in the presence of an overwhelming multitude of circumstances leave us wanting for clarity and reliable assistance. The complexity we face in our struggle for happiness makes us wish for a mechanism that would reduce this complexity. We would like to anticipate, plan, and control our path as much as possible so we can extend the enjoyment of our existence to its maximum. We wish we could find a manageable set of instructions that could bring order into the seemingly confused state of our search for happiness. This motivation was already the source of our empiric investigations. However, their failure to satisfy our desire for guidance incentivizes us to search for an alternative approach. This alternative approach is suggested to us by the insight that empiric explorations largely fail us. This insight may provoke a radical departure in our method. Rather than searching for what will make us happy in the circumstances we find, we may undertake to create circumstances pursuant to our wishes. Instead of letting our strategies be defined by what is, we may define them according to what we desire our circumstances to be. This might appear like a circular approach. If we are not familiar with our needs and the circumstances for their fulfillment, we do not know too well what we want. We can only react to topical urges presented by our needs and the means given and constrictions imposed by our situation. Thus, we may inquire for a method to identify our needs free from the constraints of pursuit. We may believe that we can short-circuit the discovery process and begin it with concentrating on its end points of pleasure. We may perceive that we can form a reality according to what we consider as best, our inventions, our ideas. We may contemplate that we can escape empiric ties and achieve pure knowledge of what happiness means for us through our imagination.

In this undertaking, we attempt to imagine an ideal state where our needs are being fulfilled. We try to build methods that can achieve this ideal without at least initially referencing our present state. Based on the ideal conditions of fulfillment, we ask what has to occur to obtain these conditions. To determine the necessary means for our transition from dissatisfaction to satisfaction, we step downward from the most proximate requirement for fulfillment to the next proximate re-

quirement and so on. We may proceed in this way until we arrive at a condition that we can create as a proximate step up from the basis of where we are. Once we have established such a sequence of steps, we can define our subordinated wishes as constituted by these steps. We then trace the sequence of deducted steps back in implementing these steps and their corresponding wishes in the reverse order of their deduction. We build the circumstances we imagined to be capable of fulfilling each need. Hence, our needs form the starting points as well as the end points of our pursuits. It seems that, in this reflective movement, our needs define their factual necessities, the premises for their fulfillment. Our needs become ultimate premises. They become facts in relation to which we seek all other facts. To the extent these other facts cannot be readily obtained, we search for them and we endeavor to shape our environment to fit the purpose of fulfilling our needs.

Beginning our investigation from the ideal of our needs appears to be the reasonable answer to our empiric struggles. These struggles seem to have attacked the problem from the wrong side. They seem to have focused too much on circumstances as they are and on distancing ourselves from the deprivation of these circumstances. By trying to reject and distance ourselves from circumstances as they are, we do not appear to obtain sufficient guidance to steer us toward the fulfillment of our needs. Such negative guidance might give us part of our motivation to transform our circumstances. However, the negation of what we find and attempts to extricate ourselves from certain circumstances or to ameliorate them stop short of adequately defining what makes us happy. They leave us aimless because our vision remains focused on deprivation instead of being set on a state of fulfillment. If we are to maximize happiness, the positive guidance by our desire of fulfillment seems required. Being guided by our ideals of fulfillment appears to enable us to transcend the limitations of our experiences.

Ideal happiness does not strike us as a function of the world as it is or as we have experienced it. As a state of fulfillment, its distinction seems to be largely its differentiation from our reality. It seems to be the very nature of a wish that it designates a state of affairs that is not, at least not yet. In this quality, it appears to have the capability to surpass empiric status. We may wish for something that is absolutely impossible or something we cannot manage to arrange. If existing circumstances do not provide the answer to our wishes, we are willing to consider processes that go beyond circumstances we have already experienced. When we form a wish in excess of customary constellations and functions, the method we employ does not appear to be an empiric deduction, let alone a scientifically founded process of building up

from underlying circumstances and their organizing principles. Ideal wishes often do not represent current or past conditions. Rather, they may appear as leaps that are founded on our conjecture of what might bring us satisfaction. Notwithstanding, when we examine our wishes, we appear incapable of inventing circumstances that are independent of anything we have experienced. Even if we do not follow substances and laws of nature in a scientific or technologically possible sense, we arrange elements of our experiences to form our fantasies. The premises of our needs are empiric as well. We become aware of those needs through direct sensory impressions, emotional reactions, and physiological states that are prompted by deprivation and fulfillment. These impressions are authentic empiric phenomena. Arguably, their unreflected immediacy renders them the most empiric of our experiences. Their characterizations of pain and pleasure provide us with the most important sensory impressions in our pursuit of happiness. All aspects of our pain-pleasure mechanism that stimulate us can be categorized as empiric events. The distinguishing quality of empiric and idealistic aspects of our mind is not that one is more based on experiences than the other. We experience phenomena of our mind, including its motivations, as much as any other aspect of nature. Rather, the distinction lies in the character of one as a rationally ascertainable experience and the other as an emotional experience. It might thus be more precise to distinguish rational empiric and emotional empiric phenomena.

The use of the word ideal with regard to our concepts of happiness cannot be justified as signifying a phenomenon that is separate from our experiences. But our needs comprise an element that is ideal in terms of the meaning of the word that designates perfection. That ideal is the concept of ideal happiness as the complete absence of pain and the complete presence of pleasure. We possess this ideal, even if we have never experienced such condition, simply as an extrapolation from the direction implied in our pain-pleasure mechanism. That ideal is based on experiences as well because we merely purify and continue the movement between dissatisfaction and satisfaction to its ultimate conclusion. Even if we only harbor a vague notion of relief and bliss, its anticipation is a result of empiric impressions. There can be no ideal separate from empiric constituents. As all mental occurrences, all ideal concepts are in their essence empiric. However, this does not keep us from forming ideals of our ultimate destination of perfection. Our experiences suggest to us that the complete absence of pain and complete presence of happiness represent our consummate ideal. They would indicate that all our needs are fulfilled and that we would not have to fear any circumstances that might change that fulfillment.

As we turn to potential means for fulfilling our needs, the basis of our experiences remains indispensable. The demands of each need are articulated by references not only to what we presently sense but also to our preceding impressions of its deprivation and fulfillment. We cannot help being influenced by these experiences as samples in ascertaining our objectives and pursuits. If we can distinguish objects or events that bear similarity with sampled objects or events that provided adequate satisfaction before, we may apply the most promising of them and improve them if that is possible. We may have to use our imagination of potential components to build planned pursuits based on our experiences. We may replace, add, or subtract components in naturally occurring objects or events. But it may not be sufficient to deconstruct and reconstruct objects or events we find preexisting and to engage in their variation, even if it is a significantly improved variation. To accomplish means beyond these, we may have to disassemble objects and events and to scrutinize the possibilities their components hold to interrelate in unprecedented objects and events. That we possess such creative capacity seems to be evidenced by human technology as well as feats of social and economic organization. Its results often appear to reflect a departure from nature. Historically, the fulfillment functions of our needs were met by naturally occurring objects and events. Objects and events we invent to fulfill these functions in a more developed state may seem dissimilar from anything nature provides. Yet, in spite of that appearance, we take all our cues of what is possible from nature. Even means and functions that we newly develop or revolutionize for the pursuit of our needs often appear to be inspired by objects and events we observe in nature. Although we might not work with traditional objects and events anymore, we frequently emulate their functions. Our search and coordination of subordinated functions derive from this principal orientation. This is not surprising because the ultimate resulting functionality of products must often be identical or similar to natural products if they replace these products to be useful for the contentment of our needs. A similarity in resulting functionality implies a requirement for similar components.

While our development is hence substantially characterized by copying nature, we appear to be able to discern allocations of components to which we can more fittingly attach the label of human invention. By drawing analyzed components and characteristics of components from separate objects and events together to synthesize new objects and events, we may not only build functionalities that are identical or similar to existing objects and events. We may combine components in unprecedented ways with unprecedented results. We can un-

dertake this expansion of our knowledge and technical ability without an intent of emulation. Instead, we would systematically examine the combination of nature's components, try to find out how they react, and see whether we might be able to use the result. This implies that we play through possible combinations of given or extracted components. We can also try to abbreviate the process by taking reference to experiences to determine what combinations have not been explored so far. Further, we can arrange experiments under the use of settings we have already experienced. However, by these methods, we merely discover what is already there, what nature already provides. Our scientific research is destined to bring such preexisting factualities to our attention. The attribute of invention is even less deserved where we stumble upon knowledge that is new to us in a coincidence. We may then restrict invention to situations where we search for and find solutions for particular problems. Yet even here we are bound to the empiric acquisition of knowledge and the advantage of using prior empiric knowledge to concentrate our inquiries. Finding solutions with such undertakings is not fundamentally dissimilar from broader systematic endeavors to amplify our knowledge and capabilities. Nor is it fundamentally different from gaining insight as a byproduct of accidents or attempts to meet needs, or from observations of occurrences in which we are not or not intensely involved. While such techniques may pose differing requirements regarding our talents, knowledge, or efforts, we can only discover what nature holds in store for us. The belief that we can invent anything is born from a lack of comprehension.

Although our mind may have experiences within itself that are not the result of external factors, these cannot be called a product of our independent creation. Our knowledge or speculation about what we might find and the dedication and sophistication of our search or confirmation efforts do not change the derivative character of our activities. Our sole contribution appears to be an intentional or an accidental arrangement of factors that bestows on us particular experiences from a larger fund of possibilities. But the motivations of our needs that guide us in these undertakings and our other faculties are products of nature as well, and we experience all of them involuntarily. We do not create. We merely realize potentials within us and in our environment that are already granted and whose development through us seems to be imposed by our dispositions and dispositions in our surroundings. We may be able to imagine and implement circumstances in variation, rearrangement, qualitative enhancement, or quantitative augmentation of what we have experienced. Nevertheless, the concept for such activities originates in and is defined by sources beyond our

control within us and our surroundings. When we deconstruct experiences into their components and apply them individually or allocate them into the same, similar, or new correlations, we react to and use what is presented. New correlations are mere extensions of what already exists and the realization of its preexisting potential. Allocating what exists from the basis of our knowledge of substances and principles or chance may be unprecedented and complex. But neither our ideals nor the means for their fulfillment are independently ours. The capacities and determinations of our mind seem inexorably rooted in what is and what we are by the grace of nature. Our insights and activities merely catch up with the potential of us and of our environment. Our potential or the potential of nature may or may not be competent to meet our ideals. Still, through our practical pursuit of our ideals, we are reconciling empiric reality with empiric potential to some extent.

Insights regarding the empiric nature of our needs may be disappointing at first. But they give us renewed hope that we might derive happiness as a scientific result. We might succeed if we approach our research from the viewpoint of ideal satisfaction, by posting it as a hypothesis from which we derive and toward which we develop a systematic science of happiness. Such an idealistic position and method seem to come naturally to us. Our needs represent the ideals to which we aspire. They confront us with the idea of their satisfaction as our objectives from which all our organizational efforts and activities flow. The empiric aspects of what is or may be possible and how it may be possible provide tools that the idealistic aspect attempts to use. They also place practical limitations that the idealistic aspect might attempt to obliterate or at least expand. Yet the undefined experience that we are not satisfied, that we can anticipate more pleasure when we detect the presence of pain, creates an idealistic edge on which our development essentially depends. This idealistic edge drives us to develop our empiric knowledge to where our capabilities and their application will match our aspirations. It is the vanguard of our knowledge and practical abilities. At the outer edge of our skills, we may know what we are looking for only by sensing a discrepancy in our pain-pleasure mechanism for a need. Our perceptive, rational, and practical efforts are set in motion by that emotional discrepancy. Our mind connects empiric impressions of an emotional void with its memory of similar impressions and corresponding remediation efforts. Our needs incentivize us to meet their requirements as well as possible. Where empiric circumstances that cause ideal satisfaction are missing, they encourage us to develop these. We may then search for such circumstances under the leadership of our needs until we become able to meet our ideals.

Our ideals focus us on experienced or imagined circumstances of pleasurable events. The at times speculative nature of our happiness or of imagined opportunities for its advancement exposes us to considerable risk. The emotional character of our ideals may have our rational mind guessing. Because they might exceed our practical experiences, we might not be able to call upon sufficient knowledge or other resources to generate the necessary conditions. Even if circumstances can be imagined and produced, they may fail our emotional expectations. Our emotional ideals set our development objectives in a sometimes indefinite manner. They compel us to engage in pursuits even if we cannot be certain of their aptitude or success. Their impulses and means at which they make us grasp may at times be reckless and misleading. Nevertheless, the achievement of improved levels of satisfaction and aptitude in its service appears to depend significantly on letting the impulses of our needs motivate us. The idealistic aspect of our mind encourages us to develop knowledge and other resources to fulfill our needs better. This makes an idealistic approach essential for advancing our individual and collective survival and thriving beyond the levels that are secured by automatic instructions of our instincts. Without the leadership of our emotionally inspired ideals, our means may not develop past the levels we have already reached. Their uncertainty of fulfillment seems to be a price we must pay in exchange.

Unless we have experienced ideal fulfillment before, we cannot securely anticipate its circumstances. We will only know whether our ideal has been reached when our pain of deprivation regarding a particular need subsides. Besides projections we may venture based on observations, our only ability to better define our needs and what will satisfy them is to explore more of us and our reality and make it part of our experiences. To understand what our needs are and to arrive at ideals of their fulfillment, we have to refer to and build on experiences with them. Apart from instinctive instructions, our needs only give us guidance with respect to whether approaches fulfill them and whether some experiences fulfill them more or less than others. They appear to be incapable to tell us what will satisfy them beyond such experiences. To the extent we do not have instinctive knowledge or experience regarding what means fulfill them better or best, we have to rely on empiric observation or experimentation. We may have to engage in trials and revise our approaches depending on their results. Finding the best solutions may require experiments in addition to those undertaken to locate better solutions. Depending on resulting advancements and approximations toward an ideal state, we might modify our concepts of ideal applied circumstances that will or might live up to our emotional

ideals. In spite of all its shortcomings, this empiric method appears to be the only feasible process we can devise to obtain better knowledge about our needs and their fulfillment. Our trials must be largely individualized because our needs are modulated by our particularities. To obtain guidance on what will make us happy, we must try all reasonable possibilities. But we may identify areas of worthwhile experimentation by referencing previous experiences of happiness and unhappiness that might indicate directions for improving our happiness.

To construct ideal concepts and ideal circumstances according to them, we have to seek a concept that reconciles experiences regarding singular needs and their correlation. As we accumulate experiences through natural pursuits and intentional experiments, we develop a roster of incidents that we can translate into a guidance scheme. The basis of this scheme is the combination of incidents of satisfaction and pain with factual circumstances. On some occasions, we might be able to assess and record circumstances regarding single needs. But mostly, our experiences in the pursuit of needs will intersect and overlay, generating a netting of happy and unhappy correlations among our needs and of linked factual conditions. The association of happiness and unhappiness in a variety of types and intensities with certain categories of occurrences may allow us to develop some principles. Hence, it may in part reflect scientific abstraction. More immediately, it may provide us with a topographical map of what can cause us pain or pleasure and to what extent. We may refer to this composite as our existential philosophy because it gives us orientation regarding what we deem to secure and advance our existence. The formulation of an existential philosophy seems to be a natural process in all of us as our experiences grow. The context of these experiences may enable us to ascertain regions in which we are missing sufficient guidance, and we may decide to gain more experience in these areas to build a more comprehensive philosophy for our existence. We may deliberate how we should react if we were confronted with alternative settings and what alternatives would be conducive to what degree for the contentment of our needs. Even so, such a philosophy must remain deficient if its entries are insufficiently integrated into a comprehensive, reflected scheme. Without such a system, we may not have the necessary oversight and criteria to rightly assess, correlate, or supplement our experiences. Our experiences may have been affected by factors that cloud our judgment. Our philosophy may further suffer from a limited scope of our experiences. We may only achieve approximations of happiness, or not even that. Our existence proves that we have succeeded in satisfying basic survival needs up to this point. But some of our collateral needs may

stay unfulfilled, and collateral and basic survival needs may be underfulfilled. That might also be applicable to idiosyncratic features of our needs. Needs may compete and damage other needs and lack reconciliation. Even if we can experience happiness at one moment, future or continued fulfillment may be endangered. As long as we sense pain or fear and we yearn for more satisfaction, we have not experienced ideal happiness if we deem it to consist of pure fulfillment. Because our philosophy might not be able to attend to these issues effectively, it may fall short in helping us to dependably define our ideals. To elevate our happiness, it appears necessary that we transcend the limitations of a scientific approach to our means and apply it to our objectives.

How we can undertake that may not be immediately accessible for us. To expand our reach, we may extrapolate from what we know and may picture ideal conditions that can be assembled from components in our mental repertoire. We may attempt to integrate the concepts we have collected and derived into a comprehensive system that gives our experiences overarching sense. We may use such a system to supplement areas in which we have insufficient experience or to shape areas in which we have no experience. We may build a philosophy as a speculative, ideal construct. However, if we want to ascertain that our constructs afford us applicable guidance, we must engage in corroboration. We will have to generate a reality in which the practice of our imagined ideal pursuits becomes feasible. Often, the building of such a reality may surpass our personal capabilities. That insufficiency may not only be due to a lack of personal or nonhuman resources for momentous rearrangements of our nonhuman environment. It is also attributable to the fact that a number of our philosophical ideals require or benefit from cooperation with other humans, by exchanges or common ventures or by the mere survival and thriving of our species. We all wish we could shape the world to cater to our needs. But achieving our ideals may require extensive and at times massive undertakings.

Our desire to adjust the world to our liking and the potentially vast changes we imagine stand in stark contrast to our particularities and their possible insignificance for large-scale developments of humanity. Considering the context of our pursuits and our interest in the survival and thriving of our species, our desire to have our idiosyncrasies accommodated must appear frivolous to us upon deeper contemplation. The shape of our existential philosophy and the success of its implementation are in large parts determined by our particular internal and external circumstances. It is therefore likely that this philosophy will solely pertain to us. We may reserve the right to shape immediate circumstances to satisfy our particularized requirements. But we

may acknowledge that such pursuits must not interfere with our ultimate objective to support and protect the survival and thriving of our species. Even if we have not graduated to these insights, the fact that our idiosyncratic ambitions to arrange our surroundings are not likely to be shared in much of their detail by other individuals and that such individuals are likely to have their own diverging ambitions must impress us as an overwhelming presentation of obstacles to our ideals.

Differing wishes among individuals that result from their particularized needs and circumstances make it unlikely that a homogeneous system of pursuits under one philosophy could be created and maintained by them. We may therefore question to what extent harmonious coexistence and collaboration is possible in the face of idiosyncrasies. They seem to require limited unity to support and protect underlying common interests but also the preservation of large areas of autonomy. We may further query how we should arrive at comprehensive guidance for matters of our happiness if we each have to develop and implement our unique existential philosophy. It seems that our attempts to form ideals do not help us much to overcome our dependence on trials and exposure to their detriments. To obtain competent guidance for our happiness, we have to largely sustain our own experiences from which we might then construct such a guidance. But this threatens to defeat the purpose our seeking guidance. We want to avoid having to suffer through experiences of failure, frustration, and pain. We do not want to waste time, efforts, and other resources on endeavors that might not fulfill our needs. We may fail in our experiments because of personal and environmental adversities. We might remain ensnared in a variety of continuing trials without significantly improving our happiness. Even if our trials eventually succeed and we become better able to understand our happiness, we might have wasted much of our existence in arriving at appropriate insights. We might have expended large amounts of our resources on misadventures that could have been better spent in the production of happiness. We may view the loss of most resources with mitigated regret because we can regenerate most of them. Yet we may regard time and the particular constellations of circumstances in our life to be different. We stand to spend much of our existence trying to comprehend ourselves and our relations with our environment. By the time we obtain sufficient wisdom so we could benefit from our exploratory hardships, many occasions in which we could have applied that wisdom may have irretrievably passed. We may be robbed of the products of our educational investments by becoming debilitated by physical decay and annihilated by death. We may also lament that, as our insights mature and might

lead to a happier life, we may be deprived of choices by the surroundings we built. We may seek to reduce our frustration over these facts by trying to view our insights that result from our struggles as accomplishments in themselves. We may attempt to make sense of our tribulations as an apprenticeship that prepares us for higher destinations in a life following death. But these appeasements cannot change that we might not advance much in our comprehension of happiness and that we might not have much occasion to apply our knowledge. These difficulties might be compounded by technical problems of finding or producing conditions that correspond to our requirements because of internal and external deficiencies and obstacles. We might also mourn that the lessons we draw from experiences should be of little relevance for other humans. We might regret that they should have to contend with their own particular internal and external circumstances without being able to build upon our insights. We may therefore conclude that gaining knowledge of happiness by exploration is an inefficient, ineffective undertaking even if it is guided by our ideals. Further, the idealistic method we tried to devise seems to add little. We have been following the exhortations and reactions of our needs for improvement all along. Even if identifying and striving toward ideals gives us ultimate direction, the reality of how we must earn more detailed knowledge seems to be unchanged. We still follow our hunches and react to results, albeit in a more systematic fashion and with greater expectations. The painful development of perfection through trials may make us suspect that we cannot reach it without additional guidance.

We should be confident that at least some guidance can emerge because not all our efforts are defined by our particularities. We might succeed in learning from, constructing together with, and passing on to others existential principles that focus on common needs and the individually and collectively ideal pursuit of such needs. Such general existential philosophies should generate essential contributions to the happiness of individuals and humanity. Much could be accomplished if humans could be motivated to acknowledge their existential needs, their apparent purpose, and their requirements, including the protection and support of one another's fundamental rights and the practice of mutuality. This might naturally incentivize them to pursue an existential ideal. Such insights would situate idiosyncrasies into a guiding context on the basis of which they might be explored, evaluated, and possibly adjusted. In looking for comprehensive guidance on a general theory of happiness, we might take notice of partial insights other individuals have gained in these matters. But we might hope that a professional philosophy would have established a general framework.

Upon forming this hope, we may immediately question whether professional philosophy can assist. For many of us, philosophy may appear to be a lifeless or at least an irrelevant science. There does not seem to be much of a demand for philosophical services. References to philosophers may summon images of unworldly university professors, marble busts, or rows of dusty books. We may think of it as an association of scholars that predominantly focuses on its history and continuance, that endlessly discusses problems but never arrives at broadly recommended solutions. To many, philosophy signifies the abstract treatment of arcane subjects that are only of academic importance to a few experts and whose content is inaccessible to noninitiates because it is phrased in incomprehensible jargon. Philosophy is widely regarded as a science without much practical applicability, as erudition for its own sake. But we may also carry a suspicion or even the conviction that this lack of relevance is as unnecessary as it is undesirable. We understand some of the power of philosophy because we are aware of the search for and applicability of some of its principles within ourselves and the reliance of social organization on philosophical principles. Still, for most of us, philosophical propositions remain unknown, distant, or disconnected. We may want to know whether someone has developed a comprehensive concept that can make our life better.

What we are looking for may hide beyond questions of means. We may want to know how we can find more satisfaction with them. There is good reason to believe that philosophy should give us at least some of the guidance we seek. Its Greek name that translates as love of knowledge implies an inquisitive mind that tries to understand its surroundings and itself. The implication is that once we know about phenomena and how they work, we can put these insights to use. We may say that philosophy is in part an abstract science because it tries to derive mental representations of objects and events and attempts to describe and categorize them and their relationships. But we can also claim this abstraction as a necessary precursor for our ability to competently influence our environment. When we look at how philosophy developed, we can detect such a practical effect if not intent of philosophy. Originally, philosophy covered all ranges of science. The relative lack of knowledge of humanity prompted philosophy to inquire into all directions where knowledge could be located. As knowledge grew, the amount and complexity of knowledge and its practice in particular areas as well as the requirements for further exploration in these areas led to the specialization of knowledge into segments. Thus, the original pursuit of acquiring knowledge separated into sciences that were largely autonomous in their subsequent inquiries and resulting knowl-

edge. They were only bound together by their shared boundaries and a common basic method. As areas of exact science were carved out of the body of philosophy, it increasingly resembled an emptying husk, whose developments of knowledge have fruited and fallen out, germinated, and begun growing on their own. Even the foundations of science became self-contained. Philosophy became increasingly restricted as a backward-oriented science that reviews, compares, and classifies its own development. However, it has preserved authority in trying to explain the shrinking array of matters that have not yet become accessible to proof. In that area, it retains the nature of an exploratory science according to procedures that take account of proven facts, disclose unproven assumptions, and develop conclusions in their interrelation according to accepted standards of argument. Only, the subject matters it is left to address frequently exhibit such an undefined complexity in their elements and correlations that speculation may build upon speculation. The resulting theoretical proof might require practical application to confirm the correctness of its speculative conclusions. Philosophy has then retained some practical scientific aspects.

That remaining function to discover subjects for practical confirmation through speculation seems to be curtailed in areas that adjoin practical sciences because these may undertake their own speculations. Although these dispersed speculations may consist of smaller steps, have a smaller scope, and insist on more immediate proof, their development may catch up with philosophical constructs. Where that is not the case, philosophical research appears to contribute to its replacement by exact sciences by pioneering and confirming through its conceptual results worthwhile directions for more practical investigations. As speculative concepts that still remain contained in philosophy become accessible to proof, they either form their own sciences or become integrated into an existing exact science. With the progress of practical sciences and speculative philosophy, speculative philosophy is relegated to ever smaller areas that eventually will completely give way to exact knowledge. Hence, the mission of philosophy to find out what there is to know seems to be programmed to expire as a result of its success. As the mother of all sciences, it is set to retire and live in its memories of its productive years. Until that time, speculative philosophy may help to define areas that remain to be explored and provide an initial framework of possible explanations that motivate more exacting research. It can serve as a temporary advisor that preliminarily explores uncharted areas and attempts to give us orientation. While philosophy might remain instrumental to practical sciences and ultimately to human pursuits, its functions seem to be remote at best.

However, this contemplation of philosophy is evidently incomplete. It never was only preoccupied with what is but also with what should be. It has never limited itself to explaining the workings of the world and assessing how and with what results they might be applied, only to leave determinations regarding the application of knowledge to us. It has always concerned itself with what we should do with our knowledge once we have developed it. As we acquire knowledge and through knowledge achieve command of other resources, we are confronted with choices that exceed and distance themselves from the automatic instructions of our instincts. Our rising powers make our wisdom in using them increasingly important. Philosophy can help us in that determination. It may keep an overview over all specialized sciences and incorporate their insights into a comprehensive system that avails us of the ability to apply them for optimal benefit. That service is needed because the specialized sciences and their coordination can only assist us to find out how something functions and how to achieve something. They can describe to us the consequences of acts or omissions. But they cannot instruct us why we should or should not apply what they make possible beyond considerations of technical effectiveness or efficiency within their subject. Questions about purpose and instructions that flow from its designation form a second, higher level of our love of knowledge. It is the task of philosophy in its existential concerns to answer these questions and to prepare those instructions or at least to bestow the development of our own competent conclusions. As the originating point from which humanity ventured out to discover its surroundings and itself, philosophy still presents the focal point of human concern. All our technical knowledge and our capacity converge on it to determine what we should undertake with them and ourselves. The only adjustment in a continuation of this function will be that the speculative nature of its considerations will be progressively substituted by scientific optimization. That result develops from the practical confirmation of its speculative premises and deductions. This time, however, the comprehensive ambition of the philosophical foray suggests that philosophy is to maintain the administration of the subject matter even after its speculative explanation has been confirmed. That is because the comprehensive scope of its purview fundamentally differs from the specificity of the sciences that previously departed.

Our acceptance of a philosophical leadership in existential concerns is ultimately determined by our identification of what we want in a philosophy. To be legitimate to us, an existential philosophy, even after its speculation is factualized, would have to reliably designate or assist us in designating what we want. Our mind judges all knowledge

it acquires and applies all science under the criterion of whether they assist our wishes and, if it is wise, the entirety of our needs. Existential philosophy may help us to recognize our needs and understand how they can correlate for an overall maximized level of fulfillment. Existential philosophy then seems to be a science to find out what pleases us and how to maximize our pleasure. The inquiry by philosophy into the nature of our world and the particularized sciences that developed from that inquiry seem to constitute subordinated efforts to obtain instruments for achieving this ultimate objective of happiness.

Considering the apparent significance of existential philosophy, it is difficult to explain why we do not avail ourselves more of its suggestions. One reason seems to be that there are many existential philosophies that remain unreconciled with one another. Another reason might be that existential philosophies resort to speculative constructs to fill gaps in matters of knowledge until these aspects have developed into a science that can successfully comply with demands for practical proof. The presence of speculative concepts creates a dangerous opening for risk and damage in our optimization efforts. That is particularly so if speculation leaves scientific methods behind and takes flights of imagination with diminished care in defining premises or disclosing its speculative character and methods of developing conclusions. The conclusory nature of a nonscientific speculative philosophy decreases our opportunities to evaluate its presentations and may cause us to rely on superficial concordances in its premises, arguments, and conclusions with what we suppose or want to be true and want to attain. The paucity of its scientific clarity may combine with our lack of ability to investigate its claims. But we may also condition ourselves to avert our mind from what we could find and understand. We may want to believe that speculative concepts are correct. This may have us rely even more on superficial concordances. They might even be embedded to sway us in favor of a philosophy that we might otherwise not adopt.

Mistakes in nonscientific speculative philosophies should reveal themselves during and after their implementation. Only, this type of proof can subject us to great risks of damage. Even after we incur such damage, the factually untethered nature of a nonscientific speculative philosophy may forestall us from determining the true causes for our failure. To avoid such consequences, an existential philosophy has to adhere to a scientific method of speculation that reveals its premises, allows us to follow their application, and limits its claims to what the argument allows it to conclude. But we may not take it upon us to review and to differentiate accordingly and may mistrust all speculative philosophies, particularly after being apprised of warning examples.

Perhaps most of all, we may resist considering speculative philosophies because we have already been taken in by a speculative philosophy that precludes us from considering other speculative philosophies even if they are scientifically legitimate. Notwithstanding, unless we are completely satisfied with the guidance such a philosophy gives us, it appears useful to review legitimate alternatives. Our considerations might be rewarded by establishing a better approach toward the pursuit of some or all our needs, if it is only by helping us define our own premises and philosophy in differentiation from what we review. To facilitate such considerations, scientific philosophies have to make themselves available. This requires that they avail individuals of technical access to them. Only, that may not suffice because many philosophies are restrictive in the substantive access they permit. For one, they are often difficult to understand. That may have various reasons. Some of them were recorded or have reached us only in fragments. Issues of language, style, and organization might pose a problem. Translations may be imprecise. Archaic terminology may make writings difficult to understand. Authors may have had problems in clearly expressing themselves. They may not have been aware or may not have cared that they left important presumptions and parts of their arguments unexpressed or poorly described. Writings might build on their authors' interpretations of other philosophies that are not explained in sufficient detail. They might use arcane language that their authors or other philosophers coined. They may give new specialized meaning to commonly used words. These problems make it frequently difficult if not impossible to find clear meaning in the statements of a philosophy or to compare or correlate the substances of philosophies. They often prevent or limit direct access by those who could benefit from it.

These problems require that persons with studied knowledge of these philosophies become intermediaries. The at times considerable communicative shortcomings of philosophies may also pose a significant burden on the resources of academic philosophers who might try to become such intermediaries. Many of their activities may be preoccupied with deciphering, translating, explaining, and speculating what original philosophers have expressed and in the discussion of their insights with other researchers of these philosophies. It might appear to be a relatively minor stride to make that work accessible to a broader audience. Yet, often, researchers become so enveloped in the universe of a philosophy they are reviewing that they succumb to many of the original or grown communicative shortcomings of that philosophy. In an effort to obtain intimate understanding of an original philosopher's mindset, they may assume that philosopher's terminology to elucidate

that mindset. For this reason, it may be difficult among specialists in different philosophies to truly understand one another. That may not only be so because each philosophy might use unfamiliar terminology but also because each philosophy may attribute partly different meaning to common language. While experts may enable competent comparisons by gaining proficiency in multiple philosophies, that does not significantly assist the dissemination of a philosophy if their explanations continue within the particularities of one philosophy. This does not change much if they create translation mechanisms between philosophies. To make veiled philosophies more accessible, they will have to be translated into commonly understandable terminology.

The absorption and maintenance of the original code of philosophies may be an understandable and partly necessary requirement to become familiar with and understand works that are often extremely challenging and to succeed in not falsifying their meaning. Translating a philosophy carries a high risk of misinterpretation. However, experts who comprehend its meaning should be able to express it in commonly understandable terminology. Such a popularized expression should also be in the interest of such experts because remaining within expert jargon may prevent a philosophy from making its case and conferring the benefits it promises. It sentences an existential philosophy and its endorsers to a speculative state and its potential beneficiaries to a relatively unhappy existence. Having dedicated their life's work to an existential philosophy, specialists in it should believe that it has much to give and they should be uniquely motivated to popularize its content. That an existential philosophy has not been popularized may indicate that its experts may not have an interest to disseminate its message.

One reason popularization is not undertaken might be that experts wish to reserve the philosophy with which they are occupied to elites and desire to forestall broader access. They might form part of a power structure that attempts to subject other parts of a society to the rule of the initiated. Another reason experts might not desire to popularize a philosophy might be that it represents an agenda that might not be accepted if it is fully revealed. The resulting veiled indoctrination may be broadly employed or focus on subjects who go on to positions in which it can operate in favor of objectives that originators and expert promulgators want to have promoted and prevail. Even if they are not aware of bias in their positions and regard them as scientifically justifiable and able to withstand critical scrutiny, they may fear additional adversity. They may be concerned that representatives of other philosophies or attitudes they deem erroneous might attack them, their philosophy, and its followers if the philosophy gains attention.

Another motive for not popularizing an existential philosophy might be that experts are prohibited from doing so. However, their reluctance appears to continue in societies that do not encumber their freedom. In such settings, experts might occupy themselves with such philosophies for reasons other than their confidence that these could benefit humanity or even a segment of humanity. They may keep existential philosophies alive in their minds because of considerations related to the teaching of philosophy and its institutions. Academic institutions may be charged or permitted to keep an extensive scope of speculative philosophies alive. Their commissioned inclusiveness may be sourced in the ignorance of sponsors regarding the merit of philosophies or the reluctance of these to become involved in deciding such matters. Nor may those administrating philosophical schools want to interdict the teaching of any accredited philosophy. A selective curriculum may be viewed as an affront to freedom. It may be regarded as an overt act to suppress an undesirable philosophy or as an opening to future unwarranted discrimination. New philosophies are more likely to be excluded. Academic institutions may require that they establish themselves in certain ways before they are given a place in an institution's curriculum. Yet, once philosophies are academically established, they may be very difficult to remove. They may assume an encapsulated status that may neither pursue nor tolerate their improvement. Academic treatments may focus on interpretations of the original works.

There may be valid reasons to maintain a broad offering of existential philosophies in their original substance. One may be the establishment of foundations on which later philosophies build without repeating these. Another may be that philosophies define themselves by differentiations from other philosophies and can be better perceived if these are understood. A further reason would be lacking development or verification of their substance. Beyond this, there may be interest in establishing and keeping a historical record of how existential philosophy has developed. Keeping a wide range of speculative philosophies present may further be a matter of academic stature and tradition.

Experts may also be interested in a broad, stable curriculum for reasons of their employment. Since teaching institutions are the sole employers for professional philosophers, it is in their interest to maximize the positions that can be justified in such institutions. That justification is easiest if a broad range of speculative philosophies can be maintained and if their speculative nature is not resolved. Expertise in any acknowledged philosophy might secure a desirable academic position regardless of such a philosophy's relevance. Once their position is dependent on the philosophy they teach, they might be disinclined to

concede its irrelevance or failings. Nor might they be disposed to facilitate ready access to the philosophies they oversee for concern that an understanding of them by others might invite assertions of irrelevance or failings. But even if reasons to make such assertions are known, colleagues might be reluctant to attack the relevance of philosophies colleagues administrate. They might have concerns about becoming subjects of such attacks as well or exciting a greater discussion about the funding or justifiability of philosophical institutions or their positions, compensation, and other benefits. Philosophical experts may then habitually skirt issues of practical relevance for economic reasons.

However, if existential philosophies are to have any purpose in accordance with their claim of existential importance, their mere academic preservation is insufficient. Any philosophy that purports to offer guidance in existential matters must present itself in ways that allow such guidance to be understood, considered, accepted, practiced, dismissed, or improved by intended beneficiaries. Hence, experts that take the philosophy they represent seriously must render that philosophy accessible. There might be obstacles that an offering cannot control. Individuals might be biased by philosophies already residing in or influencing their mind against considering other existential philosophies. But even if this makes it harder to gain consideration, this must not keep an existential philosophy from making its teachings available if it is to possess any chance of realization. Yet there may be another, more justified and resolvable issue that might foreclose consideration by designated beneficiaries. They may be unwilling to entrust their life to a philosophy that represents one viewpoint among others that are presented by competing philosophies. Even if specialists could render their philosophies generally comprehensible, nonexperts might not be able or prepared to commit the time and effort to immerse themselves in a diversity of speculative philosophies. They might demand that experts examine one another's philosophies, discuss their validities and shortcomings, and present their findings in ways that comply with the same communicative standards as their initial presentations. That appears to be an appropriate demand because professional philosophers are trained to review and critique the logical structure and substance of arguments and can consecrate more time to such efforts. Their assessment of one another's philosophies may add a clarifying pointedness to such an undertaking. Nonexperts may further demand that experts in these philosophies undertake reconciliation work before they submit them for practical implementation. That seems to be a legitimate requirement because the reconciliation of philosophies promises to be difficult and time-consuming even if these were to be translated

into the same terminology and comparative opinions were presented. Reconciliation may necessitate a partial or total abandonment or adjustment of philosophies. In addition, the involved considerations may give rise to important new developments. Experts appear to be in the best position to render such decisions and their determinations could be presumed to be reliable because their consent after initially divergent positions is likely to reflect a fully considered change. If speculative aspects of existential philosophies do not allow present clarification into one construct, experts would be uniquely qualified to lay out the alternatives of scientifically legitimate speculation and to describe the scope and consequences of this multiplicity of models. They might also give advice on how speculative concepts might be practically confirmed and thus advance existential philosophy. They would be dutybound to attend the development of existential philosophy until one comprehensive solution to common and general matters of our needs is derived. The application of scientific principles to interchangeable human characteristics has the logical result that proof will successively and ultimately entirely reduce our search to one result. It generally portends that the speculative aspects of existential philosophy will ultimately transform into an exact science of human happiness. Experts in existential philosophies may hence provide a critically useful service to humanity. Their assumption of responsibility may even be essential for individual and collective survival. Our development and ascent in power may not leave us much room for experiments and injudicious choices in addressing existential problems. Even if philosophical guidance should not be a matter of life or death, any lack of guidance may unnecessarily cause large numbers of humans to be afflicted with pain and restrict their thriving. Unless philosophers admit that their work is pointless, they must claim that they may be in possession of at least a partial recipe for an antidote to human distress. Their failure to perfect it and make it available may strike us as cruel and irresponsible.

Experts in existential philosophies may not be comfortable with their responsibility. Fulfilling their vanguard function may demand a drastic change in their outlook and practice. They must overcome the divisions of their particular orientations. They may have to supersede reverence for particular philosophers or their philosophies with a general commitment to existential philosophy. They have to emerge from academic seclusion and place their activities in the center of public interest. Moreover, the exercise of their responsibility may be burdened with danger and personal sacrifice because the assumption by philosophy of its rightful leadership in human development may meet with resistance. Such a resistance may be caused by fear of transformation

even if current circumstances leave room for improvement. It may also be attributable to interests that benefit from an antecedent state of confusion or the relative order they manage to maintain. Both the fear of losing ground and the fear of losing overproportional benefits may motivate countermeasures against active scientific philosophical practice, its originators, and its promoters. These measures may entail the necessity to respond defensively. Additionally, nonscientific philosophies may pose independent threats of irretrievable damage that may suggest defensive measures against them. Philosophers may thus become involved as leaders in human affairs. Although scientific existential philosophies have already participated and made progress in shaping human pursuits, they have often suffered perversion and suppression at the hands of unscientific philosophies or due to the pressures of attacking and defending against them. Where scientific philosophies were successful in motivating individuals to shape their life according to them, their inherent errors or lack of development as well as incomplete or erroneous acceptance or implementation may have added obstacles. These problems frequently left them discredited and their supporters desolate. Many humans have therefore come to distrust schemes purportedly aimed at improving their happiness.

There may then be daunting problems that philosophy has to overcome if it is to fulfill its mission. But who else could competently undertake this mission? History instructs us that a void of competent philosophical leadership will be rapidly occupied by nonscientific impostors to whom humanity will look for guidance in its confusion and pain. Regardless of whether their guidance is well-meant or offered for nefarious purposes, following them may cause avoidable detrimental consequences. Although scientifically based philosophical movements may derail and falter from their own deficiencies, there does not seem to be any alternative to scientific progression. The development of a unified scientific existential philosophy requires that professional philosophers establish it and see it through to a stable existence. Without their initiative, hope wanes that humanity can advance and realize its potential. The preservation of philosophies by academic institutions reveals itself as an invaluable foundation for this reorientation. They have been able to enshrine sources of enlightenment similar to some monasteries, schools, and libraries that were their keepers before, despite a world governed by unprincipled behavior, nonscientific, superstitious philosophies, or misguided scientific philosophies. Most technical aspects of philosophy have succeeded in freeing themselves from the paralyzing grip of nonscientific powers. These powers have largely receded and transformed to exclude technical sciences. Yet, in many

respects, they have continued their domination over the application of technical sciences and human life beyond them. To complete its mission of illuminating the world, philosophy must complement the establishment of a first level of scientific technical knowledge with the institution of a second scientific level of knowledge about purpose.

However, the generality of this philosophical positioning would disregard the particularizations of needs that weigh so heavily on our happiness and thus would be only of limited utility. Existential philosophies that venture beyond commonalities into individual particularities can only hope to account entirely for the principles that apply to the happiness of one person. Comprehensive guidance would have to accommodate a large number of variants to establish optimized happiness for individuals. This might entail the fragmentation of the philosophy every time personalities could differ. It would splinter an existential philosophy into unmanageable multitudes of philosophies. Idiosyncratic differences necessarily render a comprehensive substantive philosophy with universal pertinence impossible. We may attain some success in drawing on particularized existential philosophies that apply to us and others if we share sufficient particularities with them. An existential philosophy that embraces idiosyncrasies should be able to increase the depth of its applicability as it narrows its scope to certain shared types of particularities. Such a specialization might empower a philosophy to provide capable assistance to some groups of individuals in some areas. Yet, to the extent interests it addresses do not exist alone, the differences in the remaining context of individuals' pursuits may still burden such specialized philosophies with problems of subjective divergence. To avoid being embroiled in such intractable problems, specialized philosophies may exclude coverage of such aspects. But that may dispossess such philosophies of much of their utility because they would leave us to manage the dissonance of particularities in us and in our relationships with other individuals on our own.

The failure of the idea of a comprehensive substantive existential philosophy that can securely guide us in all our affairs might be a disappointing result that we are not willing to suffer. We may not be willing to let the potential of essential commonalities among humans be overruled by separating idiosyncrasies. We may claim that idiosyncrasies keep us from acting in our true interest and denounce them for causing irritation and insecurity within ourselves and with one another. We may see in them the cause for unnecessary complexity in our search for happiness and our inability to find happiness. We may view individualized aspects of happiness as a result of errors, inadequacies, and deformations. We may therefore believe that we must transcend

and extinguish these idiosyncrasies and generate an existence that is based on commonality if we want to achieve a maximum of happiness. For such a system to take hold, we may not deem it sufficient to only suppress idiosyncrasies because they persist as inherently virulent and because their dissatisfaction still leaves us unhappy. We may consider it necessary to remove idiosyncrasies with their root by removing their causes. We may think that it should be possible to shape an ideal society of humans with superior capabilities of creating and maintaining happiness. This may necessitate that individuals comply with a genetic standard. To form sufficient similarity, individual genetic substance might have to be unified to where individuals are mere copies of one another. In addition, such individuals would have to be exposed to the same or at least similar circumstances, experiences, information, and education and would have to live and pursue activities without significant differences. To achieve this, needs for self-realization, expression, and self-determination would have to be neutralized. An effort to improve happiness thus may produce a temptation to streamline us, others, and other conditions so the pursuit of happiness becomes scientifically traceable, predictable, and manageable. Such a rationalization of our production of happiness might appear as a reasonable response to the problems that individual differences cause. These make it difficult to administrate the pursuit of happiness in a society. They can lead to interference, estrangement, and friction. The interaction of distinctive pursuits increases problems in the establishment of an environment in which participants can find fulfillment. It further renders coordinated behavior for the achievement of coexistential objectives more difficult to arrange. The management of idiosyncratic pursuits necessitates far more extensive protective regulation, enforcement, judgment, negotiation, self-restraint, and vigilance compared to common pursuits.

Only, an equalization of personalities and of environmental circumstances would not necessarily solve the problems of interference, estrangement, and friction among individuals. If we were all the same and engaged in the same activities to satisfy the same needs, we would require and might compete for the same means. Arguably, these problems might be solved by an undifferentiated philosophy. But it is hard to see how differentiated means we require for high levels of pursuits could be created if all humans had the same abilities and had to apply them without specialization. We would each have to be able to create or find all the resources we need autonomously or by bundling parallel individual efforts. Unless we are highly advanced on an individual level to secure means for ourselves, or a society has evolved to where independent structures and processes provide our means, our ability

to satisfy our needs would be severely limited. It is also challenging to conceive how we could progress to an advanced state of development under such strident conditions of equalization. More than that, all developments would have to come about exactly in the same manner for each individual to maintain equal conditions. This may cause unmanageable logistical problems. Trials would impart the additional burden of being universally undertaken. Failures and mistakes could therefore cause more severe consequences. Even if we should manage to initially create a functional society of identical personalities and pursuits in an identical environment, it is difficult to envision how such a world could be maintained. All activities and circumstances would have to be controlled in ways that would prevent material deviations. Even if intentional eccentricities could be foiled, such a system would have to control the potential that individuals might meet with different occurrences that might give rise to unintentional differences. We could not empower selected humans to manage such a system because this differentiation would destroy the uniformity of all participants and could easily lead to our disadvantagement by ruling individuals or classes.

To avoid such a result, we might hand over control to an independent nonhuman entity. Then again, subjecting ourselves in such a comprehensive manner to a mechanism of human fabrication entails similar dangers of abuse. This transfer of control may also breed dangers of malfunction that might cause us to recoil. Our subjection to an external authority exposes us to unacceptable risk. As a better alternative, we might attribute control functions to each individual to be exercised in an identical and integrated manner by all. But our imagination may not be able to grasp a setting where we are all the same and live under the same circumstances. The prospects of the requirements to construct and keep such a system stable, of what might go wrong, and what the effects of such a system might be on our happiness and our survival and thriving may cause concern and apprehension. Even if adjustments should succeed, homogeneity and the requirements for its maintenance may require or threaten unacceptable repercussions. Notwithstanding, the questionable feasibility and benefits of a radically equalized society have not kept humans from rejecting individuality and setting forth and endeavoring to implement substantive equalization. Such efforts, even if they are only incremental and stop short of being comprehensive, may engender many of the same problems that full-fledged equalization efforts might entail. But individual superimpositions on general aspects may pose an even more insidious threat in the purported formation of general existential philosophies and in equalization efforts. The next chapter examines these threats.