CHAPTER 19
THE STRUGGLE FOR OBJECTIVITY

To many of us, an exploration of our personality might seem intuitively redundant because we are what we are trying to explore. We may not acknowledge the possibility of being uninformed. We may believe that we should be well aware of and familiar with our self because our mind has been witnessing all along everything we perceive, think, feel, and do and is exposed to all that we are at present. We should be able to recognize our traits by focusing on our exposure to them without much additional inquiry. Notwithstanding, many of us seem to possess only a superficial knowledge of our personality. This becomes apparent if we pose to us the question of who we are. The answers may not come easily. It is unlikely that we can readily marshal a sufficient detail to cover all or at least the principal facets of our personality.

On occasions when we want or are prompted to communicate who we are, we might appear to have a sovereign grip on such a representation. Most of us have learned to render short presentations about us. We may state our name and our occupation. We might explain in more detail what we do and have done, our professional experiences, and our opinions. We might describe our family, where we live, where we grew up, and how we arrived at our current station. We might talk about our leisure endeavors, possessions, nonprofessional experiences, social affiliations and activities, and possibly our religious and political attitudes. Different occasions may require or allow selection or preferences among these descriptions. We may further portray information about us by our accomplishments, status symbols, and demeanor. All such communications might be important in our cultural, social, economic, religious, and political interchanges. Still, they are expressions of our outward existence. They give only indirect clues about the person within. We shy away from revealing too much of our personality. On occasion, the provision of deeper insight into our personality to others or ourselves may be unavoidable or appear useful or necessary to pursue our needs. But such events seem to be extraordinary. Most of them are marked by exigencies that lay our emotions bare or designate them as a means of pursuit. We might strive to limit these occasions. We may shy away from revealing our personality to others for fear that they might discover an insight that disadvantages us. Yet we also appear inclined to avert our mind from who we are. We seem to resist acquiring insights about our personality or keeping them in our awareness or considering them after they become apparent. This may prevent us from taking full or even partial account of our self.

Many of us may not see any obvious reasons for delving deeper into who we are. Our perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and demeanor regularly go unnoticed by us as indications of traits. The preset, automatic, amalgamated nature of our mental traits may not let them rise to prominence in our conscious mind. Rather, they impress us as undifferentiated, natural expressions of our person. As much as our traits may engage in competition with one another, their automatic interaction may prevent or materially restrict this competition from entering our awareness. Even the activities of our council of traits appear to us as intuitive and subliminal. We might assert that this largely unconscious mechanism has worked reasonably well, that our existence has been satisfactory without knowing ourselves in detail. Where we cannot convincingly maintain that, we might refer to our demanding and eventful circumstances as preventing us from pausing and reflecting more deeply about our character. Our mind may be preoccupied with countless tasks. We may be struggling to keep up with immediate and ever-changing challenges, to get by from one day to the next. We may not have the time or the energy for fundamental contemplation. Then again, we appear to reserve time and energy for diversions, entertainment, and pastimes. This might cause us to ask whether our claim of being too busy for self-exploration is not a pretext or an indication of a shield we built. We may wonder whether we are merely unskilled at introspection or avoid facing ourselves. Do we fear insights or that we might have none? Are we apprehensive that we would not know what to do with what we expose? Whatever the claimed reasons might be, we may not have investigated our self exhaustively. Yet, without self-awareness, our genetic and acquired programming works largely in an automated fashion. We find ourselves at the mercy of what unregulated mental traits or extraneous occasions might trigger. We may have immediate awareness of our impulses, thoughts, and perceptions. We may try to engage them at that immediate level. However, we may not be aware of their causes, how they came to be, and whether they serve our happiness, serve it better than alternatives, or serve it in the best possible manner. We cannot be certain that our emotional traits engage in competent determinations or that they prompt the rest of our mind to obtain, investigate, review, and correlate information in adequate ways. We may at any given time follow the needs that issue the strongest impulses with little or no contest or deliberation.

Because we may not have dedicated much effort to the exploration of our inner dimension, our aptitude for self-investigation may be underdeveloped. If we do not know very well who we are inside, it is not surprising that we have trouble understanding what we want from

our existence, what makes us happy. Given our lack of access and skill in investigating ourselves, it is not probable that we can suddenly gain this access and skill simply as a matter of determination. Finding admittance to our inner world may be more of a challenge than we first realize. Our mental traits are programs, routines that cause us to deal with issues in particular, set ways. Once these programs have been installed, they tend to defend themselves against attempts to destabilize them. This is a necessary function if they are to succeed and survive in competition with other traits and with functional obstacles. But it also poses a barrier in the investigation of our mental traits. Because that investigation is motivated by the ultimate intent of obtaining power over them and possibly interfering with them, our mental traits may raise their defenses. Such defenses may be inculcated not only in the natural persistence of established mental structures and processes as traits. Our perceptive and rational traits may be additionally protected by the leadership of emotional traits that depend on them for support and protection. As a consequence, we may be contending with sophisticated mechanisms that include all three types of our mental abilities and may include coalitions of emotional traits. The integration of such mechanisms into the communications of our mind allows them to notice our intent or its potential and to evade detection and scrutiny of their nature. They may have access to many of the awareness and assistance functions in their efforts of evasion that we attempt to rally in their capture. The focusing of our mind on itself thus seems to create obstacles that exceed inherent circularity with attempts of evasion.

Defense mechanisms appear to be particularly vigorous in traits that already maintain disagreements with other traits or our council of traits or that are struggling with themselves. If they cannot deflect attention, they might instill defensive concerns or combine with favorable concerns set forth by other traits. We might resist exploring them for fear that we might weaken needs whose pursuit is already under pressure. We might fear that we would reveal and inflame aspects that cause us pain without an effective ability to heal them. We might recall failed remediation attempts whose recurrence we might attempt to prevent. We might have become despondent about our inability to address demands successfully or to establish balance among them. We might lack confidence that we can harmonize our traits. The resigning obstruction resulting from these concerns is unproductive. If there is unresolved conflict or dissatisfaction in our personality, if we continue to accept and reinforce internal barriers in the pursuit and fulfillment of our needs, we sentence ourselves to carry their burdens. By registering and reviewing these issues, we gain a chance of resolving them.

Arguably, it should be easiest to review our perceptive and rational traits because these can be measured by how well they reflect reality that we can describe through scientific insights. To the extent there are discrepancies, we should be able to find functional deficiencies in the mechanisms these traits represent and use. But there may be problems in drawing insights from scientific attention to our mind even if we should make impressive advancements in science and technology. We might have general blind spots in our comprehension of human perceptive and rational traits. Humans might be incapable of detecting incongruities of our perceptive or rational facilities with the substances and principles of nature because we apply these facilities to detect incongruities. The impressions of substances and principles of nature we derive might be shaped to comply with these blind spots. We might find some indications that our perceptive and rational traits are inadequate when we observe aspects of nature that seem to breach logic or specific principles of nature. Rather than considering that we might lack capacities to perceive or understand, we may claim that nature acts in ways that allow us to deny our shortcomings. As long as we can create purported scientific explanations and apply them in the pursuit of needs, we may deem our views sufficiently confirmed, even if we leave inconsistencies unresolved. Machines we devise may confront us with our blind spots and help us overcome them only if we do not pass our disabilities on to them. That might happen if we understand our limitations and construe machines to step into such areas. We might also construe machines that coincidentally alert us to blind spots or contribute to their remediation. Even if we fail to detect blind spots, machines we produce might become able to develop themselves to independently increase their perceptive and rational capacities beyond ours. Defining the general human perceptive and rational blind spots then appears to be an undertaking that we must largely leave to scientific and technological progress. Besides some obvious extrapolations of our spectral ranges, it appears to require the surpassing of our mind by an exterior, nonhuman intelligence that can investigate our world, including our mind, without being caught in our restraints and avenues of perceptive and rational processing of information.

Machines might assist us in the expansion of perceptive and rational capacities. But they may also visit perceptive and rational horizons in excess of our capabilities that remain removed from our mental grasp. Even if we avoided implanting them with human perceptive and rational deficiencies and thus eluded reiterating our blind spots in them, we would filter their results through our perceptive and rational facilities, including the shortcomings of these facilities. Our acknowl-

edgment that there are ranges of perception and rational thinking that exceed our capacity does not make these areas accessible to our senses and thinking. The construction of machines to appropriate an extended reality might suggest to us that we are capable of imagination beyond our perception and thinking. But such an imagination can only consist of rearrangements of the aspects we are already perceiving and thinking. We may possess much room for such rearrangements within our perceptive and rational capacities and may make much scientific progress under the use of our imagination. Still, our perceptive and rational capacities pose natural limits to our imagination. Machines we devise can only assist us to supersede these limitations to the extent they can translate matters outside our reach down to matters within our perception and thought. That we can conceptualize and construct such translation mechanisms is based on experiences that certain allocations allow us to measure effects emanating outside our range. We can only perceive an image and deductive concepts of what is being translated. We try to explain what is being translated in terms of the behavior of that image. While this may allow us some conclusions that we may deem scientific due to their stability, our indirect exposure to phenomena may leave us with substantial deficits in our understanding of the phenomena themselves. At some point, our inability to perceive or rationalize phenomena may leave us unable to interpret their effects in our perceptive and rational parameters with much success. Machines we can construct may meet limits of what they can detect because they are still bound to our capacities. If we created machines that could independently evolve and develop their perceptive and rational capacities, they might develop into such a distance that similes we could understand might not capture much or anything they could conceive or compute. We might only be apprised of it by vague metaphors or by products that we can perceive or consider in our range.

Our understanding of the limitations of our perceptive and rational capacities appears to be generally confined by these limitations. We only accept areas external to our capacities if we are confronted by their results within our sphere of perception and rationality. To go beyond the limitations of this mindset, we would have to change our capacities. We might undertake that through genetic manipulation or by integrating our mind with technological supplements that are capable of perception and rational operations in excess of our natural capacity.

Scientifically affirmed or developed perceptive and rational capacities typical to humans as well as general restrictions to them may be considered to be general perceptive and rational traits. There may be significant individual variances to these general standards. Similar

to emotional traits, these other mental traits may be differently developed and distinguished in individuals due to genetic or environmental causes. Here again, science and technology should be able to assist us in ascertaining individual perceptive and rational traits. Even in an individual, not all perceptive or rational facilities might be developed or variegated equally. They can vary depending on different types of subject matters being processed. Hence, there may be differences in and among individuals that we may describe as specific perceptive or rational traits. But differences in perceptive or rational processing may not only happen as a matter of differently shaped capacities. They may further stem from variations of operational conditions individuals encounter due to exposures and influences that might assist or restrict the use of their capacities or preoccupy them. The external and often temporary nature of these conditions distinguishes them from traits.

We may measure perceptive acuity by how well we can acquire information from scientifically measurable phenomena. We may also measure rational acuity, our intelligence, by our ability to recall, understand, associate, and invent. Arguably, such tests should yield objective, scientific results that can inspire suggestions for improvement. While tests we undergo in education and licensing may provide some of such results, we may otherwise avoid subjecting ourselves to independent objective testing of our perceptive and rational traits for fear of repercussions on our internal and external standing. We may only accept such testing if it is required to obtain or maintain a position. We may still undertake informal inquiries to gauge whether and how well we can accomplish perceptive or rational goals. But determining our related traits on our own may be difficult. We may experience individual blind spots in our perceptive and rational faculties, and humanity may have similar difficulties to supersede them generally. We might be incapable of perceiving or imagining capacities that diverge from our current capacities. Further, we might not realize that, within our capacities, it is possible to perceive or think differently. We might not acknowledge limitations or errors that lead to an incorrect or an incomplete reflection or processing of circumstances unless we apply our insights, that application fails, and other causes for failure are excluded. Then again, many of us might not be compelled to such clarification because our pursuits may present us with bearable results in spite of perceptive or rational limitations or because we find plausible other attributions of responsibility. In addition, our pursuits may not have us apply perceptions or thoughts in ways that show their incorrect or incomplete nature. As a consequence, we may carry perceptive or rational blind spots without any or much awareness of them.

Arguably, there might be conditions where we might not profit from becoming aware of perceptive or rational blind spots. However, we might not know that until we explore what we have been missing and reach such awareness. Added perceptive or rational ability or capacity carries a strong presumption of a potential to improve our existence. This may incentivize us to try to transcend their limitations. Their scientific exploration might impress us as preferable because it may provide us with certainty. But the number and variety of issues with which we have to contend may not lend themselves to a scientific treatment. Further, we may not possess the necessary resources or be willing to invest them. Nor may adequate scientific resources be available for such specialized purposes, except in conditions in which our existential functioning is at risk. This may frequently leave large areas of our perceptive and rational idiosyncrasies unexplored by science.

In these areas, we may use our experiences to examine whether our perceptions and rational operations are correct or lack effectiveness and efficiency. We may engage in explorations through observations and experimentation of our own. Yet we may fall prey to the circularity of our perceptive and rational traits or less permanent settings investigating themselves. Moreover, it seems difficult to separate emotional impressions from our perceptive and rational assessments. We seem to have difficulties gathering impressions about perceptive or rational aspects without an emotional connotation that threatens to influence or take over our impression of what we perceive or think. Any perception or rational thought we have is immediately evaluated concerning its utility and its detriment for the contentment of our needs. This threatens to taint our assessments of factual reflection with emotional bias. To avert such problems of subjectivity, to evade the problems of circularity, and to gain a better understanding of our perceptive and rational mind, we might supplement our perceptive and rational experiences by comparing them with those of other individuals. We may establish our perceptive and rational capacity and operational peculiarities relative to other humans by differences and similarities in reaction or in communication regarding perceptive and rational phenomena. We may participate in explorations regarding possible causes of differences. Others may be amenable to granting information about their perceptions and thoughts to ascertain their perceptive or rational conditions. But the benefits of such comparisons seem insecure because each individual might employ different variations of subjectivity and circularity in the derivation and description of perceptive and rational phenomena. These effects are enhanced if we rely on others to assess our perceptive and rational mind. Each individual observes and

evaluates others through the filter of that individual's perceptive, rational, and emotional facilities. In addition, numerous situational biases of observers may contribute to their assessments. The results may then be as much a reflection of the observing as of the observed individual. The threat of bias may increase if evaluations of other individuals are not confined to perceptive or rational features. This is understandable given the difficulty of deciphering other individuals' minds and because being aware of and understanding their motivations may be crucial or helpful in our pursuits. We will also want to compare our emotional bearings with those of others to know whether we are processing other mental aspects correctly. But we may miss opportunities for cooperation and peaceful coexistence if we do not distinguish perceptive and rational conditions in others from emotional motivations. We may impart additional bias if we do not keep our emotional positions separate from evaluations of other individuals' minds. We must make an effort even if excluding emotional aspects entirely appears to be impossible unless we proceed pursuant to scientific protocols.

There may further be a risk of bias if evaluations are not mutual because they may lack disclosure or understanding of evaluative foundations. Others may be able to better hide their propensity to judge or influence us according to the biases of their mental traits. They might mislabel their blind spots as ours, identify our disharmonies with their interests as blind spots, or render false evaluations to benefit their interests. They may abuse insights about us without reciprocal risk. But a mutuality of evaluation may also incentivize individuals to act disingenuously to attain favorable judgment in return. Effects similar to deception may occur if we fail to comprehend the mind of others. If we cannot find acceptable results in mutual disclosure, we may try to gain safeguards by involving individuals whose judgment we trust not to be tainted. We might ask them to register and evaluate our circumstances, our mental management of these circumstances, and possible reasons for variances and problems. Only, identifying such individuals already requires a level of capable judgment that we may not possess. In either case, we may be drawn to trust the judgment of individuals who display similar traits or situations without their or our grasp of the differences. Even if they are similar to us, their judgment may not be useful because they might have the same or similar blind spots. In addition, we may trust the judgment of individuals based on an impression that they care for us. Beyond an exposure to uncontrolled traits or situational conditioning and the risk that our presumption of their care is false, their care might bias them to evaluate us incorrectly. Any relationship from which trust emerges carries a risk of false positive eval-

uations if an individual we trust wishes to build or preserve the relationship. Combining the two criteria in our attempts to exclude exposure to undue influence, abuse of information, or error may foreclose corrective insights because of their compatibility with our mindset.

Considering such risks of bias, we may seek the evaluation by individuals who stand removed from direct relationships with us and thus have a diminished or no interest in how we affect their pursuits. We may regard this as a big enough advantage to accept an increased shallowness of evaluations because of lacking contact and diminished interest by such individuals. We may trust that they want to advance human affairs for their proximate sake or in the interest of their need for collective survival and thriving. We may trust they act in the hope that they could be beneficiaries of unbiased evaluation efforts by us or others. We may believe that these motivations can make them bridge their distance and can sufficiently engage them to provide meaningful evaluations. Such assistance may suffer if we do not sufficiently know about individual differences. Still, large numbers of assessments may balance individual particularities and may thus approximate an accurate assessment. We may therefore prefer to rely on the evaluation by a larger group of individuals to minimize effects of idiosyncratic bias. We may believe that we can gain useful direction if we draw a median of opinions or focus on a large enough preponderance of opinions.

But such a participation may be difficult to mobilize and its occurrence would not create certainty who is right or wrong. Incapacity, error, and treachery can afflict large numbers of individuals. Additionally, individual particularities may differ quantitatively or qualitatively so much that it may be impossible to establish useful accord or middle ground. An amalgamation of observations and of assessments that are tainted by skewed mental conditions might fail to approximate a true portrait of perceptive, rational, or emotional traits. This renders it indispensable that we undertake comprehensive inquiries regarding the traits and positioning of individuals before we consider their opinions in any circumstances where these might impact their evaluation. This requirement makes finding adequate evaluations of our mental traits by others a complex undertaking. Arriving at reliable and sufficiently thorough results appears to require a breadth and a depth of involvement with other individuals that we might not be able to achieve or willing to build. We would have to divert considerable resources and might create closeness that would counteract necessary detachment. We therefore appear to be reverted to trials in which we test the effectiveness and efficiencies of our pursuits to make adjustments within the flexibilities and capacities of our mental traits. Such a restriction

may be unworkable because we may not muster necessary motivation or skills. That may direct us toward considering evaluations by others even if we have indication that such evaluations may be tainted.

As imperfect as the detection or confirmation of perceptive and rational standards with the assistance of individuals who have different bearings might be, it often seems to be the most convenient tool to give us a comparative sense of reality. It also may give us orientation regarding the eccentricity of our emotional positions. Even if the views of us issued by others are contaminated by differences in their mental traits and situations, we may take their statements as indicators for further investigations into their and our positions. Evaluations by other individuals of subjects other than us may assist us to recognize and understand their and our mental traits and more superficial positions. Engaging with different positions seems preferable to a dialogue with persons whose judgment is affected by similar blind spots.

Even if we found little use in the exchange of insights to illuminate our mental positions and even if the views of others about us are incorrect, we might not be able to ignore them. We might have to be aware of and address how other individuals evaluate us because these views influence the demeanor of others toward us and our interests. Beyond that, we may more generally explore the attitudes of other individuals whose behavior matters to us. In a social context, individuals commonly engage in the examination of mental traits and opinions of others and compare them to theirs to anticipate the behavior of such individuals and plan appropriately. That purpose may be assisted if we open ourselves to them in an exchange of expressions that opens their views to us. Individuals may then engage in a disclosure process not only to explore and improve their own shortcomings. They might also try to gain information about and possibly affect the traits and resulting behavior of others or to adjust their own positioning toward them. These processes may be embedded in a larger process of information sharing and more tangible cooperation by which individuals strive to improve the pursuit of particular needs or to generate a general socialization that can serve as the basis for the pursuit of various needs. Besides trying to discern our mental traits to possibly improve them, we may look for similarly minded or complementary-minded individuals with whom we can successfully interact in the pursuit of our needs or who will not or not unduly interfere. That objective may have negative consequences for our mental growth. The constructive and defensive mechanisms of our mental traits may join in arrangements with each other to surround us with an environment in which doubts about the applicability of our pursuits can be suppressed or postponed because

their application is optimized with the assistance of other individuals. Defensive apprehensions that may motivate us to seek evaluations and affirmations from individuals whose mentalities resemble or complement ours may commingle with our legitimate tendencies to look for harmonious coexistence, guidance from individuals with similar experiences and dispositions, and compatible cooperation partners.

Even if we can attain objective assessments of our mental traits from others, such disclosures might be ineffective. We might not realize differences even if they are pointed out or upon receiving instructive experiences because we might be confined by the capacities of our traits or solidified patterns within our capacities. If we gather an impression that features are different in us than in others and some notion as to how these might be different, this may not induce us to address mental deficiencies. Rather, we may blame dissatisfactory experiences on deficiencies in other humans or other aspects of our environment. Multiple incidents of inadequacies and examination may be necessary to make us comprehend that our mental profile deviates injuriously from a general profile. This realization may never arrive because our condition may appear legitimate by its ostensible normality. Idiosyncrasies of others may further render it difficult to distinguish a contour of normality. Also, we may not strive to commonize our personality. Idiosyncrasies may insist on their characteristics as valuable defining elements of our personality. If we notice differences, we may consider them tolerable, helpful, or necessary. Even if we could come to realizations concerning our deficiencies alone or with the assistance of others, we and they might not know how to remediate these.

We may thus not succeed or our success may be lessened without professional assistance. Such assistance might be encumbered by limitations, contortions, and fears similar to those burdening nonprofessional assistance. Education, experience, accreditation, and the policing of standards may minimize or exclude such issues. Still, all outside assistance might be hampered by its separateness from our mind. While its distanced perspective may be beneficial because it provides an opportunity for an objective view, it might exacerbate the general problems in qualifying, quantifying, and affecting mental features and interactions. Professional assistance might overcome these issues. We might also weigh concerns of economy if we are to pay for assistance. Regardless of valid concerns, the very deficiencies that should make us pursue external assistance may try to deter us from seeking or heeding such assistance. Our dispositions and experiences may cause us to incorrectly evaluate benefits, risks, or costs in rejection of external assistance. We might not be able to overcome these obstacles on our own.

They may cause us to reject constructive assistance even if it is initiated by others. The more skewed or limited our mind is, the less we may be amenable to the possibility of such a condition, that we should adjust, or that we might require or otherwise benefit from external help.

Mental blind spots might not be curable with the processing of information by conventional conduits. More fundamental adjustments might be necessary. Such adjustments might be undertaken through genetic or other physiological interventions. While the targeted remediation of perceptive, rational, and emotional blind spots might be regarded to be a matter of technical acuity, the motivations to engage in such interventions have to issue from emotional traits. Unless we become subjected to the will of others, we have to develop such motivations ourselves. Notions that there are perceptive, rational, and emotional aspects that are different or beyond the present scope or focus of our traits might incentivize us to search for them and render them accessible to improve our happiness. That motivation may arise from our observation of others who have undergone similar adjustments or from other impressions that prompt us to consider a different state as superior. But we may also deem it in our interest to adjust the minds of other individuals, as they may deem it in their interest to adjust our mind. There appears to be a legitimate dimension to such an undertaking if it assists contorted, suppressed, or disjointed sections of individuals' minds or other mental growth. It is particularly unobjectionable if individuals request assistance and remain in decisional control. That this might assist needs of other individuals who suggest modifications does not detract from the legitimacy. It seems equally justifiable to adjust the minds of others defensively if they cannot be otherwise dissuaded from illegitimate infringements. But the modification of other individuals' minds by compulsory intervention carries a great risk of abuse, if not error. It therefore has to be strictly evaluated and controlled and might have to be reserved to egregious circumstances.

To the extent external sources eschew direct intervention, they will have to work with the emotional mind of individuals as the central authority concerning all their current objectives and pursuits and potential developments and alterations that might improve their happiness. Such interactions might be challenging because the identification of traits that require correction and the development of our motivation to change them may draw resistance from emotional traits that consider themselves endangered by such actions. Such traits may also object if we try to affect our traits without outside assistance. The processes by which traits are chosen and committed to change require an investigation of our council of traits as the forum in which our traits

interact. Its proceedings appear to involve more than negotiations or a vote. It may involve investigations and a commitment by traits to restrain or shape their own character or pursuits or those of other traits. To fare well in council proceedings, emotional traits may brace themselves with diverse strategic options. These may encompass the use or threat of compulsion. More ordinarily, they may seek to convince other traits of the merits of leaving them intact or of protecting and supporting them. They may back their positions by perceptive and rational presentations. To succeed to the greatest possible extent in the satisfaction of our needs overall, an accurate representation of the world, including of us and our traits, is in our interest. A functioning council of traits should therefore be able to bring such positions in line under the combined pressure of our emotional traits. But such work may be complex and uncertain because perceptive and rational traits may not be entirely shared by our emotional traits. They may be at least partly subdivided into attachments to single or allied emotional traits.

The chances of this to occur may seem to be low. At the beginning of our existence, our perceptive and rational facilities should apply to all our emotional traits because these have not been able to take any influence yet. On the contrary, it appears that our perceptive and rational traits would have significant influence in the construction of emotional traits at that juncture. The development of emotional traits builds in part on our genetic basis and direct physiological influences. It additionally depends on our mental assimilation of external circumstances. That assimilation depends on the circumstances we encounter and the processing of information concerning them by our perceptive and rational mind. Hence, an important part of emotional traits may be formed by perceptive and rational traits. If these are uniform at the time, that should have a levelling effect on the operation of our emotional traits. Because our emotional traits would assume the same perceptive and rational blind spots, the resolution of each such blind spot should be a singular undertaking effective for our entire mind.

Yet complications may arise from the genetic and acquired differentiations among emotional traits. Each emotional trait establishes subroutines centered on its objectives. These are in their core defined by genetic or acquired instincts that interpret perceptive and rational information, derive decisions, and issue instructive impulses. The automatic nature of instincts may not only entail set manners of how information is processed by them. It may also shape perceptive and rational adjuncts they regularly use in their operations. Such instinctive mechanisms should be interested in applying perceptive and rational traits that reflect the environment in which they must operate and not

falsifying these. However, instinctive programming of emotional traits may not follow such an imputed interest. It may not be shaped to logically accomplish its objectives. Our emotional traits may not be well-founded or generally applicable reflections of the world. They may not be well-adjusted to their particular purposes or to the overarching dedications of our individual and collective survival and thriving. Common features of emotional traits and their arrangements with one another may give rise to deviations. Emotional traits may further be contorted by idiosyncratic genetic mutations or manipulations and in reaction to the selective presentation of facts. That selective presentation may be externally intended or coincidental, or may be due to the genetic or acquired common or idiosyncratic receptivity of emotional traits. It may also stem from the fact that distorted common and idiosyncratic perceptive and rational traits may affect emotional traits. Finally, the underdevelopment of mental traits may distort their operations. As a result, emotional traits may be shaped in ways that compel perceptive and rational facilities to comply with ineffective or inefficient movements. That may be in addition to ineffectiveness and inefficiencies already afflicting such facilities on their own account. Each emotional trait may impose or trigger its particularized disfunctions in our perceptive and rational traits. Once these are installed, they tend to reinforce in a composite of emotional traits and perceptive and rational adjuncts with combined, mutually compounding blind spots.

The effects of this interaction may not only occur in our mind. Because our perceptive and rational facilities form instruments to reflect the outside world, they are purveyors of influence from our environment on the acquired portions of our mental traits. But our emotional traits project these influences back onto our environment. The reflection of mental traits in our activities creates aspects in our environment that can influence our mental traits. The shaping of our environment according to our mental traits provides a setting whereby our mental traits and our surroundings become aligned with each other. Yet, ultimately, our mental traits have to comply with the allocations, substances, and laws of nature presented in our environment and us. This should prompt our emotional and other mental traits to adjust to empiric circumstances. Our environment has also sourced our shared and our specific genetic and acquired traits or sanctioned and shaped them through their compulsion of having to exist in it. These formative impositions join more direct physical strictures and influences to form a rigid framework. Still, within the zone of activity that our environment tolerates and in accordance with the mental patterns shaped by it, emotional traits conduct our response to environmental circum-

stances. Their alterations to our environment may generate apparent confirmations that perceptive and rational positions they advocate are correct because these find some reflection in the outside world. Emotional traits may thus splinter our existence into partly different realities that appear to abide by their own perceptions and rationalities in some respects and leave our quest for happiness disjointed.

Emotional traits may be reflections of our world, and these reflections may be significantly influenced by our perceptive and rational traits. Nevertheless, emotional traits reign supreme among mental traits because they motivate all our undertakings, including their own, alone or through our council of traits. Our perceptive and our rational traits appear to be largely intermediaries in the forming mutuality between emotional traits and the world outside our mind. The overbearing nature of our emotional traits creates problems for the independence of our perceptive and rational traits. They may establish spheres of command and influence over perceptive and rational traits as they deem necessary to pursue their objectives and to preserve their integrity. Their influence may not necessarily install itself to a level of permanently shaping perceptive or rational traits. They may merely guide their application or suppress them. They may not only apply such tactics in their immediate domain but may endeavor to impose their perceptive and rational treatments on emotional traits whose deportment matters to them. They might even invent these for the particular purpose of misleading other traits. Emotional traits may interfere with already existing perceptive and rational capacities or their development. They may wield influence if such capacities are built or maintained by the acquisition and processing of information or by posing physiological conditions. They choose whether and to which effect we interfere with our perceptive and rational traits through direct genetic technology. They may regulate whether and which of our genetic perceptive and rational traits survive by directing our procreation, and they control whether and to what extent we impose acquired traits on others.

Our perceptive and rational traits might be dominated by emotional traits in ways that only allow glimpses of their deficiencies. We may become aware of undue influence exerted by our emotional traits if we catch ourselves resisting scientific or less formal empiric proof. But that resistance may be concealed and rationalized. We may escape acknowledging such resistance by calling indications or proof in question under purportedly valid reservations or interpretations. Our pursuits may habitually encounter sufficient interferences and imperfections to blame most of their deficiencies on extraneous factors and to spare ourselves internal examinations. Moreover, our emotional traits

may produce interferences or give instructions to focus on them. They may also avoid the exploration, presentation, and correlation of facts. Many pursuits may grant us the opportunity of avoiding justification because they constitute relatively unordered amalgamations of objects and events that are not easily accessible to empiric insight. Even if we should have to justify perverted perceptive or rational processes, emotional traits may train perceptive and rational traits to act in conformance with their direction by limiting their purview or biasing their review proceedings. Where scientific proceedings would be possible, we may renounce them in favor of less accurate methods that grant room to empiric evasions or irregularities. Under the influence of emotional traits, we may further more openly abandon pretenses of empiric rationalization. We may posit emotional arguments to override the cogency of factual insights. We may assert that our needs or their reconciliations require manners of pursuit consistent with ideals or compromises in deviation from technical proficiency. While that might be a valid interjection, we might use it without full consideration whether a deviation is warranted. We may proclaim it and conduct ourselves according to it because our impulses are inadequately reconciled.

Notwithstanding the possibility that our emotional traits might use their power to impose on our perceptive or rational traits, they also contain the incentive to escape contortions and restrictions in such traits because these are likely to be reflected in painful experiences of failure. Such experiences may incentivize us to recognize and conquer or at least manage the existence of perceptive or rational inadequacies regardless of whether they originated in these traits or are imposed by emotional traits. Finding the necessary motivation appears to be relatively easy if we do not have the interests of particular emotional traits attached to the maintenance of these inadequacies. However, such attachments may be common because of emotional contortions and restrictions. In either case, an uncritical attitude may not only be a consequence of unawareness or misinformation due to emotional, perceptive, or rational inadequacies. We might be inclined to negate mental inadequacies of any kind because it may be painful for us to concede a permanent or even only a temporary personal impossibility or that we committed an avoidable failure of adequately processing information within our capacities. We may much rather seek fault in external circumstances or even accept shortcomings in our physical capacities or possessions. Moreover, if we require assistance to comprehend or address our limitations, needs that are attached to personal achievement might object. Other needs might fear undue influence or our subordination. Even if we would not rely on others, needs whose impressions

of achievement would be weakened might object. On the other hand, our failure to acknowledge our mental disfunctions and shortfalls may result in additional, potentially repeated pain because we did not adjust our pursuits according to applicable insights. The incompatibility with reality of the results of our actions and the mental constructs on which our actions are based may be an effective corrective. Unsuccessful endeavors may have us question perceptive or rational traits even before we question emotional traits. Our fear of acknowledging inadequacies may be resolved if we recognize that we can overcome them or that addressing their unremitting presence can moderate their detrimental impact. The resolution of such functional deficiencies should be motivated by negatively affected needs. Needs that instill fear in us concerning the mode or consequences of gaining awareness and overcoming inadequacies might be addressed by providing sufficient participation and governance of the process by us. The resistance of traits might not be so firmly entrenched that it could not be overcome, even to the satisfaction of resisting traits, with the intervention of a considered argument. But we may harbor emotional traits whose interests in maintaining inadequacies might be more difficult to counter.

Such traits may engage in deceptive schemes that we may understand as a derivative of our wishes in whose nature it is to long for something that is not. To fulfill a wish, we normally operate based on facts upon having attained knowledge of them. The deception consists of contriving false impressions of facts or in providing incomplete impressions by withholding correct impressions of facts. It may be perpetrated by emotional traits in persuasion of themselves or other emotional traits of incorrect past, present, or future circumstances in a bid to manipulate reactions for a purportedly constructive purpose. It may also arise in protective mechanisms that are overwhelmed by practical demands of reality. To find some release from the pain of deprivation, emotional traits may pretend that they have already achieved their objectives, have the means, or are on their way to achieve them. If they cannot deny failure, they may pretend that, barring interference, they did have, could have had, or would now possess the means or success they desire. Arguably, emotional traits should never succeed in entirely deceiving themselves because they would have cognizance of their deceptive actions, particularly with the help of reflection through other mental traits. But their paths of processing may not allow such a reflection or may not allow it to be accurately considered by them. Even if they could reach some awareness of their deceptive practices, they might be able to override such an awareness at least to some extent by understanding their emotional reactions to certain factual stimuli and

by generating such stimuli to outweigh contradictory concerns. Emotional traits may apply similar schemes to direct other emotional traits in support or protection of their interests or to foil their interference.

While self-deception can be a temporarily effective, superficial remedy, it keeps us from surmounting existent deficiencies and from avoiding possible deficiencies because it does not address actual causes and might issue motivations that lead us further astray. It may also motivate us to invest considerable resources into the evasion, suppression, or discreditation of awareness aspects that might correct our illusions. Our self-deception may extend to unwitting attempts to mislead others, and our conviction may add credibility to these. It may allow us to overcome scruples about overriding other individuals' needs and wishes by deception or other, more compelling methods. But we may also exert deception of others with clarity about the disingenuity of our positions. We may have traits that demand or permit deception of other individuals as means for our pursuits. These traits may dominate other traits that oppose such tactics. If we assume that the deception of other individuals is a sign of disfunction among our own emotional traits, we seem to employ a composite of self-deception and external deception. Our self-deception may be instigated, enhanced, and directed by external deception that ascends from the self-deception of others or their intentional deception of us. Interaction of internal and interactive deception may build among individuals in a linear or circular fashion to produce pervasive and profound illusions. If emotional traits predictably react to information, and such or other traits or other individuals benefit from that response, deceit might not be necessary. A manipulation to steer our emotions into certain directions may succeed by supplying accurate facts that trigger the desired reaction.

If our emotional traits are not entirely reconciled and have not explored our perceptive and rational traits to identify and to neutralize their bias and other defects, they may be prone to drive or permit the short-circuiting of our mental functions. This short-circuiting and its maintenance under the leadership of emotional traits may not only lead to far-reaching consequences for our ability to pursue our needs within ourselves but also in correlation with others. Due to the individualization of mental traits, each individual may entertain a particular perception and understanding of circumstances that is dominated by the individual's needs. Additional difficulties may be infused by differences in the fulfillment situations of needs among individuals. Reconciling differences among individuals is difficult under conditions of emotional involvement because objective, rational evidence must contend with subjective, irrational attitudes. These may prevent individu-

als from coordinating their pursuits according to the same criteria unless their emotional traits happen to coincide. This may hamper constructive cooperation in pursuits and arrangements to lessen and minimize interferences. While similar challenges might exist based on different perceptive and rational traits and experiences alone, emotional influences threaten to harden mindsets and to deprive humans of fundamental common references in the management of their relations.

Although our perceptive and rational traits are tools in the service of our emotional traits, they can fulfill their functions only if they remain independent and grounded on reality. To pursue our needs effectively and efficiently, we must be able to connect to the factualities of us and our environment so that we can unfold our capacities, maximize the utility of our and of our environment's resources, and prevent damage. Our perceptive and rational traits constitute the instruments by which we detect and process impressions about our world. If we replace or taint their reflections of what is by what we would like it to be, we preclude their proper functioning in assisting our emotional traits. By changing perceptive or rational information or limiting what we sense or think, we delude ourselves and we disable our mind from competently organizing itself and interacting with our surroundings. We disable a proper definition of our wishes and hence the fulfillment of our needs. Further, our bias deprives our council of traits of a competent shared basis for reconciliation. It may foreclose our emotional traits from evolving to solutions that maximize our overall happiness. The utility of our perceptive and rational traits might already be challenged by genetic deficiencies, low states of development, and physiological damage. It may also be challenged by insufficient, false, or improperly correlated and thus misleading information in the building of perceptive and rational traits and of less entrenched operational idiosyncrasies. Our emotional traits fulfill an important function in overcoming such challenges. They may be instrumental in protecting the soundness of our perceptive and rational facilities and in supporting them to apply their capacity to the highest degree and to extend their reach so that our mind can match circumstances of our world. Hence, our emotional mind may be a corruptor, beneficiary, and savior of our perceptive and rational traits and through them of itself and of all the objectives for whose pursuit it is responsible. Its connectedness with perceptive and rational traits can make it difficult to clearly identify it. Although we can recognize emotional traits by impulses, they necessarily take reference to our perceptions and thoughts in formulating wishes and means. Moreover, we might not possess reflective or even a direct awareness of our impulses, fully represented facts, or entirely

researched perceptive and rational traits. Absent detailed inquiries, we may be unable to decide whether, which, or to what degree emotional traits affect our treatment of facts. We can subject perceptive and rational assertions to empiric and logical proof. According to their functions, they must conform to observable conditions and an explanation in substances and principles of nature. Emotional traits may impede such proceedings or these may be unavailable. Still, our repeated failure in similar tasks without convincing other causes suggests that we suffer from inadequate mental traits and may cause us to inquire.

Only the testing of such problems under conditions that might attenuate or disconnect a possible influence by emotional traits might permit us to attribute our deficiencies among the three types of mental traits. Our detection of the involvement of emotional traits is predicated upon their autonomous acquiescence or the compulsion or revelation by other emotional traits. It also depends on our capabilities to establish constellations of circumstances in which perceptive and rational traits can be observed in manners that are unrestricted by emotional influences. If we could comprehend our perceptive and rational traits in this manner, we might identify and move to a remediation of their shortcomings. But the resolution to engage in scientific or in less formal empiric procedures to reveal our perceptive and rational traits free from emotional bias and to engage in remedial action has to arise from our emotional traits. Frequently, the only way we might proceed to such an unbiased resolution is through a mutual counterbalancing of bias by emotional traits in our council of traits. Pursuant to its mission to maximize the overall contentment of our needs, the assembly of our emotional traits may battle influences on perceptive or rational traits as well as more immediate impulses that detract from that mission. The proper functioning of our council of traits may not only rely on emotional cognition but also necessitate assistance from adequately advanced perceptive and rational faculties. Similar to how emotional traits might without council proceedings be inadequate in their definition and presence, perceptive and rational traits might be revealed, adjusted, or developed as our council of traits advances in its proceedings. Where emotional impositions on perceptive or rational traits exist, other emotional traits may requisition perceptive and rational facilities to build counterpositions. Disparate motivations and resulting positions among emotional traits have them engage in arguments that we notice as contests among different interpretations that assert factual and logical fidelity. Our council of traits may then be essential not only for the reconciliation of our emotional traits but also for reconciling perceptive and rational traits to reflect the factual circumstances

of our pursuits. Its reconciliation of needs may collaterally neutralize holds by emotional traits on perceptive or rational functions. Through its comparison of factual assessments and investigation if they are incompatible, our council of traits may succeed in deriving one unified perceptive and rational stance. This may permit us to identify and to address remaining functional perceptive and rational shortcomings.

Objectivity then seems to be a condition for and result of emotional reconciliation. The superseding of distorting impositions from internal and external emotional traits appears to be a critical condition to unlock the potential of perceptive and rational traits in support of our emotional traits. It appears essential in achieving the potential of our emotional traits. We must ascertain the genuine character of information, consider its consequences, and uncover possible internal and external agendas to direct our perceptions, thoughts, or emotions. We must reserve emotional attachment until the completion of factual investigations. Even then, we must continue to reconsider our judgment when new facts rise to our attention or we become apprised that our previous considerations might have been incomplete or incorrect. Passively awaiting information may be insufficient. To reach an accurate and complete understanding of the world and of our activities in it, we must seek new perceptions and thoughts and expose our mind to the possibility that perceptions and thoughts, as well as resulting or independently arising emotions, might be invalidated in parts or their entirety. As a condition for accomplishing all this, and for the sake of the ulterior objective of advancing our happiness, we have to reconcile our emotional attitudes so that they apply our perceptive and rational traits in ways that maximize the overall fulfillment of our needs. The mutual appraisal and acknowledgment of integrated and ultimate purposes by constructive traits focuses us on a common interpretation of reality, if not within traits by their reconciled views. This joint reflection of facts in our mind may be as close to reality as we can come.

We may find it difficult to believe that we should be able to develop our council of traits to a level where it can arrange our traits in their relationship and if necessary in their character. This may indeed be impossible. Our mind may be underdeveloped or may be deformed in ways that foreclose its internal mechanisms from functioning with sufficient competence and flexibility to attain a reconciliation of our needs or an accurate reflection of reality. Such conditions may be partial but severe enough to forestall a well-rounded reconciliation of our mind. We all, most, or many of us might be suffering from such irreversible conditions. We might have to live with mental flaws that do not permit us to become whole. To the extent impediments to recon-

ciliation might be resolvable, the comprehensive scope of review and possible intervention may exacerbate the problems that afflict topical endeavors to ascertain and correct mental inadequacies. The ambition of the undertaking may exceed our capabilities. Our mind may not be sufficiently skillful to comprehend, or resolute to acknowledge, its inadequacies or to achieve comprehensive remediation. Our efforts may compound inadequacies and unite traits that fear for their integrity in opposition. Our efforts may be successfully constrained by mental aspects we would have to mend to attain higher levels of happiness.

Individuals who do not suffer these limitations may assist us to ascertain obstacles to our reconciliation, address issues that can be resolved, or acknowledge and cope with problems that cannot be cured. Comparing our mindset, capabilities, pursuits, and results with theirs may provide us with helpful or required insights. They might also become more actively involved in ascertaining problems in our mind, assessing their consequences, adjusting or constraining damaging traits, promoting underdeveloped traits, and reconciling our traits. For best results, assistance in reconciliation of our mental traits might have to address them as an integrated mechanism. This implies a complexity and intensity of engagement that may exceed the willingness and capability of other individuals. It might also exceed our willingness to allow others insight to assess and to possibly reform any part of our personality. Even if others are trustworthy and willing to assist, they may lack skills or capacities of individuals with professional qualifications. The comprehensive ambition of reconciliation may make professional assistance even more necessary or helpful. Yet our opposition to this assistance may surge because the entirety of inadequate traits is challenged by the possibility of being suppressed, altered, or eradicated.

Such a determined resistance may necessitate the imposition of compulsory assistance. Warranted and unwarranted resistance at lower levels might be solved by the socialization of individuals in a manner that allows them to sample, understand, and trust others, encourages the exchange of mental reflections, and creates mental and practical ties that allow and motivate the detection and addressing of unreconciled mental states. Societal assistance for individual reconciliation is likely to interpose with reconciliation activities among individuals to advance their happiness through peaceful coexistence and constructive cooperation. If this becomes the primary objective, socialization increases the risk that individuals might be pressured into alignment against their advantage. Even if a society should not exert such a pressure willfully, personality traits that do not benefit the community might be adjusted or suppressed under the pressure of having to exist

within the community. Arguably, such an alignment might be a desirable outcome and should independently be in the interest of individual members. Yet to be conducive to individual happiness and achieve sufficient stability, it would have to happen voluntarily unless procedures can be applied that supplant personality traits. A society seeking interpersonal reconciliation therefore must solve the potential contradiction of making room for individual reconciliation while also imposing constrictions that do not tolerate violations of principles indicated by such reconciliation. It has to decide how far it will go to align individuals for societal advantages, or even out of a sense of responsibility based on needs relating to others or mutuality. Alignment only seems legitimate to affirm or defend rights of individuals in question or others. If possible, alignment has to exceed coercion to promote reconciliatory capacity as a condition for functioning individuals and societies.

Beyond required or helpful assistance, and possibly in conjunction with it, there may be settings in which humans can sort and improve their own mind. Self-regulating mechanisms might succeed unless they are pathologically impaired. Emotional traits engage in council proceedings by their nature once we actuate them by making them conscious. Their drive to succeed impels traits to evaluate the relative merits and disadvantages of one another. They are prone to continually point out weaknesses and errors in one another's perceptive, rational, and emotional aspects and encourage aspects they deem constructive. The insight that we can improve our happiness if we permit our emotional traits to come forth and interact with one another in such a critical fashion focuses our efforts on identifying our emotional traits.

It may be possible to discover particularized or underdeveloped emotional traits if they noticeably distort the common acuity of other traits. But our emotional traits may not lie on the surface of our mind. Absent direct access to them as physiological phenomena, we can only detect them by their expressions. We must observe, if necessary draw out, their indications. Because they might defend against their discovery, we must limit our investigations initially to collecting mental impressions in an immediate and unconsidered state without attempting to categorize or otherwise evaluate. We must unqualifiedly gather and record perceptions, thoughts, and emotions without judging their relevance or authenticity and considering whether or to what extent they are expressions of emotional traits. We leave it to a second, diagnostic stage to organize, assemble, and interpret what we find to identify our emotional traits. A third phase is reserved for the examination of their interactions. The next chapter addresses how we can comprehensively collect information that may allow us to distill our emotional traits.