

ONE

INITIAL SKETCH OF A CONCEPT OF FAITH

I take reason to be deeply structured by faith and I take any faith that is not simply madness to be obliged to be articulate about itself and, so, rational in that sense.

—John D. Caputo¹

The term *faith* has many uses in our language. I can speak of having faith that my brother will pick me up each Thursday morning for our regular breakfast together. I can talk of having faith that the salad I am eating for lunch will not make me sick. I can ponder the faith it requires to drive with confidence in a blinding rain—what my dad called a “gully washer”—when the streets are slick and slippery and one can hardly see the traffic lines on their surfaces. But I want to use the word faith in a different sense from these common, everyday uses. The faith I refer to in this book is existential. By *existential* I mean that faith with this meaning underlies, shapes, and supports the distinctive quality of a person’s existence or life, its fundamental sense of purpose and direction, aim and orientation.

To speak of one’s faith in this sense is to speak of the inner core of one’s being, of one’s dispositions, emotions, choices, and actions, as well as one’s most firmly held convictions and beliefs. One’s faith is that mysterious inner strength, resolve, and power that enable one to live in the face of bewilderments, insecurities, frustrations, failures, sorrows, or tragedies, and despite the haunting awareness of an always precarious and uncertain future, with resilient confidence and hope instead of debilitating skepticism and despair. The faith, whether religious or secular, that a person openly *professes* and the faith that person actually *lives*, may in some cases be very different. It is one’s lived faith, not just his or her announced faith, that

most interests me here. Such faith is not just a matter of explicit profession or belief, however honestly held or proclaimed. Faith in this existential sense informs one's most deeply rooted beliefs, helping to give them their particular focus and character, but it is not identical with or reducible to those beliefs. Statements of belief can at best only partially express one's faith, because there is much about it that lies behind and beyond clear conceptual or verbal formulation. Faith's fullest, most accurate, and most telling expression is the character of one's life.

Here are some fundamental questions—questions of a deeply existential and not merely theoretical character—that must be dealt with in some manner by all of us. What is the meaning of life? What basic or perhaps even ultimate values should guide the living of our lives? How should we best exercise our capacity for judgment and choice? How should we live in the face of an uncertain future and the inevitability of death? How can we deal with problems of guilt, shame, regret, and despair? What account should we give of the presence of evil in ourselves and in the world, and how should we respond to that presence? What does it mean to be a human being, and what is the place of humans in the world? How can we find inspiring and appropriate models and exemplars for living our lives? Where can we find strength and perseverance to live up to our deepest aspirations and ideals? These questions are difficult and profound, they are perennial and fundamental to human life, and *they will not go away*.

A major contention of this book is that any serious approach to these questions, whether religious or secular, must give a central role to faith when the concept of faith is properly analyzed and understood. One of the book's tasks, therefore, is to work toward such an analysis and understanding. This task is extremely important despite its evident complexity and difficulty, partly because the nature and roles of faith are so commonly distorted and misconceived, but largely because, when properly understood, faith should be recognized as an indispensable component of thought, feeling, volition, action, and thus the whole of human life. Faith is not, then, the sole preserve or prerogative of religion, nor should it be identified with religion. As important as it is to religious outlooks and ways of life—and it is certainly necessary to do justice to that fact—the scope of faith itself is broader and more encompassing than that of religion. This is one of the basic claims I make, develop, and defend herein.

There are many different kinds of existential faith. There are fundamentalist forms of faith and liberal forms of faith. There are religious and secular versions of faith. There are traditional and nontraditional types of faith, and expressions of faith that are more communal and others that are more individualistic. There are types of faith whose bigotry, rigidity, or proneness to violence call for rigorous criticism and objection, and there are forms of faith that are open-minded, charitable, and exemplary. But there are

few if any among us who are totally devoid of some sort of deeply underlying existential faith, because the complete or nearly complete absence of faith is not mere secularism or professed nonreligion, but nihilistic skepticism and despair. Differences between insistently secular outlooks and those of religious outlooks by this interpretation are not so much differences between faith and nonfaith as differences between particular expressions of faith.

Furthermore, far from reason's being necessarily opposed to existential faith, all forms of reason at critical points rely on stances of this faith. We can speak meaningfully, then, of *faithful reason*. By the same token, all viable and plausible forms of existential faith require the guidance, support, and articulation at significant junctures of reason. So we can speak meaningfully of *reasonable faith*. Reason and faith should not be seen as standing in sharp separation from one another or as being inimical to one another, despite the fact that both secular and religious people all too frequently view them in this way. Rather, I submit that reason and existential faith should be understood as working constantly together in our lives and in those things we take to be most profound and important in our lives.

A passage in the Book of Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible enjoins, "Lean not on thine own understanding."² There is a sense in which this injunction is profoundly true and another in which it is profoundly false. If it is taken to mean that we should not trust *exclusively* in our understanding, it is a principle well worth attending to. For there is much about the world that no one understands completely. The world is mysterious in countless aspects and will always remain so. The astounding fact of the world's sheer existence, its diverse constituents and ever-evolving character, as well as the fact of one's own conscious, reflective life as a fleeting part of the world, are deeply mysterious. Among the world's mysteries are the threatening presence and power of destructiveness, hurtfulness, and evil in their various guises, both within us and outside us. But also arrestingly mysterious are the constructive forces of creation, cooperation, and goodness we find to be at work in ourselves, in our societies, and in the world as a whole.

Then there is the mystery of the future and of what it may bring in the way of new threats, problems, and perplexities, as well as of unanticipated alterations or even radical changes in personal or societal commitments and beliefs. Moreover, no one person even begins to have complete understanding of specific features of the world that may be better understood by certain other persons. No one scientist, for example, can be the master of all of today's complex and far-reaching scientific knowledge or fields of scientific inquiry. It is also true that the whole course of any human life and its multifarious beliefs, commitments, and emotions are complex and many-sided, deeply rooted in one's particular acculturation, habits, and intuitions and in one's firmly held but largely unconscious assumptions. Hence, the course of a life cannot be reduced in its every detail to clear and distinct rational

analysis or to an entirely perspicuous set of rational explanations, goals, purposes, or ideals. Nevertheless, we have to find ways to live productively and meaningfully in the world.

Fullness of life does not and cannot require fullness of rational understanding of everything in one's life or in the world in which one lives. If it did, it would be unattainable. On the other hand, it would be reckless indeed to base one's whole life on beliefs and commitments that deliberately resist or ignore any sort of rational development, articulation, or defense. This would be a recipe for blind credulity, deliberate irrationalism, and dangerous fanaticism. It would be to live a completely arbitrary and unreflective life. In this connection, the familiar Socratic dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living rings true.

A central point I want to make, then, is that a rationally examined life is perfectly consistent with a life that both involves and requires some kind of faith. We cannot live meaningful lives without faith because faith is a stance of trust, hope, and conviction that undergirds all purposeful life. This stance can be based partly on reason, but it cannot be wholly based on reason. In fact, one's faith is a source from which a significant amount of one's reasoning is apt to flow, a source of ultimately significant and deeply embedded and complexly entwined meanings, values, and commitments of various kinds that reason does not so much prove as presuppose.

An author who makes this point with compelling force is the physical chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi in his book *Personal Knowledge*. Some kind of "fiduciary programme," Polanyi argues, lies behind all processes of reasoning and all claims to knowledge. In the foreground of our consciousness are the *explicit* assertions we are able to make about what we believe and why we believe it. But in the more dim and distant background are all of the *tacit* assumptions, attitudes, feelings, intentions, and outlooks that help to give form and credibility to these explicit assertions but that are themselves relatively inarticulate and unspoken (Polanyi 1962: 264–68 and *passim*). In this tacit dimension of our outlook and understanding are to be found those fundamental commitments, the basic and generally unquestioned trust, conviction, and assurance, that are vital elements of one's faith. I will have more to say about Polanyi's views in a later chapter.

What would a sound and healthy existential faith look like? The well-known interpreter of world religions Wilfred Cantwell Smith has provided us with an instructive statement to this effect:

Faith . . . is a quality of human living. At its best, it has taken the form of serenity and courage and loyalty and service; a quiet confidence and joy which enable one to feel at home in the universe, and to find meaning in the world and in one's own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate, and is stable no matter what may

happen to oneself at the level of immediate event. Men and women of this kind of faith face catastrophe and confusion, affluence and sorrow, unperturbed; face opportunity with conviction and drive; and face others with cheerful charity. (Smith 1987: 12)

Smith tends to overstate the stability and imperturbability of faith in this characterization, for one's faith may be battered by threats, insecurities, uncertainties, challenges, or catastrophes of various kinds in the course of one's life—sometimes even to the point of causing one to abandon one kind of faith in favor of another. But the faith of which he speaks, whether religious or secular in its form, is obviously well worth having or aspiring toward. Far from being opposed to reason, it commends itself to reason even though, as I argued earlier, it would be a mistake to think of it flowing *exclusively* from considered argument or explicit reasoning.

Existential faith has inchoate but nonetheless extremely powerful experiential, emotional, intuitive, volitional, and active aspects about it that cannot be reduced to reason alone. It is not just a claim to know that something is true; this faith also is an eminently practical process of living in the world, responding to its challenges, and aspiring to grow in one's capacity to do so.

Do we ever act *against* our faith and thereby betray its ideals and demands? Of course we do, and sometimes with sad or even disastrous consequences for ourselves and for others. We may on those occasions experience profound regret, and yearn for forgiveness and renewal.

For some, the principal source of this empowering sense of forgiveness and renewal may be trust in some sort of transcendent and perhaps personal, gracious, and loving being, presence, or power. For others, it may be help or inspiration from a particular person, a circle of friends, a supporting community, or fellow participants in working together for a significant cause, whether secular or religious in character. For others, it may be the healing and rejuvenating powers of nature. For still others, it may be discovering new resources within oneself for living in fuller attunement and accord with the ideals of one's faith, and finding there the motivation and will to draw on those resources. The release from regret, shame, or guilt and the source of forgiveness and renewal might well be a combination of two or more of these factors. In any event, as the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich insists, existential faith and the ongoing struggles of existential faith are centered acts of the total person, not just of the rational part of the person (Tillich 1958: 4–5). Reason is profoundly involved in sound and healthy faith, but such faith amounts in its fullness and entirety to more than reason.

Moreover, faith is not just a matter of belief, as important as belief is to the whole of faith. It would certainly be a travesty to view faith merely as a set of beliefs stubbornly adhered to *without* or *against* evidence or reason,

as it is so often and unfortunately viewed. One's existential faith underlies and supports one's whole way of life. It is confidence and commitment of the whole person in all the aspects of the life of that person. It is the generally stable, predictable, regular character of persons as they go about living their lives, relating to other persons, and taking their places in the world. As Smith rightly says, "Faith is a quality of human living." I would add that it is the *most basic* quality and character of any trusting, hopeful, and affirming human life. Faith, then, is not just a way of thinking or believing but the font and focus of each person's most basic and comprehensive commitments and aspirations.

Let me suggest an analogy by way of illustrating the difference between mere belief and faith. Suppose that a crowd is at the circus and watching the performance of an expert knife thrower. He places his female assistant up against a large board at the back of a stage and proceeds to throw a series of knives at her. The knives come frighteningly close to the assistant and trace out a pattern around her head and upper body, but none of them injure her. When the performance is concluded, the tense crowd applauds loudly, giving vent to its feelings of amazement and relief. The knife thrower addresses the crowd, "Do you believe that I am accurate and precise in the throwing of knives?" They all vigorously nod their assent. Then he asks a further question: "Would one of you like to take the place of my assistant for another round of knife throwing?" The crowd shrinks back. No one volunteers. The knife thrower has expected this reaction. He raises the second question only in order to reinforce the crowd's impression of his remarkable prowess and showmanship.

The crowd firmly *believes* in his ability. They have been given convincing evidence of it! But not one of them is willing to stake his or her life on that belief. Such commitment requires a large amount of emotional as well as intellectual confidence, and it calls for a courageous act of will. It draws on deep reservoirs within the self. There is great risk involved, because accidents happen, and a person in the crowd cannot be sure that such an accident would not happen to the knife thrower, perhaps nothing more than a small reflexive twitch in his arm as he hurls his deadly blade. The degree of confidence required to submit one's own body and physical well-being to the test of the knife thrower's accuracy is perhaps justified by the rational evidence at hand, but it is certainly not compelled by it.

Theologian and social theorist Reinhold Niebuhr makes a related point when he notes that there is "an element of illusion in the [secular but quasi-eschatological] faith of the [Marxist] proletarian" that a truly egalitarian and even classless society can be permanently established by his revolutionary actions in concert with those of his peers. Such an element of possible error or illusion is present in all forms of faith, Niebuhr contends, because they require concerted action and commitment in relation to an

uncertain future and in the absence of absolutely decisive rational evidence or proof of the attainability of envisioned goals. But resolute confidence and risky action, and not mere contemplation of theoretical statements or beliefs, are required if, for example, perceived and experienced social inequities are to be effectively redressed. "The inertia of society is so stubborn," Niebuhr observes, "that no one will move against it, if he cannot believe that it can be more easily overcome than is actually the case." The "moral potency" of the proletarian's protest against the evils of present society is "the faith of the man of action. Rationality belongs to the cool observers" (Niebuhr 1960: 221; see also 154, 156, 159). We do not have to share every detail of the Marxist vision and faith to recognize that rationality is not the sole ingredient in an actively committed life of faith. Rationality's contributions and role are necessary but not sufficient.

Accordingly, faith as I am endeavoring to describe it here, is not a mere matter of belief or even belief of a particular kind, although it generally will have a content of belief. It is, as I have already pointed out, something markedly existential, something to which one courageously devotes one's whole life and one's whole being in the face of the grave uncertainties and ambiguities of the world. It is, again as Tillich affirms, a centered act of the total person. Whatever the style, pattern, or path of a person's life may be, and whether it is religious or secular, faith of this sort is both profoundly involved and required. It is required to the extent that a person has any modicum of confidence, trust, or hope in his or her manner of life. A person's reason will typically reflect and help to give form and expression to his or her faith. It will be a significant part of faith, but not the whole of faith. More than reason lies at the heart of faith, and more than reason informs its hope.

French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal once observed that "[t]he heart has its reasons, which reason does not know" (Pascal 1941: #277, 95). His assertion could be taken as an endorsement of the idea of a purely emotional conception of faith, devoid of reason or even set against reason. I would reject that conception of faith, as did Pascal. But he was within his rights in reminding us that there is more to faith than reason. Intimations and discernments of the heart or of the deepest recesses of one's being are also involved. This claim need not mean that reason has no place in the life of faith, only that faith is something more comprehensive and profound than reason. One can have a reasonable faith without one's faith being reducible to or based on reason alone. To put the point in another way, it is entirely reasonable to recognize the role of faith in confident human life and to see reason as rooted to a significant extent in the whole character, focus, and direction of a life of faith.

On the other hand, we should certainly aspire toward a reasonable faith, a faith that is well grounded in experience and reason, well equipped

to support the whole course of a person's life, and one that takes careful account of optional paths of life and thought. We should aspire toward a faith that is humble and open-minded not merely assertive, a faith that is devoted throughout life to learning from the outlooks and commitments of others. And we should be ready to acknowledge that no single path of life, no matter how relentlessly thought about and pursued, can exhaust the enormity of mystery and wonder packed into the world. All of our respective paths and forms of faith are like teaspoons dipped into an enormous, inexhaustible ocean of reality and truth. We can live these teaspoons with courage and conviction even while acknowledging their final limitation and inadequacy. This kind of humility is an essential element in a sound, healthy, and reasonable faith. Of course, we can and should also adjudicate consciously and carefully among different kinds of faith. Some are worse and some are much worse than others. Some are more challenging and richly fulfilling than others. Here both our moral and our theoretical reasoning, and the whole of our ongoing experience of ourselves and the world, should be put to vigorous use.

It may sound paradoxical to combine deliberate and active critical adjudication among forms of faith with openness and humility about the mysteries and uncertainties to which forms of faith are responses. But it is not a simple matter of either-or. Rather, it is a tension that needs constantly to be recognized and upheld. The phrase I like to use to characterize such an attitude is *convictional openness*. There is no such thing as faith without convictions. But a dogmatic and close-minded faith affords little possibility of correction, revision, or growth, and it cannot enter into mutually constructive and meaningful dialogue with those whose lives are based on and give expression to other forms of faith.

Highly relevant in this regard is Mohandas K. Gandhi's attitude toward the human search for truth in its various aspects—epistemic, ontological, moral, and existential—and, by implication, toward the different forms of faith that may motivate and guide this search. Joseph Prabhu provides us with this description of Gandhi's outlook: "We humans with our finite capacities can have access . . . only to relative truth, an assertion Gandhi uses to justify epistemological humility and tolerance. All our perceptions of truth are inevitably partial and therefore claims of cognitive absoluteness are both unwarranted and dangerous." Prabhu adds that for Gandhi, "Given that one's grasp of the truth is at best partial, it is imperative to see and appreciate the truth in the position of the other and to try and achieve a higher or dialectical reconciliation of conflicting ends" (Prabhu 2008: 166, 168). I heartily endorse these statements, but in doing so I do not mean to claim that *anything* goes in the realm of faith. I do want to insist that more than one thing goes, because any one stance of faith and the outlooks giving expression to that stance can be, as Gandhi rightly recognizes, only

partially adequate at best. All such stances are in need of constant criticism and revision. And reason—especially careful, sustained consideration of the reasoning of those with different kinds of faith from one's own—has a crucial role to play in this regard.

There is no viable faith that does not take fully into account the resources of reason, then, and there is no possibility of having a reason that does not reflect and draw in significant ways on some kind of deep-lying faith. This is the two-sidedness of faith and reason. There is a substantial place in every affirming human life for both reasonable faith and faithful reason. I want now to turn our attention a bit more specifically to the topic of faithful reason by looking briefly at the critical role of faith in both our *moral* outlooks and practices and in the practices and achievements of *scientific* thought. The discussion here is encapsulated and merely suggestive. I take up these two topics in more depth and detail in subsequent chapters.

Our moral outlooks and practices are given impetus, strength, and credibility by our tacit conviction that moral life is worthwhile, that we live in a universe in which it can make a difference, that others will be responsive to our moral ways of living, and that it is possible to live together in such a way as to bring about a morally better world. Thus, we must be convinced that we are genuinely responsible and free and that the universe is amenable to the moral efforts we exert in our freedom. We are not like cogs in a machine, manipulated by forces beyond our control, but creative agents capable of bettering our own lives and contributing to the well-being of others, not only human others but the others of the natural world as a whole. We also must be convinced that the lives of these others are intrinsically valuable and worth our moral effort and respectful regard.

I hope you begin to see how much implicit faith is involved in morality thus described, how it reflects a whole way of life and not just a set of intellectual propositions explicitly entertained or rationally defended. The propositions can and should be defended, of course, but they also can and have been attacked, and sometimes with considerable rational and persuasive force. I submit that more than reason is involved in their confident assertion or assumption, and especially in their being put into consistent and lifelong practice. Commitment to them and the active living of them exemplify faithful reason.

Scientific outlooks, for their part, also rest on and give expression to sometimes tacit and sometimes explicit testaments of faith. Scientific investigation would make no sense without reliance on the uniformity and order of the universe; the reliability at some critical points of the five senses; the applicability and usefulness of logical and mathematical reasoning; the general reliability of past scientific findings and understandings; the extreme value and importance of devoting one's life to scientific investigation and seeking to understand fundamental principles, constituents, and laws of

the world; the honesty and integrity of one's scientific colleagues; and the hope of making steady and significant progress in scientific understanding. Uncertainties are involved in all of these commitments, even though they are essential to scientific theorizing. In theoretical physics in particular, the element of uncertainty and risk is especially evident. Physicist Lee Smolin comments that theoretical physics of the currently most basic, open-ended, and cutting-edge type simply cannot be done without great risks of being wrong even in one's most confident assumptions, beliefs, or assertions at any given time (Smolin 2007: xvi).

Let me elaborate for just a bit on two particularly telling examples of what I have in mind. One example is from the thought of one of the most widely recognized and respected scientific thinkers of all time, Albert Einstein. The other is from the thought of a Noble Laureate in physics who made profound contributions to subatomic physics. His name is Paul Dirac. Let me take Dirac first, because I want simply to quote a statement of his that gives evidence of his unquestioning confidence in the power of mathematical reasoning not only to unlock the secrets of the world but also to reveal what he believed to be its deep mathematical structure and character. In describing his personal affinity with Erwin Schrödinger, with whom he shared the Nobel Prize, Dirac had this to say:

Schrödinger and I both had a very strong appreciation of mathematical beauty, and this appreciation . . . dominated all our work. It was a sort of act of faith with us that any equations which describe fundamental laws of Nature *must* have great mathematical beauty in them. It was like a religion with us. It was a very profitable religion to hold, and can be considered the basis of much of our success. (quoted in Olive 1998: 89; emphasis added)

Dirac here acknowledges the central role in his life and thought of faith in the beguiling beauty of mathematics and in its power to provide profound insight into the character and workings of the physical world. His statement thus gives clear expression to what I am calling faithful reason, a reasoning deeply informed by faith. Now one might want to object that the so-called *faith* of which Dirac speaks is not that at all, but simply a general hypothesis that seems to be well borne out by the history of a mathematically based science and its successes in explaining the world and enabling us to put aspects of the world to solid practical use.

But adherents and practitioners of secular and religious faith of whatever sort would be inclined to say something quite similar, namely, that their faith enables them to make sense of their lives and to live with evident confidence and success in the world. We may well regard all forms of faith, secular and religious, scientific and moral, and so on, as deep-lying

hypotheses that must be put constantly to the test of thought and experience. To regard them as such is to have a healthy view of the legitimate role of faith. A faith that is not open to ongoing confirmation or possible disconfirmation either in whole or in part is a species of faith that should be called seriously into question. This caveat is a central part of what I mean by the phrase *reasonable faith*.

But to get back to the idea of *faithful reason*, let me cite the example of Albert Einstein. Einstein had such complete and unquestioning faith in absolute causal determinism and in the idea that the universe is utterly law like, mathematically structured, thoroughly rational, and in principle intelligible through and through, that he was never able to accept or even seriously consider the idea that, at the quantum level or elsewhere, there is a significant role for chance and indeterminacy.³ The result was that in his later years he fell into the backwaters of the creative science of his time, insisting throughout his life that the quantum indeterminism that was coming increasingly to be accepted by the scientific community had to be wrong. He also failed to achieve the grand unified theory of the universe that he felt to be possible and that he worked on with relentless, unquenchable faith until his dying day.

Einstein felt a deep and abiding reverence for the universe as he conceived it, and no amount of putative empirical evidence was sufficient to convince him to the contrary. In other words, his scientific reasoning was deeply informed by his scientific faith, and his scientific faith merged easily into his religious faith. He was quite honest and upfront in recognizing and announcing this intimate intermingling of the two in his thought and life. Einstein's favorite philosopher was the seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza. Spinoza's universe is mathematical, tightly ordered, and deterministic in its every detail, and he spoke of it not only as Nature but also as God. The same is true of Einstein, for whom the wondrous complexity, order, and rationality of the universe showed it for him to be identical with or deeply suffused with the presence and power of God.

Einstein's profoundly compelling religious vision in its connection with his scientific theorizing, a prominent example of what I am calling *faithful reason*, lay strongly behind his conception of the role and competency of natural science and provided much of the motive and impetus of his scientific achievements. He was happy to assert that this was so (see Crosby 1994b; Jammer 1999). His reason was solidly rooted in and inspired by his existential faith, and his lifelong practice as a scientist gave evidence of this faith. I am arguing that his and Dirac's faiths are not isolated instances, but that something like such modes of faith—again, religious or secular—permeates all scientific endeavors. The practices and accomplishments of scientists in general illustrate the concept of *faithful reason*, as do the practices and accomplishments of all who seek to interpret the character

of and put into practice a moral life. The same is true of other modes of thought and life.

Let me summarize what I have been saying about existential faith in this chapter. I have been asserting that it:

- Is not just equal to belief or a particular set of beliefs, although it has an important aspect of belief;
- Is not opposed to reason but underlies and works in concert with reason;
- Is not just emotional but involves and incorporates emotion;
- Is not an arbitrary act of the will but requires practical choices and actions;
- Can be secular or religious;
- Lies at the heart of morality, science, and other significant modes of thought and life;
- Gives fundamental shape and direction, purpose and character, to the whole of a person's life and work;
- Is indispensable for all or nearly all forms of human life.

Thus, it would be as much of a mistake to impugn or dismiss faith regarded in this existential manner as it would be to impugn or dismiss critical reason. Neither can function without the other. Both are necessarily involved in any kind of affirming, responsible intellectual endeavor, and both are essential to any kind of flourishing, meaningful life. This is the important and far-reaching idea I have sought to emphasize and explain here. I shall develop it further as this book proceeds, and it is the book's central theme.