

The Weight of Philosophy in Otto Rank's Psychoanalysis

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Introduction

Among the early psychoanalysts who, together with Freud, formed the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, Otto Rank, together with Hans Sachs, had a special position, in that he was not a member of the medical profession. Because he departed from Freud's views on psychoanalytical theory and therapy, his work requires comprehensive analysis in order to further probe its acknowledged profundity.

Considering the fact that Otto Rank was the only member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society to hold a doctorate in Philosophy, we aim in this article to make clear how that field had a decisive impact on Rank's ideas, and moreover, how Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kant influenced his work.

Considering these philosophers, along with Freud, as having provided a broad foundation for his work, it may be said that Rank:

1. Accepted the fictional nature of human constructions, from Nietzsche;
2. From Schopenhauer, adopted the will as the foundation of the world and of human beings' contact with the world; and
3. With Kant, considered the noumenon to be the locus of the *being*, such that ideologies and their social structures are doomed to fail and must, with the passage of time, be discredited; while the human person's being is located in the Kantian noumenon, and therefore has a worth that can never be discredited.

An Overview of His Theory

Rank considered that the creative impulse in the individual, which contains in its core the will, propitiates a process in which people become more and more distinguished and differentiated. All this development unfolds through the individual, for as long as he fights, conquers, creates and interacts with others. Therefore, the individual becomes an affirmative agent, who learns and recreates the community's values. In the process, the development of the will and progressive individuation tend to turn the individual, as far as permitted by the human constraints, into the creator of his or her own personality and, symbolically, the creator of himself or herself. This implies the individual's intention to self-perpetuate, mainly symbolically, outlasting the ideologies of the different historical contexts and cultures.

These great systems of belief, which Rank called *ideologies*, eventually become ineffective and are discarded in the trash heap of history. However, the termination of every ideology causes no harm to the individual's being, inasmuch as Rank, influenced by Kantian epistemology and ethics, placed the being within the noumenon – as will become clear below.

It should be pointed out that anthropologist Ernest Becker has offered the most widely known recognition of Otto Rank's contribution. Becker's theory deals with the cultural constructions necessary for the individual to confront his or her condition of finitude. To overcome a handicapping fear that arises from the awareness of one's own constraints and eventual death, the human person, in his or her interaction with others, builds mechanisms that will preserve and enhance self-esteem and the ability to effectively interact in the social world. This viewpoint does postulate a consoling role of cultural elements, as a way of self-deception. On the other hand, we can see in Rank's work *the positive affirmation of will and meaning*. In this article, we will focus on this positive aspect, understood as affirmation of life, which could, through philosophy, be seen as deriving from the *primacy of the will*, the *fictional aspect of human constructions*, and the person's being as part of the Kantian *noumenon*. Therefore, it is very relevant to an understanding of Rank's psychoanalysis that all this replaces self-deception with affirmation of life and meaning.

Culture and the Being

It is important to highlight the fact that when Rank spoke of the different cultures and mentioned the diverse religions and symbolic systems of the peoples, he observed a respect for those social constructions and never debunked them or had recourse to irony. When he talked about cultures, whether Western or of a completely different tradition, he never once discredited them, like somebody who compares them with what he considers to be modern Western rationality.

A reading of Rank reveals to us a melancholic and stoic intellectual in his analysis of the heroic expression of the will deep within the person, in the being. In contrast, we see the fragility of the social expression of the being throughout history, due to the fictional nature of social constructions in the face of the individual's will – which is the very foundation of life.

The question of the fictional nature of things is derived from Nietzsche, while the will, as the foundation of being, is derived from Schopenhauer. Kant's "determine thyself by thyself" provides the ethical criticism in Rank's theory, preserving it from Nietzsche's scepticism and Schopenhauer's pessimism while maintaining the critical nature of these authors' views.

According to Rank, we must recognize that a human being needs to express his or her being, a differentiated being capable of interacting and integrating with a community. Furthermore, it is of fundamental importance that this program of

being guarantee the perpetuation of those values that permit the expression of one's subjectivity in the world. It should be stressed that what one is looking for is the perpetuation of the values of subjectivity and its dignity, with a degree of abstraction that will lead us to the Kantian noumenon.

Thus, what will be a problem for the being is the fragility and failure of the social constructions of perpetuation of subjectivity, which Rank designates as *ideologies*. Although also shared by the individuals, they are very close to established social structures, and eventually become ineffective in guaranteeing the symbolic perpetuation of the subject. We observe that the symbols that were pertinent for a culture, that provided an expansion of the being (here considered as the person), have needed to be replaced.

From Dogmatism to Criticism, via Scepticism and Pragmatism

Apart from some Schopenhauer's influences, there was no metaphysics in Rank. However, what could easily be perceived was his estrangement from Freud, principally in relation to the materialism that the latter represented. Actually, that was Freud's main distinguishing feature vis-à-vis the understanding of psychology at the time.

As pointed out by E. James Lieberman, Freud's success lay in the creation of a system of investigation and comprehension that broke away from religious or supernatural ideas, i.e., from dogmatism:

Freud – atheist, neurologist, and former hypnotist – championed a psychology without spiritualism and metaphysics, in order to meet the requirements of the new scientific materialism, and called religion an illusion without future. Rank respected religion whether or not it is illusion. (Lieberman, in Rank, 1998, xviii).

At this point, we need to clearly understand how and why Rank respected the elements of culture, “whether or not they were illusions.” We see that psychoanalysis expressed an evolution from traditional *dogmatism* to the *scepticism* of Freud's rationalism and scientific attitude.

The fact is that to be consistent with his own position, Freud would have had to discredit the traditional symbolic codes, considering them to be an illusion. What Rank was to do, to be consistent in his respect for culture “whether or not it is an illusion,” would be to take one step from scepticism to *pragmatism*, and move on to *criticism*. In this process, the scepticism was to be that of Freud, whom the young Rank had enthusiastically supported; the pragmatism, on the other hand, was to be that of Nietzsche. Finally, we have Kant's criticism – where we may find the roots of what we could consider an *ethics* present in Rank.

Let's start with the question of pragmatism. It says that we assume to be true whatever it is relevant to know. Truth is seen as agreement between thought and being. At certain times, however, this affirmation has been undermined and questioned. That was when the question of philosophical pragmatism (which grew out of scepticism), with its stress on the useful, was raised. In the quote from Lieberman, the idea of pragmatism is clear: whether or not it is an illusion, religion does have utility in human society. This was the attitude shared by Rank, and for him the roots of this idea of the value of utility were basically in Nietzsche. In addition, as representatives of pragmatism, we may cite Schiller and Vaihinger, in philosophy, and, in psychology, William James.

So what was it like, this pragmatism in Nietzsche? It is necessary to stress one point: according to Nietzsche, agreement between thought and being can never be achieved, because of human historicity. Self-awareness is the least developed "organ" in the human being. For living beings, who need to *act* to establish themselves in the world, the primordial force is not intelligence, but the *will to power*.

So the human being is a being who needs to act; only in order to act better does he need to think. Thus a judgement derived from thought becomes true to the degree that it conserves, expands and stimulates life. This then becomes the parameter of validity of a judgement – its *practicality*. According to Nietzsche, what we must evaluate is whether or not a determined truth judgement is at the service of the will to power, i.e., of the expansion of life.

It may be seen that Rank fully internalized the pragmatic point of view; the contents of culture do not need to have their validity confirmed *per se*, because the important thing is their utility in providing the person with a symbology of perpetuation, a basis for "being more", in general.

However, Rank does not stop with pragmatism. If it is necessary to guarantee the expansion of being, it is quite natural for us to ask, what being are we talking about, if we consider metaphysics to be impossible? It is at this point that Kant's criticism comes in.

Kant also experienced the passage from dogmatism to scepticism as a personal journey, mainly in relation to Hume, within British empiricism. While he did agree with Hume with regard to the contingency of knowledge – from which it was inferred that there never has been and never could be a metaphysics – Kant considered the ethical consequences of scepticism to be unacceptable. Actually, all German idealism (in which Kant included himself) found itself engaged in defending reason against the doubt and relativism of British empiricism. Kant, specifically, saw himself as driven to *defend reason against scepticism*, and this is very important for our understanding of Rank. Kant defines this as a critique of the very possibility of knowing, in order that speculative illusions,

characteristic of dogmatism, might be avoided, along with the reduction of everything to experience, in the case of scepticism.

It is well worth returning to pragmatism in order to see how much of Kant can be found in Nietzsche, precisely in relation to the possibility of knowing.

Knowledge and Fiction

Nietzsche's pragmatism focused on the life to be lived immediately; it was space without the infinite and time without eternity. It abandoned the metaphysics of Schopenhauer, to whom Nietzsche in his youth had referred as "my master." Thus, in his early works, such as *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, the young Nietzsche had asked, "what can we know for sure about the world, and to what extent can we really know about the world?"

Nietzsche's doubt already was very broad: how can we be sure that the world reveals itself to our senses as it really is? We are not as yet asking whether our senses are capable of perceiving the world, but rather if the world itself, understood as the true world, fully reveals itself. Furthermore, the world causes a nervous stimulus to our senses that may not exactly reproduce the external stimulus; this excitement will trigger a thought in the brain, and we do not know how faithful this thought will be to the nervous stimulus. And we do not know how faithful the word that expresses the thought will be to that thought.

Based on these perspectives, we can say that we only have approximations, or, in Nietzsche's critique, collectively shared illusions. As he said:

What is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, adorned, and which after long use seem solid, canonical and binding to a people: truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; metaphors which have been used up and drained of sensory force; coins which have lost their image and are now considered as metal, no longer as coins (Nietzsche, 2014, p. 66.).

For us to understand pragmatism in Rank, it is important to discuss how strongly this doubting of the capacity to know saps the foundations of any system purporting to be absolute, with emphasis on the moral and the social. Nietzsche, however, followed this path to discredit not only social systems but also the very individual, to the extent that consciousness of oneself is extremely weak in relation to the forces of nature, and also because its constructions have no basis. When Nietzsche told us not to have any egoism, he meant that that which our consciousness thinks important for us is nothing compared to what the forces of life and nature are, as it were, planning for us, and that our will – the will to cultivate our fictional "I" – has no bearing on the flow of events. But

Nietzsche also told us not to abandon egoism only to fall into altruism, for the will of another similarly has no power, in the grand scheme of things, on whatever life has reserved for him, - not to mention the fabrication that his supposed self-conscious awareness really does exist.

In the course of this paper, we shall see why Rank accepted Nietzsche's critique of the absolute foundation of social systems, while at the same time rejecting his critique of consciousness and of a person's being.

The Human *a priori* and the Noumenon

It was Hans Vaihinger who said that "there is more Kant in Nietzsche than one usually thinks". In his opinion, this comes from that radical doubt regarding the capacity to know the world. This doubt, according to Vaihinger, originated from Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (2011), which discusses the issue of the phenomenon and the thing in itself.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant analyzed the possibility of knowing, and, seeing knowledge as contingent upon the human *a priori*, challenged the possibility of a metaphysics, in the sense of *knowledge* of God, the world and the soul. One also must remember that Kant, as a philosopher of the Enlightenment, aimed at attacking all dogmatism.

But we need to understand how he intended to protect reason against skepticism using something that could support skepticism. The answer is in his later work *Critique of Practical Reason*, in which he laid the foundations of morals, introducing criticism as an alternative to both dogmatism and skepticism.

Kant sought an ethics that could be found by a man of the Enlightenment, in which the dogmatic, supernatural drivers of morals should be replaced by categories that could be rationally argued.

Kant's reference to the "Copernican revolution" aimed precisely at showing the subject's reason as the driver of knowledge of the object. The subject's capacity to know dominates the object. We shall see that the fact that reason no longer bowed before the object of knowledge, always remaining faithful to its own laws and consistent with itself, was extremely important. Reason became *law-giving reason*. This was not so when the object dominated the subject and the latter's act of knowing.

This development was necessary for Kant, due to dogmatism's failure to apprehend reality, particularly through the metaphysical attempts intrinsic to dogmatism. One aimed to *know* in such a way that could be as effective and verifiable as the knowledge stemming from logic and mathematics. Kant thus had to study reason itself, its innate characteristics, rules and boundaries.

Kant posited that nature is always questioned by means of requirements already encompassed by human reason, that is, in *a priori* forms of knowledge. The

human being knows the real through such forms, which exist *a priori* in reason, and which his capacity to know places above the data of sensory experience. Everything real is thus a human construct stemming from sensorial experience submitted to the *a priori* forms of pure reason. That which is beyond the reach of reason is the thing in itself, the ultimate reality, which the human being cannot know, but can think about through symbols.

Kant differs from metaphysical thought in that the *subject* and *subjectivity* have no “substance,” but there is a *consciousness of oneself* that accompanies every cognitive action and every conscious experience. These cognitive actions are established within boundaries that outline the experience of phenomena, for it is impossible for consciousness to have reference to that which is beyond phenomena (the thing in itself). But this consciousness of oneself has to be assumed. Accepting that we have no immediate experience of the objects of our senses, but only reach them through representations supplied by those possibilities already encompassed by reason, we conclude that *consciousness of objects* is no more or less worthy than consciousness of oneself, because they are simultaneous.

We must note that only the phenomenon, the world of phenomena immediately available to human beings, can be *known*. It can be both known and thought of. In contrast, the world of moral determinations is not the object of sensory experience; it can only be thought of. It is the world of the noumenon, separate from the phenomenon. Phenomena thus exist in the visible world, and the noumena in the *intelligible world*, which is supersensible. However – and this was very important for Kant – the supersensible world was not metaphysical or supernatural; it was a world that could only be conceived of by means of symbols that the reason needs to postulate. It is necessary within the realm of *practical action*, in accordance with reason; it becomes, therefore, *moral action*. It is noteworthy that in this intelligible world, which is “comprehensible only in the moral aspect” and where all determinations are moral, Kant follows Plato’s ancient notion of a world of ideas (Kant, 2012, p. 107). Kant said:

Because we here treat (or judge) only ideas that reason created for itself, whose purposes (if any) lay far beyond our horizon, and because, even if we must assume them useless for speculative knowledge, they need not because of this be void in every sense, but the very law-giving reason puts them within our reach with a practical purpose, not for us to ponder on its objects, on what they are in themselves and according to their nature, but for us to think to the benefit of moral principles focusing on the ultimate purpose of all things (whereby these ideas, which would otherwise be utterly empty, receive objective practical reality). (Kant, 2012, p.112).

Rank said that the human being is a “theological being,” but he never discussed God, but rather culture in relation to the idea of God as a means for the perpetuation of the individual and his or her subjectivity. We could say that Rank used these concepts as if they were Kant’s *regulative principles* and Vaihinger’s *fictions*. This will likewise be reflected in the fictional character of human constructs in Nietzsche, in whose work we can also find the presence of the Kantian thing in itself:

We have to establish this principle: we live only by our illusions – our conscience emerges on the surface. Many things are hidden from our eyes. There is no reason to fear that man will come to know himself *fully*, that he will at every instant penetrate all relationships of strength ... that are necessary for life. ... They are only formulae for forces that are utterly unknowable. (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 349).

If we take these so-called illusions as the Kantian regulative principles, Otto Rank’s work takes on a new dimension. Kant saw the regulative principles as ideas that are not knowledge but rather establish guidelines and milestones for procedures in the act of knowing. *Constitutive principles*, however, lay the foundation for the objectives and possibilities of knowledge based on sensory data.

These fictions would also entail accepting as the noumenon the sphere where he places the being, in view of the respect with which he treats the subject – which Rank never discredits and whose sincerity he acknowledges.

Will, Affirmation and Autonomy

Although Kant made no room for metaphysics, Schopenhauer, even when criticizing Kant, created a metaphysics, by considering the will as the ultimate reality. It will be because of Schopenhauer that certain considerations approaching the metaphysical will appear in the work of Otto Rank.

Let us remember that in Kant, speculative thought (as expressed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) recognizes the world of phenomena as its boundary and stops there, acknowledging that it cannot know the thing in itself. However, Schopenhauer saw the thing in itself as being the will, and thus pushed thought beyond that boundary, now seeing the will as the thing in itself.

Being a metaphysical concept for Schopenhauer, the will does not depend on anything biological; indeed, Schopenhauer avers that living beings came to existence to fill the void that the will contained in itself.

In his considerations on the human being, Schopenhauer stated that that which is not phenomenon in the individual is the will, and that the thing in itself also is the will. The will reveals itself through its representation, emerging as the world

and being thus perceived by the subject – and this is why Schopenhauer thought the world is assured for the subject.

Schopenhauer's concept of the will, as the foundation of the world of phenomena, is present in Otto Rank. Indeed, Rank wrote that the individual is

... the temporal representative of the cosmic primal force no matter whether one calls it sexuality, libido, or id. The ego accordingly is strong just in the degree to which it *is* the representative of this primal force and the strength of this force represented in the individual we call the will (Rank, 1978, p. 4).

One must here note that Rank really did take into consideration the human subject and the being, because therein, implicitly, lies the Kantian ethics. This takes us again to Rank's common ground with Schopenhauer's metaphysics, because this distancing of the being from the social and historical context becomes not only implicit, but necessary.

Thus, Rank reflects Nietzsche's pragmatism in an amalgam with Schopenhauer's metaphysics, in the primacy of the will in relation to consciousness and the intellect:

...will, guilt and consciousness maintain themselves differently, for the will, however one comprehends or interprets it, remains a constantly operating force, while consciousness above all is a quality, a state, and as such is passive and temporary, yes momentary (Rank, 1978, p. 90).

If Schopenhauer's ideal was the annihilation of the will because it is the incessant compulsion that should not exist and causes pain, in Nietzsche one finds the enjoyment of the immediate power of life, without the need for any ultimate absolute or purpose.

Within this context, it may be said that Rank sustained

1. The neutral aspect of the primacy of the will;
2. The negative aspect of its compulsiveness; and
3. The positive aspect of the will as a pragmatic affirmation of life.

Furthermore, influenced by Kant's Enlightenment aspects, Rank added his epistemology and ethics, so that we may add the following:

4. The self-determination aspect, whereby the individual transforms compulsion into liberty, guiding the will by means of a project of *affirmation* grounded in the being, which is considered as noumenon.

It is very important that at this point, the will is no longer subordinated to the phenomenon, but rather to the noumenon.

To illustrate the presence of Kant, let us focus, for example, on the issue of time as *form*. In Kantian epistemology, the matter of the phenomenon constitutes the sensation, and forms are the structures that make it possible to give order to the materials received from experience (Mora, 1996, p. 305). For Kant, time is an *a*

priori form of the internal states of human beings, i.e., the form of the succession of representations in the human being as an arrangement of internal perception. It is conceivable that Otto Rank kept the Kantian concept of time as a form of conscience, while at the same time we can see in him the presence of Schopenhauer's concept of compulsion as the origin of pain:

Therefore, from the standpoint of the psychology of emotions, consciousness shows itself as a time problem in the sense that time represents the form of consciousness and by means of this time factor makes the different contents pleasurable or painful. Will as the constant driving force strive accordingly to prolong its pleasurable perceived affirmation through consciousness, to make the feeling of happiness lasting, that is, redeeming. Insofar as this prolongation succeeds, it is perceived as painful because compulsory... (Rank, 1978, p. 89)."

As we can see, the inner states unavoidably change; for Kant, this is the very ground of our perception of time.

The Noumenon and the Contingency

One must understand that Kant had accepted Hume's skepticism, but could not accept its moral consequences. Thus, what he deemed impossible to attain by speculative reason he attained by practical reason, permitting him to defend reason against skepticism. This made it possible for Kant to legitimately refer to the "*homo noumenon*," whose pilgrimage is in eternity (Kant, 2012, p. 114)" – and this without any metaphysics, only referencing the moral world.

Where does this touch Otto Rank? Exactly in the "ineffable spirit" mentioned by E. James Lieberman in the introduction to Rank's book *Psychology and the Soul*, referring to the form Rank employed to deal with intangible concepts, which Freud, loyal to his scientific view, could only consider illusions.

The experience of the noumenon, pertaining to the moral world, is found in the regulative principles. According to Hans Vaihinger, the fictions mentioned by the early Nietzsche are equivalent to regulative principles, outlining the boundaries for understanding an inexact and ever flowing reality. Moreover, Denis Thouard remarked that the noumenon may be thought of *symbolically*:

Imagination appropriated this, compelled by an impulse that may be subjectively understood but cannot be objectively followed. These domains are left for myth, religion, literature, which are entitled to suspend reference (Thouard, 2004, p. 75).

For Kant, *knowing* and *thinking* are not equivalent. Phenomena may be known and thought of, but the noumenon can only be thought of. This brings momentous consequences. One might think that something that exists only symbolically should not be taken into consideration. To exist only as a symbol would be tantamount to not existing. But according to Kant, that which can only

be thought of symbolically *must* be thought of symbolically, and will have a legitimate place in people's lives. It is exactly in this manner that we can reach the supersensible world, where all determinations are moral and expressed by means of the symbolic life.

In this way, we can correctly grasp Rank's attitude towards culture.

Otto Rank often stated that the human being wishes to escape from purely material and biological determinations in his quest for spiritual determinations. "Spiritual" here means the same as "cultural," the fruit of the being's choices in the universe of moral determinations, where human will can act. According to Kant, all of this alludes to the noumenon, not to illusion. The legitimate use of reason leads us to the noumenon, to the unconditioned; reason allows us to think of it without the presumption – or the need – to obtain from it any sensory data, because the latter belongs to phenomena, while a moral law, which stems from reason, requires not the phenomenon but the noumenon.

Through the noumenon, Rank spoke to us of the being, which brushes up against the various ideologies of immortality, contingent on the different contexts of history, which have helped individuals to seek their own symbolic perpetuation. But the individual, as a being, does not depend on these ideologies to *be*, but rather to present himself to the world. The being remains unscathed, presenting itself as detached from social contexts, which are doomed to fail. And it is here that subjectivity will be protected: it concerns the noumenon and is not undermined by the world of phenomena.

It is important to make clear that only the being has a fundamental quality in the moral sense – which is important in Rank's thought, in that *the individual does not have to submit himself or herself to the phenomenon*, given that one's being resides in the noumenon. Only this can detach the individual from contingency; and this permits Rank to question the limitations of the several ideologies of immortality that have followed one another throughout history, without discrediting the human person and his or her being.

The importance of this notion of a "detached" being lies in its shedding of all aspects that could be mistakenly considered "essential" within the world of phenomena. In this sense, Rank followed Kant's moral self-determination. In other words, human beings must be morally conditioned to nothing in the sensory world. The life-heightening and life-propagating property, and the ensuing affirmation of the being, reside not in any aspect of the sensory world, but rather in how the will expresses itself in order to attain this affirmation. We thus see that criticism has penetrated pragmatism.

Affirmation and Dignity

Using the very internal laws of reason, which are simultaneous to perception of the sensory world, a position of respect for human beings and their dignity becomes the correct one to take. Rank, in his narrative of the obsolescence of

ideologies of immortality over time, in what he termed the “eternal drama of life,” at a certain point mentions a “lowering of the curtains” in the historical saga, when one can exist only in and of oneself:

The subjects of my former interest – the hero, the artist, the neurotic – all come back once more on stage, not only as participants in the eternal drama of life but also after the curtain has come down: unmasked, undressed, unpretentious. Not debunked by any means, just human, while I myself do not pretend to pull their strings, to tell them what to do and say, nor to interpret them to the audience (Rank, cited by Lieberman, 1993, pp. 387-388).

One may therefore say that Rank considers the being to be outside historical contingency, where human beings would exist even after “the curtains of the drama of life have come down,” where people would exist “naked, without masks, without pretensions,” and where they could be “just human,” and still in no way be discredited.

Only in the universe of the noumenon, where all determination is moral, can the human being reclaim his right to moral dignity, without the need for any self-deception. Likewise, this makes it possible to bring the experience of ethics into the world of phenomena, of contingency. Otherwise, if social life were a monolith of power and domination, each member of society would forever be an accomplice in his or her own domination, with no possibility for the exercise of reason to show another way; because a critique of power would be impossible for the faculty of reason.

Thus we may understand the degree of Rank’s wisdom in incorporating Kant’s epistemology and ethics, and thus placing the being of the human person outside of contingency. We also better understand the wisdom of Kant’s introduction of criticism, which makes it possible to avoid both dogmatism and scepticism.

Taking as our starting point the philosophers that influenced Rank to take his position, we may say that reason demands that the being be outside of contingency, remaining untouched by it; it needs to be where Kant placed the super sensible: in the moral universe. Finally, it becomes possible to acknowledge the importance of the human symbolic repertoire and its many manifestations, “whether or not they are illusions,” for human culture, meaning and values remain as affirmations so long as the being dwells in the noumenon.

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