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**NATURE'S PRIMAL SELF: AN ECSTATIC NATURALIST
CRITIQUE OF THE ANTHROPOCENTRISM OF
PEIRCE'S PRAGMATICISM AND
JASPERS' EXISTENTIALISM**

**A dissertation submitted to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies
Drew University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

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**For Minh-Nguyet,
and in grateful memory of my father
Hai Nam Nguyen**

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*No mind can take one step without
the aid of other minds.*

Charles S. Peirce

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Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Minh-Nguyet, whose sacrifice, encouragement, and unfailing love have taught me how to persevere in my efforts to reach the finish line.

ABBREVIATIONS

CHARLES S. PEIRCE

- CP** *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Vols. 1-6. Edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-1935). Vols. 7-8. Edited by Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).
- RLT** *Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898*. Edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner. With Introductions by Kenneth Laine Ketner and Hilary Putnam (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
- SS** *Semiotics and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*. Edited by Charles S. Hardwick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).
- W** *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. Vols.1-5. Edited by Max Fisch and the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-1993).

A number of sources cited in this dissertation are published in the journal *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*. The journal's title is abbreviated *Transactions* in all references.

KARL JASPERS

- AP** *Aneignung und Polemik: Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co Verlag, 1968).
- EP** *Existenzphilosophie*, 3rd ed., (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1964).
- GP** *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1923 and 1946). English translation, *General Psychopathology*, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
- N** *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*, 3rd ed., trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (Tucson: University Arizona Press, 1966).

- OGH** *The Origin and Goal of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (Westport: Greenwood, 1976).
- PGO** *Der philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung* (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1962).
- PH** *Philosophie*, 2nd ed., (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1948).
- Phi** *Philosophy*, 3 vols., trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
- PKJ** *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, ed. Paul A. Schilpp (La Salle, ILL.: Open Court, 1981).
- PSP** *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949).
- PW** *Philosophie und Welt: Reden und Aufsätze* (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1958).
- VdW** *Von der Wahrheit* (München: R. Piper & Co Verlag, 1947).
- VE** *Vernunft und Existenz: Fünf Vorlesungen* (Bremen: Johs.Storm Verlag, 1949).

ROBERT S. CORRINGTON

- CI** *The Community of Interpreters: On the Hermeneutics of Nature and the Bible in the American Philosophical Tradition*, second edition (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995).
- ICSP** *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce: Philosopher, Semiotician, and Ecstatic Naturalist* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993).
- EN** *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- NR** *Nature's Religion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997).
- NaS** *Nature & Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992).

NS ***Nature's Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit*** (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996).

STTP ***A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

“Transcendental Pretence”¹

Since the ancient period, two perspectives or *Weltanschauungen* have often vied for their own philosophical predominance in Western thought; they are naturalism and anthropocentrism. From Epicurus and Democritus to Bertrand Russell and John Dewey, naturalism has been historically equated with materialism; that is, nature is seen as a domain of matter; in other words, it is understood as the physical orders of the world (*nature natured*). Also, from Charles Peirce’s metaphysical conception of panpsychism (matter as an effect mind), nature’s “matter/material” was viewed as a muted form of mental life. Yet the unconscious potencies of nature (*nature naturing*), allied to its utter indifference, have not adequately been explored. In sharp contrast to the perspective of naturalism is that of anthropocentrism whose perspective goes back to Protagoras, who boldly announced that humanind is the measure of all things (*homo mensura*).

Whether the self is viewed as a substance (rationalism), as an empirical self, as an organic self (process philosophy), or as a system of meanings (idealism);² whether

¹ This phrase is taken from Robert C. Solomon’s book *Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). What Rousseau discovered; namely, “the self,” according to Solomon, was called the “transcendental pretence,” which consists of two central components: “first, the remarkable inner richness and expanse of the self, ultimately encompassing everything; and secondly, the consequent right to project from the subjective structures of one’s own mind, and ascertain the nature of humanity as such” (1-2).

² In his essay “Is the Self as Ultimate Category?” John Smith proposes four basic theories of the self that have played a significant role in modern philosophy. See *Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966); cf. Anthony Kenny, *The Self, The Aquinas Lecture*, 1988 (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 1988).

the self is a divine union between Brahman and Atman (Hinduism), is nothingness (Buddhism), or was created in *imago Dei* (Christianity); whether starting from Protagoras, Plato, Augustine, Descartes, Locke, Kant, or Kierkegaard,³ the self or human subjectivity has become the “star performer” (Solomon) in philosophy. And whether the self is situated in the semiotic community (Peirce) or in the encompassing realm of *Existenz* (Jaspers), an anthropocentric obsession with the self as the arbiter of knowledge has been continuously privileged. Human subjectivity, with its conceptual and constituting activity of the mind, has displayed its universal and autonomous power to fashion the structure and nature of the world. Nevertheless, the nature and ambitions of the so-called “transcendental self,” in Solomon’s words, “were unprecedentedly arrogant, presumptuously cosmic, and consequently mysterious.”⁴

But, whether embedded in the Kantian transcendental self (the structured unity of consciousness), or in Feuerbach’s anthropological theism (God is a manifestation of humankind’s own inner self or species-being), anthropocentrism (or what Alvin Plantinga terms “creative antirealism”),⁵ may be defined as the privileging of the human self and its meaning horizons over their natural locations. The anthropocentric obsession with the self as the arbiter of knowledge has unceasingly continued to play a central role in philosophy. With its conceptual and constituting activity of the mind, human subjectivity has displayed its universal and autonomous power to fashion the structure and nature of the world. However, following the Nietzschean project of nihilism (which attempted to dethrone all systems of reason) and Foucault’s and Derrida’s rejection of modernity’s “transcendental pretence” (that the subject-matter of philosophy revolves around the self or the world’s fundamental structure which is ontologically grounded in the noetic activity of the human mind), the celebrated

³ See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* and Robert Solomon, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self*.

⁴ Solomon, *Continental Philosophy*, 4. John Smith states: “One of the major embarrassments of man as reflective being is that he does not clearly grasp what he is.” See his “Is the Self an Ultimate Category?” (135-150).

⁵ See his “Augustinian Christian Philosophy,” *Monist* 75 (1992): 296-302.

“modern self” has been systematically decentered, deconstructed, and displaced by the so-called “postmodern self.” Postmodernism rightly attacks the pretensions and presuppositions of modernism; that is, the universal truth and naive optimism of the self’s capacities through human reason. The timelessness and universality of the transcendental self or ego has been rejected by postmodernism; human subjectivity or transcendental pretence is no longer celebrated. “Postmodernism implies a *shattering of innocent confidence in the capacity of the self to control its own destiny.*”⁶ Both the Cartesian subjective self and Lévi-Strauss’ “structuralism” of language no longer exist under the framework of postmodernism. While Nietzsche declared that “God is dead,” Foucault has announced the death of human subjectivity. “It is comforting, however, and a source of profound belief to think that man is only a recent invention...and that he will disappear again.”⁷

Whether located by modernism or dislocated by postmodernism, the anthropocentric self is still plagued with its own “crisis of subjectivity” (Keller). As a founding within nature, the self is ontologically fissured. Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism succinctly states: “At the heart of the self is a cleft, a wound that emerges with the first dawn of consciousness and remains with the self until its death.”⁸ The self is split between *nature naturing* (presemiotic potencies) and *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world). This dualism between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* is different in kind from Cartesian dualism, because it deals with dimensions within the one nature, rather than two separable orders. The underlying reason why the self

⁶ Anthony C. Thiselton, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self: On Meaning, Manipulation and Promise* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 11. (Author’s italics).

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), xxiii. Foucault, according to Charles Davis, “is attacking modern anthropocentrism, urging us to awaken from our anthropological sleep and pointing to the *aporias* into which our egocentrism leads.” Davis, however, points out that while Foucault attacks the modern self “as a distortion and diminution of the human being, he offered nothing in its place.” See Charles Davis, “Our Modern Identity: The Formation of the Self,” *Modern Theology* 6:2 (1990): 159-171.

⁸ Corrington, *NS*, 1.

suffers its own crisis of subjectivity is that it has either ignored or forgotten its own finitude and embodiment as an order which is deeply implanted in the utterly indifferent vastness of nature.

The self is but one frail perspective of and in nature. For the anthropocentric self or nature's primal self to be appropriately "positioned" and to relevantly procure its true ontological and semiotic meaning, I will argue that hidden origin in nature can be best metaphysically expounded and grounded in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism. They are of course many fine explorations of nature, such as eco-feminism and creation-centered theology. However, I believe in different approach which may prove to be important dialogue partner with contemporary philosophy as well as theology.

The perennial curse of the self, from the metaphysical view of ecstatic naturalism, is that it wants to write itself so large across the face of nature, thus disregarding the fact that it is only "an inscribed and finite product" of *nature naturing*; in other words, "from the standpoint of nature, the self is but one curious and fragmented product that crosses the stage of life for a brief moment and then moves on to another vastly different stage."⁹ Nature (as a metaphysical concept), as articulated in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, is a precategory; that is, it is beyond all genera. Nature has no location; it is not *in* or *of* anything. If quantum theory offers the term "togetherness-in-separation" or "non-locality" to describe two quantum entities, then ecstatic naturalism's nature can be defined as "nonlocated location." It prevails as a "clearing" (Heidegger's *Lichtung*) within and from which all prehuman and human orders of meaning derive. Santayana is right to remark that the self has only limited prospects within nature as a whole. Ecstatic naturalism naturalistically presupposes all possible as well as actual existence; namely, nonhuman, human, and divine entities encompassed by nature. Nature itself transcends the alleged distinction between supernaturalism and naturalism.

One way in which the so-called nature's "primal self" can be semiotically and metaphysically explored and examined is through the "still evolving" perspective of

⁹ NS, 23.

ecstatic naturalism, which probes into the ontological divide/difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. Because the self is constantly fissured by this ontological wound, it is split between its origin or *nature naturing* (constituted by potencies) and resistance or *nature natured* (constituted by natural orders/complexes). By the sheer momentum of the self-othering *nature naturing*, the self is propelled toward autonomy; and once it is cast out from *nature naturing* the self becomes one of the “products” or orders of the world (*nature natured*), where it will attain possibilities and interpretive meanings. Without recognizing that it is ejected from the realm of *nature naturing* (or the material maternal) the self will never be able to achieve its own individuation. With individuation and autonomy, the self is now aware that it is fissured by the ontological difference. To say that the self is “nature’s primal self” is to assert “the sheer embeddedness of the self in a sovereign nature that seems to be indifferent to what appears to us to be its most semiotically dense product.”¹⁰ Nature’s primal self belongs to the often primal dimension of *nature natured*.

As will be discussed in more detail in chapter four, ecstatic naturalism, as a new movement, is both a semiotic theoretical method and a metaphysics that probes deeply into the ontological divide between *nature naturing* (*natura naturans*) and *nature natured* (*natura naturata*).¹¹ As a form of thought, ecstatic naturalism may be:

defined as that moment within naturalism when it recognizes its self-transcending character...The movement from a presemiotic potency to a signifying structure or a signifying position is ecstatic insofar as the potency stands outside of itself and gives birth to its own self-other as a sign or sign system.¹²

¹⁰ Corrington, *NS*, 12.

¹¹ This Latin medieval *natura naturans/natura naturata* distinction was introduced in the 12th century, and was popularized through Spinoza’s metaphysical concept of pantheism. Corrington holds that even though there are no external or internal relations between the world of *nature natured* and the realm of *nature naturing*, *nature naturing*’s traces of the ejective ground can be found within the innumerable orders of the world via what are called “engrams.”

¹² Corrington, *EN*, 18-19.

The term “ecstatic” functions like Peirce’s “indexical sign”; that is, it dynamically and causally points to the self-transcendent possibilities within the orders or complexes of nature.

Relying heavily on his philosophical anthropology and semioticism, Peirce adorns the self with much open lucidity and transparency, which abjects the unconscious of the true and hidden dimension of the self. Jaspers’ *Existenz*, with irreducible freedom, centers intensely on its awareness (consciousness) of selfhood in existential situation, thus turning away from the depth dimension of the unconscious of nature. It is therefore accurate to say that both Peirce and Jaspers did not have a real sense of the unconscious of nature or of the depths that may contain the divine mystery. In addition, because Peirce’s so-called community of interpreters is one dimensional (i.e., scientific) and Jaspers’ tenuous notion of community (even though his *Existenz* expresses itself in different modes of the encompassing), they fall short of illuminating the *self/nature natured* correlation and the *self/nature naturing* correlation.

Because both Peirce and Jaspers affirmed the anthropocentric principle, they ignored the self’s metaphysical relations to the ontological difference of *nature naturing* and *nature natured* as profoundly and radically articulated by Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism. Like other forms of naturalism, such as descriptive (Santayana, Dewey, and Buchler), honorific (Emerson and Heidegger), and process (Whitehead and Hartshorne), Peirce and Jaspers have overlooked the implications as well as demands of the metaphysical categories of the unconscious and the unconscious of nature, which play pivotal roles in the realms of *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. Although Peirce and Jaspers broaden our understanding of the scope and prospects of the self, at the same time, they diminish the role of nature - it is anthropocentrically (and anthropomorphically) domesticated. As a result, nature is deprived of its self-transcending character as delineated in ecstatic naturalism.

Methodologically, ecstatic naturalism relies on two new methods; namely, “horizontal hermeneutics” and “ordinal phenomenology,” which will help us to critique Peirce’s and Jaspers’ anthropocentric concepts of the self. Horizontal hermeneutics is a

methodology used to ascertain the most generic traits or features of the world; in other words, it explores and examines human orders of relevance. With a perspectival view, it attempts to “look” at the “other” realm of the ontological difference (*nature natures*) - the side that is visible. However, a transition from horizontal hermeneutics to ordinal phenomenology is necessary, essentially because it is a move away from “a narrow concern with human subjectivity and the constitutive acts of an alleged transcendental ego.”¹³

And while horizontal hermeneutics positions itself in the semiosis of personal and communal life, ordinal phenomenology probes into the basic and pervasive features of nature. Methodologies like ecstatic naturalism’s horizontal hermeneutics can be implicitly found in Peirce’s and Jaspers’ study of human subjectivity and the human orders of relevance. Phenomenologically, Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self and Jaspers’ elucidation of *Existenz* have both come short, mainly because of the absence of the metaphysical movement of ordinal phenomenology. Not only does ordinal phenomenology identify, describe, and analyze nonhuman and human orders of relevance (from the limited traits or the process of human selfing, to worldhood, to the divine natures), but it also unveils and delineates the ontological difference of *nature natures* and *nature naturing*. Ecstatic naturalism’s metaphysical concept of ordinal phenomenology frees traditional phenomenology from being plagued with human subjectivity or anthropocentrism. It is very important to point out that while the metaphysical functions of horizontal hermeneutics and ordinal phenomenology are used to describe and analyze orders of relevance embedded in the ontological realm of *nature natures*, ecstatic naturalism (as a metaphysical perspective) attempts to probe into the depth dimension of *nature naturing* in order to uncover the ever-fissuring relationship between the two realms of the ontological divide. And only in and through this uncovering will nature’s primal self emerge. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the hidden origin of nature’s primal self is ramified through a metaphysical and semiotic methodology.

¹³ Corrington, *NaS*, 1.

Ecstatic naturalism, as a descriptive (in its application to *nature natured*) and revisionary (in its application to *nature naturing*) metaphysics, is well equipped to probe deeply beneath the surface layers of the anthropocentric self theorized by Peirce and Jaspers in order to elicit the self's hidden origin, which is directly and infinitely sustained in its "primal ground," the unconscious of nature (*nature naturing*). Also, as a new metaphysical and semiotic stream of thought and as a formal perspective on nature, ecstatic naturalism is neither confined to nor circumscribed by metaphysical or existential anthropology or by textuality. Consequently, its starting point is not that of the human process, but that of nature (*nature naturing*) via semiotic modalities, for the human process is only a product (*nature natured*) or sign of *nature naturing*. Nature is humankind's "enabling ground and goal."¹⁴ The semiotic self in Peirce's primal category of Firstness and Jaspers' *Existenz* in its existential freedom would, so I will argue, be much enriched and enhanced if they are critically approached in the context of ecstatic naturalism.

Anchored in the descriptive and revisionary metaphysics of ecstatic naturalism, this project will descriptively and analytically critique Peirce's and Jaspers' anthropocentric concepts of the self. In addition, as a "reflective analysis" (to borrow John Smith's phrase), metaphysics will be employed to scrutinize Peirce's ontological categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness and Jaspers' depth dimensions of *Existenz*, especially its role in the so-called "axial period." It is very important to note that it would be difficult to completely comprehend Peirce's semiotic theory of the self without wrestling with his metaphysics, for he is first and foremost a metaphysician; in other words, "fail[ing] to understand Peirce as a metaphysician, first and last, is to fail to grasp the crucial support conditions for pragmatism."¹⁵ Likewise, existential terms like *Dasein*, *Existenz*, the Encompassing, and Transcendence clearly reveal Jaspers'

¹⁴ Corrington, *NaS*, 22.

¹⁵ Corrington, *ICSP*, 118. Peter Ochs is right to state that as a metaphysician, Peirce "grounds his inquiry in the conviction that the objects of his inquiry resolve themselves into one object." See his *Charles Peirce's Metaphysical Conviction* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Yale University, 1979), 1.

nuanced and distinctive metaphysical implications and presuppositions. As Alan Olson notes: “Jaspers came unabashedly to the defense of metaphysics...Much in the manner of Josiah Royce, Jaspers believes that metaphysics has to do primarily with the *spirit* of philosophizing; in other words, with the essential task of being human.”¹⁶

By utilizing the fundamental concepts and the two methodologies of ecstatic naturalism, this project attempts to achieve three goals. First, to present and elucidate the underlying philosophical thoughts and concepts of Peirce, Jaspers, and Corrington; secondly, to critique the anthropocentric self of Charles Peirce’s semiotic pragmatism and of Karl Jaspers’ existential anthropology (periechontology); and thirdly, to introduce the concept of nature’s primal self, radically grounded in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, as a judicious, more encompassing, and richer framework compared to those of Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self and Jaspers’ existential concept of *Existenz*.

¹⁶ *Transcendence and Hermeneutics: An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 31.

CHAPTER 1

SKETCHES OF AMERICAN PRAGMATISM AND CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE'S LIFE

Who is the most original and the most versatile intellect that the Americas have so far produced? The answer "Charles S. Peirce" is uncontested, because any second would be so far behind as not to be worth nominating...If he has had any equals in that respect in the entire history of philosophy, they do not number more than two.

Max H. Fisch

Peirce was a very great man, with a variety of interests in each of which he made original contributions. The essence of his thought was originality in every subject that he taught.

A. N. Whitehead

Sketches of American Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a major philosophic movement that emerged from so-called classical American philosophy during the first quarter of the twentieth century. H.O. Mounce divides the genealogy of American philosophy into three distinctive periods. The first was dominated by Christianity incarnated in the theological substance of Calvinism; the most influential figure in this period was Jonathan Edwards. The Transcendentalists represented the second period, which was publicly recognized through the creative thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson. German idealism and the European Romantic movement philosophically and culturally governed this second

period. The third period was inaugurated by the American Pragmatism.¹ Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1859-1952), George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), and C.I. Lewis (1883-1964) have all played essential roles in shaping the pragmatism movement. However, Peirce, James, and Dewey have been widely considered the pioneering and influential pragmatists who were responsible for the dominant emergence of American pragmatism.² The American

¹ See *The Two Pragmatisms: From Peirce to Rorty* (London: Routledge, 1997), 1-2. Regarding the third period, Mounce notes, "Here, for the first time, the direction of influence is reversed. Pragmatism is not a body of thought which arose in Europe and then was extended to America; it is one which arose in America and then extended to Europe."

² For different and detailed accounts of American pragmatism, see the following: Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). In this book West presents American pragmatism as "a specific historical and cultural product of American civilization" that has undergone transforming as well as declining periods; however, West downplays the essential role of naturalistic metaphysics, especially that of Peirce, in American pragmatism; instead, he finds Dewey's pragmatic thought on historical and social consciousness more congenial to his emphasis on cultural critique. See Robert Corrington's counterargument, "The Emancipation of American Philosophy," *APA Newsletter* 90 (1991): 23-26; Murray Murphey's "Toward an Historicist History of American Philosophy," *Transactions* 15 (1979): 3-18; Max Fisch, "Some General Characteristics of American Philosophy," *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays by Max H. Fisch*, ed. Kenneth L. Ketner and Christian J.W. Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 110-113; Bruce Kuklich, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge Massachusetts, 1860 - 1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Elizabeth Flower and Murray G. Murphey, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 2 vols (New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1977); John E. Smith, *The Spirit of American Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963). Smith continues to expound the pragmatic thought of Peirce, James, and Dewey in his *Purpose and Thought: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). To trace a critical history of American Pragmatism, see H.S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1984); Sandra B. Rosenthal, "Recent Perspectives on American Pragmatism, Part I," *Transactions* 10 (1974): 76-85; A.J. Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism: Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce and William James* (San Francisco: Freeman, Cooper, and Co., 1968). Deeply immersed in the empiricist tradition of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, Ayer's extensive treatment of James' radical empiricism received more positive interpretations; whereas Peirce's foundational aspects of pragmatism, however intricate, such as semiotics and the three universal

pragmatists may also be called “naturalists,”³ for they have professed themselves to be anti-dualists. For them, whatever is, is nature; that is, there is no fundamental demarcation between human beings and nature. Nature is vast and encompassing, and human beings are not merely causally connected to it, but are enveloped within it, as it were. There is an intimate epistemic and ontological “transaction” (to use Dewey’s term) between the human organism and the natural environment.⁴ These pragmatists discarded the dualistically rational abstractions of Cartesian foundationalism, especially the privileging of the substantive self’s solipsism. Their metaphysical monism found

categories were neither penetratingly explored nor examined. Regarding Ayer’s book, John E. Smith remarks that Ayer “seems to ignore the fact that the pragmatists were strenuously attacking the empiricism of his own tradition, and therefore he discusses Peirce and James as if they were seeking to answer all the epistemological questions which have become the stock-in-trade of British philosophy.” See his *Purpose and Thought: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 199.

³ This term, however, must be treated with some qualifications, mainly because, as Robert Corrington points out, there are two major streams emerging from the “classical American metaphysics”: idealism and naturalism. Even though the classical Americans all found science (e.g., biological sciences, psychology, or mathematical physics) essential to metaphysics and to the axiological quest, the way in which they approached it radically differs. According to Corrington, such philosophers as Emerson, Peirce, Royce, Hocking, Whitehead, and Hartshorne may be loosely labeled as “idealists,” while such thinkers as James, Santayana, Dewey, Mead, Randall, and Buchler are called “naturalists.” See his “Classical American Metaphysics: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, ed. Richard E. Hart and Douglas R. Anderson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 260-81. Also regarding “pragmatic naturalism,” Sandra Rosenthal states that pragmatism is naturalism because humans are imbedded within it, and that “man’s grasp of nature within his world is permeated with the irreducible meaning structures by which he and his world are intentionally bound.” See her “Classical American Pragmatism: Key Themes and Phenomenological Dimensions,” *Pragmatism Considers Phenomenology*, ed. Robert S. Corrington, Carl Hausman, and Thomas M. Seebohm (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1987), 37-57.

⁴ In the chapter entitled “Scientific Method and the Structure of Speculative Pragmatism,” Rosenthal used the terms “epistemic” and “ontological” to examine the inseparable relationship between biological/human organism and natural world that pragmatists such as Peirce, Dewey, and Mead assert. See her *Speculative Pragmatism* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1990), 7-22.

affinities not only with the Hegelian rejection of dualism, but also with the insurrection of Darwinian evolutionism.⁵

While Peirce declares that his pragmatism is a continuation of Jesus' teaching ("You may know them by their fruits"), John Dewey argues that his American pragmatism is "an extension of historical empiricism, but with this fundamental difference, that it does not insist upon antecedent phenomena but upon consequent phenomena; not upon the precedents but upon the possibilities of action."⁶ Furthermore, Dewey insists that the "pragmatic movement," is not *de novo*, but has its roots in British and European thought; it is just the attempt at "re-adaptation." But this readaptation uniquely reflects the "distinctive traits of the environment of American life."⁷ American pragmatism may be defined as "a philosophy of *experience*, a fact which at once links the position with the philosophy of existence, with phenomenology and ... with the Wittgenstein who demanded that we return to the actual situation for a 'second look'."⁸ This philosophic doctrine has certainly exerted such a profound impact on many other aspects of the American life, such as religion, art, social theory, politics, science, morality, and cultural criticism. Essentially, American pragmatism embraces a future-oriented principle, which holds that the meaning of an intellectual concept is conditioned and clarified by practical action; in other words, all thought must begin within the context of actual experience and that the "whole function of thought is to produce habits of action" (*CP* 5.402). Thought is to be intimately

⁵ It should be noted that what essentially attracted the American pragmatists and naturalists to Darwin's evolutionary theory was its methodological and statistical implications. In fact, Peirce resolutely jettisoned Social Darwinism; he characterized it a "greed philosophy," which was opposed to his "agapism" or "evolutionary love." Corrington argues that, for Peirce, the Darwinian evolution "lacks a deeper sense of purpose that could show us the inner dynamism of growth." See his *ICSP*, 170. See also William M. Shea, *The Naturalist and the Supernatural: Studies in Horizon and an American Philosophy of Religion* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 1-29.

⁶ John J. McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸ John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought*, 9.

connected with practical consequences. Peirce claims: "Thinking is universally acknowledged to be an active operation" (CP 1.573); in other words, "The elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action" (CP 5.212). For the American pragmatists, thought must be an "embodied action," existing alongside a concrete or pragmatic thinker. Pragmatism is not about abstract intellectualism or a fixed system of thought as so predominantly upheld by Continental thinkers.⁹

Carl Hausman suggests that there are at least five characteristics that distinguish American philosophy, especially classical American pragmatism, from the philosophical perspectives of rationalism and British empiricism. (1) American pragmatism disclaims any form of absolute idealism or foundationalism, which privileges the rigid epistemic individualism and intuitionism; instead, it introduces the dynamic pragmatic doctrine of continuity and its logical structures of inference. "There are no atomic facts. Instead of an Absolute, the universe is condensed into a plurality of focused, dynamic processes."¹⁰ (2) It would be inconceivable for the American pragmatists to have the pansemiotic world co-exist with the noumenal world. According to Peirce, since the universe is "perfused with signs," the metaphysical concepts of things-in-themselves or dualisms must be repudiated. (3) The third

⁹ According to Calvin O. Schrag (in his *The Self after Postmodernity* [New Haven: Yale University Press], 1977), anti-Hegelians such as Feuerbach, Marx, and Kierkegaard, "made us aware of the profound irony of a system of thought without a concrete thinker" (61). The essence of American pragmatism may also be elucidated via Heidegger's concepts of *Zuhandenheit* ("readiness-to-hand") and *Vorhandenheit* ("presentness-at-hand") and his example of the hammer and the act of hammering. For Heidegger, knowledge always involves action: thinking and doing are inextricably connected. "Equipment" (*Zeug*) or "a useful thing" (Joan Stambaugh's translation) is something "ready-to-hand" or "handy" (*zuhanden*) that enables one to pragmatically deal with his/her world. For Heidegger, humankind is first and foremost *homo faber*. See his *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 69-74.

¹⁰ Carl Hausman, "Introduction: American Philosophy in Transition," *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, ed. Richard E. Hart and Douglas R. Anderson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 3-4.

characteristic centers on the rejection of the Cartesian self's immediate and intuitive self-consciousness, for to ground knowledge "on intuition is to close knowledge at its logically inferred and temporal origin."¹¹ (4) Both experiencing and the experienced are primal; namely, "all dimensions of the world and our consciousness of it [cannot be reduced], traced to or subsumed under fully determinate, final premises or conclusions."¹² (5) Deeply grounded in the metaphysical doctrine of developmental teleology, Peirce's universe is dynamically evolving, developing, and reaching toward the growth of the reasonable concreteness. "Structures or regularities emerge. They are neither fixed nor presaged in a necessitating teleology. Spontaneity is an ingredient in the nature of things."¹³

Considered as a founder of semiotics, Peirce asserts that "all thought is in signs" (CP 5.253). Thought is semiotically mental, dialogic, or representational and it irreducibly involves the triadic dimension of sign, object, and interpretant. Thought belongs to the category of Thirdness (meaning). As regards the pragmatic theory of meaning defined in the paper entitled "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878), Peirce enunciates his famous maxim: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (CP 5.402).¹⁴

¹¹ Hausman, "Introduction: American Philosophy in Transition," *Philosophy in Experience*, 4.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. Corrington also enumerates and analyzes six fundamental traits of American metaphysics: anti-Cartesianism, the priority of community, Darwinism, teleology, the priority of the scientific method, and the radicalized concept of experience. See his "Classical American Metaphysics: Retrospect and Prospect," *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, 260-81.

¹⁴ As Mounce points out in his *The Two Pragmatisms*, Peirce's "pragmatic maxim" in this paper shares philosophical affinity with the Logical Positivists' "verification principle" (36-37). This 1878 paper also exhibits Peirce's early nominalism and subjective idealism, evidenced by his example of the diamond's "hardness." As his philosophy became more mature, Peirce eventually rejected his nominalism. In his letter (c.1905) to Mario Calderoni, an Italian pragmatist, Peirce wrote, "The pragmatist cannot admit that. I myself went too far in the direction of

The term “effects” connotes that effects are sensible, not just on our private senses but on our public perception or perceptivity; and the term “practical bearings” refers to habits of action. The understanding of objects must be embedded in sensible effects and practical implications in order to promote the growth of the concrete reasonableness.

Pragmatism may be defined as:

an assertion that all concepts, qualitative or other, are definitionally equivalent to a set of conditionals of perception, to experienced effects. The point of this theory, it should be clear, is to provide a definition of meaning suitable for the theory of inquiry, for if, as that theory holds, beliefs are habits, then to believe that a concept applies to *x* must be to adopt certain habits of action with respect to *x*.¹⁵

Pragmatism, as Dewey enunciates in his “The Development of American Pragmatism” (1922), “has a metaphysical implication. The doctrine of the value of consequences leads us to take the future into consideration. And this taking into consideration of the future leads us to the conception of a universe whose evolution is not finished, of a universe which is still, in James’ term ‘in the making,’ ‘in the process of becoming,’ of a universe up to a certain point still plastic.”¹⁶

The American pragmatists also regarded themselves as experimentalists who applied dynamic scientific concepts (not scientism) and methods to their pragmatic modes of philosophizing as opposed to the hegemony of the European epistemology-centered philosophy; namely, rationalism (the philosophic abstractions of Cartesian intuitionism or foundationalism and Kantian transcendentalism) and traditional

nominalism when I said that it was a mere question of the convenience of speech whether we say that a diamond is hard when it is not pressed upon, or whether we say that it is soft until it is pressed upon. I *now* say that experiment will prove that the diamond is hard, as a positive fact. That is, it is a real fact that it *would* resist pressure, which amounts to extreme scholastic realism” (CP 8.208).

¹⁵ Murray G. Murphey, “Kant’s Children: The Cambridge Pragmatists” *Transactions* 4 (1968): 3-33.

¹⁶ McDermott, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 50.

empiricism (Hume, Mill, and Russell). For the rationalists, knowledge was grounded in *a priori* foundations, whereas for the empiricists it derived from sense-experience or perception.¹⁷ Nevertheless, structured by foundationalist epistemology these two perspectives inferred that knowledge must hold absolute certainty. On the contrary, the American pragmatists claimed that epistemology, because of its dependence upon scientific inquiry, was always relative, fallible, and self-corrective.¹⁸ The method of pragmatic philosophizing must be contextually and scientifically formulated, and

¹⁷ Like James (who considered himself as having an intellectual pedigree from British thinkers), Peirce was an empiricist who insisted that *a priori* knowledge must be founded upon experience. Rejecting the traditional empirical theory, especially the Humean notion that all thought derives from impressions or sensations, the American pragmatists argued that, instead of playing a passive observer/spectator of reality, the mind must take on a constitutive role in the structuring of reality or in perception. There must exist an “interactional unity between knower and known” (Rosenthal, *Speculative Pragmatism*, 12). In his *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, H.S. Thayer maintains that, “For Peirce, James, and Dewey, the weakest and most troublesome points in traditional empirical theory were three: its interpretation of sensation (or sense data); its interpretation of ideas (thinking and mind); its persistent attempt at a reductive analysis of mental phenomena. In short, empiricism, to the pragmatic eye, was suffering from a faulty philosophical physiology, psychology, and method of analysis” (137). Robert J. Roth points out that the classical empiricists (Berkeley, Hume, James Mill, John Stuart Mill) were not “radical” enough in terms of deeply examining a lived experience. And that their ‘ordinary empiricism’ “tended to eliminate connections between things and to emphasize the disjunctions.” On the contrary, the so-called “radical empiricists,” such as Peirce, James, and Dewey, firmly believed that “[t]o be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced.” However, Roth proposes to show that the pragmatists themselves were not radical enough “in sifting out the full implications of their own tradition.” See his “Radical Pragmatism and a Theory of Person,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1996): 335-49.

¹⁸ Peirce’s epistemological principle is pragmatically grounded in the so-called *fallibilism*; that is, knowledge grounded in finite cognition will never be absolutely true. And since the scientifically finite inquiry is self-corrective and fallible, truth is only approximate, hence further inquiry is required. For Peirce, all knowledge or thought is inferred via semiotic representation. The whole idea of fallibilism originated from Peirce’s concept of the infinite community of inquirers, the theory of signs (semiotics), the doctrine of synechism (continuum), and the theory of *agapastic* evolution. These fundamental concepts will be examined in more detail.

continuously developed in order to fittingly confront communal or social problems; in other words, the immediacies of lived experiences ought to be dynamically dealt with by scientific experimentalism as well as pragmatic naturalism.

Despite its thematic common ground of pragmatism (philosophy of experience), this philosophic movement developed heterogeneous versions. Peirce configured his pragmatic epistemology from the perspective of objective idealism (things or ideas exist apart from our perception of them) and architectonic cosmology (the construction of a metaphysical but open system of realism), which were integrated with the logic of science. While Peirce attempted to furnish a scientific experimentalism which was not an *a priori* transcendental construction of Kant, James' pragmatism was inspired by British empiricism; his philosophical psychology was underscored by nominalism, which was metaphysically incommensurate with Peirce's realism. Although it was James who popularized the doctrine of pragmatism, its groundworks were originated and formulated by Peirce.¹⁹ William James' version of pragmatism (or his preferred

¹⁹The genealogical doctrine of pragmatism first surfaced in the weekly discussions of the Metaphysical Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts (ca.1871), which composed of members like Charles Peirce, Chauncey Wright, William James, Nicholas St. John Green, and Oliver W. Holmes, Jr. This so-called "doctrine of pragmatism" actually had its roots in European sources: Kant, Berkeley, and Alexander Bain. The articles "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," published in 1877 and 1878 respectively, were Peirce's first expositions of pragmatism, even though the name "pragmatism" was not explicitly stated. The word "pragmatism" as the name of a philosophic doctrine and method first received the public attention through James' annual address before the Philosophical Union at the University of California in Berkeley on August 26, 1898. In his lecture entitled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" addressed to the members of the Union, James fully credited Peirce as the originator of the term "pragmatism." However, according to Max Fisch, James used the term "pragmatism" "with reluctance and only out of loyalty to Peirce." It was an act of "characteristic generosity" (Mounce). James would prefer employing the term "practicalism." See Max Fisch, *Peirce, Semiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays by Max H. Fisch*, 285; on the contrasting views between James and Peirce, see Vincent M. Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 78-80; cf. William J. Gavin, "Peirce and 'The Will to Believe'," *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, ed. Eugene Freeman (La Salle, IL: Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983), 145-153. Mounce claims that the views that James attributed to Peirce "were drawn exclusively from the paper written in 1878, some thirty years previously. Moreover, the aspects of the paper which James

term “practicalism” which accentuates the distinctive individual or particular) was firmly established in both radical empiricism and nominalism. James’ pragmatism, unlike Peirce’s and Dewey’s, which were primarily shaped by scientific method, essentially patterned itself around religious and moral considerations.

The meaning of a concept, for Peirce, is semiotically interpreted and communally grounded in reasonable conduct; while for James, the concept is psychologically appealed to through the affective dimension of particular/individual experiences. Dewey’s form of pragmatism is grounded in his naturalistic empiricism and “instrumentalism” (the function of thought in a “problematic situation”).²⁰ For Dewey, the epistemological approach must methodologically function within “warranted assertibility” (the judgment of the inquiry that has finally been established or concluded); whereas for Peirce, the epistemological approach operates within the speculative or theoretical realm.

Influenced by Peirce, Dewey maintained that inquiry must not only be experimentally informed, but also formed by scientific method; however, he insisted that inquiry must not be exclusively confined to the sciences; it may be encompassed by varied subject matters (e.g., arts, law, ethics, etc.). Again, like Peirce, Dewey understood inquiry as the attempt by the self to get rid of doubt, to solve a “problematic situation” by bringing it to a “unified whole,” or to reach a produced judgment (Peirce’s “habit”). Similarly, for Peirce, the purpose of inquiry is to settle real and living doubts (not Descartes’ “paper doubts”) in order to attain belief. In his paper “The Fixation of Belief,” published in *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (November 1877), Peirce asserted: “The irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term this struggle *inquiry*” (CP 5.374).

emphasised were those that Peirce had abandoned” (*The Two Pragmatisms*, 43). As mentioned before, this 1878 paper evidently displays Peirce’s early embrace of nominalism.

²⁰ Dewey claims that James also belongs to this movement, for his concepts and theories are employed as instruments. However, James’ concepts and theories focus more toward moral idealism and “meliorism”; whereas Dewey’s operate within logic and reasoning.

Unlike James' view of private consciousness (or principled individualism) as the ultimate criterion of truth, Peirce's and Dewey's pragmatic conceptions of truth are implanted in social practice and communication. And even though Dewey ontologically agrees with Peirce's notion of truth as opinion collectively and ultimately settled by the "community of inquirers," he maintains that truth is to be transformed; on the contrary, Peirce infers that truth, founded upon "synechism" (the principle of continuity), must be continuously discovered: "Do not block the way of inquiry" (*CP* 1.135). Peirce's doctrine of synechism was what distinctively and profoundly distinguished his version of "pragmaticism"²¹ from that of James or Dewey.

In spite of their distinctive versions of pragmatism, American pragmatists²² were

²¹Peirce insists that "pragmaticism" is not a system of philosophy; it is only a "method of thinking." He also claims that the term "pragmatism" should be used "loosely to signify affiliation with Schiller, James, Dewey, Royce and the rest of us, while the particular doctrine I invented the word to denote, which is your first kind of pragmatism, should be called 'pragmaticism.' The extra syllable will indicate the narrower meaning" (*CP* 8.205). On March 7, 1904 Peirce wrote James saying that, "You and Schiller carry pragmatism too far from me" (*CP* 8.258). To exercise his "ethics of terminology"; namely, "[t]he first rule of good taste in writing is to use words whose meanings will not be misunderstood" (*CP* 2.223) and rescue his intended version of pragmatism from James, Peirce decided to denominate the more precise term "pragmaticism" which was, for him, "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers" (*CP* 5.414; cf. *CP* 5.414 - 437). Actually, Peirce neither denounced nor renounced the fundamental principles of pragmatism such as the concepts of practical beliefs or habits, or the scientific method; however, he firmly rejected the pervasive nominalism and humanistic and subjectivistic pragmatism that underlined James' and Schiller's pragmatism, which closely remained within British empiricism. As opposed to their versions of pragmatism, Peirce's pragmaticism was deeply grounded in synechistic metaphysics and semiotics (doctrine of signs); cf. H.S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 136-141.

²²Emerson's various works were one of Peirce's early influences, mainly because of his growing up in a Unitarian home and being exposed to Concord Transcendentalism. (This movement commenced early in the 1830s, and in 1836, the "Transcendental Club" was formed. Besides Emerson, members included Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and others). In addition to admitting to being a "modified Schellingian," Peirce also thought of himself as a "New England transcendentalist."

indebted to the “Emersonian evasion of epistemology-centered philosophy.”²³ Cornel West observes that Emerson (1803-1882) “not only prefigures the dominant themes of American pragmatism but, more important, enacts an intellectual style of cultural criticism that permits and encourages American pragmatists to swerve from mainstream European philosophy.”²⁴ Even though it is debatable as to whether or not Emerson is a “critical” philosopher,²⁵ his seminal themes on science, religion, moral/ethical principles, and nature were continuously either adapted, interpreted, or modified by Peirce, James, and Dewey. Inspired by Emerson’s perceptions of nature,²⁶ the American pragmatists underscored the lived experience of the communalized self as contingently and dynamically floating on the constant flux of evolving events, evidenced by such concepts as “synechism” (Peirce), the “*more*” (James), and

²³ Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 42. Epistemology does play an important role in pragmatism; however, there is a marked difference between “Emerson evasion of epistemology-centered philosophy” and pragmatic epistemology. Rosenthal insightfully points out: “What pragmatism houses is a rich and fundamental ‘existential’ view of epistemology, not an epistemological existentialism, but an epistemological point of view on existence as the foundational level of all knowledge. Epistemology is not here understood as an abstract articulation of conditions of our understanding, but as an examination of conditions and structures of our way of being, an examination at once epistemic and ontological.” *Speculative Pragmatism*, 21-22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵ See Ellen Kappy Suckiel “Emerson and the Virtues,” *American Philosophy*, ed. Marcus G. Singer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 135-152. According to Suckiel, if philosophy basically entails “cognitive” or “non-empirical” work and sets out to discover truth via “propositional claims,” and inquires the “most fundamental reality,” then Emerson is indeed a “paradigm American philosopher” *par excellence*. However, if philosophy is considered “critical” or “well-reasoned,” then in this respect Emerson is not a philosopher. He is “first and foremost...a preacher.” Emerson “rejects critical philosophy” and “discursive reasons as a means to truth” (152). Dewey believes that Emerson, besides being a poet, is not only a philosopher but that his name should be mentioned in the same breath with that of Plato.

²⁶ “Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result.” See Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Five Essays on Man and Nature*, ed. Robert E. Spiller (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1954), 6.

“transformation” (Dewey). Cultural, moral, and philosophical optimism (Peirce’s “cheerful hope”) is also one of the essential themes that American pragmatists shared with Emerson. Human experience is ontologically attached to the open-ended future and is filled with innumerable possibilities of the “not yet.” Nevertheless, in contrast to Emerson and James, Peirce, Dewey, and Mead consistently stressed the social/communal dimensions of the pragmatic self. Even though Peirce’s pragmatic philosophizing is steadily anchored in logic and science, his metaphysical concept “abduction” (instinctive insight, which goes from a rule to a case) is close to Emerson’s understanding of “instinct,” which enables us to generate various general theories so that we can learn, adapt, and connect our lived experience with the world or nature. Both Emerson and Peirce lay stress on the ethical/moral significance of inquiry. And for Peirce, ethics or “practics” is the “normative science” (one of his three divisions of philosophy) that furnishes ethical norms for self-controlled, deliberate conduct to promote the *summum bonum*. The *summum bonum* (reasonable conduct), as a process, must be collectively pursued by the greater community, and not by the isolated or selfish individuals, and definitely not by the “Gospel of Greed,” but by the gospel of Christ.²⁷ Contrary to Peirce’s anti-solipsism, James constructed his finitely insulated self²⁸ in parallel with Emerson’s individualism, which was famously inscribed in Emerson’s essay “Self-Reliance.” In this essay, Emerson considers social conformity or moral rules to be a sign of weakness or inauthentic individuality; instead he optimistically idealizes the individual’s own creative power, ideals, or judgments as

²⁷ “The gospel of Christ says that progress comes from every individual merging his individuality in sympathy with his neighbors. On the other side, the conviction of the nineteenth century is that progress takes place by virtue of every individual’s striving for himself with all his might and trampling his neighbor under foot whenever he gets the chance to do so. This may accurately be called the Gospel of Greed” (*CP* 6.294). The “gospel of Christ” reflects Peirce’s “social principle,” which is intrinsically grounded in logic; that is, “He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively” (*CP* 5.354).

²⁸ See William James, “The Stream of Thought” and “The Consciousness of Self,” *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University

guided by divine spirit or the oversoul. While the role of “Spirit” seems to have been de-eulogized or deprivileged by Satayana, Emerson’s “Spirit” plays a significant and dominant role in nature; that is, it fashions and frames nature. Emerson’s nature “always wears the colors of the spirit.”²⁹ “It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.”³⁰ Emerson’s privileging of spirit over nature did not have a significant impact on Peirce; instead, Peirce’s pragmatic philosophizing was sustained by objective idealism; that is, the objective universe is discovered or explored only by means of mental constructs. This is also seen in Peirce’s doctrine of “panpsychism”; namely, that matter is “effete mind”; in other words, it is the presentation of ideas or consciousness. He contends that the depth structures or essential features of the universe are fabricated by mental, not material, processes; thus, there is no gulf between matter and mind. The Peircean mind is active and functional, and its role in the universe resembles Leibniz’s concept of the monad. Furthermore, the theory of mind plays an indispensable role in Peirce’s cosmology, especially in his principle of “evolutionary love,” which teleologically moves toward the highest good: the growth of concrete reasonableness, which is comparable in some respects to Kant’s “kingdom of ends.”

After the Civil War, the lingering traces of Kantian and Hegelian idealism still lurked behind the philosophical thought of a few American thinkers. While both Peirce (influenced by Kant) and James (inspired by British empiricism) found Hegel’s thought problematic, Dewey and Royce, on the contrary, became neo-Hegelians. Dewey’s early philosophy was immersed in Hegelian idealism, although he eventually transformed his German idealism into a distinctive version of pragmatism. Before creating his concept of instrumentalism Dewey was a neo-Kantian. William James’ *Principles of Psychology* (1890) had a considerable influence on Dewey’s epistemology, moving it in a

Press, 1983). Besides being a *magnum opus* in introspective psychology, this book also prefigures James’ philosophy of “practicalism.”

²⁹ Emerson, *Five Essays on Man and Nature*, 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

naturalized direction as evidenced by Dewey's essay "The Development of American Pragmatism." Following James' thought espoused in *Principles*, Dewey argues that the mind actively and directly perceives reality, and experience itself constitutes inference. Royce studied philosophy at Leipzig and Göttingen, Germany after obtaining a degree in literature at the University of California. Early in his career, Royce did not align his philosophy with pragmatic epistemology; instead he opted for Hegelian idealism which essentially provided a metaphysical framework for his concept of the Absolute, particularly in the first volume of *The World and the Individual* (1899), where his concept of detached individualism etched in absolute idealism was extensively expounded. Taking cues from Hegel and Schelling, Royce infers that knowledge can be reached through metaphysical idealism; this certainly echoes Peirce's theory of panpsychism. However, later influenced by Peirce's semiotic theory with its triadic logic, Royce, in his book *The Problem of Christianity* (1913), began to convert the particular individualism of absolute idealism into the social philosophy of the "Beloved Community," in which the spirit of loyalty is cultivated.

Peirce, after entering Harvard in 1855, spent "the two most passionately laborious years" (CP 1.288) dissecting Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which eventually led to the Peircean maxim of pragmatism.³¹ Even though he was not

³¹ In his freshman year, Peirce devoted his time to studying Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* and later he began to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in German two hours a day and knew it almost by heart. He admits: "I, alone of our number, had come upon the threshing floor of philosophy through the doorway of Kant" (CP 5.12). He also recalls: "In the early sixties I was a passionate devotee of Kant, at least as regarded the Transcendental Analytic in the *Critic of the Pure Reason*. I believed more implicitly in the two tables of the Functions of Judgment and the Categories than if they had been brought down from Sinai" (CP 4.2). Although Peirce rejected Kant's metaphysical concepts of *Ding-an-sich* and the synthetic *a priori*, his pragmatic empiricism indeed evolved from Kant's conception of "pragmatic belief" (rooted in the word *pragmatisch*), which does not mean "practical" (*praktisch*), but experimental. For Kant, unlike opinion or knowledge, the essence of belief is grounded in practical judgments. In "What Pragmatism Is" published in *The Monist* (1905), Peirce clarified more fully the Kantian term *pragmatisch*, which he adopted for his new theory: "Some of his friends wished him to call it *practicism* or *practicalism*...But for one who had learned philosophy out of Kant, as the writer, along with nineteen out of every twenty

strongly influenced by Hegel like Royce, one can detect Peirce's affinity with Hegel's dialectical theory of meaning, the triadic structures, and the principle of continuity. Peirce and Hegel denied that rational intuitions can be directly cognized; hence immediate or unmediated meaning is cognitively impossible. They both maintain that cognitive immediacy must also possess teleological activity. Peirce contends that thought must semiotically involve a triadic relation among sign, object, and interpretant; in other words, all thought must unequivocally operate within the realm of semiosis (sign-action), for we have no power of thinking without signs. And, according to Peirce, since we have no power of introspection, knowledge is to be derived from hypothetic reasoning. Besides submerging himself in metaphysical pragmatism, synechistic ontology, and objective idealism, Peirce was also influenced by Duns Scotus' scholastic realism. With its conception of "haecceity," Peirce resolutely rejected the Cartesian introspective process and its foundationalism as well as the progeny of nominalism of British empiricism. Unlike the self of Descartes' epistemic individualism, Peirce's pragmatic self is the social participant in the community of inquirers.³² And while the rationalists' static reality was plagued by the indubitable premises which were grounded in foundationalist epistemology, the pragmatists' reality was dynamically unfolding itself through scientific inquiry, especially through what

experimentalists who have turned to philosophy, had done, and who still thought in Kantian terms most readily, *praktisch* and *pragmatisch* were as far apart as the two poles, the former belonging in a region of thought where no mind of the experimentalist type can ever make sure of solid ground under his feet, the latter expressing relation to some definite human purpose. Now quite the most striking feature of the new theory was its recognition of an inseparable connection between rational cognition and rational purpose; and that consideration it was which determined the preference for the name *pragmatism*" (CP 5.412).

³² For an excellent paper on Peirce's criticisms of the Cartesian epistemology, see Susan Hack, "Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community," *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, ed. Eugene Freeman (La Salle, IL: Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983), 238-263.

Peirce termed, “abductive reasoning” (constructive imagination from rule to case), and not through Descartes’ cognitive intuitionism.³³

Charles S. Peirce’s Life

My life is built upon a theory; and if this theory turns out false, my life will turn out a failure.

Charles S. Peirce

Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), an obscure and neglected figure during his life, is now widely recognized as the greatest philosopher this country has ever produced. Peirce was a semiotician, logician, scientist, inventor, engineer, mathematician,

³³ One of Peirce’s momentous contributions to philosophy is his tripartite structure of the scientific method or logic of inquiry; namely, abduction, deduction, and induction. These are the three fundamental forms of reasoning. Peirce called hypothetic inference “abduction” (later termed “retroduction”). His pragmatism is intimately coalesced with the “logic of abduction.” See *CP* 5.195-205. Abductive reasoning posits a natural instinct for guessing right; it is a mere conjecture, the creative imagination that can generate hypotheses (Peirce assumes that humankind has a “natural instinct for truth”). Deductive logic (a form of syllogism) is the logical conclusion of the hypothesis, and the inductive reasoning involves the empirical testing of the inference (the confirmation or falsification of the hypothesis), which is derived from deductive logic. Peirce explains: “Deduction proves that something *must* be; Induction shows that something *actually is* operative; Abduction merely suggests that something *may be*” (*CP* 5.171). In other words, “Abduction having suggested a theory, we employ *deduction* to deduce from that ideal theory a promiscuous variety of consequences to the effect that if we perform certain acts, we shall find ourselves confronted with certain experiences. We then proceed to try these experiments, and if the predictions of the theory are verified, we have a proportionate confidence that the experiments that remain to be tried will confirm the theory. I say that these three are the only elementary modes of reasoning there are...In forty years diligent study of arguments, I have never found one which did not consist of those elements” (*CP* 8.209).

psychologist, philologist, lexicographer, historian of science, mathematical economist, astronomer, chemist, geodesist, surveyor, cartographer, metrologist, spectroscopist, book reviewer, phenomenologist, rhetorician, metaphysician, and founder of the philosophic movement called American pragmatism. With the immense depth and breadth of his knowledge and experience Peirce was indeed a “Renaissance Man.” He was “one of the rare thinkers who deserves the overworked title of ‘genius.’”³⁴

Neither William James nor John Dewey apparently possessed Peirce’s unquestionably intellectual amplitude. Vincent G. Potter remarks that, “James was a physician and experimental psychologist, but not a logician. Dewey was a logician but not a working scientist.”³⁵ James, Dewey, and Royce all acknowledged their indebtedness to Peirce’s original and groundbreaking thought of pragmatism,³⁶ especially the later Royce whose metaphysical hermeneutics was substantially shaped by Peirce’s theory of signs, significantly evidenced by Royce’s important book *The Problem of Christianity* published in 1913.³⁷ Because of his scientific, mathematical, and logical sagacity, W. K. Clifford considered Peirce the greatest living logician. Charles Hartshorne proclaims that Peirce is “America’s profoundest philosopher,” and the triadic universal categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) are considered by him to be Peirce’s important

³⁴ Kenneth Laine Ketner, *His Glassy Essence: An Autobiography of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 40.

³⁵ Vincent G. Potter, SJ., “Charles Sanders Peirce: 1839-1914,” *American Philosophy*, ed. Marcus G. Singer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 21; cf. Max H. Fisch, “Peirce as Scientist, Mathematician, Historian, Logician, and Philosopher,” *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism*, ed. Kenneth Laine Ketner and Christian J. W. Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 376-400.

³⁶ According to Potter, what has made Peirce’s pragmatism so significantly and even radically different from that of James or Dewey is that “it is the result of his reflections upon his own life in the laboratory and of his thought, even painstaking, study of logic. Neither James nor Dewey had quite this combination of experience... But Peirce, from his boyhood, lived science, logic and philosophy” (“Charles Sanders Peirce: 1839-1914,” *American Philosophy*, 21).

³⁷ See Corrington, *CI*, 1-29.

contribution to philosophy.³⁸ Karl Popper also regards Peirce as one of the greatest philosophers of all time. As regards Peirce's vast knowledge of the history of philosophy, he has been compared with Hegel; however, considering his extensive knowledge of medieval logic, natural science, mathematics, and logic he could be a step ahead of Hegel. Peirce is also considered by Max Fisch as "America's greatest logician and one of the founders of modern mathematical or symbolic logic."³⁹ He was classed along with, if not higher than logical giants such as Cantor, Frege, Russell, and Whitehead of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And without modesty, Peirce placed himself near or the same rank of Aristotle,⁴⁰ Duns Scotus, and Leibniz, whom he considered to be the three greatest logicians.

Even though endowed with spiritual prowess and "full of flashes of brilliance" (James), collegially Peirce remained either an obscure or rejected figure, mainly due to the jealousy of academicians and also to the fact that his unpublished writings

³⁸ As one of the young editors of the first six volumes of *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Hartshorne praised Peirce as follows: "Peirce was a profound thinker from his early teens on. The power of incisive, independent thinking which some of those early reflections show almost made my hair stand on end. There are ethical and religious reflections of great power, and sometimes of great beauty and nobility...Peirce was the only universal intellectual genius after the pattern of Leibniz in the whole nineteenth century. I call him the greatest technician philosophy has had since Kant" (Cited in Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 53).

³⁹ Fisch, *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism*, 1. See also Max H. Fisch, "Peirce as Scientist, Mathematician, Historian, Logician and Philosopher," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*, No.23 Graduate Studies (Lubbock: Texas Tech University, 1981), 13-34.

⁴⁰ Greek thought, especially that of Aristotle, always had a profound impact on Peirce's philosophy. Peirce admitted that he had intensively read and studied Aristotle more than any other philosopher; and for him, Aristotle "was by many lengths the greatest intellect that human history has to show" (CP 6.96). See Max Fisch, "Peirce's Aristotle: The Greek Influence in His Later Philosophy," *Transactions* 7(1971): 187-207. It is interesting to note that Peirce also recognized Hegel "in some respects the greatest philosopher that ever lived" (CP 1.524); and compared to Hegel's *Logic*, Peirce believed that Hegel's *Phenomenology* was exceptionally written. It is understandable since Hegel's *Phenomenology* did play a considerable role in the Peircean pragmatic system. See Fisch, "Hegel and Peirce," *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism*, 261-82.

outnumbered the published ones. In addition, both Peirce's writing style and thought were intrinsically dense and oftentimes extremely intricate. Because of this, they failed to gain a wider readership. Peirce became renowned among intellectual circles only few years before his death. By the time he was forty-four years old (1883), according to Joseph Brent, Peirce had already written approximately twenty-six important publications, some of which altered the course of philosophy.⁴¹ Even though Charles Peirce the philosopher, logician, mathematician, and scientist had not yet been prominently recognized in this country, he was, paradoxically, already a great American philosopher "to be known by the entire world."⁴² However, from 1883 to 1891 Peirce's philosophical career and personal life were tortured by tragedies, scandals, and controversies.

Peirce, a Boston Brahmin, was born on September 10, 1839 in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Benjamin Peirce and Sarah Hunt Mills Peirce. He was raised in a culturally and socially privileged class and intellectually aristocratic upscale family. Peirce's family "descended from John Pers (pronounced 'purse'), a weaver from Norwich, England, who emigrated to watertown, Massachusetts, in 1637 in the first wave of the Puritan exodus."⁴³ His father was a prominent Professor of Astronomy and Mathematics at Harvard University. Peirce's older brother, James Mill, was also an esteemed mathematician at Harvard. Peirce was a precocious child who was always exposed to a variety of disciplines such as law, politics, engineering, literature, business, physics, etc. Motivated by his uncle, Charles Henry Peirce, a physician, Peirce began to study chemistry. He recalled setting up his own chemical laboratory: "I must have been about twelve years old when I set up a chemical laboratory of my own and began to work through Liebig's hundred bottles of qualitative analysis and to make such things as vermilion both in the dry and in the wet way and to repeat a great many

⁴¹ Joseph Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*. Revised and Enlarged Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 139.

⁴² Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 40.

⁴³ Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*, 29-30.

well-known processes of chemistry.”⁴⁴ Late in the year of 1851, within only a few days Peirce mastered a copy of Whately’s *Elements of Logic*, which he picked up in his older brother’s room. Logic became his strongest passion even though he was well trained in chemistry, mathematics, and physics. At the age of fifteen, he was admitted to Harvard College and graduated four years later as one of the youngest students of his class.⁴⁵

Religiously Peirce was brought up a Unitarian, but later became an Episcopalian when he married his first wife and remained one throughout his adult life. Yet Peirce did not lead a life without the dark side of human nature (or what Carl Jung termed the “shadow”), which incessantly punctured his psyche. Perhaps Peirce and Kierkegaard shared one common trait; namely, melancholy, which tormented their lives. Physically, Peirce was plagued (as was his father) with the disease known as trigeminal neuralgia - a neurological disorder causing unbearable facial pain which could last either for few days or even weeks. To suppress this excruciating pain, both father and son had to take decoctions of opium; Peirce later used morphin and cocaine regularly, thus not only becoming addicted but also because of these toxins, inflicting physical abuse on his two wives. In his inspiring portrait account of Peirce’s life, Joseph Brent depicts the hellish torment of Peirce’s physical and mental illnesses as follows:

Peirce often associated the incidence of neuralgia with other disorders and conditions, such as prolonged fever, rheumatism, bronchitis, excessive stress, high emotion, bad weather, depression, overwork, and even madness of a kind...[W]hen the pain was on him, he was at first almost stupefied, and then aloof, cold, depressed, extremely suspicious, impatient of the slightest crossing, and subject to violent outbursts of temper... Peirce suffered all his adult life from the

⁴⁴ Cited in Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 103.

⁴⁵ In an obituary, Peirce’s younger brother Herbert recalled his older brother “forever digging into encyclopedias and other books in search of knowledge upon abstruse subjects, while discussions with his learned father upon profound questions of science, especially higher mathematics and philosophy, were common matters of astonishment, not only to his brothers and sister, but to his parents as well” (Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*, 37).

uncontrollable and intense mood swings symptomatic of manic-depressive illness...On the manic side he exhibited driven, paranoid, and impulsive actions; extreme insomnia; manic grandiosity and visionary expansiveness; hypersexuality; extraordinary energy... On the depressive side, he exhibited severely melancholic or depressive states characterized by suicidal feelings or flatness of mood, which were accompanied by inertness of mind, inability to feel emotion, and an unbearable sense of futility.⁴⁶

Obviously, some but not all of Peirce's character defects (e.g., drug addiction or irascible temper) may be fairly attributed to the physical causes. His intellectual greatness, exhibiting in logic, semiotics, philosophy of science, metaphysics, psychology, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, linguistics, geology, and religion was also stained by psychogenic illnesses, manic-depression (and possible insanity), sexual infidelity, unpredictable changes of mood, chronic drunkenness, impulsive or offensive manners, drug addiction, flirtations with suicide, racism against African-Americans, and unpaid debts. Peirce was a genius whose life was perpetually suffused with controversies, paradoxes, and contradictions. Brent portrays Peirce's life as "brilliant, bitter, humiliating ...fascinating, saddening, and compelling."⁴⁷ George Becker, Peirce's friend, of the U.S. Geological Survey, wrote the following words in Peirce's obituary:

Genius Peirce indubitably had; he also had its eccentricities; they stood sadly in his way, diminished his intellectual output, and exposed him to privations. Though he could be very charming, he was so intensely individualistic that cooperation was for him almost an impossibility, he could not "get along" with associates, and as he grew older, ill-health aggravated his peculiarities...[T]hey deprived him of the popularity, prosperity, and honors to which his great achievements would have entitled him.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*, 40-41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1. According to Brent, William James once lamented that Peirce was a "strange and unruly being."

⁴⁸ Cited in Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 25.

Peirce's personal and professional life, as well as his abstruse thought, contained striking contrasts. He did not practice what he preached, so to speak; in other words, he had to struggle to control his "sensuous impulse" (Schiller). These poignant contrasts can be illustrated through Peirce's pragmatic concepts of "self-control" and community. First, ethics (practices), a subdivision of Peirce's "normative sciences" (Secondness of experience), plays such an important role in Peirce's architectonic philosophy. He insists that the *telos* of a person's existence is to strive for rational self-conduct, to form habits of selecting or formulating and acting on certain rules of conduct that will direct that person to the growth of the concrete reasonableness or to absolute ideals (which is commensurate with Kant's moral doctrines of "categorical imperative" and "kingdom of ends"). According to Peirce, a mature, logical person is one who acquires the ultimate ideals of self-control and is also measured by them. A self-controlled person is fundamentally a rational person; a rational person is one who ethically and logically controls his/her own action or conduct. Furthermore, that person lives with selfless sacrifices and must jettison his/her own finite self (desires) so that he/she can attach himself/herself to the community of inquirers in order to collectively search for an ultimate reality or truth. Peirce imperatively declared that, "He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively" (CP 5.354). Consequently, a self-centered person is one who logically violates the social principle and thus becomes negated by it. Nonetheless, judged by his scandalous life, with its lack of moral constraints, Peirce's ethical notion of self-control proved practically irrelevant as a guide to his own conduct. It is also important to mention that one of the causes that contributed to Peirce's lack of self-control was his father's support of individualism, which had plagued him throughout his life. Brent notes: "Individualism was encouraged in the Peirce home by a lack of all discipline, except that which fostered the intellect. The family was unusually indulgent of its male members, who behaved much as they wished."⁴⁹ Peirce confessed:

⁴⁹Brent, *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*, 36.

I was brought up with far too loose a rein, except that I was forced to think hard & continuously...But as to moral self-control he [Peirce's father] unfortunately presumed that I would have inherited his own nobility of character, which was so far from being the case that for long years I suffered unspeakably, being an excessively emotional fellow, from ignorance of how to go to work to acquire sovereignty over myself.⁵⁰

Secondly, the man who inspired Royce's "Beloved Community" failed to live up to his own pragmatic theory of the community of inquirers. As has been mentioned, one of the underlying characteristics of American pragmatism is the transformation from the solipsistic self to the communal/social self, amply evidenced by Peirce's "community of inquirers" or Royce's "Beloved Community." Whether Peirce's early concept of community "functions as the criterion of reality solely on a metaphysical and epistemological level" or his "later community is both ethical and God-centered,"⁵¹ the social principle that he fervently imparted seemed illogically irrelevant to his personal life, even though for him the social principle must be intrinsically rooted in logic.⁵² He preached that if ideas are not to be isolated and truth is to be attained through the community of inquirers, then the individual must not enclose himself/herself in an insular shell. To be a "private self" is Second (mere existence or

⁵⁰ Cited in Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 90.

⁵¹ Joseph P. DeMarco argues that Peirce actually holds two concepts of community. See his "Peirce's Concept of Community: Its Development and Change," *Transactions* 7 (1971): 24-36. Stanley M. Harrison, however, disputes DeMarco's claim by insisting that even though Peirce's "later community" is "grounded in a normative foundation, we do not think the author has shown that Peirce ever meant the community merely to 'function as the ideal definition of reality'." In our opinion, DeMarco has fundamentally misconstrued the nature of Peirce's objective idealism and, as a result, has viewed Peirce's early thought as being essentially solipsistic" (*Man's Glassy Essence: An Attempt to Construct a Theory of Person Based on the Writings of Charles Sanders Peirce* [Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1971], 353-54).

⁵² Peirce articulates this concept in his "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2 (1869): 193-208. He also reiterates it in "The Doctrine of Chances," *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (March 1878): 604-15.

brute reaction), only an opposition to the other. The self, enveloped in isolated existence, is not “only a negation,” but also possesses an “artificial human nature” (Dewey). Unlike Kantian phenomenalism in which the private self cannot be transcended, hence confining itself to solipsism, Peirce’s pragmatic self must open itself into a social context or living community, for without it the self will become ontologically incomplete, semiotically unintelligible, and ethically irrational. And since humankind is by nature social, the private self must become Third (general), because as Third the private self shares a “connecting bond” with others; and also through Thirdness the community of inquirers is essentially founded. According to Peirce, “The thread of life is a third...Sympathy, flesh and blood, that by which I feel my neighbor’s feelings, is third” (CP 1.337) and “In the first place, your neighbors are, in a measure, yourself...Really, the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarest delusion of vanity” (CP 7.571). But Peirce’s idea of the community of inquirers was antithetical to his own solipsistic self, for he was a social outcast, living an isolated and ostracized life,⁵³ which tragically resulted in his theft of food, deteriorating health, and financial schemes.

Because of his lack of moral self-control, unconventional lifestyle, unorthodox religious views, scandalous divorce in 1883 from his first wife, Harriet Melusina Fay and his remarriage to the French woman named Juliette Froissy, and his failure to fulfill contractual obligations, Peirce was never granted a full tenured professorship

⁵³ Brent likens Peirce’s ill-fated life to the French poet Charles Baudelaire: “Both had a precocious taste for women. Both lived extravagantly beyond their means and were constantly in debt. Both used drugs and had special knowledge of their effects...Both men were social outcasts whose lives and works engendered disgust and dismay in the respectable bourgeoisie of their respective countries...Both men were forced by their ostracisms to make their livings by their wits and from writing articles for journals, and both lived their last years on the charity of others. Both men had deserved reputations for brilliance and depth and breadth of knowledge and achievements, spiced with a sharp originality and insulting arrogance” (*Charles Sanders Peirces: A Life*, 22).

either at Johns Hopkins⁵⁴ or at Harvard despite positive recommendations from his close friend William James. He was indeed a “philosopher without a chair” (to use Fisch’s phrase). As a part-time appointment, Peirce lectured in logic at the Johns Hopkins University, where a young Vermonter named John Dewey was among his students. To support himself financially Peirce became a book reviewer for many journals, notably *The Nation*. He had spent more than thirty years working as a scientist in the United States Coast Survey in charge of gravimetric experiments. Forced to retire from the Survey at the end of 1891 (at the age of fifty-two) on grounds of dereliction, coupled with an incurably lavish lifestyle, Peirce was heavily buried in financial destitution, legal battles, and mental crises, faced with many debt lawsuits, forcing him to become a fugitive, and eventually leading him to contemplate suicide. By 1897, the old man Peirce, almost at the age of sixty, had, as noted, to steal food to keep himself from starvation.

There is another significant trace contributing to Peirce’s darkened life that is often either discounted or unheeded by Peirce scholars; namely, his fissured psyche or what Corrington calls, “profound psychic splits” (the psychic doubling between a true and false self).⁵⁵ Peirce’s psychic rupture was lacerated by the narcissistic demands of his father. He believed he had failed to fulfill his life and was lost in his own melancholy search of an elusive lost object (the lost maternal). In the first chapter of his Peirce book entitled “Peirce’s Melancholy,” Corrington, taking cues from French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, probes into Peirce’s melancholy existence and concludes that: “Peirce was caught in a painful dialectic”⁵⁶ between a demanding father and a detached mother. Always longing yet hiding from the desired maternal face, Peirce

⁵⁴ “In April 1884, just after Charles had lost his Hopkins lectureship, an event which so shamed and angered him that at first he could not bring himself to tell his mother about it” (Ibid., 147).

⁵⁵ For an excellent version of Peirce’s melancholy, see Robert Corrington, “Peirce the melancholy prestidigitator,” *Semiotica* 94-1/2 (1993): 85-101. See also his chapter “Peirce’s Melancholy,” *ICSP*, 1-26.

⁵⁶ Corrington, *ICSP*, 21.

“remained haunted throughout his life by a sense of melancholy loss.”⁵⁷ And because of this melancholy loss, Peirce’s “attempts to delineate the domain of firstness, both phenomenologically and cosmologically, are responses to the lost realm that his paternal affiliation drove him from.”⁵⁸ Ontologically, Peirce’s absorptions in the primal category of Firstness and pansemioticism reveal his “psychic splits.” Hence, one can see that Peirce’s presemiotic self was not fully developed; it lacked the “creative ground of signification”;⁵⁹ and psychoanalytically, it transformed into an abjected self; that is, the self existed simultaneously in fear/denial and desire.

Corrington probes further:

Peirce could not find the true self precisely because of his deep narcissistic wound. In struggling to overcome the father/mother, he had to split his self into the attainable false self of public semiosis and the hidden self that could not be integrated with his persona...Peirce’s manic productivity is in search of a resurrected self that can overcome the narcissistic wound left by the self-absorbed father/mother who failed to allow Peirce his own intrinsic needs... Peirce’s true self belongs in the ‘not yet’ where it can only emerge out of the transforming power of a universal community, itself rooted in an evolving God...We are left then with the picture of a failed Dandy who spent his life in search of an elusive lost object.⁶⁰

On Sunday evening April 19, 1914, Peirce, a lonely and impoverished seventy-four year old man, this “strange and unruly being,” an anchorite, and a genius died of cancer in Milford, Pennsylvania, where he and his wife had been living while plagued with many financial and physical woes for the previous twenty-three years. On that mournful night this country had lost its “great American philosopher” (William James). A. N. Whitehead, in his letter dated January 2, 1936, wrote:

⁵⁷ Corrington, *ICSP*, 22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Corrington, “Peirce the prestidigitator,” *Semiotica*, 97-99

My belief is that the effective founders of the American Renaissance are Charles Peirce and William James. of these men, W.J. is the analogue to Plato, and C.P. to Aristotle.⁶¹

Peirce never seemed to find the transfigured existence or the eschatological hope wherein his fissured psyche could be healed, and where he was not left abandoned as a foundling constantly devoured by the semiotic density and mania of *nature natured*. Sadly, Peirce precariously quested for the ever elusive lost object (the presemiotic firstness in *nature naturing*) without finding it. Regardless of a life hhrshly mired in countless tragedies, Pierce's brilliantly complex and seminal thought in pragmatism, metaphysics, semiotic realism, phenomenology, and normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics, and logic) is still continuing to exert a growing impact on many contemporary philosophers and scholars both at home and abroad.

⁶¹ Cited in Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 39.

CHAPTER 2

THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC SELF IN PEIRCE'S SEMIOTIC PRAGMATICISM

It is that the word or sign which man uses is the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an external sign, proves that man is an external sign.

Charles S. Peirce

Peirce's Conception of Synechism

Before deeply probing into Peirce's construction of the semiotic self, his conception of synechism (theory of the continuum) and the three universal categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) must be first inquired and elucidated respectively. Delving scrupulously into Peirce's conception of synechism is the key to indispensably unlocking his philosophical system. The doctrine of continuity is the metaphysical foundation on which Peirce's metaphysical pragmatism stands. In fact, Peirce has claimed that his metaphysics is "synechism," because it encompasses the study of the continuum. The third paper in the *Monist* series entitled, "The Law of Mind" amply warranted his claim. Peirce had spent fifteen years endeavoring to perfect his conception of synechism, which was partly inspired by the German mathematician named Georg Cantor (1845-1918), whom Peirce recognized as "indisputably the *Hauptförderer* of the mathematico-logical doctrine of numbers" (CP 4.331). Although he later rejected Cantor's theory of the continuum as a collection of points in favor of his own conception of infinitesimal intervals, Cantor did play an instrumental role in configuring the mathematical foundation of Peirce's principle of continuity, particularly the theory of the transfinite cardinal

numbers of infinity.

Peirce's synechistic philosophy is far from ideal, for it is unavoidably plagued with metaphysical flaws and foundational contradictions. Murray Murphey is right to remark that this "is a difficult subject to deal with because of its heterogeneous character."¹ And it is also "one of the darkest areas of his philosophy."² In Lecture Eight on the logic of continuity at the Cambridge Conferences in 1898, Peirce himself warned of the two difficulties of his synechistic philosophy; namely, the logical (method of reasoning about continuity) and the metaphysical (the being, the existence, and the genesis of continuity). "Of all conceptions Continuity is by far the most difficult for Philosophy to handle"³ was the first sentence in Peirce's final lecture.

Despite its shortcomings, Peirce scholars have concurred that Peirce's conception of synechism is not only arguably the greatest achievement of his philosophical career, but it is also "one of the greatest contributions to philosophy."⁴ Peirce's conception of

¹Murray G. Murphey, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 379.

²Christopher Hookway, *Peirce* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 174.

³*RLT*, 242. In all his eight lectures on *Reasoning and the Logic of Things* at the Cambridge Conferences in February and March of 1898, this final lecture may be the most difficult one. Besides presenting his conception of the continuum, Peirce also lectured on evolutionary cosmology and metaphysics, coupled with projective geometry and topology. It is interesting to know that as to Peirce's lectures, William James politely persuaded his friend Peirce not to engage the audience in his highly technical logic: "I am sorry you are sticking so to formal logic. I know our graduate school here, and so does Royce, and we both agree that there are only 3 men who could possibly follow your graphs and relatives...Now be a good boy and think a more popular plan out. I don't want the audience to dwindle to 3 or 4" (*RLT*, 25). To which Peirce replied, "People who cannot reason exactly (which alone is reasoning), simply cannot understand my philosophy - neither the process, methods nor results...My philosophy, and all philosophy worth attention, reposes entirely upon the theory of logic. It will, therefore, be impossible for me to give any idea of the nature either of my philosophy or of any other of any account" (*Ibid.*, 26).

⁴Charles Hartshorne, "Charles Peirce's 'One Contribution to Philosophy' and His Most Serious Mistake," *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Second Series, ed. Edward C. Moore and Richard S. Robin (Amherst, MA.: University of

synechism underlines all his metaphysical categories: from perception, philosophical theology, semiotics, pragmatism, logic, to phenomenology.

The genesis of Peirce's conception of synechism may be traced back to his early Cambridge years when Leibniz was one of the main topics of discussion in Peirce's household. Thus, as a youth Peirce was already familiar with and influenced by Leibniz's principle of continuity, and in his later years while in school he continued to pursue Leibniz's philosophical work alongside Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Besides Kant, Peirce has ranked Leibniz as a great logician; therefore, it is safe to assume that Peirce's synechistic metaphysics was considerably impacted by Leibniz's infinitesimal calculus and especially, the law of continuity.⁵

Raised in a family of mathematicians (his father Benjamin Peirce was the leading American mathematician of his day; his older brother James Mills Peirce was also a mathematician succeeding to his father's chair at Harvard), mathematics had naturally become the integral aspect of Peirce's philosophical system. For Peirce, all branches of the sciences, including philosophy, must be inevitably associated with mathematics, for philosophy demands exact thought, and only in mathematics can one truly find exact thought. Therefore, Peirce's mission, as it were, was to channel mathematical exactitude

Massachusetts Press, 1964), 455-74. Hartshorne argues that Peirce's doctrine of synechism would be "one greatest contribution to philosophy" only "when purified of its synechistic excesses" (474); otherwise it will remain as "Peirce's greatest single mistake...which consisted in trying to make continuity the key principle to every relationship, both of actuality and possibility" (467). In his later paper, "A Revision of Peirce's Categories" (*Monist* 63 (1980): 277-89), Hartshorne essentially offers the same critique of Peirce's synechism. Nevertheless, in this paper he wants to change Peirce's ontological categories into three modalities of relation: Firstness as "independence of some things" (279); Secondness as "dependence on some things" (279); and Thirdness "is neither sheer dependence nor sheer independence but an *intermediate* relation nondependence with respect to definite particular, dependence with respect to more or less general outlines" (280).

⁵Fisch notes: "Peirce identified himself more closely with Leibniz than with any other thinker; that among the many grounds for the identification was that Leibniz alone of the great philosophers was mathematician, logician, historian, and physical scientist as well as metaphysician; and that not the least ground was that Peirce saw prefigured in Leibniz, as in no other philosopher, his own progress from nominalism toward realism" (*Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays by Max H. Fisch*, 258).

and its principles to philosophy. Not only did mathematics become the inspiring and fundamental aspects in Peirce's phenomenology, pragmatism, semiotics, and the logic of relatives, but it also provided a requisite groundwork for Peirce's conception of synechism. Concepts such as true continuity (as opposed to the pseudo-continuity of calculus) and infinity can be reasoned via mathematics. Peirce has always considered the mathematics of the simplest finite collections and the logic of relatives as important to his philosophical synechism. In the "The Architecture of Theories," *Monist* (1891), Peirce stated: "Had I more space, I now ought to show how important for philosophy is the mathematical conception of continuity" (CP 6.31). In his 1898 Cambridge lectures, while lecturing on the logic of continuity (Lecture Eight), Peirce emphasized that, "Geometrical topic is what the philosopher must study who seeks to learn anything about continuity from geometry."⁶ It should be noted that Peirce treats the concept of generality from the point of view of geometrical continuity.

Peirce's conception of synechism "refers to the tendency to see continuity within and among the orders of the world."⁷ The term "synechism" was defined by Peirce in the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1902) as "that tendency of philosophical thought which insists upon the idea of continuity as of prime importance in philosophy and, in particular, upon the necessity of hypotheses involving true continuity" (CP 6.169). The conception of synechism essentially originated from Peirce's paper, "The Law of Mind" published in the *Monist* series (1890-93). *Synechism* is the coined word from the Greek that Peirce employed to mean "continuity"; that is, roughly speaking, the view that all realities are infinitely continuous. Peter Ochs indicates that Peirce's treatments of continuity are of two kinds: (1) when Peirce claims that "'generality and continuity are the same thing,' he generally speaks as a semanticist, referring to the continuity of possibility or ideal space and not of the real possibility inherent in semiotic processes, and (2) when he identifies vagueness and continuity, however, he speaks as a pragmatist

⁶*RLT*, 246. Peirce's detailed analysis of geometrical continuity can be found in his final lecture, "The Logic of Continuity," 242-268.

⁷Corrington, *ICSP*, 181.

referring to the continuity of real things in the world.”⁸ Descriptively, synechism is a metaphysical proposition which claims that reality is continuous; or whatever real in the world is a continuous whole, and that:

a whole all whose parts without any exception whatsoever conform to one general law to which same law conform likewise all the parts of each single part. *Continuity* is thus a special kind of *generality*, or conformity to one Idea. More specifically, it is a *homogeneity*, or generality among all of a certain kind of parts of one whole. (CP 7.535n.6).

Continuity involves real possibilities, and insofar as a phaneron forms a continuum, it will infinitely open to more possibilities, to more growth and to more inquiries, however fallibilistic. Hence, Peirce has urged that one must not “block the road of inquiry.” And this is precisely the semiotic function of Thirdness. By invoking a regulative principle of logic, Peirce is able to argue that one must assume that realities are continuous until proven otherwise.

A true continuum, for Peirce, at least bears these two essential features: first, it contains no definite or ultimate parts; and second, it must contain actualized potentialities, and these actualized potentialities must also be greater in multitude. Peirce writes: “A true continuum is something whose possibilities of determination no multitude of individuals can exhaust. Thus, no collection of points placed upon a truly continuous line can fill the line so as to leave no room for others” (CP 6.170). Mathematically, the continuum is elementarily about the line, which was developed in the nineteenth century and “became virtually the exclusive mathematical conception in the twentieth century, or

⁸See Ochs’ review of *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, ed. Eugene Freeman, *Transactions* 21 (1985): 128. Semiotically, Peirce makes a distinction between *general* and *vague*. According to Peirce, “[a] sign is objectively *general*, insofar as, leaving its effective interpretation indeterminate, it surrenders to the interpreter the right of completing the determination for himself. ‘Man is mortal.’ ‘What man?’ ‘Any man you like.’ A sign is objectively *vague*, insofar as, leaving its interpretation more or less indeterminate, it reserves for some other possible sign or experience the function of completing the determination” (CP 5.505).

at least the exclusive conception until the recent appearance of something called ‘Non-Standard Analysis,’ is that the line is isomorphic to the real numbers.”⁹

Even though the metaphysico-mathematical element plays an important role in Peirce’s conception of synechism, it is not the ultimate metaphysical doctrine, but it is more of a regulative principle of logic, “prescribing what sort of hypothesis is fit to be entertained and examined” (CP 6.173). Peirce’s conception of synechism¹⁰ permeates his understanding of phenomenology, semiotics, cosmology, philosophy of religion, and the normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics, and logic).¹¹ In “The Law of Mind” (Peirce’s first defense of his conception of synechism), published in *Monist* (1892), Peirce insisted that his “*synechistic* philosophy ... carries along with it the following doctrines: first, a logical realism of the most profound type; second, objective idealism; third, tychism, with its consequent thorough-going evolutionism” (CP 6.163). He also applied his principle of continuity to the phenomena of mind:

Logical analysis applied to mental phenomena shows that there is but one law of mind, namely, that ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. In this spreading they lose intensity, and especially the power of affecting others, but gain generality and become welded with other ideas. (CP 6.104)

⁹Hilary Putnam, “Peirce’s Continuum,” *Peirce and Contemporary Thought: Philosophical Inquiries*, ed. Kenneth Laine Ketner (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995), 2. Putnam remarks that while other mathematicians consider real numbers as “the real line,” Peirce “decisively rejected the idea that the geometrical line...is isomorphic with the system of real numbers” (2-3).

¹⁰“Synechism is founded on the notion that the coalescence, the becoming continuous, the becoming governed by laws, the becoming instinct with general ideas, are but phases of one and the same process of the growth of reasonableness. This is first shown to be true with mathematical exactitude in the field of logic, and is thence inferred to hold good metaphysically” (CP 5.4). In his post-Cantorian years (1908-1911), Peirce, however, preferred his semiotic models to the Cantorean model of continuity; see Peter Ochs, *Peirce, Pragmatism and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 136-38.

¹¹“The principle of synechism is manifest in all areas of inquiry: from mathematics, to logic (as semiotic), to perception, to emotion, to the structure of matter, to evolutionary laws, to habits, and to the structure of the community.” Corrington, *ICSP*, 101.

Synechism denotes the infinitesimally connected things or events in the universe; in other words, that consciousness, matter, mind, and feeling are welded together to reach out for the growth of the concrete reasonableness. Nature, for Peirce, cannot grow without an open-endedness or tychistic structure. Natural law is a product of evolution. Nature and mind are regarded as products of growth; they exist with a sense of ontological restlessness or of developmental teleology, and they have their being within the agapastic fecundity, which is ready to give birth. Synechism allows no ontological division or radical breaks between mind and matter, and is precisely what the Peircean term *panpsychism* connotes: matter is “effete mind” or “partially deadened mind.” Panpsychism reveals Peirce’s objective idealism, which asserts that “matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws” (*CP* 6.25). Physical events are undeveloped forms of psychical events, and that matter itself possesses no autonomy. Mind (or idea) ontologically, phenomenologically, ethically, and semiotically associates with feeling. In “The Law of Mind,” Peirce equates the law of mind with the law of continuity:

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Reality is psychical, and to make any statement about reality is to describe it in the anthropomorphic (mental) term. To ascribe “effete mind” to reality or universe is to assert that it has its own purposes, and that assertion clearly suggests such conception is undoubtedly anthropocentric as well as anthropomorphic. In a fragment of Lecture Four of the 1903 Cambridge lectures, Peirce explained:

[E]very scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is a hypothesis that there is something in nature to which the human reason is analogous;

and that it really is so all the successes of science in its applications to human convenience are witnesses. They proclaim that truth over length and breadth of the modern world. In the light of the successes of science to my mind there is a degree of baseness in denying our birthright as children of God and in shamefacedly slinking away from anthropomorphic conceptions of the universe.¹²

It is quite clear that, for Peirce, all human conceptions, scientific hypotheses included, are at bottom anthropomorphic. Consequently, all human knowledge, if it is to have any meaning at all, has to be completely grounded in experience; in other words, humankind's conceptions, then, are anthropomorphic in the sense that they are dependent upon the bounds of its practical/lived experiences. As a result, Peirce's anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism are nothing other than his metaphysical realism or idealism. As has been analyzed, panpsychism involves mental/psychical life and growth, directionality, and sympathetic purposes. Peirce trusts that human mind can achieve correct inferences in the long run and so long as fallibilism is not to be jettisoned. The psychical seems to control, contract, or compress the physical realities or life. Panpsychism is a "neutralistic" doctrine (Peirce's preferred term over "monism"), which states that mind and matter, as diametrically opposed to the Cartesian dualism, share the same dimension of reality and not polarized into two different types of substances.

For Peirce, generals have a real existence and they dynamically grow, modify, and always strive toward what Aristotle calls *entelechy*, the ultimate or ideal end. It is important to note that the conception of synechism is built on the framework of the Peircean pansemioticism; namely, "the universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs" (CP 5.448n.1). Reality is read through signs and sign relations. Peirce juxtaposes pansemioticism with panpsychism. And for him, the conception of being is a conception about a sign. He argues that thought is representational, thus dialogically semiotic; and since every thought is a sign, we cannot think or cognize things without signs. And signs anthropomorphically constitute mental

¹²Cited in Corrington, *ICSP*, 67.

behavior. Peirce even argues further, “When we think, then, we ourselves, as we are at that moment, appear as a sign” (*CP* 5.283).

The main reason why Peirce was not comfortable with the term *pragmatism* and decided to rename it *pragmaticism* was that he wanted to stress the metaphysical and mathematical concepts called *synechism* and *generality*.¹³ True generality is a rudimentary form of true continuity (*synechism*), and true continuity is essentially important to the *proof* of pragmaticism. Peirce insists that the proof of pragmaticism “would essentially involve the establishment of the truth of *synechism*” (*CP* 5.415). Peirce’s pragmaticism is future-oriented and thus open to novelty. Lived experiences, as a dynamic process and filled with possibilities, continuously evolve and develop toward the growth of the concrete reasonableness (reasonable conduct); and the pragmaticist truth must also be continuously and infinitely discovered (“Do not block the way of inquiry”). As aforementioned, *synechism* is the metaphysical foundation on which pragmaticism stands; that is, true generality decides the meaning of pragmaticism. Pragmaticism and *synechism* are inextricably linked because they are constructed upon the bedrock of metaphysical realism. To understand the meaning of pragmaticism, one will first need to probe deeply into the concepts of generality and continuity. In a letter to William James on November 25, 1902, Peirce spoke of “the completely developed system, which hangs together and cannot receive any proper presentation in fragments” and that his pragmaticism would lead to “*synechism*, which is the keystone of the arch” (*CP* 8.257). Pragmaticism, which operates within the metaphysical realm of *synechism*, incarnates itself in the triadic categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness), *tychism* (creative change, evolutionary cosmology), and *agapism* (evolutionary love).

The actualized potentialities belong to Thirdness, for Thirdness is constitutive of continuity. It “represents Thirdness almost to perfection” (*CP* 1.337). Peirce considers time and feeling as manifesting the law of continuity. Time is *real* and continuous; it infinitesimally summons the past, sustains the present, and strives for the future.

¹³Corrington claims that the “highly public pragmatism of William James lacks a sensitivity for *synechistic* structures within the world and tends to emphasize binary oppositions, thus ignoring deeper triadic structures of mediation” (*ICSP*, 51).

The idea of the continuum not only manifests the identification of Thirdness and its perfect continuity,¹⁴ but it also anchors Peirce's semiotic construction of the self as well as his privileging of Thirdness over Firstness (vague potentiality). By privileging Thirdness over Firstness Peirce maintains that he is "a Synechist at bottom and a Tychist only because Tychism is a corollary of Synechism."¹⁵ He objects to having his metaphysical system reduced to tychism (absolute chance or pure spontaneity); Firstness or tychism is subsidiary to the synechistic system.¹⁶ Peirce's triadic categories are logically irreducible;¹⁷ nonetheless, the category of Thirdness "introduces Peirce's notion of continuity, and it is his insistence upon the the principle of continuity that differentiates Peirce's philosophy from many others- such as the pragmatism of Dewey or James, or the

¹⁴"In fact...the doctrine of Synechism, which is that elements of Thirdness cannot entirely be escaped" (*CP* 7.653). "Permit me further to say that I object to having my metaphysical system as a whole called Tychism. For although tychism does enter into it, it only enters as subsidiary to that which is really, as I regard it, the characteristic of my doctrine, namely, that I chiefly insist upon continuity, or Thirdness, and, in order to secure to thirdness its really commending function, I find it indispensable fully [to] recognize that it is a third, and that Firstness, or chance, and Secondness, or Brute reaction, are other elements, without the independence of which Thirdness would not have anything upon which to operate. Accordingly, I like to call my theory Synechism, because it rests on the study of continuity" (*CP* 6.202).

¹⁵*RLT*, 31. Cosmologically, Peirce equates Firstness with tychism.

¹⁶For more detailed explanations, see *RLT*, 258-262. In Lecture Four of his 1903 Harvard *Lectures on Pragmatism*, Peirce considered Thirdness the most important category, for it represented the true continuity; Firstness and Secondness would be ranked second and third respectively. See Charles Sanders Peirce, *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking: The 1903 Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism*, ed. Patricia Ann Turrisi (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 189-203.

¹⁷Firstness is phenomenologically *sui generis*, independently monadic, and involves no relation; Secondness, which plays an essential role in Peirce's normative science, is brute; it diadically entails opposition between two relata. Cognition does not belong to these two primal categories because they are prerational or precognitive. Thirdness, on the other hand, is triadic; it signifies the mediating relation that both Firstness and Secondness are deprived of. Thirdness is the category of thought or law and it produces intelligibility in phenomena. Peirce asserts, "Not only does Thirdness suppose and involve the ideas of Secondness and Firstness, but never will it be possible to find any Secondness or Firstness in the phenomenon that is not accompanied by Thirdness" (*CP*

mechanistic Cartesianism that Peirce rejected.”¹⁸ Corrington argues that Peirce’s criticisms of the Jamesian pragmatism directly link to James’ concept of the self. While the Peircean self is structured by logical and phenomenological features, the Jamesian self is shaped by the psychological and physiological conditions. Corrington is right to conclude that neither Jamesian pragmatism nor his concept of the self “understands the roles of inference, continuity, thirdness, or feeling in shaping a general picture of the world.”¹⁹ The principle of continuity was also Peirce’s staunch defense against John Stuart Mill’s empiricism.²⁰

For Peirce, internal knowledge gains information or insights from external objects via semiosis (sign activity). Everything is a sign. And each sign is an indivisible triad; namely, sign (or representamen), object, and interpretant. Peirce defines a sign as follows:

A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for the object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen. “Idea” is here to be understood in a sort of Platonic sense, very familiar in everyday talk. (CP 2.228).

5.90); cf., Sandra B. Rosenthal, “The ‘Would-be’ Present of C.S. Peirce,” *Transactions* 4 (1968): 158-59.

¹⁸Kelly A. Parker, *The Continuity of Peirce’s Thought* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 73-74. Parker also insightfully points out that, “Though Peirce often argued against Descartes, his chief objections were directed against Cartesians. Descartes himself did require a third sort of substance besides mind and body: God, the infinite substance. Though Descartes’ concepts of infinity and continuity were precisely the *wrong* concepts for Peirce’s category of Thirdness, Descartes himself was at any rate closer to Peirce’s view than those who construe Descartes as a mere dualist” (239).

¹⁹Corrington, *ICSP*, 101.

²⁰See Timothy L. Alborn, “Peirce’s Evolutionary Logic: Continuity, Indeterminacy, and the Natural Order,” *Transactions* 25 (1989): 4-5.

In Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1902), Peirce also defined a sign as "[a]nything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its *object*) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum*" (CP 2.303). A thought or an idea must be conveyed through a sign, and in order to gain meaning, a sign must function within its triadic relation; namely, sign, object, and interpretant. Epistemologically, knowledge is inferential, and not intuitive cognition (*W* 2:163-64). The cognitive process, without a definite beginning point, is both infinitesimally continuous and previously inferred. The cognition "arises by a *process* of beginning, as any other change comes to pass" (CP 5.263). Peirce infers:

Our experience of any object is developed by a process continuous from the very first, of change of the cognition and increase in the liveliness of consciousness. At the very first instant of this process, there is no consciousness but only the beginning of becoming conscious. It is also not a real state of mind because it instantaneously passes away. There is a paradox here. But so there is in respect to any beginning or other limit of anything continuous. (*W* 2:191)

Influenced by Leibniz's law of continuity, Peirce regarded his conception of synechism as a powerful offense against the threat of Cartesian dualism and pure introspection (and also against Kant's forms of intuition and the British empiricists, such as Locke, Berkeley, and Hume). His rejection of cognitive intuitionism is found in the paper, "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed For Man," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (1868): 103-14. Against Cartesianism, which characterized cognition as indubitable, incorrigible, and self-evident, Peirce insisted that: First, we have no power of introspection, but all knowledge originates from hypothetical reasoning; secondly, we have no power of intuition, but every cognition must be logically determined by the previous ones. Consequently, knowledge cannot be ultimately established upon any foundations; thirdly, we have no power of thinking without signs;

fourthly, we have no conception of the absolutely incognizable.²¹ One of the underlying reasons that Peirce posited the conception of synechism was to eschew the idea of inexplicabilities. Peirce explicitly furnishes his reasons against the Whiteheadian atomism as well as the Kantian noumenal realm as follows:

The general motive is to avoid the hypothesis that this or that is inexplicable. For the synechist maintains that the only possible justification for so much as entertaining a hypothesis is that it affords an explanation of the phenomena. Now, to suppose a thing inexplicable is not only to fail to explain it, and so to make an unjustifiable hypothesis, but, much worse, it is to set up a barrier across the road of science, and to forbid all attempt to understand the phenomenon...The synechist for example, would never be satisfied with the hypothesis that matter is composed of atoms, all spherical and exactly alike... neither the eternity of atoms nor their precise resemblance is, in the synechist's view, an element of the hypothesis that is even admissible hypothetically. For that would be to attempt to explain the phenomena by means of an absolute inexplicability...So the synechist will not believe that some things are conscious and some unconscious, unless by consciousness be meant a certain grade of feeling...In short, synechism amounts to the principle that explicabilities are not to be considered as possible explanations. (CP 6.171-73)

The concept of the continuum also attempts to give the true representations of reality. Peirce reasons that without the metaphysical principle of synechism one can hardly understand reality, for reality is continuous.²² Anchored steadily in his conception of synechism, Peirce declares that not only are humans continua, but “*all things* so swim in continua” (CP 1.171). He continues: “I will content myself with saying that the only

²¹See CP 5.213-63; cf. W 2:190-91. See also Susan Haack, “Descartes, Peirce, and the Cognitive Community,” *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, 238-63.

²²Although reality is continuous, Peirce never seems to have claimed that all phenomena are continuous; for instance, he argues that time is of continuum, but it is not necessarily *perfectly* continuous. “We have no reason to think that even now time is quite perfectly continuous and uniform in its flow. The quasi-flow which would result would, however, differ essentially from time in this respect, that it would not necessarily be in a single stream” (CP 1.412). Hartshorne apparently seems to have overlooked this salient point.

things valuable, even here in this life, are the continuities” (*NEM* 4:345),²³ and that “[g]eneralization, the spilling out of continuous system, in thought, in sentiment, in deed, is the true end of life” (*NEM* 4:346).²⁴ Peirce epistemologically welds his conception of synechism into the idea of fallibilism (not skepticism), which contributes an integral role to his pragmatist inquiry; that is, the true representation of the Real can only be approached *approximately* or provisionally, for it continuously evolves, expands, and grows. And because of its teleological striving for evolutionary habits, the representation of the Real will always remain in the realm of the “would be.” Reality or the Real belongs to the future; namely, the “would-be” or the “not yet.” The concept “would-be” is the foundational aspect of pragmatism; that is, predictions or hypotheses *would be* proved true, or *would* produce relevant consequences or general meanings if certain conditions of experience were encountered. Peirce’s “would-be’s” are possibilities, functioning like rules, and they are “real because they have objectivity in relation to the thoughts that are about them. Would-be’s are dispositional properties that have some independence of any particular thought.”²⁵

For Peirce, the principle of continuity is “the idea of fallibilism objectified. For fallibilism is the doctrine that our knowledge is never absolute but always swims, as it

²³Cited in Parker, *The Continuity of Peirce’s Thought*, 132.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Carl R. Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce’s Evolutionary Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 51. Apel points out that through his 1900 book review of Royce’s *The World and the Individual*, Peirce first began to reflect upon the relationship “would be” and “will be.” Peirce writes: “[T]his ‘would be’ is readily resolved into a hope for *will be*. For what we mean by saying that any event, B, *would* happen under conditions, A, that are never fulfilled, is that the ultimate not a opinion which will, as we hope, actually be attained concerning any given question (though not in any finite time concerning *all* questions), will accept certain general laws from which a formal logical consequence will be that conditions, A, in any other world in which they may be fulfilled will, those laws still obtaining, involve the happening of the event, B” (*CP* 8.113). To probe more into Peirce’s defense of meaning-critical realism against Royce’s absolute idealism, see Karl-Otto Apel, *Charles S. Peirce: From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism*, trans. John Michael Krois (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 134-57.

were, in a continuum of uncertainty and of indeterminacy” (CP 1.171). As regards human finitude; that is, its proneness to error, Peirce reflects on his fallibilistic attitude:

Accordingly, there are three things to which we can never hope to attain by reasoning, namely, absolute certainty, absolute exactitude, absolute universality. We cannot be absolutely certain that our conclusions are even approximately true... We cannot pretend to be even probably exact... Finally, even if we could ascertain with absolute certainty and exactness that the ratio of sinful men to all men was as 1 to 1....On the whole, then, we cannot in any way reach perfect certitude nor exactitude. We never can be absolutely sure of anything, nor can we with any probability ascertain the exact value of any measure or general ratio. This is my conclusion, after many years study of the logic of science. (CP 1.141;1.147)

Next to psychology, cosmology always fascinated and captured Peirce’s inquiring mind: “I came to the study of philosophy not for its teaching about God, Freedom, and Immortality, but intensely curious about Cosmology and Psychology” (CP 4.2). More importantly, it would be inconceivable to fully grasp Peirce’s conception of synechism without probing into his metaphysical category of cosmology. And despite the fact that Peirce maintained that synechism is not an absolute metaphysical conception, metaphysics has always held the determining position in his cosmogonic philosophy; namely, the evolutionary cosmology. He writes: “Metaphysics has to account for the whole universe of being. It has, therefore, to do something like supposing a state of things in which that universe did not exist, and consider how it could have risen” (CP 6.214). Metaphysics, therefore ubiquitously permeates Peirce’s three ontological and phenomenological categories, semiotics, and cosmology. However, among these three branches, cosmology (or mathematical metaphysics) is the most crucial aspect to Peirce’s cosmogonic philosophy, because it enables him to understand how space, time, law, and concepts like tychism (absolute chance), agapism, and synechism operate in the dynamically evolving cosmos. Cosmology, according to Peirce, “is not so very difficult, provided it be properly expanded and displayed” and that it “deeply concerns both physicist and psychist” (CP 6.213). Peirce’s speculative cosmology, which is *a priori*, not empirical inquiry, attempts to illustrate “how law is developed out of pure chance,

irregularity, and indeterminacy” (CP 1.407). Essentially guided by the metaphysical concepts of tychism and synechism, Peirce posits that the whole universe does display a tychistic motion; that is, it is heterogeneously evolving from a spontaneous or indetermined (“chaos of unpersonalized feeling”) state to a purposive or law-filled (“habit-taking”) state.²⁶ While deeply grounded in the principle of synechism and as equally critical of Herbert Spencer’s mechanical principles of evolution as Darwin’s purposeless evolution, Peirce found the French evolutionary Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s theories of organic growth more congenial to his cosmogonic principles.

It is debatable whether or not Peirce was really a brilliant philosophical theologian, but there is no denying that his conception of God and God’s reality, however vague,²⁷ did

²⁶In “The Architectures of Theories,” published in *Monist* (January 1891), Peirce clarified his cosmogonic philosophy as follows:

Cosmogonic philosophy...would suppose that in the beginning - infinitely remote - there was a chaos of unpersonalized feeling, which being without connection or regularity would properly be without existence. This feeling, sporting here and there in pure arbitrariness, would have started the germ of a generalizing tendency. Its other sportings would be evanescent, but this would have a growing virtue. Thus, the tendency to habit would be started; and from this, with the other principles of evolution, all the regularities of the universe would be evolved. At any time, however, an element of pure chance survives and will remain until the world becomes an absolutely perfect, rational, and symmetrical system, in which mind is at last crystallized in the infinitely distant future. (CP 6.33)

²⁷Peirce’s theological metaphysics was notably recorded in his paper, “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God,” published in *Hibbert Journal* in September 1908. In this paper Peirce continues to confirm his conception of synechism and the affinities between religion’s pragmatic approach and science’s theoretical inquiry. For Peirce, theism is expressed via anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. “Vaguely like a man,” utters Peirce. Regarding Peirce’s theism, Potter contends that the Peircean God is not only anthropomorphic, but it is also “intrinsically infected with vagueness, a disease which surely will be diagnosed as fatal by many analysts and logicians” (“Vaguely Like a Man’: The Theism of Charles S. Peirce,” *God Knowable and Unknowable*, ed. Robert J. Roth [New York: Fordham University Press, 1973], 241). Potter is correct to make this salient point because, for Peirce, all beliefs are instinctively vague, including the belief in God’s reality (CP 6.499). Orange also insightfully shows that, “Vagueness is not ambiguity, to be resolved by a simple distinction; it is real indefiniteness, characterizing ideals,

unfold in his metaphysical realism, objective idealism (the privileging of mind over matter), semiotics (and *theosemiotic*)²⁸ and evolutionary cosmology. Peirce's mathematical theory of "infinitesimals" plays an integral role in his evolutionary cosmology; it involves law (Thirdness) and pure chance (Firstness). And through the

generals, the not yet fully accomplished Omega. Nor is vagueness equivalent to lack of meaning; the vague has pragmatic meaning in its influence upon conduct" (Donna M. Orange, *Peirce's Conception of God: A Developmental Study* [Lubbock, TX.: Institute for Studies in Pragmatism, 1984], 72). Peirce insists that since people possess the so-called "instinctive mind," they thus hold ontological affinities to nature and God. The instinctive mind notion originated from Peirce's understanding of "critical common-sensism," which is itself the outcome of pragmatism.

²⁸Peirce claims that reality is mixed with signs and sign relations, and not only does a sign bring its object and interpretant into relation, but all such relations are really continuous. And if all of reality is continuous, then everything is a sign of God's omnipresence; in other words, semiotic connotes *theosemiotic*. This is Raposa's coined term to denote that, "given the fact of continuity, in one sense, semiotic is always already theosemiotic. If all of reality is continuous, then everything is potentially a sign of God's presence" (Michael Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989], 146); see Orange, *Peirce's Conception of God* and Corrington's *ICSP*, see particularly his chapter four and the conclusion chapter. See also Herman Deuser, *Gott: Geist und Natur: Theologische Konsequenzen aus Charles S. Peirce's Religionsphilosophie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993); see particularly chapters on "Gott - Realität und Erfahrung," "Metaphysik der Evolution: Agapismus und Synechismus," "Schöpfung und Zufall: Tychismus," and "Gott-Hypothese und Kosmologie." In his "Beyond Experience: Pragmatism and Nature's God" (*American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 14 [1993]: 147-60), Corrington indicates that it is not always easy to come to some kind of philosophical or theological consensus regarding Peirce's conception of God, for he seems to have "developed a philosophical theology that is profoundly ambivalent on the nature of the divine life within an evolutionary cosmos. His texts can be read in a process or panentheistic way [Orange's *Peirce's Conception of God: A Developmental Study*] or in more orthodox or even Thomistic terms [Raposa's *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion*]. As is to be expected, the truth lies somewhere in the middle" (157) ("Beyond Experience: Pragmatism and Nature's God," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 14 [1993]: 147-60). To study Peirce's philosophical theology through the perspective of ecstatic naturalism (a metaphysically and psychoanalytically semiotic approach), see Corrington, "Nature's God and the Return of the Material Maternal," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993):115-32. For his ecstatic naturalist perspectives on God, religion or "theonomous naturalism," see *Nature's Religion* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997). To explore and examine the hypothesis of God, see Peirce's famous essay, "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," *Hibbert Journal* 3 (1908): 90-112.

function of infinitesimals and the constituting of Firstness (unbounded potentiality) and Thirdness (continuity) the universe is formed and evolves. Because of the principle of growth, the Peircean God is an evolving God, a self-creating God who is continuously growing. And insofar as God is *ens necessarium*, a creator of all, God's being constitutes the continuum of all continua; that is, God permits evolution to occur. That would imply that without God, there is no evolution; or without evolution, there is no God. Peirce's postulation certainly echoes Hegel's assertion: *Ohne Welt ist Gott nicht Gott*. Since God embodies all three phenomenological categories or three "Universes" (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness), which point towards an evolutionary cosmology, God is "evolving." God is divinely and infinitely growing along with the dynamically unfolding universe. And like Whitehead's process philosophy, Peirce takes divine creativity (and novelty) seriously, because it is the main source that keeps the universe growing, developing, and moving towards cosmological fulfillment: "I think we must regard Creative Activity as an inseparable attribute of God" (CP 6.506). However, unlike Whitehead who considered actual things physical, Peirce embraced panpsychism.²⁹ As a devout pragmatist, Peirce requires the reality of God³⁰ be subject to the fallibilistic

²⁹Like Peirce, Hartshorne is also a panpsychist. He prefers the term "psychicalism" to Peirce's panpsychism. To see contrasting concepts of the naturalistic and process theism between Whitehead, Hartshorne, Corrington, and Neville (pan-naturalism), see Corrington, *PS*, 39-44; cf. Robert Neville, *Eternity and Time's Flow* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 39-44; and Richard E. Creel, "Continuity, Possibility, and Omniscience," *Process Studies* 12 (1982): 209-231.

³⁰Peirce is reluctant to apply the term "existence" to God, for to do so means locating God in the ontological category of Secondness, which is the domain of brute reaction among finite things. Like Tillich's "the Ground of Being," the Peircean God is not a finite being, "existing" among other things. It would be fetishism to say God "exists." And for Peirce, the term "existence" is not a qualifying predicate. In his view, to say "God exists" is to juxtapose that God with William James' finite god; namely, "one of a genus." Once asked if he believed in the existence of God, Peirce replied as follows:

I will ...take the liberty of substituting "reality" for "existence."
This is perhaps overscrupulosity; but I myself always use *exist*
in its strict philosophical sense of "react with the other like things in
the environment. Of course, in that sense, it would be fetichism
to say that God "exists." The word "reality," on the contrary, is

evolutionary foundationalism, and the only way in which one can apprehend it is through abductive reasoning or inference, for it guides the person to reason from the observation of natural order to the ultimate hypothesis. Even though the hypothesis may be invariably vague, it still efficaciously serves as the antithesis to the apriorist's skepticism.

Borrowing Schiller's aesthetic concept of *Spieltrieb*, Peirce suggests that, without any preconceived notions or philosophical formulation, one may encounter the reality of God through the "pure play of musement." It is "a kind of 'pure play' of the mind which, on the one hand, is guided by the object of contemplation, and, on the other, progresses in accordance with the 'attentive observation' of the muser and the direction which his internal conversation assumes."³¹ This contemplative/reflective act or playful meditation "involves no purpose save that of casting aside all serious purpose" (CP 6.458).

Eventually this "musement" will lead to the first and crucial inquiry phase called "abductive reasoning"; namely, the forming and selecting of explanatory hypotheses. Peirce's abductive inquiry is deeply grounded in human natural instincts and conjectures.

From 1878 to 1911 Peirce's theory of the continuum underwent several notable modifications, beginning with his famous essay, "The Doctrine of Chances" published in *Popular Science Monthly* (March 1878). And as Peirce's conception of synechism continued to develop, so did his definitions. As previously mentioned, Cantor had exerted a considerable influence on Peirce's mathematical doctrine of continuity. Vincent Potter and Paul Shields have divided the development of Peirce's conception of synechism into four periods: (1) pre-Cantorian: until 1884; (2) Cantorian: 1884-1894; (3)

used in ordinary parlance in its correct philosophical sense. (CP 6.495)

Relying on Duns Scotus' medieval concept of "reality" Peirce perceives God as *real* (as opposed to *existent*); that is, God's reality as that which is totally independent of any finite mind that might conceive it to be. *Reality* is a more suitable term for Peirce, for God is real, however vague. God's reality means having characteristics independent of anyone's conception, and that the conception of God is semiotically intelligible. In addition, Peirce also vigorously rejects Kant's *Ding-an-sich*, because the Peircean God cannot be confined to the noumenal realm.

³¹Smith, *Purpose and Thought*, 179-80.

Kantistic: 1895-1908; and (4) post-Cantorian: 1908-1911.³² Cantor defined a continuum as follows:

[A]s a set, aggregate, or collection (*Menge*) that possesses the properties of being perfect (*perfekt*) and cohesive, or - as Peirce referred - concatenated (*zusammendhängend*). A perfect set is one which is closed (*abgeschlossene*) and dense-in-itself (*insichdicht*)... A set is said to be cohesive or concatenated if there are no gaps in the elements, that is, if it is everywhere dense (*überalldicht*). A set is everywhere dense if between *any* two elements of the sets there are other elements.³³

While for Cantor continuity is a “perfectly concatenated” (*zusammenhängende*) collection of points, and that it is perfect if it is “closed” (*abgeschlossen*) and “condensed-in-itself” (*insichdicht*), Peirce rejects the notion that continuity is a collection of points or an aggregate of distinct parts, and that it is composed of individual “instants *infinitesimally* close together” (*CP* 7.466); in other words, the multitude of individual instances can neither be infinitely collected nor combined. Continuity does not associate with the size of collection; rather, it is closely involved with the mode of connection among its parts. Peirce argues that if one accepts Cantor’s definition, one must readily assent that there are gaps in the continuum. This is “pseudo-continuity,” mainly because it “is only a collection of independent points. Breaking grains of sand more and more will only make the sand more broken. It will not weld the grains into unbroken continuity” (*CP* 6.108). Peirce, moreover, emphasizes that, “possibilities are general, and no multitude can exhaust the narrowest kind of general” (*CP* 4.514) and “the idea of a general involves the idea of possible variations which no multitude of existent things could exhaust but would leave between any two not merely *many* possibilities, but

³²Vincent G. Potter and Paul B. Shields, “Peirce’s Definitions of Continuity,” *Transactions* 13 (1977): 20-31; cf. N.A. Brian Noble, “Peirce’s Definitions of Continuity and the Concept of Possibility,” *Transactions* 25 (1989): 149-71.

³³Brian N.A. Noble, “Peirce’s Definitions of Continuity and the Concept of Possibility,” *Transactions* 25 (1989): 149.

possibilities absolutely beyond all multitude" (CP 5.103).³⁴ Thus, a true continuum does not consist of a set or collection of points; it is a multiplicity or "multiplicities greater

³⁴Like Kant, Peirce made the same mistake, for he "understood that [a continuum] to mean infinite divisibility, which plainly is not what constitutes continuity since the series of rational fractional values is infinitely divisible but is not by anybody regarded as continuous" (CP 6.168). Peirce later realized that even though Kant's definition of continuity "as that all of whose parts have parts of the same kind" was essentially correct, Kant himself misunderstood his own definition: "Kant's definition, that a continuum is that of which every part has itself parts of the same kind, seems to be correct. This must not be confounded (as Kant himself confounded it) with infinite divisibility, but implies that a line, for example contains no points until the continuity is broken by marking the points. In accordance with this it seems necessary to say that a continuum, where it is continuous and unbroken, contains no definite parts; that its parts are created in the act of defining them and the precise definition of them breaks the continuity" (CP 6.168). Consequently, *Kanticity* was the term that Peirce attributed to Kant's misconceived notion of the property of infinite divisibility; that is, it has gaps in the series that will interrupt the continuity. Peirce later augmented Kant's definition by adding another property of continuity, the so-called *Aristotelicity*, which "may be roughly stated thus: a continuum contains the end point belonging to every endless series of points which it contains. An obvious corollary is that every continuum contains its limits" (CP 6.123). Essentially grounded in Kant's real definition of continuum "as that all of whose parts have parts of the same kind" (CP 6.168) and that "a continuous line contains no points," finally after 1895 Peirce dissociated himself from Cantor. And according to Ochs, this parting of company also means that "Peirce has begun to abandon models derived from the mathematics of collections, in favor of semiotic models" (138). Regardless of his corrections and modifications of the properties of *Kanticity* and *Aristotelicity*, Peirce was not quite satisfied with his conception of synechism, and that "his mathematical account of continuity remains undeveloped" (138). (For detailed analyses of Peirce's evolving definitions of continuity, see Potter and Shields, "Peirce's Definitions of Continuity," *Transactions* 13 (1977): 20-34; and Noble, "Peirce's Definitions of Continuity and the Concept of Possibility," *Transactions* 25 (1989): 149-174). Ochs points out that, for Peirce, a continuum must essentially have two properties: "multiplicity" (or "*Kanticity*" or "compactness," that is, *insichdichtkeit*) and "arrangement" ("*Aristoliticity*" or "closure," that is, *abgeschlossenheit*). Multiplicity connotes infinite divisibility and arrangement implies that "a continuum contains the end point belonging to every endless series of points which it contains [and thus] that every continuum contains its limits" (CP 6.127). Peirce believed his definition would adequately elucidate the continuity of phenomena such as time and feeling. But Ochs considers this definition "introduces contradictory tendencies into Peirce's analysis of feeling and, therefore, into his projected objective idealism...One one hand, Peirce defines 'intensity of feeling' as a physiological mode of hypothesis, where 'a number of reactions called for by one occasion get united in a general idea which is called out by the same occasion' (CP 6.146)...On the other hand, Peirce does intend at this time to credit feeling with a creative function. He writes that

than any discrete multitude” (CP 4.219). Any true continuum must embody actualized potentialities, and these potentialities must be greater in multitude than any actualized set of events. Consequently, a true continuum incorporates potentialities and generals, which are constitutive of Thirdness; and this is precisely why Peirce has so pronounced his “synechism was the new Scholastic realism.”³⁵

Peirce’s conception of synechism is inherently adjoined with the mathematical assumption of infinitesimals; for example, in discussing his concept of continuum, Peirce posits that “continuity is the relation of the parts of an unbroken space or time” (CP 6.168). In accusing Kant of confounding the concept of infinite divisibility with continuity, Peirce is essentially implying that the infinitesimal cannot be seen primarily involved with the divisibility of a line, because for Peirce, the “real issue is not that of divisibility, or of finding a third between any two points on a line, but that of showing connection between antecedent, present, and consequent states.”³⁶ There exists a metaphysical cleft between synechism and divisibility.

While Whitehead (and Hartshorne) conceives of actual occasions (or actual entities) as temporally and spatially atomized, and that “there are no infinitesimals...In mathematics, all phraseology about infinitesimals is merely disguised statement about a class of finites,”³⁷ Peirce rejected any form of atomism or of any atomic structures welded in the continuum. And while Whitehead’s atomic unit of experience/actual occasion does not allow the becoming to occur instantaneously, Peirce grounds his conception of

‘wherever chance-spontaneity is found, there in the same proportion feeling exists. In fact, chance is but the outward aspect of that which within itself is feeling’” (137-38). For more detailed analysis of Peirce’s contradictions of foundational theory of continuity, see Peter Ochs, *Peirce, Pragmatism and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 137-38.

³⁵Murphey, *The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy*, 396; cf. CP 6.163.

³⁶Corrington, *ICSP*, 183.

³⁷Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Free Press, 1969), 385; see also John W. Lango, “Whitehead’s Actual Occasions and the New Infinitesimals,” *Transactions* 25 (1989): 29-39. Lango argues that it is possible to formulate actual occasions as infinitesimally small, essentially based upon the recent development of the so-called new infinitesimals of Nonstandard Analysis.

synechism deeply in the mathematical assumption of infinitesimals. An infinitesimal is as an interval infinitely divisible; and roughly speaking, an interval is that which is quantitatively greater than zero but smaller than every number. The infinitesimals constitute a continuum; thus, it is now clear that both continuity and spontaneity come into being through the functional elements of infinitesimals. Infinitesimals “are not so much discrete units as they are potencies that compel continua into being, while, ironically, opening out forms of novelty and chance.”³⁸

Both time and feeling play key roles in Peirce’s conception of synechism. He explains the logic of feeling as follows:

Whatever there is in the whole phenomenon to make us think there is feeling in such a mass of protoplasm - *feeling*, but plainly no *personality* - goes logically to show that that feeling has a subjective, or substantial, spatial extension, as the excited state has. This is, no doubt, a difficult idea to seize, for the reason that it is a subjective, not an objective, extension. It is not that we have a feeling of bigness; though Professor James, perhaps rightly, teaches that we have. It is that the feeling, as a subject of inhesion, is big. (CP 6.133)

And because of Peirce’s profound emphasis upon panpsychism, feeling becomes “more basic than time. Feeling has both a temporal and spatial dimension. Of all things mental, feeling is that which is most likely to spread and to form into webs of connection...Feeling is thus spatial, temporal, and relational. It is the ultimate manifestation of the principle or law of continuity.”³⁹ Peirce explicates:

We are immediately aware only of our present feelings not of the future, nor of the past. The past is known to us by present memory, the future by present suggestion. But before we can interpret the memory or the suggestion, they are past; before we can interpret the present feeling which means memory, or the present feeling which means suggestion, since that interpretation takes time, that feeling has ceased to be present

³⁸Corrington, *ICSP*, 188.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 184.

and is now past. (CP 1.167)

By the continuity of the infinitesimal intervals one can now see how the past is intimately blended with the present, and also how every mental state/feeling is affectible by every earlier state. Peirce's concept of infinitesimals, especially regarding the nature of human consciousness, is reminiscent of William James' "stream of consciousness," where he concludes that thinker and thought are, mingled in neutral monism (one kind of *stuff*), continuously riding on the flow of experience. And as a processive unity, the immediate past lingers on in the present fragment of the stream.⁴⁰

The theory of infinitesimals inescapably interweaves the continuity of time. Time not only holds an integral part in the functioning of continuity, but it also helps one to understand the fundamental nature of pragmatism.⁴¹ All experience encompasses time, and time's flow is conceived as continuous. Peirce reasons that if time were not continuous, then there would be neither motion nor change in time. According to him, "consciousness must essentially cover an interval of time; for if it did not, we could gain no knowledge of time, and not merely no veracious cognition of it, but no conception whatsoever. We are, therefore, forced to say that we are immediately conscious through an infinitesimal interval of time" (CP 6.110). To experience time's flow is to envision time being inserted in the infinitesimal intervals. And that is what makes memory possible; it is possible because it is not discretely incorporated in independent intervals. Time is not only continuous or general, but it is also infinitely divisible:

Time is continuum. For since the instants, or possible events, are as many as any collection whatever, and there is no maximum collection, it follows that they are more than any collections

⁴⁰See his chapters on "The Stream of Thought" and "The Consciousness of Self," *The Principles of Psychology*, intro. by George A. Miller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 219-379.

⁴¹Peirce states: "A good question, for the purpose of illustrating the nature of Pragmatism, is, What is Time?" (CP 5.458). For his discussion of time and its linkage with the pragmaticistic conduct, temporal modality, and objective modality; see also CP 5.459 - 5.463.

whatever. They must, therefore, be individually indistinguishable in their very existence - that is, are distinguishable and the parts distinguishable indefinitely, but yet not composed of individuals absolutely self-identical and distinct from one another - that is, they form a *continuum*. (CP 1.499)

Time is “a continuum in which the present is the ‘place’ for the continuing relevance of the past and the goods of the future.”⁴² Because of the law of continuity, the past, present, and future are immediately connected; in other words, these moments (past, present, and future) are infinitesimally linked or melted into one another. Therefore, there are no absolute breaks or instants in time’s flow. And since there are no discrete moments, one is not aware of the present within the interval of time. For Peirce, the “present is connected with the past by a series of real infinitesimal steps” (CP 6.109), and also “the present is half past and half to come” (CP 6.126). If time integrates itself in infinitesimal intervals, then a past idea cannot be completely past, for time is a continuum.⁴³ Peirce distinguishes between “instant” as a point in time (equivalent to immediate consciousness) and “moment” as an infinitesimal duration as follows:

In an infinitesimal interval we directly perceive the temporal sequence of its beginning, middle, and end - not, of course, in the way of recognition, for recognition is only of the past, but in the way of immediate feeling. Now upon this interval follows another, whose beginning is the middle of the former, and whose middle is the end of the former. Here, we have an immediate perception of the temporal sequence of its beginning, middle, end, or say of the second, third, and fourth instants. From these two immediate perceptions, we gain a mediate, or inferential, perception of the relation of all four instants. This mediate perception is objectively, or as to the object represented, spread over the four instants; but subjectively, or as itself the subject of

⁴²Corrington, *ICSP*, 183.

⁴³“Peirce did not deny that there were finite intervals of time, such as a day, a week, a year, etc. But he did argue that the experience of time itself was the experience of something continuously flowing, an experience which required a theory of infinitesimals in order to make sense of it” (Stanley Harrison, *Man’s Glassy Essence: An Attempt to Construct a Theory of Person Based on the Writings of Charles Sanders Peirce* [Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1971], 232).

duration, it is completely embraced in the second moment. (The reader will observe that I use the word *instant* to mean a point of time, and *moment* to mean an infinitesimal duration). If it is objected that, upon the theory proposed, we must have more than a mediate perception of the succession of the four instants, I grant it; for the sum of the two infinitesimal intervals is itself infinitesimal, so that it is immediately perceived. It is immediately perceived in the whole interval, but only mediately perceived in the last two-thirds of the interval. (CP 6.111)

Peirce has effectively used the blackboard analogy to show how the metaphysical nature of infinitesimals interplays with such notions like continuity, discontinuity, spatiotemporal dimension, spontaneity, human consciousness, vague potentiality, and actualized possibilities. He attempts to prove that, because of the geometrical infinitesimals, there are no gaps or discontinuity. The board is a continuum of possible points; the blackboard is a continuum of two dimensions that causes everything on it to be continuous. A drawn chalk line on the blackboard represents both temporal discreteness or discontinuity and continuity; in other words, singularity or discreteness is infinitesimally a part of the continuum. From this blackboard analogy, it is important to see that although Peirce maintains Firstness is essentially indifferent to continuity, it does have continuity. Firstness is itself a continuum.⁴⁴

As previously remarked, Peirce's conception of synechism is not without flaws; specifically, contradictions. His principle of continuity has been unavoidably subject to few criticisms.⁴⁵ One of the noted criticisms has come from Hartshorne - evidenced by his

⁴⁴For his detailed elucidation of this blackboard analogy, see CP 6.203-205.

⁴⁵For example, Ochs and Murphey have found contradictions and ambiguities in Peirce's conception of synechism. Murphey indicates that Peirce's synechism "holds that all that is is continuous, yet *haecceities* [the principle of individuation], according to the theory of the modes of being, are the very opposite of the general. The difficulty cannot be escaped by positing the three realms of being as separate universes. Synechism applies to every thing there is including the universes" (Murphey, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*, 397-98). In addition to the flaws detected in Peirce's synechism, his writings of pragmatism have also suffered many contradictions. Hence, few Peirce scholars have concluded that there are at least "two" Peirces; that is, "only one of which is the 'true' Peirce...[and] there is one, brilliant but confused Peirce whose philosophic project fails to achieve what it seeks" (Peter Ochs, "The Sentiment of Pragmatism: From the Pragmatic

two papers, “Charles Peirce’s ‘One Contribution to Philosophy’ and His Most Serious Mistake”⁴⁶ and “Revision of Peirce’s Categories.”⁴⁷ While others have praised Peirce’s synechistic philosophy, Hartshorne has not only considered it “a mess,”⁴⁸ but also “the greatest single mistake.”⁴⁹ In essential agreement with Murphey, Hartshorne has criticized Peirce for overindulging in continuity by making it the central principle in every relationship, both of actuality and possibility. Guided by his process ontology Hartshorne argues that actuality cannot ontologically be both discrete (individually distinct or discontinuous) and continuous at the same time, for there will be no metaphysically single experiences existing if the temporal succession of experiences is a continuum. If continuity is real, as Peirce insists, then, according to Hartshorne, it must be real *as* potentiality; that is, continuity is distinctively the order of possibility, and not the order of actuality. “Only the potentiality of events is continuous in space and time ... immediate actuality as an event is discrete.”⁵⁰ Hartshorne also disputes elsewhere: “A continuum is indeed an infinity of possibilities, but none of these possibilities is realizeable except in an actualized discontinuity. An actualized continuity is an impossibility, and this impossibility is all that the assumption of discreteness rules out.”⁵¹ Hence, actual continuity cannot be logically presumed in Peirce’s conception of synechism, for not only

Maxim to a Pragmatic Faith,” *Monist* 75 [1992]: 555). Ochs, however, opts for “three” Peirces: “an historicist pragmatist, a foundationalist pragmatist, and a pragmaticist. The third is the one whose sentiment of pragmatism lacks any explicit formulation of its own but mediates a dialogue between the formulations of the other two” (Ibid.).

⁴⁶Charles Hartshorne, “Charles Peirce’s ‘One Contribution to Philosophy’ and His Most Serious Mistake,” *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Second Series, ed. Edward C. Moore and Richard S. Robin (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), 455-74.

⁴⁷Charles Hartshorne, “Revision of Peirce’s Categories,” *Monist* 63 (1980): 277-89.

⁴⁸Ibid., 287.

⁴⁹Hartshorne, “Charles Peirce’s ‘One Contribution to Philosophy’ and His Most Serious Mistake,” *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 467.

⁵⁰Ibid., 468.

⁵¹Manley Thompson, “Hartshorne and Peirce: Individuals and Continuity,” *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*, ed. John B. Cobb, Jr., and Franklin I. Gamwell (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1984), 148.

does this presumption deny any unit events, but it also obscures the definiteness of Firstness and sends Secondness into ambiguity: “What is second to what, an infinitesimal present to a past infinitesimally prior to it? Is it a present as short as you please that is actual (for actuality is what is Second)? If so, it is scarcely accessible to anything remotely like observation.”⁵² While concurring with Peirce that continuity must be real, Hartshorne, however, argues that, since continuity is real potentiality, it must belong to the realm of possibility. Actual becoming, which determines definite ontological events, must remain discontinuous or discrete. According to Hartshorne, continuity has to do with what *can* happen, but not with what *does* happen.

Peirce’s conception of synechism can be defended as follows. (It should be mentioned that synechism is not a constitutive, but a regulative principle of logic). First, as Peirce’s blackboard analogy explicitly illustrates, the drawn chalk line is viewed as discrete/discontinuous, which is “produced...by the reaction between two continuous surfaces into which is separated, the white surface and the black surface” (CP 6.203). What Peirce is saying is that the chalk line, as a cut, already existed in the containing continuum; therefore, actuality (or particularity) itself is an already embedded element in a continuity of reactions.⁵³ Secondly, as Thompson interprets, for Peirce, a definite experience or a succession of experiences does discretely exist as “a succession of sensations of reactions, and there are single experiences in this sense. But as single the experiences are unintelligible. Intelligibility is obtained through the concept of individual identity as consisting in a continuity of reactions.”⁵⁴ Simply put, continuity does not

⁵²Hartshorne, “Charles Peirce’s ‘One Contribution to Philosophy’ and His Most Serious Mistake,” *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 469.

⁵³Cf. Sandra B. Rosenthal, “The ‘Would-be’ Present of C.S. Peirce,” *Transactions* 4 (1968): 159-161. Rosenthal argues that Hartshorne perhaps introduces a false dichotomy when he emphatically maintains that continuity is only the order of possibility, not the order of actuality.

⁵⁴Thompson, “Hartshorne and Peirce: Individuals and Continuity,” *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*, 135.

belong in the sensations, but in the reactions. Thirdly, as Peirce has explicitly declared,⁵⁵ the idea of atomism, however “immensefully fruitful in the history of science” as Hartshorne suggests, “was always a kind of departure from synechism.”⁵⁶ While for Hartshorne, an atomic or process event is definite, foundational, or terminable, Peirce’s synechism is infinitely and antifoundationally “spreading out,” striving for greater generality. With his conception of synechism Peirce wanted to bridge the metaphysical gap between possibility/potentiality and actuality. Possibility, as inextricably bound by synechistic pragmatism, becomes one of the effects of actuality. As aforementioned, the principle of synechism unequivocally rejects the idea that the inexplicabilities are considered possible explanations. Against Hartshorne’s process event ontology, Kelly Wells contends:

Just as the atomic hypothesis terminates explanation in the “inexplicable,” a fully definite event terminates both possibility in itself and further explanation by its brute actuality. Like the atoms of Democritus, the atomic event just is, a final division of experience which terminates any possible further divisions of itself. In contrast, the doctrine of synechism conforms with the notion that reality is a reality is a cosmogonic ‘effect’ of our successive and processive relationship with the world. This relationship can never be terminated or exhausted and is always ‘spreading out’ or seeking greater generality for itself. Therefore appropriate explanations regarding reality must remain cosmogonically open, i.e., open to further explanation.⁵⁷

Again, Peirce does stress that, “A true continuum is something whose possibilities of determination no multitude of individuals can exhaust” (CP 6.170). Lastly, although for

⁵⁵ “The synechist...would never be satisfied with the hypothesis that matter is composed of atoms, all spherical and exactly alike...[N]either the eternity of the atoms nor their precise resemblance is, in the synechist’s view, an element of the hypothesis that is even admissible hypothetically” (CP 6.173).

⁵⁶ “Response by Charles Hartshorne,” *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*, 145.

⁵⁷ Kelly J. Wells, “An Evaluation of Hartshorne’s Critique of Peirce’s Synechism,” *Transactions* 32 (1996): 232.

Peirce time's flow is conceived as continuous, because if it were not, then there would be neither motion nor change in time, Peirce never specifically claimed that time (or actuality) is *absolutely* or *perfectly* continuous. He only asserted: "Now if exactitude, certitude, and universality are not to be attained by reasoning, there is certainly no other means by which they can be reached" (CP 1.142). Hartshorne seems to have overlooked this salient assertion. Time phenomenologically "does exhibit the properties of infinite divisibility and immediate connection, but is probably *not* best conceived as an unbroken and absolutely regular thread...Time thus represent continuity *almost* to perfection. Likewise, '[c]ontinuity represents Thirdness almost to perfection' (CP 1.337)."⁵⁸

Three Primal Categories⁵⁹

Kant and Peirce (and others) were indebted to the Aristotelian theory of categories. Nevertheless, Peirce has either radically modified or simplified both Aristotle's and Kant's concepts of categories. Despite his departure from Aristotle, Kant still retained Aristotle's logical form of subject-predicate; whereas, Peirce's so-called "logic of relations" concentrated upon three kinds of predicates, which later identified as three primal (or universal) categories: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness.⁶⁰ These triadic categories or what Peirce calls "three cenopythagorean categories" are as equally important as his conception of synechism. They are "worth much more than the sum total of the rest of my work, as time will show" (CP 5.469).

⁵⁸Kelly A. Parker, *The Continuity of Peirce's Thought* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 117. Parker points out that Peirce's perceptual judgments are often "discontinuous with antecedent cognition is a primary reason why Peirce posited an extra-semiotic mode of being *existence*" (252).

⁵⁹The term "primal" is Corrington's; see his *ICSP*, 118-66.

⁶⁰For the essential difference between the Aristotelian and Peircean forms of categories, see Klaus Oehler, "Peirce contra Aristotle: Two Forms of the Theory of Categories," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce: Bicentennial International Congress, Graduate Studies No.23* (Lubbock, Tex.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 335-42.

In “A Guess at the Riddle,” his seminal contribution to speculative philosophy, Peirce traced his three primal categories through psychology, physiology, biology, physics, sociology, pneumatology, and theology (*CP* 1.354). Boler is right to say that “the categories reflect most directly the structure of [Peirce’s] realism.”⁶¹

Peirce does not quite call these triadic categories conceptions, for “they are so intangible that they are rather tones or tints upon conceptions” (*CP* 1.353). And even though Peirce’s list of categories stemmed initially from the study of the table of Kant, it is hypothetically inductive; whereas the Kantian categories are more logically deductive. Hegel’s philosophical system, like that of Kant, also shared a close affinity with the Peircean categories. While his objective logic digresses from that of Hegel, especially the categorial system (quality, reaction, representation or mediation) and phenomenology, Peirce still finds some of Hegel’s philosophical perspectives commensurable to his own, such as objective idealism, the denial of a totally separate noumenal realm, and the triadic structure of the categories.⁶² Besides Aristotle and Kant, whose logical and metaphysical concepts helped shape Peirce’s early development of synechism, Leibniz and Hegel - considered as chief precursors of the synechism by Peirce - also enabled Peirce to see the conceptual perspectives of the principle of continuity in philosophy. Fisch points out that in the drafts of Peirce’s 1867 published paper, “On a New List of Categories,” one can find the influence of Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel.⁶³ In his pragmatic reconstructing of Hegel’s phenomenology, Peirce realizes that his triadic categories relatively resemble Hegel’s three stages of thought or logic (pure being, negation or essence and the real or thought), especially the category of Thirdness, which is substantially close to Hegel’s *Begriff*. However, in Peirce’s terminology, by privileging the omnipresence of Thirdness (generality) and introducing Firstness (qualitative

⁶¹John F. Boler, *Charles Peirce and Scholastic Realism: A Study of Peirce’s Relation to John Duns Scotus* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), 121.

⁶²For a detailed analysis of Peirce’s critique of Hegel’s phenomenology, see Gary Shapiro, “Peirce’s Critique of Hegel’s Phenomenology and Dialectic,” *Transactions* 17 (1981): 269-75.

⁶³See his “Hegel and Peirce,” *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays by Max H. Fisch*, 261-82.

immediacy) and Secondness (compulsion) introduced in order to phenomenologically sublate (*aufgehoben*) them into Thirdness, thereby failing to recognize the “outward clash” of Secondness, Hegel’s philosophical system, according to Peirce, consequently suffers such “fatal disease” (CP 8.268).⁶⁴ In his review of Josiah Royce’s *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, Peirce briefly alludes to Hegel’s “capital error”:

The capital error of Hegel which permeates his whole system in every part of it is that he almost altogether ignores the Outward Clash. Besides the lower consciousness of feeling and the higher consciousness of nutrition, this direct consciousness of hitting and of getting hit into all cognition and serves to make it mean something real. (CP 8.41)

Compared with other philosophers like Aristotle, Kant, or Hegel, the word *category* substantially carries the same meaning. It is “an element of phenomena of the first rank of generality...The business of phenomenology is to draw up a catalogue of categories and prove its sufficiency and freedom from redundancies, to make out the characteristics of each category, and to show the relationships of each to the others” (CP 5.43). For Peirce, there are two distinct orders of categories: the particular and the universal. The particular categories only form a series, and only one of each series is predominantly present in any one phenomenon. These particular categories are limited in their application. On the other hand, the universal categories; namely, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, are the elemental forms of thought, which are empirically applicable and present in all phenomena. The Peircean categories are identified by two fundamental perspectives: logical and phenomenological.

1. *Logical Perspective*

As far as the logical perspective is concerned, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* exerted an influence on Peirce’s metaphysical categories (CP 1.560). He admits that his

⁶⁴According to Peirce, there are seven systems of metaphysics represented by philosophers, such as Hegel, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and Berkeley. (CP.5.77n). For detailed examinations of these seven systems, see Corrington, *ICSP*, 138-39.

“list of categories” indeed “grew originally out of the study of the table of Kant” (*CP* 1.300) and his description of the logical features of thought also depended “upon formal logic that Kant asserted” (*CP* 1.561). Nonetheless, Peirce differs radically from Kant regarding how thought is to be made intelligible. For him, thought must always function *inferentially*, while for Kant thought functions *propositionally*. Knowing Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* by heart, and after much struggle, Peirce concluded:

After a series of inquiries, I came to see that Kant ought not to have confined himself to divisions of propositions, or “judgments,” as the Germans confuse the subject by calling them...At last, after the hardest two years’ mental work that I have ever done in my life, I found myself with but a single assured result of any positive importance. This was that there are but three elementary forms of predication or signification, which as I originally named them (but with bracketed additions now made to render the terms more intelligible) were *qualities* (of feeling), (dyadic) *relations*, and (predications of) *representations*. (*CP* 1.561)

The articulation of Peirce’s categorial structure; namely, the logical or formal features of thought and the joining of subjects and predicates, in Kantian fashion, so as to unify experience by reducing the manifold of impressions to unity, appeared in his important paper “On a New List of Categories,” published in *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (1867). However, in “The List of Categories: A Second Essay” (1894), Peirce no longer applied the subject-predicate form to formulate judgments; rather, he began to develop what he termed a “logic of relations,” which contains the triadic relations (monad or First, dyad or Second, and triad or Third), as each relation is defined by its relata.

And in “On a New List of Categories,” Peirce first unfolded his division of signs or three kinds of representations. Not only did these three kinds of representations initially serve as a groundwork for Peirce’s later triadic categories of semiotics (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness), indispensably linked with metaphysics, but it also greatly contributed to his triadic theory of inquiry; namely, abduction or retrodution, deduction, and induction. It is important to note that, for Peirce, logic is essentially another name for

semiotic (sign theory).⁶⁵ To grasp the phenomenological structure and function of Peirce's semiotic categories, it is imperative that one understand how a sign (representamen-object-interpretant)⁶⁶ relates to each of the categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness). Peirce defines a sign as follows:

A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* in the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen. (CP 2.228)

Every sign possesses two different objects: the "immediate object" and the "dynamic object." Peirce's concept of immediate and dynamic objects resembles Kant's

⁶⁵Cf. *W* 3: 82-89.

⁶⁶The term "representamen" is used with a broader semiotic framework; that is, a nonhuman order can disclose its own semiotic signification without human interpretation; whereas the term "sign" is disposed to be more mentally anthropocentric. After 1905 Peirce no longer applied the term "representamen" and began to employ the term "sign" more extensively. He also distinguished the term "interpreter" from the term "interpretant." Like "representamen," "interpretant" (the interpreting product of sign and object or the "proper significate outcome of a sign" [CP 5.473]) need not be restricted to the mental act of human sign-users, but it can be semiotically extended to the non-human realm. Peirce gave examples of chameleons, plants, and insects make their livings by uttering signs, and that "every sign certainly conveys something of the general nature of thought, if not from a mind, yet from some repository of ideas, or significant forms, and if not to a person, yet to something capable of some how 'catching on'....that is [,] of receiving not merely a physical, nor even merely a psychical dose of energy, but a significant meaning" (MS 318, 00205-06). Cited in Felicia E. Kruse, "Peirce's Sign and the Process of Interpretation," *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, ed. Richard E. Hart and Douglas R. Anderson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 142. Peirce sometimes used "interpreter" and "interpretant" interchangeably, but according to Corrington, in most contexts, he made a clear distinction between these two terms: "That is, the interpretant is the mediating sign that makes all categorial and semiotic linkages public (specifically, in the form of arguments). The interpreter is the person who takes over the interpretant and modifies it in such a way as to create yet new interpretants" (*ICSP*, 122).

metaphysical distinction between phenomenal and noumenal realms; however, Corrington points out that Peirce's "primary difference from Kant was that the dynamic aspect of the object *would* (or at least could) be known in the infinite long run through the methods of science. If Kant give us two infinite parallel lines that never meet, Peirce gives us convergent lines that will eventually allow the object to appear fully through its interpretants."⁶⁷ The dynamic object exists in itself and unlimitedly determines or sustains the immediate object, and because of its preinterpretation or preinterpretedness the dynamic object is not semiotically exhausted or dependent on the developing process of interpretation; that is, "the Object as it is regardless of any particular aspect of it, the Object in such relations as unlimited and the final study would show it to be" (*CP* 8.183). The dynamic object is by its nature elusive; in other words, "when the sign is produced the Dynamic Object is no more *there* (and before the sign was produced it was not an object at all)."⁶⁸ Although semiotic acts are determined by the dynamic objects, "[w]hat is present to our mind and to the semiotic discourse is only the Immediate Object to be interpreted by other signs."⁶⁹ The concrete reasonableness is enclosed in the dynamic objects, for they teleologically continue to spawn semiotic interpretations into the infinite distant future. Because of its actual influence, the dynamic object enables the sign to function by generating interpretants. On the contrary, as cognized within the sign and thus indexically producing an idea, the immediate object is contextually interpreted by or represented in a sign. According to Peirce, "a mental representation of the index is produced, which mental representation is called the *immediate object* of the sign" (*CP* 5.473).⁷⁰ The process of inquiry is infinitely furthered and enhanced by the dynamic

⁶⁷*STTP*, 170-71.

⁶⁸Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 39.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰Carl Hausman has written two excellent papers expounding Peirce's immediate and dynamic objects and percepts. See "Metaphorical Reference and Peirce's Dynamical Object," *Transactions* 23 (1987): 381-409; and "In and Out of Peirce's Percepts," *Transactions* 26 (1990): 271-308.

object, while the immediate object functions immediately and is factually circumscribed.⁷¹ Peirce gives the following example:

Take for example, the sentence “the Sun is blue.” Its Objects are “the Sun” and “blueness.” If by “blueness” be meant that the Immediate Object, which is the quality of the sensation, it can only be known by Feeling...So the “Sun” may mean the occasion of sundry sensations, and so is Immediate Object, or it may mean our usual interpretation of such sensations in terms of place, mass, etc., when it is the Dynamic Object. (CP 8.183)

For Peirce, “[A] sign or representamen is one of three kinds (Qualisign, Sinsign, or Legisign); it relates to its object in one of three ways (as Icon, Index, or Symbol); and it has an interpretant that *represents* the sign as a sign of possibility, fact, or reason, i.e., as

⁷¹Following Kantian fashion, the Peircean dynamic and immediate objects apparently resemble Kant’s “thing-in-itself” (*Ding an sich*) and phenomenological “intuition” or intuitive experience (*Anschauung*) respectively. In his *ICSP* Corrington writes: “Peirce recasts Kant’s distinction in pragmatic terms. The so-called depth dimension of the object is what he called the ‘dynamic object,’ while the present aspect is what he called the ‘immediate object.’ Peirce distances himself from Kant by insisting that inquiry can actually get us closer to the true dynamic object. There is thus a growing convergence between the immediate and dynamic objects” (143). Corrington writes elsewhere: “Unlike Kant’s ‘thing-in-itself,’ the dynamic object moves closer to the interpreter through time as the more available ‘immediate object’ responds to the pressure of the dynamic object that lives within it” (217). See his “Ecstatic Naturalism and the Transfiguration of the Good,” *Empirical Theology: A Handbook*, ed. Randolph C. Miller (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1992), 203-221. As regards the marked distinction between Kant’s “thing-in-itself” and Peirce’s dynamic object, it is helpful to recall Peirce’s 1868 paper, *Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man*, in which he explicitly proclaimed that we have no conception of the absolutely incognizable, and that through the sign activity (semiosis) we would eventually probe into and discover the hidden traits or depth dimensions of the dynamic objects. Using the example of the weathercock Johansen offers a helpful illustration concerning the distinction between the immediate and dynamic objects: “[T]he weathercock tells us little about the wind as immediate object. We know only the direction. The wind as dynamical object constitutes a subject for further inquiry, through collateral experience and observation of other characteristics such as its force and velocity” (Jørgen Dines Johansen, *Dialogic Semiosis: An Essay on Signs and Meaning* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993], 75-76).

Rheme, Dicent Sign, or Argument.”⁷² His triadic distinction between *likenesses*, *indices*, and *symbols* (or what Corrington calls “the unveiling triad”) helps clarify his complex semiotic system:

1. Those whose relation to their objects is a mere community in some quality, and these representations may be termed *Likenesses* [Peirce later called “icons”].
2. Those whose relation to their objects consists in a correspondence in fact, and these may be termed *Indices* [indexes] or *Signs*.
3. Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an imputed character, which are the same as *general signs*, and these may be termed *Symbols*. (*W* 2:56)⁷³

For Peirce, both icons and indexes/indices are “degenerate”⁷⁴ classes of signs: the relation of iconic and indexical signs to their object is autonomously free of any interpretant. If

⁷²John K. Sheriff, *Charles Peirce's Guess at the Riddle: Grounds for Human Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 40.

⁷³About 1903, Peirce divided signs into the three so-called trichotomies: first trichotomy of signs (*Qualisign*/quality, *Sinsign*/actual fact, and *Legisign*/law); second trichotomy of signs (*Icon*/characteristics, *Index*/object, and *Symbol*/representation); and third trichotomy of signs (*Rheme*/qualitative possibility, *Dicisign* or *Dicent Sign*/actual existence, and *Argument*/interpretant). The first trichotomy shows how signs function within themselves. (It should be noted that what a thing or event functions as a sign is totally distinct from its semiotic meaning or interpretant). The second trichotomy indicates how signs relate to objects. The third trichotomy reveals how a thing or a event is represented by interpretant, so that a sign can become intelligible. Out of these three trichotomies, Peirce made them into a set of Ten Classes of Signs. For his descriptions and analyses of the three trichotomies of signs, the so-called degenerate signs, and the trichotomy of arguments (abduction, deduction, and induction), see *CP* 2.233-72. See also Gayle L. Ormiston, “Peirce’s Categories: Structure of Semiotic,” *Semiotica* 19:3/4 (1977): 209-31; and Floyd Merrell’s chapter, “Out of Sign, Out of Mind,” *Peirce, Signs, and Meaning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 297-314. According to Merrell, “Peirce’s decalogue of signs begins with corporeal, visceral, physical sensations, then develops to include relations between self-body-mind and something other, whether ‘in here’ or ‘out there’” (300).

⁷⁴Peirce defines a “degenerate” class of signs as follows: “A fact concerning two subjects is a dual character or relation, but a relation which is a mere combination of two

there exists a coexistence of two singular facts or a dyadic relation of the sign (whether the resemblance of an icon or the causal connection of an index) and its object without mental correlation or association, then a sign constitutes a degenerate form. On the contrary, to become a triadically “genuine” sign, a symbol must need an interpretant;⁷⁵ in

⁷⁵ An interpretant may be defined as an interpretation or signification; that is, it plays the role of a carrier of meaning; however, in his letter to Lady Welby in 1904, Peirce indicated that, “But we may take a sign in so broad a sense that the interpretant of it is not a thought, but an action or experience, or we may even so enlarge the meaning of sign that its interpretant is a mere quality of feeling” (SS, 31). According to him, every sign has three interpretant triad: immediate, dynamic, and final. And in his letter to Lady Welby dated March 14, 1909, Peirce wrote: “My Dynamical Interpretant consists in direct effect actually produced by a Sign upon an Interpreter of it...My Final Interpretant is, I believe, exactly the same as your Significance; namely, the effect the Sign *would* produce upon any mind upon which circumstances should permit it to work out its fullest effect. My Immediate Interpretant is, I think, very nearly, if not quite, the same as your “Sense”; for I understand the former to be the total unanalyzed effect that the Sign is calculated to produce, or naturally might be expected to produce; and I have been accustomed to identify this with the effect the sign first produces or may produce upon a mind, without any reflection upon it” (SS, 110). The immediate interpretant is equivalent to Firstness; the dynamical interpretant to Secondness; and the final interpretant to Thirdness. Peirce also gives different terms to his description of interpretant: emotional/immediate, energetic/dynamic, and logical/final (CP 5.475-476). Felicia Kruse shows that, according to Peirce, not every logical/final interpretant can be a concept; and that the alternative of no ultimate logical interpretant is certainly contrary to Peirce’s concept of the dynamic object. Because if there is one, then “any semiosis that involves logical interpretants must proceed *ad infinitum*, and there can be no telos conditioning it...Thus Peirce argues that the ultimate logical interpretant ‘is not a sign in the way in which that sign of which it is the logical interpretant is the sign.’” See her “Peirce’s Sign and the Process of Interpretant,” *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, 128-52. As Corrington points out: “Interpretants form into series that have neither beginning nor end, and are thus infinite in scope and complexity. An interpretant carries forward some kind of idea. As a component of thirdness, the interpretant participates in the structures of continuity and points toward the future (in which a final interpretant would be manifest)” (ICSP, 135). Some have suggested that there is a similarity between Peirce’s interpretant and Derrida’s *différance*. However, according to Merrell, “to put forth such comparisons is to overlook Peirce’s enthusiastic inclusion of the interpreters as an integral part of the *semiotic* proceedings: the subject or dialogic self is definitely constituted as the focus about which the sign revolves, and the sign takes on meaning solely as a result of the emitter-interpreter-sign interaction” (Peirce, *Signs, and Meaning*, 19-20); see also his *Deconstruction Reframed* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1985); cf. Sandra B. Rosenthal, “Sign, Time, and the Viability of Trace: Derrida and Peirce,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1996): 19-28.

other words, “the mind associates the sign with its object” (*CP* 1.372). A symbol is an interpreted sign; it is “in one sense relative to the understanding” (*W* 2:56). Consequently, both iconic and indexical signs dyadically remain unintelligible until they are triadically associated with interpretants; namely, symbolic signs.

An iconic sign is the sign of a quality; it is monadically self-contained, possessing its own characteristics or identity. It is the sign by resemblance, an icon has a shared character or represents the same quality of an object to which it denotes. This is what Peirce characterizes as Firstness: “An *Icon* is a Representamen whose Representative Quality is a Firstness of it as a First. That is, a quality that it has *qua* thing renders it fit to be a representamen” (*CP* 2.276). An example of an icon is that of a map representing or resembling the geography of a particular country. Peirce defines an icon as follows:

An icon is a representamen of what it represents and for the mind that interprets it as such, by virtue of its being an immediate image, that is to say by virtue of characters which belong to it in itself as a sensible object, and which it would possess just the same were there no object in nature that it resembled, and though it never were interpreted as a sign. It is of the nature of an appearance, and as such, strictly speaking, exists only in consciousness, although for convenience in ordinary parlance and when extreme precision is not called for, we extend the term *icon* to the outward objects which excite in consciousness the image itself. (*CP* 4.447).

An indexical sign is the sign of a relation, which is characteristically binary. It dyadically relates to or is affected by its object through existentially causal connection or contiguity; it is a “correspondence in fact” (*CP* 1.558). The indexical sign is the pointing of a finger, as it were, pointing to some other natural fact; for example, smoke is an indexical sign of fire, or a weather vane is an index of the wind direction. Like iconic signs, indexical signs exist and function by themselves whether anyone notices or not. Both iconic and indexical signs precede interpretation; therefore, they assert nothing; they can only say, “There” or “Here.” “The “demonstrative pronouns, ‘this’ and ‘that’, are indices” (*CP* 2.287). According to Peirce, if an iconic sign could be interpreted by a sentence, that sentence must possess a “potential mood,” it would state: “Suppose a figure

has three sides”; whereas if an indexical sign were to be interpreted, its mood must be exclamatory or imperative; for example, “Look out!” On the other hand, a symbolic sign by nature has the “declarative mood”; for example, “Ezekiel loveth Huldah” (CP 2.291-95). Because of its existential relation, an index belongs to the category of Secondness:

An Index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object...Insofar as the Index is affected by the Object, it necessarily has some Quality in common with the Object, and it is in respect to these that it refers to the Object. (CP 2.248)

Peirce defines symbol as follows: “A sign is in conjoint relation to the thing denoted and to the mind” (CP 3.360); it is “a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object” (CP 2.249); and symbols are “founded either upon habits, which are, of course general, or upon conventions or agreements, which are equally general” (SS, 70). So, having an imputed character, a symbol is a sign of representation; it represents generality. As the interpretant signs of semiosis, symbols are teleological, because they grow, develop, spread ideas and strive towards the growth of the concrete reasonableness. A symbol does contain elements such as similarity (icon) or indicator (index), but it is not necessarily dependent on them. According to Peirce, symbols are essentially of three types: predicates or terms, propositions, and arguments. In order for a symbolic sign to be intelligible, it will need to be triadically constituted by iconic and indexical signs. Words, sentences, images, or events are considered conventional signs of symbols. “A symbol is a law, or regularity of the indefinite future” (CP 2.293). Thus, Peirce calls this Thirdness.⁷⁶ The word “love” is

⁷⁶“In its genuine form Thirdness is the triadic relation existing between a sign, its object, and the interpreting thought, itself a sign, considered as constituting the mode of being of a sign. A sign mediates between the *interpretant* sign and its object” (CP 8.332). Milton Singer points out that while the signs of icon (resemblance), index (contiguity), and symbol (association) “may refer to all sort of things - natural landscapes, plants and animals, houses and vehicles, and the starry heavens above - an important subset of these signs refers to human persons, e.g., personal and family portraits are iconic signs of

the example of a conventional symbol, because this word associates with an idea; namely, the mental icon of two loving people.

2. *Phenomenological Perspective*

Pertaining to the phenomenological perspective, it was not Hegel's, but Kant's phenomenology that Peirce diligently and critically studied. However, Peirce's so-called cenopythagorean categories are the attempt to respond to Hegel's three stages of thought and correspond to the three categories of Kant's table of four triads. Peirce's conception of phenomenology was structured after his triadic categories, not after the Kantian transcendental ego or thing-in-itself. He cited the following reason why his phenomenology differed essentially from that of Hegel:

I will so far follow Hegel as to call it this science *Phenomenology* although I will not restrict it to the observation and analysis of *experience* but extend it to describing all the features that are common to whatever is *experienced* or might conceivably be experienced or become an object of study in any way direct or indirect" (CP 5.37).

Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, Peirce was still aware that his phenomenological categories nearly resembled Hegel's, although he announced that there was "no influence upon me from Hegel...[it] is the coincidence that Hegel and I arrived in quite independent ways substantially to the same result" (CP 5.38). In his letter to Lady Welby in 1904, Peirce wrote: "The cenopythagorean categories are doubtless another attempt to characterize what Hegel sought to characterize as his three stages of thought" (SS, 25).

Besides Kant and Hegel, one may also find a parallel between Aristotle's ontological metaphysics of being *qua* being and Peirce's phenomenology (or what he called "phaneroscopy") as a system of the triadic primal categories.⁷⁷ Phaneroscopy is defined

persons; personal pronouns and names are indexical signs of persons; verbal descriptions of people are symbolic signs. All these signs are, in one sense, signs of the self, and selves are objects of these signs" (*Man's Glassy Essence: Explorations in Semiotic Anthropology* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984], 60).

⁷⁷Herbert Spiegelberg contends that it was Husserl, not Peirce, who first used the term *Phänomenologie* in 1901 in his second volume entitled *Logische Untersuchungen*

by Peirce as “the description of the *phaneron* [phenomenon]; and by the *phaneron* I mean the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not” (CP 1.284). Phenomenology or phaneroscopy is “the systematic scrutinizing and sorting of whatever is before the mind in any sense.”⁷⁸ It enables one to either depict or examine whatever features appear in all phenomena. The three primal or universal categories: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness are found in every phenomenon/phaneron. In a letter to Lady Welby (October 12, 1904), Peirce defined the meanings of his “cynopythagorean” categories as follows:

Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is positively and without reference to anything else. Secondness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, with respect to a second but regardless of any third. Thirdness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other...The typical ideas of Firstness are qualities of feeling, or mere appearances...The type of an idea of Secondness is the experience of effort, prescinded from the idea of a purpose...The experience of effort cannot exist without the experience of resistance [*sic*]. Effort only is effort by virtue of its being

which appeared under the title of *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*. He also maintains that Peirce began to use the term “phenomenology” for the first time in 1902. However, after two years Peirce abandoned this term and opted for another well-known neologism; namely, “phaneroscopy.” There seems no apparent similarity or equivalent between Peirce’s conception of phenomenology and that of Husserl, mainly because Husserl privileges no priority to any aspect or element of phenomena as Peirce does. Nonetheless, as Spiegelberg remarks, Husserl’s theory of intentionality might legitimately share a congeniality with Peirce’s Thirdness as far as semiotic structure is concerned. Spiegelberg says that “Husserl knew practically nothing about Peirce, and that Peirce knew about Husserl only the wrong things, at least insofar as Husserl’s phenomenology was concerned” (184). See Spiegelberg, “Husserl’s and Peirce’s Phenomenologies: Coincidence or Interaction,” *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 17 (1956): 164-85. Spiegelberg also adds: “[I]t must not be overlooked that Peirce’s attempt to classify the phenomena or ‘phanerons’ according to firstness, secondness, and thirdness reveals an interest in ontological systematization which is unparalleled among phenomenologists” (*The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, third revised and enlarged edition [Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994], 17).

⁷⁸Carl R. Hausman, “Value and the Peircean Categories,” *Transactions* 15 (1979): 203-23.

opposed; and no third element enters. Note that I speak of the *experience*, not of the *feeling*, of effort...Now I come to Thirdness...If you take any ordinary triadic relation, you will always find a *mental* element in it. Brute action is secondness, any mentality involves thirdness.(SS, 24-26; 29)

Further, Peirce says: "First, Second, and Third, are the beginning, end, and middle. The first is that which has its being or peculiarity within itself. The Second is that which is what it is by force of something to which it is second. The Third is that which is as it is owing to things between which it mediates and which it brings into relation" (*W* 5: 304). Firstness (mere possibility), Secondness (actuality), and Thirdness (thought), as three modes of being, are absolutely unique and irreducible. Because both Firstness (monad) and Secondness (dyad) are prerational or preconcitive, they lack the dimension of intelligibility and generality; therefore, the third mediating category (Thirdness) is logically needed. Thirdness creates a triadic relation by mediating Firstness (feeling) and Secondness (existence). These three primal categories are interdependent. In order to engender the real or generality, Thirdness is dependent upon the other two categories; yet at the same time, Firstness and Secondness are incomplete without Thirdness. Merrell sums up the interrelational roles and functions of the triadic categories as follows:

Firstness is the possibility of a sign's becoming in the realm of Secondness, such becoming governed by the mediating force of the mind by way of convention, habit, and all other propensities lying in wait in the realm of Thirdness. Regarding this role of mind, acts of Firstness are pervaded with "subjectivism" and "idealism," Secondness with "realism," and Thirdness with "objectivism" and "realism." But these categories do not correspond to disjunctive "realms" at all. They are mutually penetrating, a constantly folding in and over one another. Their interdependence is essential to their very nature as categories. Thus, Firstness without Secondness and Thirdness is nothing. Secondness without Firstness and Thirdness is surely dead. And Thirdness without Firstness and Secondness is well-nigh unthinkable.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Merrell, *Peirce, Signs, and Meaning*, 86.

Peirce's logic of relations, as recorded in his 1867 paper "On a New List of Categories," exerted a substantial impact on his triadic primal categories.⁸⁰ As already shown, his primal categories are formed into two perspectives: the logical (logic of relatives) and the phenomenological (experience), or what Potter calls, from "within" and from "without" respectively.⁸¹ Without the triadic categorial structure phenomena will not be adequately described or characterized. More importantly, without the triadic categories Peirce's normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics, logic), evolutionary cosmology, semiotic, and religious metaphysics would inevitably lack a categorial formation and thus become incomplete.

⁸⁰Also in this 1867 paper Peirce developed an epistemic device (modeling after that of Aristotle) so that concepts or ideas can be distinguished or separated, since his phenomenological categories are absolutely irreducible and interdependent, and especially since they are "so intangible that they are rather tones or tints upon conceptions" (CP 1.353). There are three ways, Peirce claims, in which an idea may be separated from another: dissociation, prescision or abstraction, and discrimination. Dissociation is "that separation which, in the absence of a constant association, is permitted by the law of association of images. It is the consciousness of one thing, without the necessary simultaneous consciousness of the other" (W 2:50). For example, one can have an idea or color of red without having an idea or color of blue and vice versa. Discrimination "has to do merely with the essences of the terms, and only draws a distinction in meaning" (W 2:50). For example, blue can be discriminated from red (vice versa) or space from color (vice versa), but blue cannot be discriminated from color. Prescision or abstraction not merely involves mental separation, but it is also "that which arises from *attention to* one element and *neglect of* the other" (W 2:50). For example, one cannot dissociate space from color, one can still assume uncolored space (CP 1.353). Also, regarding the hierarchy of his logic of relations expounded in the "New List," Peirce developed the so-called *degenerate cases* of primal categories; that is, the distinction of genuine and degenerate cases of Secondness and Thirdness. For detailed elucidations and analyses, see CP 1.527, 1.537, and 1.365; Corrington, *ICSP*, 128; and Felicia E. Kruse, "Genuineness and Degeneracy in Peirce's Categories," *Transactions* 27 (1991): 267-98.

⁸¹Vincent G. Potter, S.J., *Charles S. Peirce: On Norms & Ideals* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 14. Potter also points out this important distinction: "The categories themselves must not be confused with the elements in the categories: a First is not to be confused with Firstness, nor a Second with Secondness, nor a Third with Thirdness. There can be various combinations of category with category, and of element with category" (14).

a. Firstness

Kolenda claims that of Charles Peirce's three primal categories, Firstness "is hardest to swallow."⁸² Firstness is pure possibility, *sui generis*, chance (tychism) and spontaneity. It is totally undetermined, prerational, nonrelative, and independent of anything else. It is the category of immediate consciousness, of the ontological "not yet," and of the quality of "feeling." It is important to understand what Peirce means by "feeling" and how it correlates with the term "consciousness." In Peirce's view, "A feeling is an element of consciousness just as it immediately is in the moment when it is there for itself and as delegate of some other feeling not present. Such a feeling is not a psychological datum" (*CP* 7.465).⁸³ He elaborates:

By a feeling, I mean an instance of that kind of consciousness which involves no analysis, comparison or any process whatsoever, nor consists in whole or in part of any act by which one stretch of consciousness is distinguished from another, which has its own positive quality which consists in nothing else, and which is of itself all that it is, however it may have been brought about; so that if this feeling is present during a lapse of time, it is wholly and equally present at every moment of that time. (*CP* 1.306)

"A feeling," in Peirce's view, "is a state, which is in its entirety in every moment of time as long as it endures" (*CP* 1.307). The word "feeling" described by Peirce is not equivalent to "sensation," that is, it does not imply a psychological datum. Feeling is nothing but a quality in itself (a First), and a quality is a pure possibility, monadically

⁸²Konstantin Kolenda, "Firstness and Contingency," *From Time and Chance to Consciousness: Studies in the Metaphysics of Charles Peirce*, ed. Edward C. Moore and Richard S. Robin (Oxford: Berg Publishers, Ltd., 1994), 199.

⁸³Peirce also writes: "[O]f whatever is in the mind in any mode of consciousness there is necessarily an immediate consciousness and consequently a feeling. The proof of this proposition is very instructive as to the nature of feeling; for it shows that, if by *psychology* we mean the positive, or observational, science of the mind or of consciousness, then although the entire consciousness at any one instant is nothing but a feeling, yet psychology can teach us nothing of the nature of feeling, nor can we gain knowledge of any feeling by introspection, the feeling being completely veiled by introspection, for the very reason that it is our immediate consciousness" (*CP* 1.310).

having no relation to any existential realms. Peirce does distinguish between qualities as in themselves and qualities of feeling (qualities embedded in feelings):

Among phanerons there are certain qualities of feeling, such as the color of magenta, the odor of attar, the sound of a railway whistle, the taste of quinine, the quality of the emotion upon contemplating a fine mathematical demonstration, the quality of feeling of love, etc. I do not mean the sense of actually experiencing these feelings, whether primarily or in any memory or imagination. That is something that involves these qualities as an element of it. But I mean the qualities themselves which, in themselves, are mere may-bes, not necessarily realized...That mere *quality*, or suchness, is not in itself an occurrence, as seeing a red object is; it is a mere may-be. Its only being consists in the fact that there *might be* such a peculiar, positive, suchness in a phaneron. (*CP* 1.304).

Because quality (suchness) is a metaphysically abstract concept it cannot be concretely realized or cognized, like seeing a red object (unless it possesses what Peirce calls an “embodied quality”). Consequently, immediate consciousness (feeling) or quality does not direct one toward any rational structure or epistemic realm. As a “mere may-be,” it is just a peculiar or positive suchness that might be actualized in a phaneron. Peirce uses this metaphysical term in order to probe into the depth-dimension of a phenomenon. Therefore, feeling, unlike sensation, does not necessarily refer to any cognitive experience. As mentioned above, because it is a purely metaphysical datum, feeling becomes highly abstract and difficult to grasp.⁸⁴ Peirce’s immediate consciousness may be likened to Kant’s noumenal realm regarding one’s cognitive function to the external world. Peirce offers the following example:

That there is a cream colored surface with black characters on it is as near as I can readily describe the datum of my consciousness at this minute, but in truth the moment I pick it to pieces, as I must do to describe it, it ceases to be a datum. As for the pure feeling, *that* is the hypothetical entity, and is as completely veiled from me by its own

⁸⁴See G. Lynn Stephens, “Noumenal Qualia: C.S. Peirce on Our Epistemic Access to Feelings,” *Transactions* 21 (1985): 95-108.

immediacy as a material particle, as it exists in itself, is veiled by the somewhat absurd requirement that it shall be considered in itself.
(CP 7.465)

In Peirce's view, feeling as a nonpsychological datum is real and it is practically everywhere - in both organic and inorganic worlds; that is, "[F]eeling in any ascertainable degree is a mere property of protoplasm, perhaps only of nerve matter. Now it so happens that biological organisms, and especially a nervous system are favorably conditioned for exhibiting the phenomena of mind also" (CP 7.364). Again, what Peirce is saying is that feeling, as a "non-psychological datum," is not restricted to human emotions. And what Peirce terms "feeling" or "consciousness" may be applied to the protoplasmic stimulation, for protoplasm does feel. He explains further: "We know that the protoplasmic content of every nerve-cell has its active and passive conditions, and argument is unnecessary to show that feeling, or immediate consciousness, arises in an active state of nerve-cells" (CP 1.386).

Firstness may be compared to Kant's "manifold of sense," but even this comparison will not do justice to Peirce's Firstness (unless it is allowed to be a potential manifold of sense), for "Kant talks inaccurately of the manifold of sense; in fact, the first impression has no parts, any more than it has unity or wholeness" (W 5:304). Firstness is dynamic and "self-othering"⁸⁵ (Corrington). It is a mere possibility, a vague potentiality. Peirce

⁸⁵Even though Firstness is monadically solipsistic having no correlation with existence, it potentially acts as the spawning ground or condition for any emerging experience; namely, Second(s). John Dewey similarly shares this understanding with Corrington, although he did not use the term "self-othering." He writes: "But this quality, while having no evidential value with respect to existence, is a condition of there being *any* experience and hence of an experience or phenomenon ('phaneron')." See John Dewey, "Peirce's Theory of Quality," *The Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1935): 705. In this paper Dewey also remarks that the term "possibility" that Peirce uses actually implies "material potentiality" or "power," not "logical possibility." He states: "'Possibility' in isolation from a context is an ambiguous word. It means both logical possibility and material potentiality. While Peirce is concerned to indicate that quality is Firstness because it is a logical condition of what he terms existence (and of Thirdness, continuity or rationality), yet when he says 'the word *possibility* fits it,' he is speaking of power, of material potentiality, not of quality as logical possibility." (702). Whether agreeing with Dewey or not, one should pay heed to his following words: "I do not profess...to agree

distinguishes “*mere possibility*” (Firstness) from “*real possibility*” (Thirdness). Firstness is a “mere may-be”; that is, there may be a peculiar suchness existing in a phaneron or phenomenon, because a quality “is how something may or might have been” (CP 1.536). On the other hand, *real possibility* is a *would-be*, for it does involve conditional necessity; namely, law, rule, or habit. For Peirce, “Habit is by no means exclusively a mental fact. Empirically, we find that some plants take habits. The stream of water that wears a bed for itself is forming a habit” (CP 5.492). A law, according to Peirce, is “how an endless future must continue to be” (CP 1.536). Because of its monadic nature, Firstness is ontologically and phenomenologically independent; therefore, it is characterized by possibilities. It is impossible to think, assert, describe, or articulate the characteristic of Firstness, because the very moment it is expressed, it “has already lost its characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else” (CP 1.357). In short, this is the “preverbal” stage and is “prior to all predication”,⁸⁶ that is, “[s]top to think of it, and it has flown” (CP 1.357). Firstness is what it is without any reference to force (Secondness) or thought (Thirdness). Peirce likens Firstness to Adam’s dreaming innocence state - the day Adam opened his eyes for the first time and before he had begun to make any distinctions or was conscious of his own existence:

What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own existence - that is first, present, immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it” (CP 1.357).

b. Secondness

Against pure intellectualism which cannot explain how matter comes into existence, Peirce simply defines Secondness as the “blind force [which] is an element of experience

completely with Peirce’s analysis, for I do not think I have fully mastered it” (708). This only affirms the fact that Peirce’s metaphysical concept of Firstness is intricately complex and highly elusive.

⁸⁶Corrington, *ICSP*, 126.

distinct from rationality, or logical force” (CP 1.222). Peter Krausser shows that the primal category of Secondness closely associates with Peirce’s pragmatic realism, especially in his attack against nominalism, for “the real is that which insists upon forcing its way to recognition as something *other* than the mind’s creation” (CP 1.325).⁸⁷

Secondness metaphysically and logically represents the dyadic element of resistance and reaction as a mode of being. It is constituted by the existential opposition or shock of reaction between the ego and the non-ego (object of direct consciousness):

Existence is that mode of being which lies in opposition to another. To say that a table exists is to say that it is hard, heavy, opaque, resonant, that is, produces immediate effects upon the senses, and also that it produces purely physical effects...dynamically reacts against other things... resists pressure...A thing without oppositions *ipso facto* does not exist...Existence, though brought about by dyadism, or opposition, as its proper determination, yet, when brought about, lies *abstractly and in itself considered*, within itself. (CP 1.457; 1.461).

Secondness shares one metaphysical feature with Firstness; that is, it is prerational, preconceptual, or incognizable. However, unlike Firstness and Thirdness, Secondness is neither quality (possibility) nor law (generality), it is strictly *individual* and irreducible to other two categories. And unlike Firstness, the characteristic of Secondness is disclosed by brute force. While Firstness is deeply submerged in sheer solipsism, Secondness dynamically exists through shock, surprise, or struggle. Second is “that which is what it is by force of something to which it is second” (CP 1.356).

Peirce identifies the mode of being of Secondness with the so-called *haecceity* or “thisness,” for he mainly wants to stress the brutal fact of existence, the hereness-and-nowness of Seconds. Peirce borrowed the term *haecceity* from John Duns Scotus’ scholastic realism (ca. 1890).⁸⁸ In Scotus’ view, *haecceity* stands for that which is

⁸⁷See Peter Krausser, “The Three Fundamental Structural Categories of Charles S. Peirce,” *Transactions* 13 (1977): 189-215.

⁸⁸“In truth, any fact is in one sense ultimate - that is to say, in its isolated aggressive stubbornness and individual reality. What Scotus calls the *haecceities* of things, the hereness and nowness of them, are indeed ultimate...Why IT [Secondness], independently

individually, singularly, or really unique as compared to its relation with the “common nature.” Boler elucidates: “If Socrates is truly a man, there must be something ‘in’ Socrates which is the basis for that assertion. In addition, there must be a principle by which Socrates is the real, unique individual that he is. Scotus calls the first principle the Common Nature and the second haecceity.”⁸⁹ In short, haecceity denotes “the ultimate actualizing entity.”⁹⁰

Secondness as a “brutal fact” belongs to the past; it is a *fait accompli* (CP 2.84); that is, to experience is to acknowledge something that has already occurred. Peirce asks, “What, then, is the fact that is present to you? Ask yourself: it is past. A fact is a *fait accompli*; its *esse* is *in praeterito*. The past compels the present, in some measure, at least” (CP 2.84). Firmly rooted in his metaphysical conception of continuity, Peirce infers that all cognitions are determined by the previous ones; therefore, it is impossible to experience the immediate present of an unmediated cognition. In his 1868 paper “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man,” Peirce disputed the Cartesian claim that one possesses the power of introspection or intuitions of objects that are immediately present.” An “intuition” means a cognition that is not determined by a previous cognition of the same object. And for Peirce, this equally means the same as a “premise not itself a conclusion.”⁹¹

c. *Thirdness*

In his fourth lecture of the 1903 Harvard *Lectures on Pragmatism*, Peirce decided to

of its general characters, comes to have any definite place in the world, is not a question to be asked; it is simply an ultimate fact... Indeterminacy, then, or pure firstness, and haecceity, or pure secondness, are facts not calling for and not capable of explanation. Indeterminacy affords us nothing to ask a question about; haecceity is the *ultima ratio*, the brutal fact that will not be questioned” (CP 1.405).

⁸⁹Boler, *Charles Peirce and Scholastic Realism*, 52.

⁹⁰Ibid., 53. To know how Scotus’ concept of haecceity helped form Peirce’s theory of reality, see Murphey, *The Development of Peirce’s Philosophy*, 123-40.

⁹¹See *W* 2: 193-211 and *CP* 5.213-63.

start with a defense of the category of Thirdness, mainly because of its importance.⁹² For Peirce, Thirdness is real and operative in nature, it corresponds to a reality:

Thirdness is nothing but the character of an object which embodies Betweenness or Mediation in its simplest and most rudimentary form; and I use it as the name of that element of the phenomenon which is predominant wherever Mediation is predominant, and which reaches its fullness in Representation.⁹³

While the realm of Secondness, following Aristotle's metaphysics, is considered as efficient causation, that of Thirdness is considered as final causation. And unlike the haecceity or "thisness" of Secondness, which is of dyadic resistance, Thirdness is paradigmatic of law, habit, generality, growth, signification, cognition, or intelligibility. It is important to note that Peirce's objective idealism constitutes the primal category of Thirdness: "Continuity represents Thirdness almost to perfection" (*CP* 1.337). Thirdness belongs to the realm of reality,⁹⁴ of ontological *telos*, of pragmatic experiences *in futuro*, and of the "would-be" (something "would" occur if certain conditions or circumstances are realized in the long run). Peirce associates the "would-be" with habits or generals,

⁹² "I will say something, first, in favor of the Reality of Thirdness; and then put in a few words a defense of real Firstness. After that, if a few minutes remain to me, I shall have something of considerable interest to add in favor of Secondness" (Charles S. Peirce, *Pragmatism as a principle and Method of Right Thinking: The 1903 Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism*, ed. Patricia Ann Turrissi [Albany: SUNY, 1997], 190).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 193-94.

⁹⁴ "Reality is an affair of Thirdness as Thirdness, that is, in its mediation between Secondness and Firstness...Reality consists in regularity. Real regularity is active law"

which can never be exhausted by any occurrences. The concept “would-be” elementally holds a central position in Peirce’s pragmatism, for that is how meanings are ascertained and ordained. Pragmatism essentially states that:

the total meaning of the predication of an intellectual concept is contained in an affirmation that, under all conceivable circumstances of a given kind...the subject of the predication would behave in a certain general way – that is, it would be true under given experiential circumstances. (CP 5.467)

Peirce defines “habit” as conforming one’s conduct to a general idea, which resembles the Platonic ideal/form. One has the tendency to behave “in a way describable in general terms upon every occasion (or upon a considerable proportion of the occasions) that may present itself of a generally describable character” (CP 5.528).⁹⁵ And because Thirdness represents laws governing future events, it belongs to the realm of prediction (or hypothesis):

Five minutes of our waking life will hardly pass without our making some kind of prediction; and in the majority of cases these predictions are fulfilled in the event. Yet a prediction is essentially of a general nature, and cannot ever be completely fulfilled. To say that the future events are in a measure really governed by a law... If the prediction has a tendency to be fulfilled, it must be that future events have a tendency to conform to a general rule...A rule

(CP 5.121). Peirce insists that Thirdness itself does not phenomenologically constitute reality, it is only “an essential ingredient of reality” (CP 5.436).

⁹⁵Peirce uses the theory of probability to illustrate his analysis of the would-be by giving the following example: “[I]f a die be thrown from a dice box it will turn up a number divisible by three, is one-third. The statement means that the die has a certain ‘would-be’; and to say that a die has a ‘would-be’ is to say that it has a property, quite analogous to any *habit* that a man might have” (CP 2.664). Real possibility is also considered as a “would be” by Peirce; for example, the diamond is apt to react in a certain fashion if particular conditions are fulfilled. In Peirce’s pragmatist view (his theory of meaning), the meaning of the diamond’s hardness cannot be solipsistically conceptualized; that is, the diamond’s condition is not an isolated fact, but it must depend on a certain condition, direction, or relation that it *would* acquire among possible events. See CP 5.457.

to which future events have a tendency to conform is *ipso facto* an important thing, an important element in the happening of those events. This mode of being which *consists*, mind my word if you please, the mode of being which *consists* in the fact that future facts of Secondness will take on a determinate general character, I call a Thirdness. (CP 1.26)

While Firstness is that which is immediate as such, having no reference to anything else, and Secondness is that which is of sheer existence, Thirdness plays the “connecting bond”⁹⁶ role. It is the mode of being that not only mediates but also fuses a First (quality) and Second (fact) together, thus creates an indispensable and irreducible triadic relation. For Peirce, a sign is representative of Thirdness. The nature of a general sign involves a triadic relation. Thirdness is of triadic relation. Peirce explicates the logical necessity and irreducibility of a triad to Lady Welby:

Analyze for instance the relation involved in ‘A gives B to C’. Now what is giving? It does not consist in A’s putting B away from him and C’s subsequently taking B up. It is not necessary that any material transfer should take place. It consists in A’s making C the possessor according to *Law*. There must be some kind of law before there can be any kind of giving, be it but the law of the strongest. But now suppose that giving *did* consist merely in A’s laying down the B which C subsequently picks up. That would be a degenerate form of Thirdness in which the thirdness is externally appended. In A’s putting away B, there is no thirdness. In C’s taking B, there is no thirdness. But if you say that these two acts constitute a single operation by virtue of the identity of the B, you transcend the mere brute fact, you introduce a mental element. (SS, 29-30)

Phenomenologically, Peirce considers that all experience is only genuinely described and encountered through triadic categories, and not exclusively by one particular category. Insofar as Thirdness is hypothetically intelligible, it must logically depend on Firstness and Secondness.

⁹⁶“By the third, I mean the medium or connecting bond between the absolute first and last. The beginning is first, the end second, the middle third. The end is second, the means third” (CP 1.337).

As regards the three primal categories, it should be mentioned that Peirce divides philosophy into three subdivisions: phenomenology, normative science, and metaphysics. Firstness is likened to phenomenology, mainly because phenomena appear as themselves, to be immediately encountered without any judgments or concepts. Normative science is the Secondness of philosophy, for it “studies the dyadic relation of phenomena to ends and so enables one to form a basis for judging true and false, good and bad, beautiful and ugly.”⁹⁷ Thirdness associates with metaphysics; it mediates phenomenology and normative science. Metaphysics, in Peirce’s view, is the science of reality, which consists in regularity. And regularity is law, which strives towards the growth of concrete reasonableness.

Peirce’s Semiotic Construction of the Self

The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man,

*“... proud man,
Most ignorant of what he’s most
assured,
His glassy essence.”*

Charles S. Peirce

Something which in itself, by its essential nature, is pointing, we call a sign. As he draws toward what withdraws, man is a sign.

Martin Heidegger

⁹⁷Potter, *Charles S. Peirce: On Norms & Ideals*, 19. Peirce also divides the normative sciences into three subcategories: aesthetics, ethics (practices), and logic. Aesthetics involves with qualities of feeling (Firstness); ethics deals with conduct (Secondness); and logic is concerned with thought (Thirdness). See *CP* 1.573 and 1.574.

In addition to the priority of futurism the nature of the self has always held a pivotal role in American pragmatism, especially for Peirce, James, Dewey, Royce, and Mead. These pragmatists' notions of the self differed epistemologically and pragmatically from those of their European counterparts. As previously mentioned, the American pragmatists rejected the concepts of the self that were configured by the Cartesian introspective process, radical dualism, and foundationalism, by the empirical nominalism of the trio British philosophers, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, and by Kantian transcendentalism. These pragmatists believed their pragmatic/semiotic concepts of the self offered a preferable alternative to those of Continental thinkers.

The previous philosophical notion of the self had its epistemological roots in Cartesian skepticism. The self's substance in Descartes' *Meditations* is *res cogitans* (a thinking thing); in other words, the Cartesian ego/self is a pure thought or mind possessing a disembodied existence. Descartes was not, of course, the first philosopher who made a distinction between mind and body, scholastics prior to him had already distinguished that; however, those scholastics:

spoke more commonly of "soul and body," and regarded the mind as one aspect or faculty of the soul. Descartes was uncomfortable with the word "soul" because in the mouths of Aristotelians who believed that animals and even plants had souls, the word was not mentalistic enough. What was new in Descartes was not the use of "mind" rather than "soul" so much as the identification of the person with the mind rather with the body-soul composite.⁹⁸

Peirce's repudiations of the Cartesian a priorism, individualism, and cognitive intuitionism were recorded in his 1868 papers entitled "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" and "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities."⁹⁹ Unlike the

⁹⁸Anthony Kenny, *The Self* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1988), 8.

⁹⁹Milton Singer suggests that Peirce's objections to Descartes' concept of the self may have been prompted by his reading of Kant, who as early as 1787 negated the

Cartesian self's immaterial substance - immutably static, immediately intuited, and excessively privileged by the *cogito* - the Peircean self is not solipsistically attached to *res cogitans*, which owes its being to cognitive intuitionism, but is the social participant in its community of inquirers. Because, according to Peirce, the universe is "perfused with signs," every self is a sign. "The fallible self cannot think or be without signs. Its internal world is a result of introjected signs from the external world."¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Peirce's semiotic self is dialogic. If thought is dialogic,¹⁰¹ then the self, as a thought-sign, is also dialogic. As a sign, the self not only engages in the intrapersonal dialogue, but also interrelates with other signs. And since every thought is a sign, "it follows that every thought must address itself to some other, must determine some other, since that is the essence of a sign" (CP 5.253). In Colapietro's words:

this intrapersonal dialogue is potentially part of a larger context, an interpersonal dialogue. Such an interpersonal dialogues are capable of generating such intimate unions among distinct selves as to be comparable to *personal* beings themselves.¹⁰²

While Descartes' introspective self (transcendental ego), as an incorporeal substance, is immediately intuited, self-contained, and privatizes itself in its self-referring world, Peirce's self (empirical ego) is dynamically relational, logically inferred, and it

included several novel contributions" (57). See particularly his chapter "Signs of the Self," *Man's Glassy Essence: Explorations in Semiotic Anthropology*.

¹⁰⁰Robert Corrington, "Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile," *Semiotics 1992*, ed. John Deely (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1993), 92.

¹⁰¹"[E]very logical evolution of thought should be dialogic" (CP 4.551).

¹⁰²*Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 91. Merrell shows that there are three dialogic others: (1) the 'inner' other, (2) the physical-world other, and (3) the collective social other. "The 'inner' I-me relation is that of Peirce's self and its own other. The self and its 'outer' others entail I-you and I-it relations. The I is modelled as oneness (iconicity) and the you-it as action-reaction, or presence-absence (indexicality). The I as pure ego cannot dialogue with an 'outer' other except in the form of another person, the other self (you). Or it can dialogue with the 'outer' other of the physically 'real,' the 'it,' which is never completely accessible but only approximately by mediary Thirdness (symbolicity)" (*Peirce, Signs, and Meaning*, 57).

inseparably binds itself to the scientific community of inquirers whose reality (or truth) is determined not by any individual or singular interpreters, but only in and through the empirical process of communal communication via semiosis.¹⁰³ It is important to remember that, “Peirce did not exclude the empirical subject from his doctrine of semiotic, and yet he avoided an idealistic conception of the self. By locating the existence and development of the empirical ego within the process of communication, external and internal, he laid the foundations for a social theory of language, mind, and self,”¹⁰⁴ which was later either developed or refined by other American pragmatists, such as William James, John Dewey, and especially G.H. Mead. In Peirce, the pragmatist, “[W]e have the self that must deconstruct its proud center and become a ‘glassy essence’, an essence that denies its own personal center so as to be a transparency onto the social self.”¹⁰⁵ For Peirce, the self is a possible member of the community of inquirers, as opposed to Descartes’ isolated self, whose insular consciousness manifests the indubitable truth. Because of its intra/interpersonal dialogues the Peircean self is continuously growing; in other words, as Third, it is in the process of becoming, or what Kristeva terms, “subject in process” (*sujet en procès*).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Susan Hack finds Peirce’s doctrine of the community of inquirers, especially his understanding of fallibilism, “profoundly problematic.” For example, Hack points out “tensions between Peirce’s short-run individual-oriented fallibilism and his long-run, community-oriented infallibilism” and “the tensions between Peirce’s stress on the cognitive community and his apparently individualist doubt/belief theory of inquiry.” See her “Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community,” *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, 238-63.

¹⁰⁴Singer, *Man’s Glassy Essence*, 48.

¹⁰⁵Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, 93.

¹⁰⁶Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 22. Also see her “The System and the Speaking Subject,” where she distinguishes between “semiology” or “structuralism” and “semiotics” or “semanalysis.” Semanalysis language, for Kristeva, is a *signifying process* (or “the phenomenological subject of enunciation,” *Revolution*, 21-24), it is not a static system. See *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 24-33.

For Descartes, grounded in his intuitionism, meaning is always self-evident, and the *cogito* solely determines external object(s), thus detaching itself from embodied existence. On the contrary, Peirce's semiotic self can never disconnect itself from lived experience. Moreover, Peirce's sign can never be object itself, but is an object represented, because no signs can take on the task of self-interpretation, but must attach themselves to a triadic relation of sign, object, and interpretant. *Contra* Descartes, who preached that through introspection certainty is attained, Peirce maintained that the "real" exists by itself, "independent of the vagaries of you and me." The self's knowledge is determined by previous ideas and aimed at external objects; and the so-called "clear and distinct ideas" are formed not by an individual but semiotically by the community of interpreters. As to human subjectivity Peirce argues that the self is not epistemologically intuited, but must be inferred.¹⁰⁷ If a pure premise is logically impossible, then according to Peirce, there is no such thing as "pure intuition" not determined by previous cognition, for a pure intuition (unmediated cognition) is like a "premise not itself a conclusion" (*W* 2:193). Also, "To say, therefore, that thought cannot happen in an instant, but requires a time, is but another way of saying that every thought must be interpreted in another, or that all thought is in signs" (*W* 2: 207-08).

In his theory of inquiry Peirce assumes that there are the so-called commonsense beliefs, which instinctively (precritically) and fallibly exist, and these instinctively vague yet indubitable beliefs need not be subject to *real doubt* unless when their practical purposes are unreliable; or there is a sudden disruption to a pragmatic belief. The word "indubitable" implies that these commonsense beliefs need not be called into question, even though they might be proved mistaken or false; whereas for Descartes, "indubitable" epistemologically connotes the privileged beliefs that are dogmatically incorrigible, to which Peirce is vehemently opposed. Because for him, none of our beliefs is absolutely certain; that is, belief or knowledge is inferential, not immediately intuited or self-contained; it is fallible and self-corrective, and that there is "always room for the

¹⁰⁷For an analysis of Peirce's "postmodernist self" as opposed to the modernist conceptions of selfhood, see Peter Ochs, "Charles Sanders Peirce," *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 76-80.

reflection that an error may have been committed” (CP 7.462). Peirce found Descartes’ Method of Doubt impossible, for beginning with a complete or systematic doubt seems infeasible insofar as one’s disposition to action (practical/real belief or habit) is not interrupted/irritated by contradictions or by what Scottish psychologist Alexander Bain (to whom Peirce’s theory of inquiry was indebted) called “acquired skepticism.” Peirce, therefore, resolutely rejected the Cartesian “paper doubt” as opposed to the pragmatic “genuine doubt.” Paper doubt is purely academic, it is the feigning doubt that bears no pragmatic connection to real lived experiences. It stands over against pragmatic inquiry, for paper doubt initially suspends all the sensory beliefs until an absolutely indubitable foundation or a clear and distinct belief is established.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, doubt “is not voluntary...genuine doubt requires a specific reason, and this makes complete, systematic doubt impossible, since a reason for doubt is something else one believes.”¹⁰⁹ Objecting to Cartesian paper doubt, Peirce contends that, from his pragmatist perspective, we must instinctively presuppose that all beliefs are true, and that our habits are reliable sources until they fail to work; that is, until doubts cause irritations which will lead to the “immediate motive for the struggle to attain belief.” He calls this “inquiry” (CP 5.375). Peirce defines doubt as “an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the state of belief” (CP 5.372). Instinctive beliefs or habits are

¹⁰⁸Susan Hack argues that Peirce’s criticisms to Descartes’ Method of Doubt, particularly of Descartes’ conception of dubitability, are not warranted. First, Descartes’ test of dubitability does not require deliberate doubt as Peirce objected to; secondly, the beliefs subjected to doubt are the ones that both Descartes and Peirce actually have and agree that that is “the only place one *can* begin”; and thirdly, Descartes was concerned only with theoretical doubts and beliefs as opposed to Peirce’s practical or genuine doubt, which “gives Peirce himself problems...where highly theoretical doubts and beliefs are concerned.” And although there may be a contrast between Peirce’s epistemological fallibilism and Descartes’ epistemological dogmatism (foundationalism), Hack, drawing from Peirce’s “*rationale* for deliberate criticism of beliefs” in CP 5.451, 5.510, and 5.517, and also from Bain’s distinction between “first-order” and “second-order” (acquired skepticism) beliefs, is persuaded that there are actually affinities between Descartes’ method and Peirce’s “critical commonsensism.” See “Descartes, Peirce, and the Cognitive Community,” *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, 238-63.

¹⁰⁹Susan Hack, “Descartes, Peirce, and Cognitive Community,” *The Relevance of Charles Peirce*, 239.

termed “commonsensism” or “primitive credulity” (Bain). However, Peirce has made it clear that these commonsense beliefs must not be totally accepted without critical revisions or scientific scrutinies. What he is saying is that since these primitive or instinctive beliefs are invariably vague, deliberate criticisms of these beliefs are required; that is, they need to be scientifically refined and clarified. Peirce called it “critical commonsensism”:

He [the critical commonsensist] is not content to ask himself whether he does doubt, but he invents a plan for attaining doubt, elaborates it in detail, and then puts it into practice, although this may involve a solid month of hard work; and it is only after having gone through such an examination that he will pronounce a belief to be indubitable. Moreover, he fully acknowledges that even then it may be that some of his indubitable beliefs may be proved false. (*CP* 5.451)¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Cf. *CP* 5.498. Commonsense beliefs or instinctive mind may be defined as a mass of uncritically accepted (primitive) beliefs, with which thinking must begin. It is not a reasoning. Although indubitable, these uncriticized beliefs or uncritical inferences will barely alter over time. Nevertheless, as Hausman puts it, they are “sufficiently stable to be thought of as instinctual...The acknowledgment of acritical beliefs and inferences as conditions within which doubt arises and remains to be settled by inquiry highlights Peirce’s rejection of the assumption that we can ever clear ourselves of conviction, no matter how committed we might be to doubting everything in order to reach rock-solid foundations. At the same time, the acritical base from which we start thinking is not a foundation, because it, or parts of it, are subject to change. The change may occur without our conscious effort or reflection. But of most importance is the change that may occur through conscious, deliberate control - the self-control of reasoning” (Carl Hausman, *Charles S. Peirce’s Evolutionary Philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 54-5). Instinctive mind is not to be seized by scientific analysis, because it is prescientific, vague, and indeterminate. However, as Hausman has pointed out, it is the ground of reasoning, both as an activity and as a developed habit. The innate cognitive habits of instinctive mind resemble John Locke’s “innate ideas.” Also, there is a similarity between Peirce’s commonsense beliefs and Hegel’s “natural consciousness.” Like Peirce’s commonsense beliefs, Hegel’s natural consciousness is that which is external, given, logically undeveloped or intuitively grounded; that is, it remains primitively or subjectively oriented (or Peirce would say it is precritically *vague*). Only when it progresses into self-consciousness will it be dialectically realized, and so is Peirce’s epistemological transition from vague commonsense beliefs to critical commonsensism. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 46-57.

Peirce does make a distinction between cognition and intuition. A cognition is that which is mediated or determined by a previous cognition; whereas the term “intuition” signifies “a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object” (*W* 2:193). In contrast to Cartesian epistemological belief, we do not possess an intuitive faculty or “the transcendental object” so that we would be able to discern intuition from mediate cognitions. While the Cartesian self shrouds itself in the immediate intuitive self-consciousness (direct knowledge of itself - the inner world through introspection), Peirce’s semiotic self cloaks itself in the abductive process called “hypothetical reasoning.” What the self perceives of the outer will necessitate the inner conception. Hence comes Peirce’s maxim: “The elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action; and whatever cannot show its passports at both those two gates is to be arrested as unauthorized by reason” (*CP* 5.212). Peirce’s semiotic pragmatism compels him to conclude that: “1. We have no power of Introspection, but all knowledge of the internal world is derived by hypothetical reasoning from our knowledge of external facts. 2. We have no power of Intuition, but every cognition is determined logically by previous cognitions” (*W* 2: 213).¹¹¹ The self must not be sheltered in the Cartesian intuitionism, because by being the

¹¹¹Peirce’s criticisms of “the spirit of Cartesianism” were recorded in his 1868 papers published in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*: “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man” and “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities.” Below is the table of the main points of contrast between Descartes’ and Peirce’s epistemologies summarized by Susan Hack in her “Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community,” *The Relevance of Charles Peirce* (240).

<i>Descartes</i>	<i>Peirce</i>
1. Method of Doubt.	Method of doubt impossible; doubt not voluntary, requires specific reason. Must begin with the beliefs we have.
2. Individualism. Certainty of self-consciousness. Rejection of tradition, authority.	Community-oriented. Define truth, reality via intersubjective agreement. Individual as locus of ignorance, error. Self-consciousness learned via interactions with others.

mediately inferred self, it cannot be known immediately or directly. For Peirce, intuitive self-consciousness is but the product of inference or hypothetical reasoning, which is embedded in ignorance and error.

Even though the Cartesian self and the empiricist's self epistemologically immersed themselves in absolute certainty, the Cartesian self was grounded in *a priori* foundation, while the British empiricist's self derived its ontological being from sense-experience or perception:

Empiricism teaches that nothing is real except what can be discovered by the senses, whether inner or outer. The self, as inner subject, can clearly not be discovered by the outer senses, which perceive only the visible, audible, tangible exterior of things. But can it be discovered by the inner sense either? It is well known that Hume, after the most diligent investigation, failed to locate the self...For empiricism, the self is an unobjectifiable subject, just as the eye is an invisible organ.¹¹²

Peirce's semiotic self, because of its dependence on scientific inquiry, is fallible and self-corrective; and because of its epistemological and ontological vagueness, it must be

All thought in public signs.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>3. Dogmatism - quest for certainty.
Chain of inference.</p> | <p>Fallibilism.
No infallible Intuition.
No indubitable first premisses.
Cable of many arguments: continuity of knowledge.</p> |
| <p>4. Inexplicables ('God made it so').
Realism.</p> | <p>No incognizables: idealism.</p> |

It is worth nothing that Peirce's pragmaticist concept of commonsense beliefs is not commensurate with Popper's scientific theory of falsification, essentially as to the meaning of the term "fallibilism." According to Susan Hack, for Peirce, *fallibilist* implies that "(we could always be wrong) but *committal* (we believe and act upon, our hypotheses). Contrast Popper's view, which is not only fallibilist but also noncommittal; according to Popper, scientists do not believe their conjectures" (Ibid., 252).

¹¹²Kenny, *The Self*, 15-6.

subject to contextual formulation, communal determination, and continuous evolution. Unlike the empiricist's self, who passively absorbs impressions or sensations, the pragmatist's self constitutively structures its reality, perception, or knowledge. There exists a simultaneous interaction between the self and sign (representamen, object, and interpretant).

And unlike the American pragmatists' self who experientially and epistemologically related to or interacted with the world as well as with its own embodied existence, Kant's self was fissured by the pure (noumenal) and empirical "I," which "left a gap in Kant's theory of consciousness. The self embedded in nature slipped through this gap in Kant's theory and lost its body."¹¹³ Kant's transcendental self is thus located beyond the realm of senses and logically precedes experience; further its cognition functions propositionally; whereas Peirce's semiotic self swims in the continuum of experience or in the metaphysical horizon of "pragmatic naturalism" (the self and its world are semiotically interconnected), and its cognition semiotically functions within the logical structures of abductive inference.

Logically, both Peirce and Kant considered thought as playing the principal role over the ego, and also there is no denying that Kant's epistemology, especially the Dialectic (Peirce repudiated Kant's arguments in the Analytic) has exerted considerable influence on Peirce's metaphysical realism; nevertheless, Peirce's semiotic self is diametrically opposed to Kant's unfathomable self (a transcendental subject), which is buried in the transcendental unity of apperception that is causally free, yet antecedent to any existential relations and thus hopelessly disappears in the noumenal realm. The Kantian phenomenal or empirical self is knowable, yet it is causally determined; therefore, it is inevitably deprived of freedom.¹¹⁴ Kant's metaphysical concept of "incognizable things-

¹¹³Thandeka, "Schleiermacher's *Dialektik*: The Discovery of the Self that Kant Lost," *Harvard Theological Review* 85 (1992): 433-52.

¹¹⁴Joseph P. DeMarco claims that, influenced by the Kantian phenomenism and nominalism at the early stage of his philosophical system, Peirce upheld the private self's solipsism, mainly "because his approach to the categories was entirely dependent on the logical process of the mind...And since thought is in the mind, Peirce could find no way to transcend the phenomenal priority of the private self"(33). What DeMarco is saying is

in-themselves” is supplanted by Peirce’s objective realism; that is, reality is experienceable; in other words, ‘to be is to be the object of some experience.’¹¹⁵ Peirce contends that every “representation, every phenomenon, possesses an element of thirdness and is thus intelligible and noumenal.”¹¹⁶ Reality or the “thing-in-itself” is cognizable through semiosis, and it “would be” eventually comprehended “in the long run” via abductive inferences collectively performed by the community of inquirers:

All our conceptions are obtained by abstractions and combinations of cognitions first occurring in judgments of experience. Accordingly, there can be no conception of the absolutely incognizable, since nothing of that sort occurs in experience...Over against any cognition, there is an unknown but knowable reality; but over against all possible cognition, there is only the self-contradictory. In short, *cognizability* (in its widest sense) and *being* are not merely metaphysically the same,

that, like Kant, Peirce maintained that reality mentally stems from human constructs embodied in the community of inquirers; that is, without mind reality would not become intelligible or rational. See DeMarco, “Peirce’s Concept of Community: Its Development and Change,” *Transactions* 7 (1971): 24-36. In this paper, DeMarco argues that Peirce actually held two different theories of community. According to him, Peirce’s early claim was that “the community functions as an epistemological ideal: the community of agreement defines truth and reality and is the culmination of the thought process” (25); nonetheless, “Peirce’s final concept of the community takes on a nature and function which is more complicated than the early concept. It is no longer solely an epistemological and metaphysical doctrine, but it involves the normative sciences of esthetics and ethics. Also, God and religion maintain a prominent role in the later community” (33). Stanley Harrison, however, questions DeMarco’s conclusion of Peirce’s two theories of community. He writes: “Although we agree that Peirce’s mature notion of community is grounded in a normative foundation, we do not think the author has shown that Peirce ever meant the community merely to ‘function as the ideal definition of reality.’ In our opinion, DeMarco has fundamentally misconstrued the nature of Peirce’s objective idealism and, as a result, has viewed Peirce’s early thought as being essentially solipsistic. Likewise, he has seen an early and later concept of person, the first also being rejected by Peirce because he recognized it as solipsistic. For example, it seems to us a mistake to say that Peirce ever held that ‘a person is the mind in which the thought process takes place’” (*Man’s Glassy Essence: An Attempt to Construct a Theory of Person Based on the Writings of Charles Sanders Peirce* [Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1971], 354).

¹¹⁵Corrington, *ICSP*, 83.

¹¹⁶Thompson, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of C. S. Peirce*, 254.

but are synonymous terms. (*W* 2: 208)

It should be noted that even though the pragmatists all found the British empiricists' nature of the self, as steeped in their traditional empirical theory, inadequate, not all American pragmatists agreed as to what the self is. These American pragmatists may also be called "naturalists," for they were antidualists. However, as previously shown, *metaphysically* there are two major streams of pragmatism; namely, idealism and naturalism. Emerson, Peirce, and Royce approached the nature and configuration of selfhood through the gate of idealism; whereas for James, Santayana, Dewey, Mead, and Buchler through the gate of naturalism. Consequently, their conceptions of the self differed metaphysically.

While James stresses the dimension of individualism of the self, Peirce, Mead, Royce, and Dewey center the self in the social/communal milieu. They, however, all concluded that a self is always evolving and growing; it is conditioned by a *telos* or by what Peirce called "developmental teleology." Even though spirit was one of the ontological categories for both Emerson and Santayana, it was primarily the guiding principle of Emerson's self and nature; whereas Santayana materialized spirit and confined it to the human organism. While James approaches the self from the psychological and psycho-pathological perspectives, Dewey develops his concept of the self from the natural/biological confines; nevertheless "both thinkers radically broadened our understanding of what occurs when the self is placed within the shifting and often hostile natural environment."¹¹⁷ Mead's self is viewed from the standpoint of social behaviorism, whereas Royce situates the self in the "community of interpreters." And Peirce's self is constructed through the logical realism of semiotics.

¹¹⁷Robert Corrington, "Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought," *Introduction to Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives*, ed. Roger A. Badham (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 167.

Norbert Wiley enumerates six traits of the self of pragmatism: dialogical, social, horizontal, egalitarian, voluntarist, and cultural.¹¹⁸ He believes these six traits have made pragmatism “a better democratic instrument”¹¹⁹ compared to social Darwinism and neo-Hegelianism, for the former privileges downward reductionism; namely, physicalism (matter over mind), while the latter elevates upward reductionism; namely, idealism (mind over matter). The Peircean self could be seen as incorporating these traits, yet it extends and expands beyond them, for Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self is principally configured by the metaphysical conception of synechism, which makes it more seminally significant and *sui generis*.¹²⁰

Because Peirce’s construction of the semiotic self was not configured in a systematic fashion or confined to a single volume, but was disseminated in an eight-volume edition called *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* and several unpublished papers, it has become a challenging task to present his concept of the self in a comprehensive way. Indeed, when it comes to examining Peirce’s philosophical anthropology it can be “frustrating because it moves in several directions at once.”¹²¹ Peirce’s approach to the self is multifarious; that is, it stems from metaphysics, cosmology, psychology, ethics, religion, logic, and semiotics. The concept of the self is

¹¹⁸See his *The Semiotic Self* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 9-11. For historical interpretations of the self: classical theories (dualism, collectivism, and neutralism) and pragmatistic theory of the self, see B. Gresham Riley, *The Self, Self-Knowledge, and Pragmatism* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1965), 165- 246.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁰It is interesting to note that, as Anderson points out, besides his triadic phenomenological categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness “and their counterparts of feeling, willing, and thinking [CP 1.375f.], Peirce offered a triadic categorial account of persons that paralleled Emerson’s: (1) ‘those for whom the chief thing is the qualities of feeling’; (2) ‘practical men’; and (3) ‘men to whom nothing seems great but reason’” (CP 1.43). Peirce called these persons “natural scientific men.” His triadic categorial account of the self resembles Emerson’s “three children”: “the Knower,” “the Doer,” and the “Sayer.” See Douglas R. Anderson, “Peirce and Representative Persons,” *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, 77-88.

¹²¹Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 91.

prominently featured in Peirce's semiotics; however, "to a significant degree, he left this view implicit."¹²² But this may be understandable, for Peirce himself declared that, "My book is meant for people who *want to find out*; and people who want philosophy ladled out to them can go elsewhere. There are philosophical soup shops at every corner, thank God!" (CP 1.11).

1. *The Unconscious of the Self*

Historically, neither Peirce nor James were the first philosophers who have critically probed into the depth dimension of the unconscious, and even Schelling (who believed that the highest form of nature is that of the unconscious, while the lowest is that of consciousness) did not actually discover but *rediscover* the concept of the unconscious. Tillich has pointed out that around 1600 C.E., "the philosophers of nature in the Renaissance, Paracelsus and Boehme...already knew about the unconscious element in man and even applied it to both God and nature."¹²³ In Book Nine of *The Republic*, Plato already anticipated Freud's major discoveries. Even though the concept of the unconscious did not originate from Freud, he was the first one who scientifically applied it from the perspective of medical psychology.¹²⁴ Besides Schelling (the "unruly ground"/ *das Ursprüngliche*), philosophers such as Kant (intuitive knowing is configured by the unconscious), Hegel ("being-in-itself"), Schopenhauer (the metaphysical "blind will"), Leibniz (theory of "innate ideas"), Hume (doctrine of causality), and especially Eduard

¹²²Vincent M. Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), xiii. According to Colapietro, Peirce's style of writing ("the density of Peirce's prose,") and his symbolically and scientifically convoluted thought coupled with neologisms ("Many of his linguistic inventions have forbidding visages") have made the formulating or exposing of Peirce's concept of the self more difficult for Peirce scholars. Peirce even admitted that: "One of the most extreme and most lamentable of my incapacities is my incapacity for linguistic express" (MS 632, 5-6; cited in Colapietro's *Peirce's Approach to the Self*).

¹²³Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 146.

¹²⁴Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, 146.

von Hartmann,¹²⁵ to name a few, have also explored this subject. As regards the historical genesis of the notion of the unconscious, based on von Hartmann's historical research, Leibniz was the first philosopher who:

discovered and introduced first the notion of unconscious ideas into philosophy by refuting Locke. In Locke's opinion, the soul cannot consciously think if man is not conscious of it; according to Leibniz's doctrine of innate ideas and the ceaseless activity of the perceptive faculty, man must be always thinking. To solve the dilemma, no other possibility was left for Leibniz but to assume unconscious thinking.¹²⁶

It is now apparent that the unconscious has played a significant role in the human psyche, especially the whole self. And insofar as the depth dimension of Peirce's self is concerned, concentrating only on the pansemiotic aspects of his pragmatism will prove insufficient, for the Peircean self was also born out of and enveloped by the "abjected unconscious" (Corrington), which was deeply tied to his melancholy life. Thus failing to probe into the realm of Peirce's unconscious of the self will make it impossible to fully grasp the dynamism and mystery of Firstness, and further will make it hard to comprehend why Peirce appears to have fled away from this primal category. According to Corrington:

With the loss of the Cartesian ego in the 1860s, followed by the further displacement of the semiotic ego in the 1880s, Peirce's semiotic

¹²⁵ Von Hartmann stated that the unconscious "was in the air, and prepared from all sides; furthermore, it was also a requirement of progress in the direction of self-consciousness and self-understanding of mankind, and because it corresponded to the deep-seated desire of the human mind it found such a quick and favorable acceptance with the public. No wonder that even the sparrows chirp about it on the roofs" (Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. III [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1950], 298. Cited in Dennis N. Kenedy Darnoi, *The Unconscious and Eduard von Hartmann: A Historico-Critical Monograph* (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1967), 75. Von Hartmann, in utilizing essential ideas from Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schelling, attempted to conquer irrationalism and rationalism by theorizing the doctrine of the unconscious.

¹²⁶Darnoi, *The Unconscious and Eduard von Hartmann*, 75-6.

anthropology opens a door on the abjected region of the unconscious, abjected and feared because of its link to a missing component in his own psycho-biographical development.¹²⁷

It should be stressed that Peirce scholars have avoided exploring this “important but neglected area of research”¹²⁸ regarding Peirce’s life and thought from the perspective of depth psychology (e.g., Joseph Brent’s *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life* or Kenneth Laine Ketner’s *His Glassy Essence: An Autobiography of Charles Sanders Peirce*); instead they have essentially focused on Peirce’s philosophical anthropology, semiotic ontology, or anthroposemiosis.¹²⁹ Lamenting the lack of genuine interest in depth psychology (there is indeed a close correlation between metaphysics and psychoanalysis), especially among empirical theologians, Corrington writes:

After all, the classical American philosophical tradition, to name no other, was not, was not friendly to depth psychology (James is only a partial exception to this claim, because of his stress on the transforming focus of consciousness rather than on the heterogeneous momenta of the unconscious). Hence, any connection between the depth of the human process and unconscious providingness of nature is looked at with some suspicion.¹³⁰

¹²⁷“Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, 95.

¹²⁸Vincent Colapietro, “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” *Transactions 31* (1995): 482-3.

¹²⁹It should be pointed out that prior to 1880 Peirce already had a theory of the unconscious. According to Colapietro, Peirce did acknowledge the reality of the unconscious (he concurred with Eduard von Hartmann that unconscious mind indeed exists), yet he did not pursue it in a systematic way. See his “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” *Transactions 31* (1995): 482-506. In his “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, Corrington writes: “Prepsychoanalytic studies of Peirce have focused on the pansemiotic elements of his pragmatism, without probing into the fierce dynamism that drove Peirce away from the background of firstness/nothingness toward the fullness of thirdness” (97).

¹³⁰Corrington, “Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought,” *Introduction to Christian Theology*, 175. Corrington also remarks elsewhere: “For some reason, North American semiotics got off on the wrong foot on the issue of depth psychology, preferring instead to derive its inspiration from anthropology, information

As has been examined, Firstness is the most vexing of the three ontological or phenomenological¹³¹ categories, mostly because it is presemiotic, prerational, and nonrelatively pure feeling; it is also vague potentiality and spontaneity. To use Kantian term, Firstness may be a potential manifold of sense. Once defined, described, or asserted Firstness “has already lost its characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else” (*CP* 1.357). Ontologically, Firstness may be (relatively) likened to the dimension of nature called *natura naturans* (nature naturing). Inserted into the domain of depth psychology, the primal category of Firstness is another term for the “unconscious.” The psychological aspect of the unconscious had been profoundly assimilated by Peirce in his principle of continuity, the three primal categories, and semiotics since 1880. Peirce, however, seems to have allowed the intrinsic meanings of consciousness and the unconscious to overlap; he rarely distinguished them, mainly because he claimed that we are inclined to “make all our distinctions too absolute” (*CP* 7.438). Consciousness and the unconscious are thus, for Peirce, linked by a certain degree of buoyancy or association. This degree of buoyancy clearly manifests in his doctrine of panpsychism¹³² where Peirce attempts to mentalize the realm of the unconscious (e.g., his

theory, or aspects of the neo-Darwinian synthesis. While none of these emphases are without great value, they remain incomplete, especially insofar as they abject the unconscious...What makes the unconscious so problematic to many semioticians is that it straddles the ontological difference between the semiotic and the presemiotic” (“A Web as Vast as Nature Itself,” *Semiotica* 111-1/2 [1996]: 112).

¹³¹L. Edward Allemand suggests that viewing from the French phenomenologist’s perspective, Peirce’s notion of Firstness would not only be better comprehended but also enriched. See his “Peirce’s Notion of Firstness and French Phenomenology,” *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*, No. 23 Graduate Studies (Lubbock, TX.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 75-9.

¹³²Corrington is persuaded that Peirce developed his doctrine of panpsychism as a “conceptual barricade” to shield “against the rages of the maternal unconscious” (the Firstness of Firstness), who carries within itself the “powers of origin” (“Peirce’s Abjection of the Maternal,” *Semiotics 1993*, ed. Robert S. Corrington and John Deely (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 592. Also, according to Corrington, Peirce’s doctrine of panpsychism was used to “sanitize the unconscious and domesticate it for the fragile ego,” and that his “fascination with the unconscious compelled him to the half-way

monistic proposition: “matter is effete mind”), to bridge the psychological gap between consciousness and the unconscious; in other words, he “made the unconscious too conscious in the sense that mentality is a trait found throughout nature in a vast continuum admitting only of degrees of instantiation.”¹³³ The lack of absolute differentiation between the unconscious and consciousness also reveals Peirce’s foundational doctrine of synechism; that is, everything floats continuously without fundamental ontological breaks. Consequently, by making the unconscious become conscious, Peirce did not fully explore the eternal chasm between consciousness and the unconscious.

Resolutely against nominalism and being an objective idealist Peirce negated the belief in a purely personal self;¹³⁴ and also against the introspection of Cartesian

measure of his panpsychism which enabled him to move toward the lost object but freed him from the burden of grasping its sheer otherness, i.e., its abject quality” (“Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 98).

¹³³Corrington, *SITP*, 53. Corrington also argues that because of Peirce’s doctrine of panpsychism, he not only “failed to grasp the sheer otherness of the unconscious,” but also “failed to understand the intensity of the intersection points between his skeletal sets and conscious sign series” (Ibid.).

¹³⁴Like Mead, Peirce privileged the socially semiotic self over Descartes’ personal/private self or ego. Because of his conception of synechism (no ontological break or discontinuity between matter and mind), there inescapably exists an immediate correlation between the personal and social selves. The self genuinely attains its identity only through communal semiosis, which engenders interpretants. And unlike Hegel, Peirce’s semiotic self is not implanted in self-consciousness or consciousness, but it is a sign series either diminishing or augmenting interpretants. Upon commenting on Peirce’s deconstructing of Descartes’ thinking substance of the introspective ego, Corrington is correct to state that, “Both consciousness and the finite ego are fictions and are to be replaced by intentional and external forms of semiosis. The self builds itself up through time and becomes the locus where the sign/object/interpretant triad unfolds most clearly. The present self refers to its past self (which obtains as an object) in a certain respect so that a future self (interpretant) can emerge to give identity to the self as a whole” (*JCSF*, 113). Also, pointing out a mistake made by neopragmatists regarding the social self’s conformity with the larger semiotic orders, Corrington elucidates as follows: “The social self does not function thorough [*sic*] some kind of bare conformity or consensus...but by binding itself to the natural semiotic structures of the evolving universe, which moves via cosmic habits/thirds toward the full realization of concrete reasonableness and the *sumum bonum*” (Ibid.). Mead and Peirce may have shared a commensurate notion of

epistemology Peirce claimed that the self was externally a semiotic series; that is, the self is an evolutionary process, always developing and maturing.¹³⁵ This claim is mainly based on his argument that our knowledge of the internal world comes to us from the external facts via so-called hypothetical reasoning or abduction. (Unlike symbolic logic, abduction is an animal instinct or intuitive beliefs, which are unconscious). However, throughout his melancholy life, Peirce never seems to have found or lived with a true or purposive self;¹³⁶ instead he was constantly tormented by a fissured self caused by what Corrington calls “narcissistic wound.” This narcissistic wound is a dialectical battle

social self; however, Peirce moved beyond this particular notion to reach to what he termed “spiritual consciousness.” To prove this dimension of spiritual consciousness or self Peirce recalled a friend of his who had totally lost his sense of hearing yet was still able to *feel* the music all over his body. Peirce’s friend explained: “Now that my hearing is gone I can recognize that I always possessed this mode of consciousness, which I formerly, with other people, mistook for hearing.” Based on his friend’s experience, Peirce made the following statement: “In the same manner, when the carnal consciousness passes away in death, we shall at once perceive that we have had all along a lively spiritual consciousness which we have been confusing with something different” (*CP* 7.577). What Peirce is suggesting is that, deeply grounded in his doctrine of synechism, there exists presently an ontological continuity, however vague, between the self’s mortality and immortality. To put in theological term, the self is living with the “eternal now.” Corrington interprets further: “This pervasive consciousness is always part of self-awareness, even if it often drowned out by the semiotic noise of the personal and social self. Just as there is no absolute break in self-identity between sleep and waking, so too there is no break between life and death” (*ICSP*,102-3).

¹³⁵In comparing Peirce’s thought to that of Eastern (based on Peirce’s semiautographical statement in *CP* 6.102), particularly that of Buddha, Donald H. Bishop claims that there are two central metaphysical tenets that both Peirce and Buddha have shared: (1) A process view of reality; that is, humans and things are always moving in constant transition (or Peirce would say that everything swims in continuum) and (2) A monistic reality; that is, all things derive from one essence (Peirce’s panpsychism). See his “Peirce and Eastern Thought,” *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*, No.23 Graduate Studies (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 265-70.

¹³⁶In his review article of Joseph Brent’s *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life*, titled “Peirce the Melancholy Prestidigitator,” *Semiotica* 94-1/2 (1993), 85-103. Corrington notes: “The purposive self is the self that prevails within and against the world of the persona, while the glassy essence version of the self is the one that leaves the struggles of life behind to become a transfigured and redeemed self on the edges of time and history” (95).

between the counterfeit self who yearns for communal semiosis or paternal interpretants (Thirdness) and the primal self who desires the abjected maternal unconscious (Firstness). And this dialectical battle (between public semiosis/Thirdness and powers of origin/Firstness) not only exists as a tension in the heart of Peirce's semiotics, but is also the "psychic split" (Corrington) that not only etched deeply in Peirce's life, but also infiltrated into his semiotic ontology and philosophical anthropology:

On the one side is the sense that he saw the self as a sign system held together through self-control and the purposes emergent from the larger reality of developmental teleology. On the other side is his quasi-Buddhistic sense that the self is at best a 'glassy essence' that only comes into its own when it becomes a cipher of a universe 'perfused with signs.' These two views, never fully reconciled by Peirce, manifest the nature of his psychic split.¹³⁷

Dominated by a father who had played such a determining role in anchoring his son's intellectual development, coupled with Peirce's precociousness,¹³⁸ Peirce was incessantly fighting against the haunting realm of maternal unconscious (which was considered menacing to Peirce's inflated self) so that he could thrust himself into the realms of otherness (Secondness) and public interpretants (Thirdness). And perhaps because he was so fearful of this constant haunting of the maternal unconscious¹³⁹ Peirce

¹³⁷Corrington, "Peirce the Melancholy Prestidigitator," *Semiotica* 94-1/2, 95.

¹³⁸Taking cues from French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, Corrington psychoanalyzes Peirce's "broken sense of self" as follows: "He entered into the paternal world of Cambridge culture by displaying these gifts at every possible opportunity. His facility with philosophy, science, and the various disciplines of his time quickly translated into an inflated picture of his own worth and severed him from the presemiotic and prelinguistic sources that stem, according to Kristeva, from the world of the mother. His decision for the paternal as against the maternal was never negotiated fully...Kristeva argues that the use of language is only possible because of a prior betrayal of the maternal. The minute we enter into the realm of public semiosis, we leave behind the ejective and creative ground of signification" (*ICSP*, 22).

¹³⁹In psychoanalytic language, especially that of Jung, this haunting realm of Firstness may also be termed "the shadow." In his book *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*, Robert Corrington describes the shadow as follows: "In analytic work

wanted to metamorphize it into consciousness as a protection from the abjected Firstness. According to Corrington, Peirce's "attempts to delineate the domain of firstness, both phenomenologically and cosmologically, are responses to the lost realm that his paternal affiliation drove him from."¹⁴⁰ However, there were three main factors impelling Peirce now not only to confront and deal with, but also probe deeply into the presemiotic realm of Firstness; namely, the abjected unconscious (the one that he had previously repressed and shunned away, because of fear of becoming incarcerated by it) in order to seek guidance and purpose for his semiotically phenomenological and cosmological shelter. First, because of being deprived of a fully developed maternal relationship with his mother, Peirce was stricken with many deep traces of melancholy yearning and thus continued searching for the "lost object" or "lost origin," which, via the mood of melancholy pretemporally intrudes upon one's psychic life continually, for "the lost object must be the shocking reminder of what lies buried in the background of origin."¹⁴¹ The maternal or abjected unconscious is that which is simultaneously feared and desired. Consequently, Peirce never seems to have found a true self, which, for him, belonged only in the realm of the "not yet" (Thirdness).¹⁴² It should be mentioned that while Brent

the shadow is often the first dimension of the unconscious that is encountered, and the effects of this encounter can be both decentering and demoralizing. The shadow can be defined as that aspect of the self that is abjected and denied so that the social persona can live in the world without hindrance. Of course, this is a dangerous delusion as the shadow will always find some way of becoming manifest" (*STTP*, 73).

¹⁴⁰*ICSP*, 22. Corrington argues elsewhere: "Peirce was struggling blindly toward the maternal precisely when his father had taken away the psychological means for him to find a healthy relationship to the abjected and denied realm that came back to haunt him in the many failed female relationships in his life" ("Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile," *Semiotics* 1992, 97).

¹⁴¹Corrington, *STTP*, 143.

¹⁴²The realm of the "not yet" is essential to Peirce's philosophical theology and semiotic anthropology because that is where Peirce's created evolutionary God and the true self inhabit. However, Corrington (borrowing insights from Julia Kristeva) asserts that a psychoanalytic reading of Peirce's concept of the not yet will also reveal to us that, "Between the extremes of sheer nothingness, as the abjected maternal, and the public realm of the father's patriarchal codes, lies the 'imaginary father' who is created by the self in an effort to both soften the brutal power of the 'father as law', and find a means

contends that Peirce identified Firstness with illicit sexuality, which caused him to shy away from “birthing ground of firstness” (Corrington) and toward the more secure realms of Secondness (existential acts) and Thirdness (public interpretants), Corrington argues that Peirce unconsciously identified Firstness with the abjection of the maternal. Second, the death of Peirce’s father in 1880 enervated his “obsession with public semiotic codes,”¹⁴³ thus causing him to explore the presemiotic function of the unconscious, especially the self as the “bottomless lake.” Third, Peirce’s inherent narcissism (e.g., the role of a Dandy) certainly contributed to his attraction to the primal category of Firstness. Both Brent and Corrington agree:

Peirce’s fascination with Firstness, the realm of feeling, potentiality, spontaneity, and qualitative immediacy, was correlated with his role as a Dandy. The Dandy is the perfect narcissist, living without regard for the forms of Secondness and Thirdness in the ‘outer’ world. The Dandy acts out of an overflow of purely internal and self-referential energy, and is not connected to an actual and concrete community of selves. Peirce probed into the elusive heart of Firstness because of an ill-defined sense that his world lacked proper metaphysical props.¹⁴⁴

It should be obvious by now that Peirce’s semiotic self and its semiosis are psychologically structured and nurtured by the unconscious life. The self is both given life by the “skeletal-sets” and the forces outwardly arising from experience. As Corrington shows, instead of using Shakespeare’s metaphor of the “glassy essence,” by which the self plays a detached and passive role; namely, watching the plenitude of the world semiosis passing by without having a will to interact with the incoming

toward the lost object. Peirce sought out many substitute fathers before and after his father’s death. This strong drive was actually a manifestation of the hunger for a linking ‘third’ that would provide another possible route back to the abjected unconscious” (“Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 99).

¹⁴³Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 98.

¹⁴⁴Corrington, “Peirce the Melancholy Prestidigitator,” *Semiotica* 94-1/2 (1993): 94.

interpretants or to link up with the new semiotic material, Peirce later employs his own simile of the “bottomless lake,” where the unconscious directs and shapes the reality of the semiotic self.¹⁴⁵ Corrington finds that Peirce’s analogy of the skeletal-sets is similar to Jung’s psychoanalysis of the personal unconscious, which Jung termed “feeling toned complexes.”¹⁴⁶ For Corrington, the complex is “a sign system in its own right as it contains the cumulative result of the self’s interaction with the environment... More importantly, the complex, for example, a power complex, gathers new interpretants into its orbit and compels them to reinforce the already attained web of meanings.”¹⁴⁷ The surface of the lake is where the self consciously interacts with all semiotic material

¹⁴⁵The image of “bottomless lake” signals the maturity of Peirce’s thought as to his theory of the unconscious of the self. Corrington writes: “The image of the lake is more faithful to the depth structures of the self than the image of our ‘glassy essence.’ A lake is constituted by numerous life forms with their own evolutionary laws and associational patterns. Peirce makes it clear that the self is the locus of nature’s forms of semiosis, but this fact can be dealt with in a variety of ways. The image of the ‘glassy essence,’ while it allows for perspectival shifts (refraction properties), remains too passive. The image of the lake, on the other hand, evokes a sense of the true unconscious dynamics that continue to exert their pressure on all surface phenomena. Ideas (as tied to experience/secondness) come into the lake and enrich its contents. The raindrop is more dynamic than the ray of light in that it can enter into the psychic/chemical constitution of the self and become transformed by the encounter. More importantly, lakes can contain hidden associational chains that are self-moving to new structures. A glass or prism is not self-moving, but must serve the ambient light that enters into it” (*ICSP*, 107-8). For his exegesis of Jung’s unconscious complexes *vis-à-vis* Peirce’s analogy of the “bottomless lake,” see *ICSP*, 103-9.

¹⁴⁶According to Jung, the “feeling-toned content, the complex, consists of a nuclear element and a large number of secondarily constellated associations. The nuclear element consists of two components: first a factor determined by experience and causally related to the environment, second, a factor innate in the individual’s character and determined by his disposition” (*The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Vol. 8 of the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, trans. E. B. Ashton, 2nd. ed. [Princeton: Bollingen, 1969], 11). Cited in Corrington, “Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self,” *Semiotics 1989*, ed. John Deely, Karen Haworth, and Terry Prewitt (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1990), 342.

¹⁴⁷Corrington, “Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self,” *Semiotics 1989*, 342. For a semiotic analysis of the “glassy essence” and “bottomless lake,” see his *NS*, 34-5 and “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, ed. John Deely (Lanham: University Press of America), 91-103.

descending from above; however, beneath the surface of the lake the “newly arrived signs must bend to the forces that lie below the surface of consciousness.”¹⁴⁸ The already obtained signs that have lied beneath the lake is the unconscious of the self that continues to shape and enhance the conscious self’s semiosis and its material. It is important to quote Peirce’s simile in length so that one may be able to thoroughly comprehend how Peirce likens the bottomless lake metaphor not only to the semiotic self’s consciousness as Third (habit), but also to its unconscious (Firstness).¹⁴⁹

Consciousness is like a bottomless lake in which ideas are suspended

¹⁴⁸Corrington, *NS*, 34.

¹⁴⁹There is clearly, for Peirce, a marked distinction between mind (psychic life) and inherent habits and consciousness. And the functioning role of consciousness is psychologically and semiotically considered less essential than mind. Because of habit-taking (practical utility) and “of involuntary determinations of belief, Peirce privileged instinctive mind over consciousness. He says that, “We have the naive idea that our beliefs are principally determined by the exercise of our *conscious* intellect; but it is not so...Most of us are in the habit of thinking that consciousness and psychic life are the same thing and otherwise [we] greatly overrate the functions of consciousness...For if psychology were restricted to phenomena of consciousness, the establishment of mental associations, the taking of habits, which is the very marketplace of psychology, would be outside its boulevards. To say of such departments of psychology - from every point of view, the most essential parts of it - that they are studies of phenomena of consciousness, is as if an ichthyologist were to define his science as a study of water” (*CP* 7.456, 6.489, 7.367. Cited in Colapietro’s “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” 484). Colapietro is right to state that Peirce indeed ascribed a modest role to our conscious selves, and that “consciousness is the *medium* in which habits are formed” (485). Peirce argues that the sign-using self’s epistemological and behavioral dimensions are governed by instinctive mind/habits, reflexion, and imagination, and not much by consciousness. In addition, Colapietro insightfully shows that Peirce not only distinguished the unconscious from consciousness, but also recognized the contradistinction between the unconscious and the so-called preconscious, which relatively exhibits a conceptual similarity with Freud’s theory of repression. Colapietro contends that the following text illustrates Peirce’s acknowledgment of the unconscious as opposed to the preconscious: “Reason is of its very nature egotistical...Men many times fancy that they act from reason when, in point of fact, the reasons they attribute to themselves are nothing but excuses which unconscious instinct invents to satisfy the teasing ‘whys’ of the *ego*. The extent of this self-delusion is such as to render philosophical rationalism a farce” (*CP* 1.631. Cited in Colapietro’s “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” 490).

at different depths. Indeed, these ideas themselves constitute the very medium of consciousness itself. [Peirce's marginal comment: "An idea is nothing but a portion of consciousness having in itself no definite boundaries, except so far as it may be of a different quality from contiguous ideas.] Percepts alone are uncovered by the medium. We must imagine that there is a continual fall of rain upon the lake; which images the constant inflow of percepts in experience. All ideas other than percepts are more or less deep, and we may conceive that there is a force of gravitation, so that the deeper ideas are, the more work will be required to bring them to the surface...But it must not be thought that an idea actually has to be brought to the surface of consciousness before it can be discerned...Not only do all ideas tend to gravitate toward oblivion, but we are to imagine that various ideas react one another by selective attractions. This images the association between ideas which tend to agglomerate them into single ideas. (*CP* 7.553)...An idea near the surface will attract an idea that is very deep only so slightly that the action must continue for some time before the latter is brought to a level of easy discernment. Meantime the former is sinking to dimmer consciousness. There seems to be a factor like momentum, so that the idea originally dimmer becomes more vivid than the one which brought it up. In addition, the mind has but a finite area at each level; so that the bringing of a mass of ideas up inevitably involves the carrying of other ideas down. Still another factor seems to be a certain degree of buoyancy or association with whatever idea may be vivid, which belongs to those ideas that we call purposes, by virtue of which they are particularly apt to be brought up and held up near the surface by the inflowing percepts and thus to hold up any ideas with which they may be associated. The control which we exercise over our thoughts in reasoning consists in our purpose holding certain thoughts up where they may be scrutinized. The levels of easily controlled ideas are those that are so near the surface so to be strongly affected by present purposes. The aptness of this metaphor is very great. (*CP* 7.554)

As a devoted synechist, Peirce obviously rejected the notion of the incognizable. He never made a radical distinction between the psychical and physical phenomena, but for him all phenomena are of one character (*CP* 7.570). Therefore, whether it is the unconscious or consciousness, everything swims in phenomena. Peirce remarks: "That which underlies a phenomenon and determines it, thereby is, itself, in a measure, a

phenomenon” (CP 7.569).¹⁵⁰ The unconscious does *appear* in the bottomless lake to determine or shape the incoming semiotic material as it emerges to the surface of the lake/consciousness.

The inner being of the semiotic self, Peirce argues, is guided by the unconscious since the mental development of the passive conscious self is constructed by the activities of habit or the law of mental associations; namely, the mind connects sensations into patterns. These associational patterns resemble Hume’s empirical concepts of “contiguity” and “resemblance.” Because under the surface of the bottomless lake there are “countless objects at different depths; and certain influences will give certain kinds of those objects an upward impulse which may be intense enough and continue long enough to bring them into the upper visible layer. After the impulse ceases they commence to sink downward” (CP 7.547), the semiotic self “‘contained’ a kind of universal or collective unconscious that has its roots in the evolutionary past...[and] that this unconscious is highly active in forming vast gestalts that in turn shape all incoming semiotic material.”¹⁵¹ Through a bundle of habits the passive conscious self’s personality, experience, or idea is being shaped or shifted by the (collective) unconscious; that is, “the bringing of a mass of ideas up inevitably involves the carrying of other ideas down” (CP 7.554). The power of the unconscious moves, shapes, or shifts personalities, experiences, or ideas, and they gravitate toward oblivion; that is, sinking to a great depth of dimness they are later vividly brought up near the surface of the lake. This runs parallel to Peirce’s

¹⁵⁰Colapietro shows that the unconscious “appears” in all of Peirce’s three universal categories: “First, the unconscious as a phenomenon in which firstness is predominant would be the mind in its irrepressible spontaneity, its ineliminable wantonness, and its inexhaustible fecundity as (above all) iconic resource and symbolic possibility. Second, the unconscious as other, as second, would be that which stands over against consciousness, its irrepressible spontaneity operating precisely as a disruptive force, as an anarchical impulse... Yet the moment we introduce symbols and narratives we have the unconscious as a phenomenon in which thirdness is predominant...In other words, we have the unconscious itself as *that which mediates* between our various engagements” (498). See his “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” *Transactions* 31 (1995): 482-506; cf. Nathan Houser, “Peirce’s General Taxonomy of Consciousness,” *Transactions* 19 (1983): 331-59.

¹⁵¹Corrington, *NS*, 34.

theory of the law of mind that is deeply rooted in the conception of synechism; namely, the spreading of ideas:

Logical analysis applied to mental phenomena shows that there is but one law of mind, namely, that ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. In this spreading they lose intensity, and especially the power of affecting others, but gain generality and become welded with other ideas. (CP 6.104)

As regards Peirce's anthroposemiotics of the self, Corrington makes this following remark: "Yet, for Peirce, the structures of the community and of the unconscious are crucial for giving the self its ontological location within the world."¹⁵²

Perception is the underlying element of Peirce's theory of cognition. However fallible, perception enables the self to recognize, acquire, and construct information about realities as well make judgments about them. The way in which the self is aware of reality, encounters lived experiences, or habitually establishes thoughts and beliefs is through what Peirce called "percipuum." The self's epistemological or perceptual experience is deeply seated in the percipuum. Peirce divides the percipuum¹⁵³ into two elements; namely; the psychological term called "the percept" (*res percepta*) and "the perceptual judgment" (which closely correlates to Peirce's theory of the unconscious). For Peirce, percepts are composed by the two different kinds of elements of the phenomenological categories of Firstness or "that of a positive suchness" and Secondness or "that of one thing's referring to another" (CP 7.630).¹⁵⁴ Percepts are not only products

¹⁵²Corrington, *ICSP*, 115.

¹⁵³"The percipuum...is what forces itself upon your acknowledgment, without any why or wherefore, so that if anybody asks you why you should regard it as appearing so and so, all you can say is, 'I can't help it. That is how I see it'" (CP 7.643).

¹⁵⁴"In the first place, there are the qualities of feeling or sensation, each of which is something positive and *sui generis*, being such as it is quite regardless of how or what anything else is. On account of this self-sufficiency, it is convenient to call these the elements of 'Firstness'...A visual percept of a chair has a definite shape. if it is yellow with a green cushion, that is quite different from being green with a yellow cushion.

of a mental process and of a sensory awareness of reality, but also are of compulsive moments or qualitative feelings that are nonpropositionally precognitive and preinterpreted, possessing neither logical relations nor analytical descriptions. Subjects of belief or disbelief cannot be ascribed to them.¹⁵⁵ Those elements exclusively belong to perceptual judgments. Percepts just forcefully appear before the self - uninvited and unintentional. Peirce asserts that the percept:

makes no professions of any kind, essentially embodies no intentions of any kind, does not stand for anything. It obtrudes itself upon my gaze; but not as a deputy for anything else, not "as" anything. It simply knocks at the portal of my soul and stands there in the doorway...The percept...is absolutely dumb. It acts upon us, it forces itself upon us; but it does not address the reason, nor *appeal* to anything...We know nothing about the percept otherwise than by testimony of the perceptual judgment, excepting that we feel the blow of it, the reaction of it against us, and we see the contents of it arranged into an object, in its totality...But the moment we fix our minds upon it and *think* the least thing about the percept, it is the perceptual judgment that tells us what we so "perceive." For this and other reasons, I propose to consider the percept as it is immediately interpreted in the perceptual judgment, under the name of the "percipuum." (CP 7.619, 622, 643).

These connectives are directly perceived, and the perception of each of them is a perception at once of two opposed objects - a double awareness. In respect to each of these connections, one part of the percept appear as it does *relatively to a second part*. Hence, it is convenient to call them elements of 'Secondness.' The vividness with which a percept stands out is an element of secondness; because the percept is vivid in proportion to the intensity of its effect upon the perceiver. These elements of secondness bring with them the peculiar singleness of the percept" (CP 7.625).

¹⁵⁵According to Jørgen Dines Johansen, Peirce's percept "has four distinctive features: (1) it contributes something positive to knowledge; (2) it intrudes itself upon the perceiver, compels him to acknowledge its presence, and resists his attempts to dispose of it; (3) it is direct, i.e., the external object exerts a force on or acts on the perceiver; (4) and at the same time the force exerted by the object is the result of an inferential (and unconscious) synthesis." Johansen also points out that, "Peirce's characterization of the percept is controversial, because it is sometimes objected that (3) and (4) contradict each other or, at least, that taken together they are ambiguous" (*Dialogic Semiosis: An Essay on Signs and Meaning* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993], 76).

Because the percept is configured by a perceptual judgment (i.e., a percept is supplied with a predicate by a perceptual judgment) and not identified with sense data or a proposition, it is therefore beyond “any *controlled* and *criticized* action of reasoning” (CP 5.157). Consequently, the percept partially belongs to the realm of the unconscious. And through the unconscious and instinctual operations of the percept and perceptual judgment, reality is unveiled. Since the percept floats in Firstness it may be correct to say that the unconscious also situates itself in this particular phenomenological category. It prethematically or presemiotically serves as a background that furnishes the conscious self with the inner momentum of the continuum and with semiotic material so that the self will move from vague potentiality to realized generality.

Because a perceptual judgment is immediately perceived, it is thus initially credible, acritical, and fallible. It is “the act of forming a mental proposition about some characteristic of the perceptually given, together with an assent to this proposition.”¹⁵⁶ And as the cognitive product of a reaction, the self’s perceptual judgment functions as a representation of the percept. Without the mental operation of the perceptual judgment, the percept approaches the self “as a kind of surd” (Corrington), carrying no cognitive meaning. Peirce makes clear that the percept itself is not a judgment and vice versa. The perceptual judgment is defined by Peirce as “a judgment asserting in propositional form what a character of a percept directly present to the mind is” (CP 5.54). He adds: “In a perceptual judgment the mind professes to tell the mind’s future self what the character of the present percept is. The percept, on the contrary, stands on its own legs and makes no professions of any kind” (CP 7.630).¹⁵⁷ The self perceives via percepts; nonetheless, the

¹⁵⁶C.F. Delaney, *Science, Knowledge, and Mind: A study in the Philosophy of C.S. Peirce* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 122. For an excellent analysis of Peirce’s percepts, see Carl Hausman, “In and Out of Peirce’s Percepts, *Transactions* 26 (1990): 271-308; see also Hookway’s four elements of perception, *Peirce*, 151-166.

¹⁵⁷Peirce uses the chair and its color to illustrate the disparateness as well as points of contrast between the percept and perceptual judgment: “The judgment, ‘This chair appears yellow,’ separates the color from the chair, making the one predicate and the

what is only made intelligible through perceptual judgments. Since perceptual judgments not only contain general elements, but also generate interpretants (which ameliorate the signs of percepts), and since they semiotically represent percepts, perceptual judgments belong to the phenomenological category of Thirdness.¹⁵⁸ It is important to note that perceptual judgments are not actually the self's own judgments; that is, the self does not *make* any judgments, but they are forced upon us.¹⁵⁹ These judgments are abductive inferences (hypothetical interpretations), which proceed beyond the self's control and criticism. In Peirce's view, there is no sharp line of demarcation between perceptual judgments and abductive inferences; in other words, the abductive inference or suggestion hits upon the self "like a flash. It is an act of *insight*, although of extremely fallible insight" (CP 5.181). The self's perceptual judgments being acritical and indubitable only imply that they are the first premises, serving as the starting point for further logical thought or "critical and controlled thinking" (CP 5.181). The perceptual judgment is not only acritical and indubitable, but is also fallible and self-corrective, for Peirce declares that no percipuum is neither without error nor absolute. C.F. Delaney is correct to say that perceptual judgments are semiotically indexical signs that allow:

Peirce to have a coherent view of empirical knowledge in which perceptual judgments are both primary and revisable, yet the scientific account of the world describes the world as it really is. Our initial interaction with the world is guided by perceptual

other subject. The percept, on the other hand, presents the chair in its entirety and makes no analysis whatever" (CP 7.631).

¹⁵⁸Corrington explicates: "The perceptual judgment applies a predicate, as a form of thirdness, to the percept so that it appears to the mind *as* something. The act of predication is unconscious and instinctual at this level. On the conscious level, any given perceptual judgment may be modified, but this is rare given the fact that we do not even acknowledge that such unconscious predication has take place" ("Peirce's Ecstatic Naturalism: The Birth of the Divine in Nature," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 16 (1995): 177).

¹⁵⁹"One can, however, escape the percept itself by shutting one's eyes. If one *sees*, one cannot avoid the percept; and if one *looks*, one cannot avoid the perceptual judgment. Once apprehended, it absolutely compels assent. Its defect in forcefulness is thus excessively slight and of no logical importance" (CP 7.627).

judgments but subsequent inquiry may give us reason to revise our conception of the objects as given in these judgments.¹⁶⁰

2. The Ethically and Logically Self-Controlled Self

The doctrine of pragmatism was originally and fundamentally based “upon a study...of the phenomenon of self-control which is common to all grown men and women” (*CP* 5.442); and it also “became a defining characteristic of his Logic and Ethics (1.191) and it is the modus operandi for evolution, at least ‘in its higher stages’ (5.433).”¹⁶¹ Peirce’s concept of self-control was essentially influenced by Schiller’s two concepts: normative sciences and “perfect freedom.” Petry points out that, first, Schiller’s proposition of the normative role of beauty serving as a telos for humankind contributed to Peirce’s philosophical concept of the aesthetics; secondly, there is a direct connection between Schiller’s term “perfect freedom” and Peirce’s “self-control,”¹⁶² especially his understanding and employment of Christian ethics. Accentuating his concept of self-control as a type of freedom, Peirce argued:

Self-control seems to be the capacity for rising to an extended view of a practical subject instead of seeing only temporary urgency. This is the only freedom of which man has any reason to be proud;

¹⁶⁰*Science, Knowledge, and Mind*, 128-9.

¹⁶¹Edward S. Petry, Jr., “The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 (1992): 667. In this paper Petry believes that Peirce did not actually use the term “self-control” in his philosophical writings until 1868. He also indicates that the origin and development of Peirce’s concept of self-control evolves in four stages: (1) Peirce “associate self-control with ‘moral absolutisms and ‘conservatism’ that block the path of inquiry”; (2) Self-control is “one element of ‘sham reasoning’.” At this second stage, Peirce’s concept of self-control involves all three universal categories: “The Firstness of freedom and self-determination, the Secondness of struggle and resistance to change and the Thirdness of habit.” At this particular stage Peirce stresses the Secondness of self-control; (3) The theory of inquiry is implicitly underscored by self-control; (4) This “fourth stage consists in the integration of the concept of self-control with the rest of [Peirce’s] philosophy.” According to Petry, the doctrine of self-control saturated all aspects of Peirce’s philosophy.

¹⁶²“The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 (1992): 672.

and it is because love of what is good for all on the whole, which is the widest possible consideration, is the essence of Christianity, that it is said that the service of Christ is perfect freedom. (CP 5.339n.)¹⁶³

In his undated letter to F.C.S. Schiller, Peirce wrote that self-control:

consists (to mention only the leading constituents) first, in comparing one's past deeds with standards, second, in rational deliberation concerning how one will act in the future, in itself a highly complicated operation, third, in the formation of a resolve, fourth, in the creation, on the basis of the resolve, of a strong determination, or modification of habit. This operation of self-control is a process in which logical sequence is converted into mechanical sequence or something of the sort. (CP 8.320)

Self-control is logically founded on rational self-conduct;¹⁶⁴ it is neither constituted by the vague potentiality of Firstness nor circumscribed by the *fait accompli* of Secondness, but it intimately shares fundamental characteristics of the open-ended future of Thirdness. Thirdness offers both possibility and novelty, and this is the reason why “[a]s always, the pragmatist/pragmaticist privileges the future because it is amenable to self-

¹⁶³Cited in Petry, “The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 (1992): 672.

¹⁶⁴“In my opinion, it is self-control which makes any other than the normal course of thought possible, just as nothing else makes any other than the normal course of action possible; and just as it is precisely that that gives room for an ought-to-be of thought, which is Right Reason; and where there is no self-control, nothing but the normal is possible” (CP 4.540). Corrington elucidates further: “Peirce links the self-control found in logical analysis with the self-control found in ethics. Peirce grounds logic in ethics because ethics expresses the deeper form of self-control in the context of the various *oughts* of our life” (ICSP, 52). Peirce’s self-control does not just confine itself to logic, ethics, or aesthetics, but it ramifies to the metaphysical realm of evolutionary cosmology and to biological/natural organism. As to Peirce’s semiotic anthropology, Corrington, citing from Peirce’s W 2.261n and EP 1.72 (*The Essential Peirce*, vol.I), points out that there is a melding of the two dimensions of self-control; namely, the ontological and the ethical: “Ontologically, self-control opens the self to an expansive future in which possibility may eclipse necessity (the modal view of time). Ethically, self-control supports both the social and the religious impulse” (ICSP, 93). See also Larry Holmes, “Peirce on Self-Control,” *Transactions* 2 (1966): 113-30.

control...Peirce ties the concept of self-control to that of novelty. Self-control has as its 'object' the increase of itself and its instances. This increase takes place in a future that allows for genuine novelty."¹⁶⁵

Peirce declares that an actual/true self is one that acquires self-control, for it not only enables the semiotic self and its community to attain the "would be" knowledge or ideal in the infinite long run, but also navigates the self toward conducting habits¹⁶⁶ in a reasonable deliberation. It is important to remember that Peirce does make a distinction between "brute action" (Secondness) and "conduct" (Thirdness). Although, according to Bernstein: "There is no conduct unless there is action, and conduct issues in determinate actions, but conduct is not identical with, or reducible to, a series of discrete actions."¹⁶⁷ Brute action is a dyadic movement; it is an indexical sign pointing to something beyond itself, hence it possesses no interpretive meaning; while a rationally self-controlled conduct (which embodies Thirdness) not only brings Firsts and Seconds into relation and exhibits interpretants, but also subjects itself to self-criticism as well as self-correction. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that prior to 1902, Peirce likened the term "self-control" to "volition" ("the voice of conscience" against what Schiller called "sensuous impulse"), thus stressing the dyadic function of Secondness. So, as long as the self struggles with its "polarized consciousness" (Petty), Secondness will continue to perform its ontological role, which reveals Peirce's "identif[ying] with the absolutist side of Ethics

¹⁶⁵Corrington, *ICSP*, 57. Peirce states: "It cannot be denied that acritical inferences may refer to the Past in its capacity as past; but according to Pragmaticism, the conclusion of a Reasoning power must refer to the Future. For its meaning refers to conduct, and since it is a reasoned conclusion must refer to deliberate conduct, which is controllable conduct. But the only controllable conduct is Future conduct" (*CP* 5.461. Cited in Corrington, *ICSP*, 57).

¹⁶⁶Peirce defines habits as modes of being; and for him, "Without those innumerable and mostly minute habits which make one person different from another, there can be no beauty; and certainly, there is no one who would like to shut off from himself mental and moral beauty, and every possibility of being loved" (Cited in Kenneth Laine Ketner, *His Glassy Essence*, 146).

¹⁶⁷"Toward a More Rational Community," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*, Graduate Studies, No. 23 (Lubbock, TX.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 118.

(2.198)...and with ‘conservatism’ that blocks the path of inquiry,”¹⁶⁸ which can be possible only by way of Thirdness; for without Thirdness self-control is nothing but a “sham reasoning” (*CP* 1.57).

In his semiotic cosmology and ontology Peirce maintains that the sign-using self’s self-control is intrinsically shaped and controlled by the evolving universe; that is, “self-control is what it is because of the depth structures of cosmic habit within the universe as a whole.”¹⁶⁹ And from cosmological habits the self not only acquires its developmental teleology, but its “self-controlled purposive thought and conduct has a significance far beyond the creation of personal habits.”¹⁷⁰ Influenced by the theological view of Swedish scientist and religious teacher Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), especially his notion of the *vir*, Peirce characterized self-control as “the means by which we participate in the ongoing process of creation and the growth of concrete reasonableness.”¹⁷¹ Furthermore, the self-control that the semiotic self exercises actually derives its power from the inclusive ideals of external realities. Peirce’s future-oriented self, as a semiotic series constantly swimming in a continuum,¹⁷² is not the proprietor of the absolute source of actions; therefore, to attain autonomous power and become a sign-functioning agent the self must subject itself to external and superior ideals. Colapietro explains:

¹⁶⁸Edward S. Petry, “The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 (1992): 679.

¹⁶⁹Corrington, *ICSP*, 114.

¹⁷⁰Petry, “The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 (1992): 675.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.* Peirce wrote that “...it is by the indefinite replication of self-control upon self-control that the *vir* is begotten, and by action, through thought, he grows an esthetic ideal, not for the behoof of his own poor noodle merely, but as the share which God permits him to have in the work of creation. This ideal, by modifying the rules of self-control modifies action, and so experience too - both the man’s own and that of others...[5.402 n.3; see also 1.575, 1.588 and 1.615 from 1903 and 8.138 n.4 from 1905] (Cited in Petry’s “The Origin and Development of Peirce’s Concept of Self-Control,” *Transactions* 28 [1992]: 675).

¹⁷²It should be stressed that Peirce never equated self-control (as a type of volition) with continuity (*CP* 8.41).

The self can only realize itself by exerting control over itself; and it can only exert control over itself by committing itself to ideals, since “self-control depends upon comparison of what is done with an ideal admirable *per se*, without any ulterior reason” [MS 1939]. However, since ideals can conflict, a commitment to one ideal frequently requires an abandonment of another ideal. Moreover, our commitments to ideals are, especially with regard to loftier ideals, more like acts of surrender than acts of acquisition: The higher ideals take possession of us rather than we of them. In fact, Peirce maintained the realization of the self demanded a series of acts by which [sic] the self surrenders itself to ever more inclusive ideals.¹⁷³

From the ethical/moral aspect of self-control Peirce demands that the semiotic self form habits of acting on certain rules of conduct that will guide it to the continuous growth of concrete reasonableness. For him, a rationally mature self is one who has acquired the ultimate ideals of self-control and is measured by them. In addition, a self-controlled self is a social/communal self, the one who must negate a solipsistic self and bind itself to the community of inquirers,¹⁷⁴ which functions as the clearing house for metaphysical, semiotic, epistemological, religious, and ethical realities. For Peirce, logical self-control perfectly reflects ethical self-control; in other words, he intrinsically grounds his social/ethical principle in logic. After 1902, Peirce realized that continuing with his dualistic dimension of ethics and dispensing with logic would not only block the self’s path of communal inquiry, but would deflect it from the continuous growth of concrete reasonableness. Consequently, the role of logic in ethics became indispensable for Peirce:

For if, as pragmatism teaches us, what we think is to be interpreted in terms of what we are prepared to do, surely *logic*, or the

¹⁷³Peirce’s *Approach to the Self*, 95-6. Cited in Corrington, *ICSP*, 94-5.

¹⁷⁴“Two things here are all-important to assure oneself of and to remember. The first is that a person is not absolutely an individual. His thoughts are what he is ‘saying to himself,’ that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time...The second thing to remember is that the man’s circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a sort of loosely compacted person, in some respects of higher rank than the person of an individual organism” (*CP* 5. 421).

doctrine of what we ought to think, must be an application of the doctrine of what we deliberately choose to do, which is Ethics. (CP 5. 35).

(The interplay between ethics and normative logic already appeared in Peirce's 1869 paper "Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities," published in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2. He reiterated this in his 1878 "Doctrine of Chances," in *Popular Science Monthly* 12). Now one can see that through self-control the self embodies itself in all three normative sciences; in other words, the self's deliberate conduct¹⁷⁵ (ethics) must indispensably exhibit a pragmatic expression of an ideal (aesthetics), which has been shaped by rational thought (logic).

It is of utmost importance for Peirce to stress that a rationally self-controlled self is one who ethically and logically sacrifices its own individual desires for the community's collective interests. With altruistic overtones, Peirce announces: "He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively" (CP 5.354). And since Peirce held Thomas Hobbes' idea of "state of nature" (or psychological egoism) to be "a very crude opinion," for he believed that, "Men are not always thinking of themselves" (CP 5.339n.). It is ethically evident that Peirce wants self-control to be dependent "upon comparison of what is done with an ideal admirable *per se*, without any ulterior reason."¹⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that Peirce's correlation between ethical principles and logic resembles Kant's use of the word "*Wille*" (rational will) as opposed to "*Willkür*" (faculty of desire). Regarding Kant's deontological principle, the moral concept of "categorical imperative," and the doctrine of "kingdom of ends," a rational will or a "good will" (*guter Wille*) is a will that acts for the sake of duty.

¹⁷⁵"Every action has a motive, but an ideal belongs to a line [of] conduct which is deliberate. To say that conduct is deliberate implies that each action, or each important action, is reviewed by the actor and that his judgment is passed upon it, as to whether he wishes his future conduct to be like that or not. His ideal is the kind of conduct which attracts him upon review. His self-criticism, followed by a more or less conscious resolution that in its turn excites a determination of his habit, will...*modify* a future action; but it will not generally be a moving cause to action" (CP 1.574).

¹⁷⁶MS 1339. Cited in Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 96.

3. *The Semiotic Self*

The conversion of the solipsistic self into communal/social self, evidenced by Peirce's "community of inquirers" or Royce's "Beloved Community," undeniably stands as one of the hallmarks of American pragmatism. The relational or communal self is of important aspect of the thought of Peirce and also for both Royce and Mead. And as has been shown, for Peirce, the self enveloped in its isolated existence is indeed "only a negation" (*CP* 5.317). If ideas or truths are to be attained through the community of inquirers, then the semiotic self's ontological identity must be irrevocably embedded in that scientific community or "rational community."¹⁷⁷ For without that "connecting bond" (Peirce), there will exist only a "private self" who is not only a Second (an opposition to the other), but also garbs itself in an "artificial human nature" (Dewey). Peirce insists that, "In the first place, your neighbors are, in a measure, yourself...Really, the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarest delusion of vanity" (*CP* 7.571). So if by nature humankind is social or communal, then the true self must become a Third (a general); for in Peirce's view, "The thread of life is a third...Sympathy, flesh and blood, that by which I feel my neighbor's feelings, is third" (*CP* 1.337). It is, however, also important to point out that semiotically the self as "Second" can still function as an indexical sign to denote objects, because without the identity of object(s) there will be neither interpretant(s) nor symbol(s).

¹⁷⁷See Richard J. Bernstein, "Toward a More Rational Community," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*, Graduate Studies, No. 23 (Lubbock, TX.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 115-20. Peirce's idea of "scientific community" or "community of inquirers" is relatively equivalent to ecstatic naturalism's perspective of communal semiosis called the "interpretive community." As ontologically opposed to the "natural community" (suffocated by the dyadic dimension of inclusion and exclusion and with inherent narcissism), the interpretive community is grounded in the effects of the unconscious, the selving and individuation processes are privileged, and the conditions of origin (unlike the natural community) are not only subject to open-ended interpretations, but is also fully embedded in pretemporal, temporal, and posttemporal dimensions of time. From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, the interpretive self is akin to Peirce's communal semiotic self (as opposed to the "private self" or the "natural self"). Ecstatic naturalism's ontological concept of communal semiosis (natural and interpretive communities) will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Unlike the Humean self, who is only an illusionary fiction getting caught in a bundle of impressions or of psychical phenomena, Peirce's semiotic self is real and incarnates itself in a bundle of habits. It is an external sign absorbed, shaped, and endowed with a unique identity only by and through the community assembled by communally integrated selves. Like Mead's "social self," Peirce's construction of the self is neither built on solipsism nor subjectivism, because the self's true identity (its self-consciousness and other-consciousness) is formed by communal interactions with other interpretive selves. Without the social/communal context the self will be incomplete; in other words, it will remain a private self; and by private self Peirce implied "self-consciousness," which is "a knowledge of ourselves. Not a mere feeling of subjective conditions of consciousness, but of our personal selves. Pure apperception is the self-assertion of THE *ego*; the self-consciousness here meant is the recognition of my *private* self. I know that *I* (not merely *the I*) exist" (CP 5.225). The semiotic self is "an 'outreaching identity,' which connected the feelings, thoughts, and actions of one individual with those of others through the processes of semiotic communication (CP 7.591). The self was thus both a product and an agent of semiotic communication, and therefore social and public."¹⁷⁸

Peirce's semiotic self is a communalized sign that participates in the continuity of consciousness; and this characteristic is irrevocably connected with the logical continuity of thought-signs. As to the concept of the self as a thought-sign Peirce holds that, "...just as we say that a body is in motion, and not that motion is in a body we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us" (CP 5.289n). Interpretive selves communicate with each other by means of signs, and that "the use of signs, the very concept of a sign, involves a mind, and a mind in communication with other minds, all of whom must to a conventional extent agree on the translation of the signs constituting

¹⁷⁸Singer, *Man's Glassy Essence*, 57. Dewey, according to Singer, "emphasizes, quite properly, that in Peirce's theory of signs there is no such thing as a sign in isolation, that every sign is a constituent of a sequential set of signs, and that a 'thing' has no meaning - is not a sign - apart from membership in this set" (Ibid., 67).

their language.”¹⁷⁹ Peirce asserts that we are not only sign-using selves, but are also signs ourselves:

[W]hen we think, we have present to the consciousness some feeling, image, conception, or other representation, which serves as a sign. But it follows from our own existence (which is proved by the occurrence of ignorance and error) that everything which is present to us is a phenomenal manifestation of ourselves. This does not prevent its being a phenomenon of something without us, just as a rainbow is at once a manifestation both of the sun and of the rain. When we think, then, we ourselves, as we are at that moment, appear as a sign (*CP* 5.283).

Not only do selves linguistically and socially share the same set of signs in their community, but they also share a “common biological character (with all the limitations and potentialities peculiar to that character).”¹⁸⁰ Peirce defines the personal identity of the self as being socially and semiotically shaped by its intercommunication with other selves in the community of inquiry, for without the organic intersubjectivity (e.g., feelings, thoughts, and actions) taking place between interpretive selves, negation of selfhood will eventually come to pass.¹⁸¹ Communally and spiritually conscious as well as possessing an “outreaching identity,” the self’s identity is not strictly “shut up in a box of flesh and blood,” but expresses itself the feeling of sympathy and “all unselfish interests” to others. The self embodied only in “flesh and blood” is, according to Peirce, the “person of an

¹⁷⁹Justus Buchler, *Charles Peirce’s Empiricism* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 155.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁸¹There is certainly a resemblance between Peirce’s communal self and Buber’s relational self. For Buber, the person truly becomes an “I” only through a “Thou”; that is, selfhood grows and develops through entering into relation with another, for without this interrelation or intersubjectivity the self will forever be trapped in the “I-It” relationship. While for Peirce, it is mutual identification that defines the semiotic self, it is mutual confirmation for Buber. For Peirce and Buber, communal life involves relation. “In the beginning is the relation,” proclaims Buber. See Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970).

individual organism,” who is ranked lower than the communal self; namely, “the loosely compacted person” (CP 5.421).

The self engages in a radical transition from “egologism”¹⁸² to communalism. Being a communalized self, the self may be distinguished, but not separated from the other selves. Colapietro points out that “genuine community is never a mere collection of individual selves; it is always a living union of integrated selves.”¹⁸³ Peirce’s theory of reality and logic elementally operate within the social principle, which firms up his semiotic ipseity.¹⁸⁴ Peirce’s semiotic self transcends James’ “pure ego,” which endlessly flows within the “stream of consciousness.” And it also transcends James’ empirical self, which is confined to the neutral monism of radical empiricism. Floating on his “stream of thought” notion, James affirms the law of absolute insulation and that thought exclusively belongs to the realm of personal consciousness. James’ finite self is sheltered in its own insulated mind. And while Peirce’s self is a communicative agent involving itself in the dimension of intersubjectivity, James’ solitary self solely encloses itself in the realm of intrasubjectivity.¹⁸⁵ Peirce believes James’ individualistic self must be reconstructed and

¹⁸²Calvin O. Schrag’s phrase. See his *The Self after Postmodernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). See particularly chapter 3, “The Self in Community,” 76-109.

¹⁸³Colapietro, *Peirce’s Approach to the Self*, 78.

¹⁸⁴“He who would not not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively. So the social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic” (CP 5.354). Peirce also stresses: “Really, the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarest delusion of vanity” (CP 7.571). Peirce’s theory of inquiry (the pragmatic epistemology and social theory of logic), as Apel claims, can become a commensurable dialogue partner for Marxism. The term “logical Socialism” (the idea of a practicing community of inquirers) recalls Peirce’s paper “Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (1869), in which he wrote: “That logic rigidly requires, before all else, that no determinate fact, nothing which can happen to a man’s self, should be of more consequence to him than everything else. He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world, is illogical in all his inferences, collectively. So the social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic” (CP 5.354). See Apel, *Charles S. Peirce: From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism*, 192-93.

¹⁸⁵In the chapter called “The Stream of Thought” in his *The Principles of Psychology*, James describes the insulated dimension of thought as follows: “My thought

transformed into a communally functioning self whose ontological dimension of identity and ethical dimension of self-control are attained through the community of inquirers. As aforementioned, to be a true synechist, like Peirce, is to affirm that my neighbors are, in a measure, myself, for the selfhood that one wishes to attribute to oneself is indeed “the vulgarest delusion of vanity.” In his review of James’ *The Principle of Psychology* in *The Nation* (1891), Peirce wrote:

Everybody will admit a personal self exists in the same sense in which a snark exists; that is, there is a phenomenon to which that name is given. It is an illusory phenomenon; but still it is a phenomenon. It is not quite *purely* illusory, but only *mainly* so. It is true, for instance, that men are *selfish*, that is, that they are really deluded into supposing themselves to have some isolated existence; and in so far, they *have* it (CP 8.82).

By the admixture of the self’s semiosis and autonomy, Peirce “suggests the need for a radical revision of the traditional picture of agency”;¹⁸⁶ that is, the self is more than a source for pragmatic actions; it rationally, continuously, and dynamically moves toward the growth of concrete reasonableness, toward purpose, generality, and meaning. The self is part of the semiotic world, and not imprisoned by solipsism. As will be analyzed in detail, the primal category of Thirdness proves to be extremely essential to Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self. However, as previously examined, because of his privileging, if not eulogizing, of Thirdness, Peirce has neglected the mysteriously unconscious aspect of the self in its Firstness. Peirce was quite aware that without the

belongs with my other thoughts, and your thought with other thoughts...The only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousnesses, minds, selves, concrete particular I’s and you’s. Each of these minds keeps its own thought of itself. There is no giving or bartering between them. No thought even comes into direct *sight* of a thought in another personal consciousness than its own” (220-21).

¹⁸⁶Colapietro, *Peirce’s Approach to the Self*, 97. Wiley also says: “American semiotics recognizes an autonomous self and European semiotics does not...Pragmatism and the semiotic self gave a convincing explanation of why all humans are psychologically and morally equal, as well as explaining the sense in which they are autonomous or free” (*The Semiotic Self*, viii-ix).

primal category of Thirdness the Peircean self would become semiotically negated or become what Hegel termed the “unhappy consciousness” (Hegel).¹⁸⁷

In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel uses two expressions: “I as We” and “We as I.” Colapietro suggests that these two expressions can be employed to elucidate Peirce’s conceptions of self and community. So when Peirce asserts that “a person is not absolutely individual” (CP 5.421), he is simply stating : “This is the ‘I’ that is ‘We,’ that

¹⁸⁷In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), Hegel’s “Unhappy Consciousness” (or the “divided soul”) is depicted as the consciousness of self that is dialectically plagued with “a dual-natured, merely contradictory being” (126). It is unhappy because it is torn, vacillating between the Skeptic’s flux and Stoic’s fixity, between particular and universality, between time and eternity, between the inner life and outer world. For Hegel, to rescue selfhood or self-consciousness from the dialectical tension between self-alienation and world’s distant externality, a third mediating/reconciling element is needed. Spirit (*Geist*) as the (double) movement of “absolute knowledge” that, through the process of *aufheben*, will quicken and reconcile the self’s self-identity (pure or abstract thinking) and self-otherness (external substance), so that it may achieve the fully developed selfhood; namely, pure concept (*Begriff*). Hegel also believes that as the mediating principle *Geist* can ontologically reconcile the dialectical tensions existing in Kant’s empirical/phenomenal self and transcendental/noumenal self as well as Descartes’ *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Likewise, in *Repetition*, the Kierkegaardian self, like that of Hegel, also suffers the state of unhappy consciousness. It dialectically undergoes constant fluctuations between Parmenidean permanence and Heraclitian change, between the temporal and eternal, between the finite and infinite, and between freedom and necessity. However, for the self to eschew the “sickness unto death” or the phenomenology of despair and become an “authentic self,” a third element (or relationship) must be established. Besides relating to itself and desiring to be itself, the self must submit itself to God as the originating freedom. For both Hegel and Kierkegaard, the life of the “Unhappy Consciousness” is noted by the deprivation of the third element or relationship that would bring reconciliation to the dialectical self. The self is “unhappy” because it is conceptually (Hegel) or existentially (Kierkegaard) divided. Although both Hegel and Kierkegaard share this common theme, their methodological approaches to solving these dialectical tensions are radically different. While Hegel grounds his “phenomenology of spirit” in essentialism and immanentalism, Kierkegaard steers his self-relating self toward existentialism and transcendence. By looking at Hegel’s Spirit and Kierkegaard’s primal source of freedom (God) as the third element or relationship to reconcile the dialectical tensions existing within the self, one may detect the similarity that Peirce shares with Hegel and Kierkegaard, and most of all, may see how indispensable the category of Thirdness plays in Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self. Without Thirdness, the Peircean self remains preconceptually unintelligible, semiotically vague, and communally deprived.

exhibits within itself the structure of intersubjectivity.”¹⁸⁸ However, according to Colapietro, when Peirce claims that a person’s “circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a sort of loosely compacted person, in some respects of higher rank than the person of an individual organism” (CP 5.421), he is saying:

This is the “We” that is “I,” that attains to some degree and in some fashion the status of subject. While the “I” or individual self is constituted in part by an inward life of a dialogical nature, the “We” or human community is constituted in part by the outward actions of a trans-individual subjectivity. In order for the “I” to act as a “We,” it must have first acted *in* a “We,” a community...In order for the “We” to act as an “I,” it must act through some “I(s),” some individual(s)... Hence, there is no “I” apart from “We,” no self apart from others; likewise, there is no “We” apart from “I’s” in dialogue with one another.¹⁸⁹

Peirce’s semiotic self and Mead’s symbolic self both insert themselves in “processive concreteness” (Rosenthal); that is, the self temporally proceeds along with those novelties and continuities that will enhance its selfhood. Mead’s self is a social product that accommodates itself in the “*process* of readjustment”,¹⁹⁰ whereas Peirce’s is more of a social process, coalescing its selfhood in the pragmatic fallibilism and evolutionary realism. To be a true self is to be *becoming* a self. The process will never be terminated, because for Peirce, a person’s personality is essentially grounded in the open future. He writes: “Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality” (CP 6.157). Peirce’s semiotic self is fallible and self-correcting, continuously striving toward its ideal conduct. Even though both Peirce and Mead recognize and emphasize the

¹⁸⁸Vincent M. Colapietro, “Tradition: First Steps Toward a Pragmatic Clarification,” *Philosophy in Experience: American Philosophy in Transition*, ed. Richard E. Hart and Douglas R. Anderson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 28.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 28-9.

¹⁹⁰Rosenthal, *Speculative Pragmatism*, 141.

social/communal dimension of the self, for that is where the self's identity is derived and formed, their pragmatic constructions of the self essentially differ. While Mead's self confines itself to social behavior or symbolic interactionism, the Peircean self swims not only in logic, but also in the evolutionary cosmology, which is radically grounded in synechistic metaphysics. Peirce's human subjectivity in Thirdness is more complex and enriching; it not only binds itself intimately to logical socialism, but is also involved in panpsychism (mental habits). And while Mead's semiotic self emerges in the realm of social interplay and symbols, Peirce's semiotic self metaphysically binds itself to all three logical categories: qualities, relations, and representations, or to the trichotomy of signs: icon, and index, and symbol. John Lincourt is right to remark: "Peirce approached the self-symbol from the point of view of a metaphysician and philosopher of science, while Mead writes as a social scientist and behaviorist. Peirce defines the self in terms of 'the long run,' whereas Mead's thinking is by contrast contextual and situational."¹⁹¹

Peirce's semiotics certainly had a profound impact on Josiah Royce's metaphysical concept of selfhood as well as on his ontological doctrine of the "Beloved Community," essentially developed in *The Problem of Christianity* (1913).¹⁹² Royce's philosophical focus is that of community characterized as a reality in which individual selves share the same visions, memories, or hopes. To become an interpreting self is to bond itself to the "community of interpretation." The self's self-identity is only unveiled through the interpretive community:

A community...depends for its very constitution upon the way in which each of its members interprets himself and his life. For the rest, nobody's self is either a mere datum or an abstract conception.

¹⁹¹John M. Lincourt, review of Norbert Wiley's *The Semiotic Self*, *Transactions* 32 (1996): 150.

¹⁹²Corrington points out that Royce's theory of signs and hermeneutics are not only maturely developed by Peirce's five seminal articles: "On a New List of Categories" (1867), "Questions concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" (1868-1869), "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868-1869), "Grounds of the Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868-1869), and "Signs" (1901), but Royce also "brought Peirce's then-neglected essays into a new prominence" (*CI*, 1).

A self is a life whose unity and connectedness depend upon some sort of interpretation of plans, of memories, of hopes, and of deeds. If, then, there are communities, there are many selves who, despite their variety, so interpret their lives that all these lives, taken together, get the type of unity which our last lecture characterized. Were there, then, no interpretations in the world, there would be neither selves nor communities.¹⁹³

Following Peirce's theory of signs, Royce stresses that since the self's self-identity is grounded in the process of interpretation, each member of the beloved community will triadically exchange the roles of "interpreter," "interpreted" (object), and "interpretation" (interpretant).

Against Plato's abstract epistemology, Royce argues that there is no pure "conception as furnishing our principal access to reality."¹⁹⁴ Royce also equally repudiates Bergson's notion that "pure perception brings us in contact with the real."¹⁹⁵ Again, modeling after Peirce's Thirdness, Royce employs the term "interpretation" as the mediating element that reconciles the predominantly philosophical dyadic systems of conceptual and perceptual knowledge represented by Plato and Bergson respectively. Knowledge cannot be delimited by or grounded in either conception or perception, but it must become a "triadic cognitive function," semiotically interpreted by the "community of interpreters." Royce affirms that "the philosopher's ideals are those of an interpreter."¹⁹⁶ And like Peirce, Royce understands the self to be not only a social animal who lives in communities, but a creature who also interprets. For both, the interpretive self is characterized by the social dimension of community. Interpretation is "an essentially social cognitive process."¹⁹⁷ If, for Peirce, to be a self is to be a Third

¹⁹³Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, ed. John E. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 274. Cited in Corrington, *CI*, 18.

¹⁹⁴Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. 2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1913), 257.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 168. Cf. M.L. Briody, "Community in Royce: An Interpretation," *Transactions* 5 (1969): 224-242; John E. Smith, "Contemporary American Philosophy,"

continuously and semiosically producing interpretants, then for Royce being “a self is to be a series of interpretations that are partly derived from the communal structure.”¹⁹⁸

Like Socrates’ notion of the self (*contra* Descartes’ “disengaged subject”),¹⁹⁹ the Peircean self is not only a “social animal” (CP 1.11), but is also dialogical, engaging itself in semiotic discourse with the community of interpreters/inquirers. Peirce argues that all thinking is dialogical; that is, the self is not only inwardly immersed in its own intrapersonal dialogue; that is, a dialogue “between two phases of ego,” between the immediate self and the future self (interpretant) or what Peirce called “deeper self,”²⁰⁰ but also is externally involved in interpersonal dialogue with the other self who “is just coming into life in the flow of time.” And since thinking is conducted in signs, the self plays the semiotic roles of the sign-using self and sign itself while engaging itself in either intra- or interpersonal dialogue:

Two things here are all-important to assure oneself of and to remember. The first is that a person is not absolutely an individual. His thoughts are what he is “saying to himself,” that is, is saying to that other self that is just coming into life in the flow of time. When one reasons, it is that critical self that one is trying to persuade; and all thought whatsoever is a sign, and is mostly of the nature of language. The second thing to remember is that the man’s circle of society (however widely or narrowly this phrase may be understood), is a sort of loosely compacted person, in some respects of higher rank than the person of an individual organism. (CP 5.421)

Signs, Selves and Interpretation, ed. John E. Smith (New York: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 312-328; and Peter Fuss, “Royce on the Concept of Self: An Historical and Critical Perspective,” *American Philosophy from Edwards to Quine*, ed. Robert W. Shahan and Kenneth R. Merrill (Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 111-147.

¹⁹⁸Corrington, *CI*, 18.

¹⁹⁹Charles Taylor’s phrase. See his *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

²⁰⁰“Your self of one instant appeals to your deeper self for his assent” (CP 6.338).

The Peircean self lives, moves, and has its being in the continuum, which means that the self is purposive and general, always reaching for self-control. The Peircean self is also theosemiotically real, for through Peirce's concept of the "law of mind" and especially through the pure play of musement, there exists a divine-human encounter or "theonomy" (Tillich).

Peirce's theistic conception of God is expressed through anthropomorphic and anthropocentric terms. He also applies these terms, which closely correlate to panpsychism, to his evolutionary cosmology. Since reality is psychological, to make any statement about reality is to depict it in the anthropocentric (mental) terms; after all, matter is "effete mind." To ascribe "effete mind" to reality or the universe is to imply that it has its own purposes or *telos*; and such a conception "seems hopelessly anthropocentric and anthropomorphic."²⁰¹ In a fragment of Lecture IV of the 1903 Cambridge lectures Peirce stated:

...every scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is a hypothesis that there is something in nature to which the human reason is analogous; and that it really is so all the successes of science in its applications to human convenience are witnesses. They proclaim that truth over the length and breadth of the modern world. In the light of the successes of science to my mind there is a degree of baseness in denying our birthright as children of God and in shamefacedly slinking away from anthropomorphic conceptions of the universe.²⁰²

Peirce argues that all human knowledge, including scientific hypotheses and philosophical theories, is at bottom anthropocentric and anthropomorphic. And if it is to have any epistemic meaning at all, it has to be grounded in pragmatic experience:

Why if you had said *Anthropomorphism*, I should have replied that I heartily embrace most of the clauses of that doctrine, if some right of private interpretation be allowed me. I hold, for instance, that man is so completely hemmed in by the bounds of his possible

²⁰¹Corrington, *ICSP*, 67.

²⁰²*CP* 1.316. Cited in Corrington, *ICSP*, 67.

practical experience, his mind is so restricted to being the instrument of his needs, that he cannot, in the least, *mean* anything that transcends those limits. (CP 5.536)

It is clear that Peirce's anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism are nothing but a form of metaphysical realism. As Manley Thompson indicates, concerning the above quoted passage, the self as the individual interpreter is ultimately the locus of Peirce's pragmatism.²⁰³

The elemental nature of the Peircean self is profoundly constructed by the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic conceptions, or what John Deely terms "anthroposemiosis" - humans are but sign-activities. The basic features of the human mind or human process are ubiquitously utilized by Peirce to describe and analyze his phenomenological or ontological categories, pragmatism, and especially semiotics. In addition, the:

anthropocentric bias is fundamental to all that Peirce articulates in his metaphysics and theory of method...[and that] the function of all philosophical methods and all the metaphysical categories is to transform the self so that it can become a microcosmic analogue to a self-controlled universe that is moving toward its ideal consummation in the *summum bonum*.²⁰⁴

The anthropocentrism of the Peircean self and its semiotic construction is extensively portrayed in these three important papers: "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man" (1868), "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" (1868), and "Grounds of Validity of the laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four

²⁰³See his *The Pragmatic Philosophy of C. S. Peirce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 252 ff. He also points out that the above-quoted passage "also suggests what is perhaps the fundamental difference between Peirce and Kant. By regarding all possible experience as possible practical experience, Peirce collapses Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical reason and defines the limits of intellectual meaning by the purposes of action rather than the conditions of experience" (252-53).

²⁰⁴Corrington, *ICSP*, 75.

Incapacities” (1869). All the three papers were published in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. In these papers Peirce insists that the self has its being in signs, and it functions in the realm of semiosis; and that:

the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an *external* sign, proves that man is an external sign...Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought. (CP 5.314)

Peirce’s semiotic self procures its self-consciousness only *through* ignorance and error. In agreement with Kant, Peirce was not certain that young children do actually possess self-consciousness; however, he was convinced that they indeed exhibit powers of thought or intellectual activity at the early stage (*W* 2: 201):

It is first to be observed that there is no known self-consciousness to be accounted for in extremely young children. It has already been pointed out by Kant that the late use of the very common word “I” with children indicates an imperfect self-consciousness in them, and that, therefore, so far as it is admissible for us to draw any conclusion in regard to the mental state of those who are still younger, it must be against the existence of any self-consciousness in them. On the other hand, children manifest powers of thought much earlier. Indeed, it is almost impossible to assign a period at which children do not already exhibit decided intellectual activity in directions in which thought is indispensable to their well-being. (CP 5.227-228)²⁰⁵

Through the clash between the evidence of fact and his/her own belief, the child begins to recognize a sense of self; in other words, “error appears, and it can be explained only

²⁰⁵“How when he wills to move a table? Does he then think of himself as desiring, or only of the table as fit to be moved? That he has the latter thought, is beyond question; that he has the former, must, until the existence of an intuitive self-consciousness is proved, remain an arbitrary and baseless supposition” (*W* 2:202)

supposing a *self* which is fallible. Ignorance and error are all that distinguish our private selves from the absolute *ego* of pure apperception” (*W* 2: 203). To make clear his theory, Peirce gave the following example:

A child hears it said that the stove is hot. But it is not, he says; and, indeed, that central body is not touching it, and only what that touches is hot or cold. Be he touches it, and finds the testimony confirmed in a striking way. Thus, he becomes aware of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a *self* in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness. (*W* 2:202)

Because the child fails to pay attention to the commands, hence the occurrence of “the phenomenon of surprise,” he/she discovers what Peirce called “double consciousness”; namely, “an *ego* and a *non-ego*, directly acting upon each other” (*CP* 5.52).²⁰⁶ This intercommunication between ego and non-ego is essentially where Peirce’s theory of perceptual judgment was configured. It is important to point out that even though self-consciousness is revealed through ignorance and error, the self is “not merely that of a repository for error.”²⁰⁷ Planted in the principle of growth, the self is a potential being who exhibits a developmental teleology, and who continuously strives for the growth of concrete reasonableness. Peirce uses the argument of ignorance and error as the locus of a fallible self to repudiate the inaccessible self metaphysically presupposed by the unity of consciousness of Kant’s transcendentalism as well as the intuitive self-consciousness of Descartes’ self. Despite the fact that Peirce’s fallible self is unfolded through error and ignorance, it will always remain a self-realizing self, because it “*must* be something more than a locus of error and ignorance: [it] must be a center of purpose and power.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶“I ask you whether at that instant of surprise there is not a double consciousness, on the one hand of an Ego, which is simply the expected idea suddenly broken off, on the other hand of the Non-Ego, which is the strange intruder, in his abrupt entrance” (*CP* 5.53).

²⁰⁷Patricia A. Muoio, “Peirce on the Person,” *Transactions* 20 (1984): 174.

²⁰⁸Colapietro, *Peirce’s Approach to the self*, 74.

Unlike Kant's transcendental self or Descartes' *cogito*, Peirce's self is logically a thought-sign; that is, "that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an *external* sign, proves that man is an external sign" (CP 5.314).²⁰⁹ The Peircean self, as the "sign-using self" (Corrington), lives, moves, and has its being in the scientific community of inquirers. By communalizing itself in the community of inquirers the self avoids being deprived of Thirdness. Since the universe is "perfused with signs," the self or humankind is a sign. Peirce announces that "a person is nothing but a symbol involving a general idea" (CP 6.270). In his letter to Lady Welby (December 23, 1908), Peirce wrote:

I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former. My insertion of "upon a person" is a sop to Cerberus, because I despair of making my own broader conception understood. (SS, 80-81)

The self interacts with other selves through semiosis, which engenders interpretants. While for Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the linguistic sign, which is essentially constituted by sound pattern (material object/sign) and concept (mental/image) - the binary structure of and paired relation between "signal" (*signifiant* or "signifier") and "signification" (*signifié* or "signified"),²¹⁰ Peirce's semiotic is constituted by the tri-

²⁰⁹For an introduction to semiotics, see Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); Thomas A. Sebeok, *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); John Deely, *Basics of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Jørgen Dines Johansen, *Dialogic Semiosis: An Essay on Signs and Meaning* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); and D.S. Clarke, Jr., ed. *Sources of Semiotic: Readings with Commentary from Antiquity to the Present* (Carbondale, IL.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990).

²¹⁰See his *Course in General Linguistics*, 3rd edition, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger, trans. Roy Harris (Chicago: Open Court, 1996). See especially the "Linguistic Value" chapter, 110-20. Remarking the ubiquity of signs that

relationality of the sign. For Peirce, a sign is incomplete without interpretant(s), for there exists a dynamic kinship between them: “A sign stands for something to the idea which it produces and modifies” (*CP* 1.339).²¹¹ A sign, as a word or symbol, is a sort of representation, and “a representation is something which stands for something...A thing cannot stand for something without standing *to* something *for* that something” (*W* 1: 466). There are no self-referential signs, but all signs must point to something else other than themselves. They must infinitely link themselves to other signs. This is the interpretive process of unlimited or infinite semiosis; or what Umberto Eco likens to the phrase “Hermetic drift” (a dominant concept of interpretation from the Renaissance Hermetism).²¹² Consequently, a sign neither stands by itself (Firstness) nor only interacts

are not exclusively “confined to the domain of human contrivance” (as eulogized and privileged by both structuralists and poststructuralists), Corrington, in his review article of John Deely’s book titled *The Human Use of Signs or: Elements of Anthroposemiosis*, writes: “The minor tradition of French structuralism, along with its manic cousin poststructuralism, has struggled in vain to illuminate those extra-human orders that make any form of anthroposemiosis possible in the first place.” See his “A Web as Vast as Nature Itself,” *Semiotica* 11-1/2 (1996): 103-15. See also his *STTP* (255-58), where he gives an example of a “powerful tree” to show forth the flawed binary system of structuralist semiology.

²¹¹As regards semiotic anthropology (for Peirce, it is also pragmatic anthropology), even though Peirce and Saussure both commensurately brought relational and symbolic configurations of signs to their semiotic and semiology respectively, the marked differences between their theories are worth observing. Saussure’s semiology centers itself in the empirical and descriptive linguistic domain, while Peirce’s semiotic expands itself to philosophical, scientific, logic, and mathematical realms. It is not only the sign-activity (semiosis) of a triadic relation: sign, object, and interpretant, but also is of “natural signs”: icons, indices, and symbols. “The subject of semiology tends to fall in the domains of natural languages, literature, myths and legend, and folk classifications. Semiotic, on the other hand, tends to concentrate on the domains of the formalized languages of mathematics, logic, and the natural sciences, on colloquial speech, and on nonverbal communication, human and animal” (Milton Singer, *Man’s Glassy Essence: Explorations in Semiotic Anthropology*, 41-2).

²¹²The basic principle of “Hermetic drift,” according to Eco, “is not only that the similar can be known through the similar but also that from similarity to similarity everything can be connected with everything else, so that everything can be in turn either the expression or the content of any other thing.” See his chapter “Unlimited Semiosis and Drift: Pragmaticism vs. ‘Pragmatism,’” *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 23-43.

dyadically to its object (Secondness), but, in order to be a genuine sign, has to be triadically mediated:

A sign stands *for* something *to* the idea which it produces, or modifies. Or, it is a vehicle conveying into the mind something from without. That for which it stands is called its *object*; that which it conveys, its *meaning*; and the idea to which it gives rise, its *interpretant*. (CP 1.339)²¹³

Whereas Peirce's sign is triadically relational, Saussure's doctrine of signs (*semiologie*) remains semiotically dyadic and its structuralist meaning becomes arbitrarily disjointed; that is, the meaning of the signified is detached from or determined not by the linguistic expression of the signifier. And because the Saussurean semiology circumscribes itself in dyadic meaning, it thus not only lacks independent objects as well as subjects, but also Peirce's Thirdness; namely, the interpretant.²¹⁴

Since all things are "perfused with signs" and all thoughts must occur in signs, it follows that the self is a thought-sign. The self/person is a phenomenal manifestation of

²¹³Peirce also writes: "Anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its *object*) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum*" (CP 2.303).

²¹⁴Deely says that as far as Saussure's semiology is concerned, his duality of signifier and signified "lacked the thirdness whereby the sign in its foundation (and whether or not this foundation be essentially arbitrary or 'stipulated') undergoes transformation into first an object and then into other signs...As far as the contemporary establishment of semiotics goes, it was the privilege of Charles Sanders Peirce to provide such an alternative framework under the influence of Locke's suggestion" (*Basics of Semiotics*, 115). John Locke's chapter XX of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* had a considerable influence on Peirce's semiotics. And according to Deely, it was Locke who proposed the name *semiotic*. In his *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), Jürgen Habermas also criticizes the inadequacy of Saussure's semiology. According to Habermas, compared to Peirce's semiotics, the structuralism of Saussure's linguistic approach lacks the communicative power (i.e., the interpretive possibilities and the transformative rules of the single sign), for the "perspective of the logician adopted by Peirce has the advantage of examining expressions from the point of view of their possible truth *and*, at the same time, from that of their communicability" (89).

himself or herself, who, as far as semiotic anthropology is concerned, is the introjected external sign or sign-using self. And as a sign-using self, its identity is cognized and functions only through the triadic process of semiosis - the self as a sign, refers to an object, which in turn produces an interpretant(s), which itself becomes a sign *ad infinitum*. The self becomes a series of signs, vaguely swimming in a continuum without definite beginning nor end:

If every sign must have an interpretant, and the interpretant is itself a sign, then the series of signs not only has no beginning - it also has no end. This conclusion, also, Peirce fully endorsed. The infinite series of signs may be interrupted by death or other factors, but of itself the sign process goes on forever. Thus thinking is an endless process of sign interpretation.²¹⁵

In his 1868 paper "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," regarding the self as a thought-sign, Peirce claims that:

[W]herever we think, we have present to the consciousness some feeling, image, conception, or other representation, which serves as a sign. But it follows from our own existence (which is proved by the occurrence of ignorance and error) that everything which is present to us is a phenomenal manifestation of ourselves. This does not prevent its being a phenomenon of something without us, just as a rainbow is at once a manifestation both of the sun and and of the rain. When we think, then, we ourselves, as we are at that moment, appear as a sign. Now a sign has, as such, three references: first, it is a sign *to* some thought which interprets it; second, it is a sign *for* some object to which in that thought it is equivalent; third, it is a sign, *in* some respect or quality, which brings it into connection with its object. (CP 5.283).

In addition to being semiotically structured by triadic references: sign, object, and interpretant, Peirce's self is also temporally functional. Corrington explains:

²¹⁵Elizabeth Flower and Murray G. Murphey, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 2:578. Cited in Corrington, *CI*, 12.

First, the sign generates a subsequent thought/sign that is an enhanced expression of the outward involvements of the self (dimension of the future). Second, that same sign points toward the object that is the self in its previous state (dimension of the past). Finally, the sign points to a quality of the previous self that is still pertinent in the present (dimension of the present)...The present self is constituted by signs of the past self, which in turn point toward an emergent future self. The self and its signs are temporally extended. No natural beginning nor ending can be seen for this extended process of signification.²¹⁶

As a genuine sign, the self is neither the immaterial substance of the *cogito* (Descartes) nor the transcendental subject of the noumenal (Kant). For Peirce, not only does the self or person appear as a thought-sign, but it is also a symbol (Thirdness), involving a general idea:

The consciousness of a general idea has a certain “unity of the ego,” in it, which is identical when it passes from one mind to another. It is, therefore, quite analogous to a person; and, indeed, a person is only a particular kind of general idea...[A] person is nothing but a symbol involving a general idea. (CP 6.270)

We have already seen that every state of consciousness [is] an inference; so that life is but a sequence of inferences or a train of thought. At any instant then man is a thought, and as thought is a species of symbol, the general answer to the question what is man? is that he is a symbol. (CP 7.583)²¹⁷

²¹⁶Corrington, *ICSP*, 86-87. For an exegesis of Peirce’s semiotic self recorded in his three important papers: “Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man,” “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,” and “Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities,” see Corrington’s chapter “The Sign-Using Self,” *ICSP*, 75-116.

²¹⁷Peirce did not regard a person or self as a symbol metaphorically or analogically. According to Stanley Harrison: “There is a temptation, perhaps, to think that because persons use symbols they must somehow transcend that category, although it seems clear that such a conclusion is not self-evident. It was precisely Peirce’s intention and, we believe, his achievement to show that there is no category more basic or more appropriate in terms of which to think our own being than that of the symbol or genuine sign”(100). See his “Charles S. Peirce: Reflections on Being a Man-Sign,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 53 (1979): 98-106. Kolenda points out that, like Peirce, in his *What Is Called Thinking*, Heidegger also infers that humankind is

It is worth quoting at length Peirce's analogy between the self and symbol, which is created through the function of words:

Perception is the possibility of acquiring information, of meaning more; now a word may learn. How much more the word *electricity* means now than it did in the days of Franklin; how much more the term *planet* means now than it did in the time [of] Hipparchus. These words have acquired information; just as a man's thought does by further perception. But is there not a difference, since a man makes the word and the word means nothing which some man has not made it mean and that only to that man? This is true; but since man can think only by means of words or other external symbols, words might turn round and say, You mean nothing which we have not taught you and then only so far as you address some word as the interpretant of your thought. In fact, therefore, men and words reciprocally educate each other; each increase of a man's information is at the same time the increase of a word's information and *vice versa*. So that there is no difference even here. (CP 7.587)

A symbol is always coextensive with an interpretant, and it also involves habits of thought. Habits, for Peirce, are general rules "to which the organism has become subjected" (CP 3.360). [As regards "habit," Peirce makes it quite clear that habit is not by all means exclusively a mental act, but it may be conjoined to the nonhuman order: "Empirically, we find that some plants take habits. The stream of water that wears a bed for itself is forming a habit" (CP 5.492)]. Every symbol is "an *ens rationis*, because it consists in a habit, in a regularity; now every regularity consists in the future conditional occurrence of facts not themselves that regularity." (CP 4.464). Because the symbol/self is a habit, which is the process of continuity, it involves thought (Thirdness), action (Secondness), and feeling (Firstness). And because the self's personality is composed by habits or the "would-be's," which are directed by developmental teleology or "emergent

a sign. Kolenda enumerates five views that both Peirce and Heidegger have in common: pragmatist epistemology, the role of language, theory of truth, "musement" vis-à-vis *Gelassenheit*, and humankind as a thinking being. See Kolenda, "'Man is a Sign': Peirce and Heidegger," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce: Bicentennial International Congress, Graduate Studies*, No. 23 (Lubbock, TX.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 227-231; cf. Singer, *Man's Glassy Essence*, 53-73.

teleology” (Hausman),²¹⁸ it continues to grow in an infinite long run. Consequently, as a thought-sign, the self’s personality is never fully realized or completed, because it situates itself in the semiotic fields that will infinitely augment it with new semiotic material: “A sign interpreted is a sign forever augmented in some respect.”²¹⁹ The sign-using self as a symbol also essentially holds a threefold function: denotation (the direct reference of a symbol to its object), connotation (the reference of the symbol to its ground through its object), and interpretation (the reference of a symbol to its interpretants through its object). Peirce reflects on the triadic function of the sign-using self as follows:

A man denotes whatever is the object of his attention at the moment; he connotes whatever he knows or feels of this object, and is the incarnation of this form or intelligible species; his interpretant is the future memory of this cognition, his future self, or another person he addresses, or a sentence he writes, or a child he gets. (CP 7.591)²²⁰

Since a genuine sign needs to be interpreted and grows incessantly into higher semiotic translations or interpretations, it cannot occur in an instant. Everything swims, develops, and grows in the temporal continuum, even sentiment and instinct are capable of developing and growing (CP 1.648). As regards Peirce’s synechistic philosophy, specifically his evolutionary cosmology, growth must be principally rooted in evolutionary love as the ontological principle, or what Peirce termed *agapasm*, which synthesizes tychism (chance) and anancism (necessity). While tychism (novelty and chance) gives birth to an evolutionary cosmology, love/agapism is the driving force of the cosmos; it is the teleological energy that empowers the orders of the world to strive toward the *summum bonum*; namely, the growth of concrete reasonableness. Evolutionary/creative love also sustains the orders of the world by its purposive character

²¹⁸See Carl Hausman, “American Philosophy in Transition,” *Philosophy in Experience: An American Philosophy in Transition*, 1-11.

²¹⁹Corrington, *ICSP*, 83.

²²⁰Singer believes this passage is “the seed” from which Peirce’s construction of the semiotic and empirical self was germinated, and it also manifests his philosophical anthropology, which was influenced by German idealism. (*Man’s Glassy Essence*, 56).

and sympathy. In his paper “Evolutionary Love,” published in *Monist* (1893), Peirce confessed that his evolutionary philosophy has received its metaphysical inspiration from St. John’s gospel; namely, growth comes only from love. “Love, recognizing germs of loveliness in the hateful, gradually warms it into life, and makes it lovely” (*CP* 6.289).

Because Peirce’s self infinitely and indeterminately swims in the continuum, his semiotic construction of the self has been unavoidably criticized and become problematic for many.²²¹ Grounded in panpsychism (physical laws are derivative of the psychical), for

²²¹As Patricia A. Muoio points out, Peirce’s synechistic approach has caused two apparent difficulties as far as the classical theory of the individual is concerned: “First, it rules out the Aristotelian and Thomistic notion of matter as the principle of individuation. Second, it destroys the notion of man’s uniqueness lying in his consciousness; consciousness is a characteristic of all reality” (“Peirce on the Person,” *Transactions* 20 [1984]: 170). Besides Hartshorne, Peirce scholars like Richard Berstein, Paul Weiss, Manley Thompson, and John Smith all believe that Peirce has failed to work out an adequate theory of the self, essentially because he defines the self not as an individual existence (Secondness) who remains unintelligible, but as a part of a larger whole (representation) of the infinite community. These scholars contend that the self must not be solely constituted by the tri-relationality of the semiotic construction; namely, Thirdness (a potential self), for it would lose its genuine individuality in the present (an actual self). Does the individual self actually possess a self-identity if things are continuously evolving or ideas that are constantly spreading? “To identify the real with the future, even the rich and full-bodied future of Peirce’s realism, is to lose the totality of an object or a person within *present* experience. It is not necessary to transform the world into a timeless, pure actuality to view it as having an integral unity and totality *at each present moment* in time. I may confront another person and be aware that, although incomplete, he confronts me as a unity and total self in every present encounter” (John Smith, “Community and Reality,” *Perspectives on Peirce: Critical Essays on Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Richard J. Bernstein [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965], 118). Richard Bernstein also contended: “The nature of human individuality always seemed to be a source of intellectual embarrassment for Peirce. He went so far as to claim that ‘the individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation’... There are traces of American transcendentalism and Hegelianism that show up in these passages. But Peirce is hurting his own insight that there is a dimension of radical individuality or positive Secondness that characterizes the individual self. More important, such a conception of the self makes a mockery of the ideal of *individual* self-control or the adoption of the ultimate ideal of concrete reasonableness by an *individual*. If my separate existence is manifested *only* by ignorance and error, if I differ from my fellow man *only* by being a negation, then where is the ‘I’ that controls and adopts ultimate ideals?” (“Action, Conduct, and self-Control,” *Perspectives on*

Peirce, all things in reality - from the lowest level or form of life (e.g., protoplasm) to the highest - possess some kind of consciousness:

It may be well to reflect that if matter has no existence except as a specialization of mind, it follows that whatever affects matter according to regular laws is itself matter. But all mind is directly or indirectly connected with all matter, and acts in a more or less regular way; so that all mind more or less partakes of the nature of matter. Hence, it would be a mistake to conceive of the psychical and the physical aspects of matter as two aspects absolutely distinct. (CP 6.268)

Even though there is no radical distinction between the psychical and the physical, Peirce's definition of the individual self can be justifiably elucidated and defended. First, one should be clear of what Peirce means by "individual"; secondly, Peirce's semiotic

Peirce, 90); cf. Manley Thompson, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of C.S. Peirce*, 248-67. Peirce's defenders like Gresham Riley, Vincent Colapietro, Emily Michael, Patricia Muoio, and Stanley Harrison, on the other hand, affirm that Peirce's semiotic theory of the self is quite cogent if only his concept of individuality/existence is carefully examined. For Peirce, to be an individual is to be law or rule regulated. To be a person/self is to be potentially growing, continuously evolving, and autonomously self-realizing. Peirce's semiotic self, because of the developmental teleology, is not always at the present completely realized: "A general idea, living and conscious now, it is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious... Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality" (CP 6.156; 6.157). Defending Peirce's synechistic approach to his semiotic self, Colapietro states: "The person is, to some extent, realized *in the present* and, to a far greater extent, unrealized in the course of his or her life. Persons are always *simultaneously* who they have been, who they are now, and something other and far more than this. In Peirce's own words, 'in all his life long no son of Adam has ever fully manifested what there was in him'" (*Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 76). See Stanley M. Harrison, "Charles S. Peirce: Reflections on Being a Man-Sign," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 53 (1979): 98-106, and "Peirce on Persons," *Proceedings of the C.S. Peirce: Bicentennial International Congress*, Graduate Studies, No.23 (Lubbock, Tex.: Texas Tech Press, 1981), 217-221; Patricia A. Muoio, "Peirce on the Person," *Transactions* 20 (1984): 169-181; Emily Michael, "Peirce on Individuals," *Transactions* 12 (1976): 321-329; Gresham Riley, "Peirce's Theory of Individuals," *Transactions* 10 (1974): 135-165; and Vincent M. Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 61-97.

self can be defined and comprehended only through the three primal or universal categories.

Peirce rejects the individual terms and the existence of atomic individuals (or logical atoms): “The logical atom or term not capable of logical division, must be one of which every predicate may be universally affirmed or denied...Such a term can be realized neither in thought nor in sense” (*CP* 3.93). He stresses further: “The absolute individual can not only not be realized in sense or thought, but cannot exist, properly speaking” (*CP* 3.93n1). Peirce distinguishes “absolute individuals” from “actual individuals.” The latter exist not by logical inferences, but by experiential reaction/ resistance of the two objects; the former, on the other hand, are identified as atomic entities, which do not exist.²²² However, it is important to recognize that, for Peirce, the term “individual” actually has two meanings, even though the reader is sometimes confused by which definition the term “individual” is particularly applied:

- (1) According to the more formal of these an individual is an object (or term) not only actually determinate in respect to having or wanting each general character and not both having and wanting any, but is necessitated by its mode of being to be so determinate. (*CP* 3.611)
- (2) Another definition...is that an individual is something which reacts. That is to say, it does react against some things, and is of such a nature that it might react, or have reacted, against my will... [E]verything whose identity consists in a continuity of reactions will be a single logical individual...With this definition there is no difficulty about the truth that whatever exists is individual, since existence (not reality) and individuality are essentially the

²²²To affirm Peirce’s assertion that logical atoms or absolute individuals do not exist, Emily Michael gives this example: “Is Socrates a thing which is healthy or a thing which is sick? Indeed, sometimes he is healthy, sometimes sick. Is he brown or white? In the summer he is brown; in the winter white. His eyes are brown; his hair is white; etc. Thus Socrates is both healthy and not healthy, both white and not white. Is he bald or not bald? He is somewhat bald, not either bald or not bald.” According to Michael, this example illustrates Peirce’s concern in *CP* 3.612, “where he questions definition (1) on the grounds of Kant’s Law of Specification, where logical quantity is treated as a continuum. Socrates, as all else, is continuous over space and time and as such varies and changes. For this reason there are no logical atoms” (Emily Michael, “Peirce on Individuals,” *Transactions* 12 [1976]: 324).

same thing. (CP 3.613)

In “What Pragmatism Is,” *Monist* (1905), Peirce admitted that individuals alone exist: “Whatever exists, *ex-sists*, that is, really acts upon other existents, so obtains a self-identity, and is definitely individual” (CP 5.429); in other words, whatever exists is individual, and that, as clearly defined by Peirce, individuality and existence are essentially the same thing, and they both belong to the ontological category of Secondness. To be “individual” is to experience the clash between ego and non-ego consciousness, because “any real connection whatsoever between individual things involves reaction between them” (CP 5.48). So, contrary to the common criticisms that Peirce’s individuals do not exist, he affirmatively states:

Any cognition is a consciousness of the object as represented; by self-consciousness is meant a knowledge of ourselves. Not a mere feeling of subjective conditions of consciousness, but of our personal selves. Pure apperception is the self-assertion of THE *ego*; the self-consciousness here meant is the recognition of my *private self*. I know that *I* (not merely *the I*) exist. (CP 5.225)

Furthermore, as Gresham Riley correctly points out, without existing individuals Peirce’s semiotic epistemology would collapse, for they are the foundational ingredients of his concepts of perception and perceptual judgments. So, it would be contradictory for Peirce to reject the existence of individuals while at the same time affirming his theory of knowledge.²²³

Colapietro contends that there are “three moments” that configure the personal identity of Peirce’s self. The first moment is of “semiotic interpretation of human consciousness”;²²⁴ that is, “whenever we think, we have present to the consciousness some feeling, image, conception, or other representation which serves as a sign” (CP

²²³See his excellent article “Peirce’s Theory of Individuals,” *Transactions* 10 (1974), 135-165.

²²⁴Colapietro, *Peirce’s Approach to the Self*, 68.

5.283).²²⁵ The second moment is of “systematic articulation of an evolutionary cosmology, tychism, synechism, and agapism.”²²⁶ The third moment is essentially about the development of Peirce’s cosmology and its incorporation with his early semiotic theory; namely, “(a) the insistence that the immanent goal of the cosmic process is the continuous growth of the concrete reasonableness and (b) the recognition that, in its higher stages, the growth of such reasonableness ‘takes place more and more largely through self-control’ (CP 5.3; 5.433).”²²⁷

Only through a scrupulous examination and analysis of Peirce’s three primal categories can his semiotic self be truly defined, represented, and comprehended. Of Peirce’s triadic ontological categories, Firstness is the most dynamically complex realm, mainly because it is not only self-othering, but is also metaphysically constituted by vague potentiality, undifferentiated suchness, or pure qualitative feeling. It is thus impossible to truly cognize the “who” of the self in its primal category of Firstness, for it is not individual or a force (Secondness) or a general or thought (Thirdness); it lacks description, reference, or classification. Therefore, the very moment the self is conceived of or asserted, Firstness ceases to be Firstness:

The idea of the absolutely first must be entirely separated from all conception of or reference to anything else; for what involves a second is itself a second to that second. The first must therefore be present and immediate, so as not to be second to a representation... It must be initiative, original, spontaneous, and free; otherwise it is second to a determining cause...It cannot be articulately thought; assert it, and it has already lost its characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else. Stop to think of it, and it has flown!...Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it. (CP 1.357)

²²⁵Cited in *Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 68.

²²⁶*Ibid.*

²²⁷*Ibid.* Colapietro finds steps (a) and (b) conflicting rather than consonant. However, he believes this conflict can be expressed as a dilemma. For a more detailed analysis, see his *Peirce's Approach to the Self*, 68, 80-90.

The self may be blessed with creativity, spontaneity, and freedom (because of the presence of tychism) in Firstness, but it will always remain a pure feeling. It veils itself in uncontaminated solipsism. In the realm of Firstness the self finds itself in the pristine simplicity apart from anything else, or what Peirce called *primisense* (CP 7.551); in other words, the self becomes an insulated being “whose being is simply in itself, not referring nor lying behind anything” (CP 1.356). Because of its monadic state of isolation and qualitative immediacy the self remains unactualized, indivisible, and unintelligible. Yet, as First, the self is *sui generis* and involves no comparisons. As Muoio points out, the self maintains its “own peculiar character” (CP 7.595) and possesses its own different quality (CP 3.568).²²⁸ And since Firstness is pure possibility, the self belongs in the “not yet”; it is embedded *in futuro*; in other words, “the future is an essential element of personality. Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality” (CP 6.157). For Peirce, because of its vague potentiality,²²⁹ the self is neither predetermined nor stagnant, but it is always striving for self-control or self-realization. As a thought-sign, the self will continue to find itself dynamically floating on the infinite momentum of unlimited semiosis; that is, its semiotic acts and semiotic meanings will always be determined by dynamic objects.

It is important to note that the word “potential” implies the indeterminate, it also connotes the capability of determination in any special case. This connotation evidently reflects Peirce’s evolutionary cosmology, which was influenced by French evolutionary theorist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s organic growth theories. Peirce’s developmental teleology, whose directionality framed by contingencies, is constructed by spontaneous

²²⁸Muoio, “Peirce on the Person,” *Transactions* 20 (1984): 174.

²²⁹Vagueness and generality are the original elements of Peirce’s theory of continuity, they are both indefinite or indeterminate. Specifically, since thought is semiotic, the sign’s meaning becomes indefinitely vague, because of its relation with the object or with the interpretant. For Peirce, “A sign is objectively *vague*, in so far as, leaving its interpretation more or less indeterminate, it reserves for some other possible sign or experience the function of completing the determination” (CP 5.505). See also Mihai Nadin, “The Logic of Vagueness and the Category of Synechism,” *Transactions* 63 (1980): 351-361.

creativity, freedom, law, and purposive action. Therefore, it is neither exclusively governed by Charles Darwin's fortuitous variation nor by tychastic evolution, which lacks the depth dimension of purpose, nor by British evolutionary theorist Herbert Spencer's mechanical necessitarianism or anancastic evolution, which, largely due to the efficient causal theory, is deprived of organic growth. Peirce does equate freedom with contingency. Kolenda is correct to state:

Human selfhood is a function of inherently contingent events in every single person's life. Each human career consists in a series of novel reactions and decisions which give shape to human possibilities not already contained in preexistent human nature or in the inherited makeup of the individuals.²³⁰

As previously explored, Peirce's individual self does *ex-ist*; its existence is determined by mere opposition or brute force, for if there is no opposition, there is *ipso facto* no existence. As Second, the self is purely an efficient causality. Reacting or struggling against the environing world creates a dynamic character for the self. And through its dyadic interaction; namely, the double consciousness of effort and resistance, the self, as Second, attains its self-identity and actually becomes aware of its own individuality: the emergence of consciousness. Furthermore, the self, as an indexical sign, can identify:

the utterer of the expression as its object but does not necessarily identify the expressive and social functions of the signs. Peirce specified three criteria for any indexical sign: that it not resemble its object, that it direct attention to its object, and that it refer to individual objects or individual collections of objects.²³¹

²³⁰Konstantin Kolenda, "Firstness and Contingency," *From Time and Chance to Consciousness: Studies in the Metaphysics of Charles Peirce*, ed. Edward C. Moore and Richard S. Robin (Oxford: Berg Publishers, Ltd., 1994), 203.

²³¹Singer, *Man's Glassy Essence*, 84.

Whereas feeling or *premisense* is the consciousness of Firstness, *altersense*, having two modes: sensation and will, is the consciousness of Secondness (CP 7.551). The consciousness of the existent self is found neither in a conception (Thirdness) nor in a pure quality (Firstness), but is found only in what Duns Scotus termed *haecceity* (the hereness and nowness) of confrontational/oppositional experiences. *Haecceity* is “the *ultima ratio*, the brutal fact that will not be questioned” (CP 1.405). The existence of the self is constituted by “the practical exigencies of life,” but most of all, by “the shock of reaction between ego and non-ego” (CP 8.266). Even though the existential opposition does not ontologically “create” the self’s being, still the self is surprised and suddenly aware of its self by becoming aware of the abrupt entrance of an unanticipated intruder named “non-ego.” As has been examined, through error and ignorance the self is forced to acknowledge its limitations. For Peirce, the self at this stage (Secondness) remains ontologically incomplete and communally isolated. The self is characterized only by irrational facticity and has yet to possess purpose, intelligibility, or generality as it “would be” in the realm of Thirdness. The self in Secondness exists as a “fact,” which belongs to the past; it is *fait accompli* (CP 2.84). However, due to the antecedent elements of Firstness and Secondness, Thirdness is ubiquitously lurking behind these two realms ready to perform the mediating role. After all, an oppositional interaction of two things or events is caused by a third element; namely, the instance of Thirdness. And because of the triadic relation, Thirdness receives its teleological fulfillment from the other two primal categories. For Peirce, the self as the consciousness of a Thirdness or *Medisense* (which has three modes: abstraction, suggestion, and association) serves as a medium or “Mediate Cognition” (Peirce’s term) between *primisense* (the consciousness of Firstness) and *altersense* (the consciousness of Secondness).²³² *Medisense* “has several varieties. In the first place there is a separative process, the centrifugal tendency of

²³²As Third, the self serves as “the medium or connecting bond between the absolute first and last” (CP 1.337). As First, the self remains a mere possibility, and as Second the self embodies in a dualistic existence; therefore, Peirce states: “The thread of life is a third; the fate that snips it, its second...Continuity represents Thirdness almost to perfection. Every process comes under that head...Sympathy, flesh and blood, that by which I feel my neighbor’s feelings, is third” (CP 1.337).

thought, by which any idea by following out its own development becomes separated from those with which it is connected” (*CP* 7.544).

A real selfhood is not to be confined to being a pure qualitative possibility or “virgin purity” (*W* 5: 304), or to being an immediate self as First (icon), for the Peircean self is a logically socialized being. It is not a unitary, self-referring self like that of Descartes. And like the Humean self, the Peircean self in Firstness will never be caught or observed, for it is “unsubjected and unrelated to anything that goes before or stands behind” (*W* 5: 304). Also, a real selfhood is not to be confined to being merely an existent or reactant individual or to being an indexical self constantly pointing to something else beyond itself, but it must transcend itself toward a generalized thought-sign; namely, Thirdness. Peirce’s semiotics is constitutive of triadicity. Thirdness or Third plays the triadic mediation role, “whose function is to bring the more absolute First and Second into relation. The beginning is first, the end second, the means third” (*W* 5: 305). These three primal categories are irreducible and “mutually penetrating, a constantly folding in and over one another.”²³³ The self as Third lives a real life, surrounding itself with sympathy, flesh and blood and with other communal selves (*CP* 1.337). Because of the principle of synechism there will always be a linkage between the individual and communal selves like that of the psychical and physical. As a thought-sign, logically inferred and not immediately intuited, the self rational cognition will be determined by the community of inquirers. Without a connecting bond with the community of inquirers, the semiotic soil of the self will become hopelessly dry and barren, and it will not be replenished with rich and fecund interpretants. It is important to add that, for Peirce, reality or truth is dependent upon the ultimate opinion of the scientific community of inquirers. Regarding the self as a communal being, Peirce writes:

²³³Merrell, *Peirce, Signs, and Meaning*, 86. Pertaining to the role of mind, Merrell says that acts of Firstness are suffused with ‘subjectivism’ and ‘idealism,’ Secondness with ‘realism,’ and Thirdness with ‘objectivism’ and ‘realism.’ To stress the inevitable interdependence of Peirce’s three primal categories, Merrell perceptively emphasizes: “Firstness without Secondness and Thirdness is nothing. Secondness without firstness and Thirdness is surely dead. And Thirdness without Firstness and Secondness is well-nigh unthinkable. They all stand together; divided they fall” (86).

When we come to study the great principle of continuity and see how all is fluid and every point directly partakes the being of every other, it will appear that individualism and falsity are one and the same. Meantime, we know that man is not whole so long as he is single, that he is essentially a possible member of society. Especially, one man's experience is nothing, if it stands alone. If he sees what others cannot, we call it hallucination. It is not "my" experience, but "our" experience that has to be thought of; and this "us" has indefinite possibilities. (CP 5.402n)

And insofar as the self lives, moves, and has its being in Thirdness it becomes a law-governed, habit-taking self. As a future-oriented self, the semiotic self is now not only a true continuum, but is also a living symbol filled with a potential series of interpretants infinitely flowing from the communal semiosis. And as a true living symbol, the sign-using self is also floating down on the river of immortality, whose notion is radically incarnated in the doctrine of continuity:

[T]he necessary and true symbol is immortal. And man must also be so, provided he is vivified by the truth. This is an immortality very different indeed from what most people hope for, although it does not conflict with the latter...Spiritual existence, such as a man has in him, whom he carries along with him in his opinions and sentiments; sympathy, love; this is what serves as evidence of man's absolute worth - and this is the existence which logic finds to be certainly immortal...This immortality is one which depends upon the man's being a true symbol. (CP 7.593 - 594)

As Second, the self is existentially circumscribed and fallible. As Third, the self not only extends and expands its semiotic horizon, but also makes "the transition from life to death in an unbroken momentum,"²³⁴ for Peirce posits that there exists no ontological fissure between life and death. Corrington shows that the sign-using self's depth dimension of being, however abstruse, is unveiled by its own spiritual consciousness or "generic soul." This depth dimension even transcends the communal

²³⁴Corrington, *ICSP*, 114.

self's public signs or interpretants:

The spiritual consciousness is the background of all backgrounds, appearing to us as a kind of pure feeling (or primal firstness). Immortality is attained in the present and does not depend upon some kind of soul substance or substrate that can be isolated from the rest of the self. Our immortal self is fully continuous with our mortal self and partakes of the same ontological structures.²³⁵

The self, as a true symbol, is both continuous and immortal, submerging itself in the "eternal now." And as signs and instances of Thirdness, symbols are indiscretely linked with interpretants, for thought will be always interpreted or inferred by another thought *ad infinitum*; they continue to exist *in futuro*. The unlimited semiosis will "immortally" live on and on, and the semiotic process of signification will always remain infinite.

Peirce writes:

[T]he interpretant is nothing but another representation to which the torch of truth is handed along; and as representation, it has its interpretant again. Lo, another infinite series. (CP 1.339)

²³⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC SELF IN JASPERS' PERIECHONTOLOGY

The essence of man considered as potential Existenz is freedom. In its freedom, Existenz knows its relation to Transcendence, by which it is given to itself. The reality of our Existenz is the self in its temporal becoming. . . As Existenz, we are self-becoming in relation to Transcendence, to the Ground of things.

Karl Jaspers

A Biographical Sketch¹

Like Charles Sanders Peirce, German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) possessed vast knowledge in law, medicine, psychology, psychiatry, politics, philosophy, and religion. He also immersed his life in poetry, art, graphology, and the theatre. And like Peirce, Jaspers also adopted Kantian philosophy, which served as an essential framework for his existential philosophizing, evidenced by the three volumes of *Philosophie*.² And also like Peirce, Jaspers had always been a sick man whose

¹For more detailed autobiographical accounts of Jaspers, see his "Philosophical Autobiography," *PKJ*, 5-94; "A Self-Portrait," *Karl Jaspers Today: Philosophy at the Threshold of the Future*, ed. Leonard H. Ehrlich and Richard Wisser (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1988), 1-25; and "*Philosophische Autobiographie*," *PW*, 275-402. English translation, "Philosophical Memoir," *Philosophy and the World: Selected Essays and Lectures*, trans. E. B. Ashton (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1963), 193-314.

²Certainly more than Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, and perhaps more than Weber who was regarded as the "spirit of Jaspers' philosophy" (Manasse, "Jaspers' Relation

sickness prevented him from working for months or sometimes almost a year.³ From childhood Jaspers was plagued with what he called “bronchiectasis with cardiac decompensation.” Unlike Peirce, who has been widely considered as the founder of American pragmatism, Jaspers regarded himself only “as a renewer and preserver of the *philosophia perennis*.”⁴ And also unlike Peirce, who architectonically built a philosophical system to have knowledge scientifically systematized, philosophy for Jaspers was an *offenhaltende Systematik*; it is *philosophizing*; that is, it “was not a system

to Max Weber,” *PKJ*, 391), and whose sociological concept of *Verstehen* can be found lurking behind Jaspers’ *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* as well as his three volumes of *Philosophie*. Kant’s philosophical thought was substantially the foundation of Jaspers’ philosophizing. Naming the ten philosophers to whom he was indebted, Jaspers singled out Kant as “the epitome of a philosopher” (*den Philosophen schlechthin*) (*PH I*: vi), even though Weber’s concept of philosophical *Existenz* had served as “the *existential* basis of Jaspers’ relation to Kant, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche” (Manasse, “Jaspers’ Relation to Max Weber,” *PKJ*, 369). Hannah Arendt claimed that Jaspers “is the only successor Kant has ever had.” See her “Karl Jaspers: A Laudatio” and “Karl Jaspers: Citizen of the World?,” *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), 71-94. Jürgen Habermas also says that Jaspers’ existentialism is “a form of Neo-Kantianism.” See “Karl Jaspers: The Figures of Truth,” *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1983), 45-52. For critical studies of Kantianism in Jaspers’ philosophy of *Existenz*, see John Butler Wager, *Existenz and Kantian Reason: The Kantian Elements in Jaspers’ Philosophy* (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1980). Wager argues that Jaspers’ three volumes of *Philosophy* systematically and essentially reflect Kant’s three *Critiques*. See also Alan M. Olson, “Jaspers and Kant,” *Transcendence and Hermeneutics: An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 72-90. Olson asserts that “formally and historically Jaspers’ philosophy is virtually unthinkable apart from the influence of Immanuel Kant. ‘Kant,’ as Jaspers puts it, ‘is the nodal point of philosophy,...the absolutely indispensable philosopher. Without him we would have no basis for criticism.’ ...The critical philosophy of Kant represents rather for Jaspers an essential refinement of the transcending-thinking that is contiguous with the metaphysical spirit of Plato and Plotinus” (72). See also Karl Jaspers, “Kants Ideenlehre,” *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1954), 465-86; cf. Jaspers, *Kant*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962).

³See “A Self-Portrait,” *Karl Jaspers Today: Philosophy at the Threshold of the Future*, ed. Leonard H. Ehrlich and Richard Wisser (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1988), 1-25.

⁴Ernst Moritz Manasse, “Jaspers’ Relation to Max Weber,” *PKJ*, 370.

nor an overreaching theory, but an activity that had to prove itself in communication.”⁵ Philosophizing is an existential act, an inner action through reflective thinking which is not necessarily possessed by a theoretical knowledge or position. In Jaspers’ view, for the first time in the history of Western philosophy, the notion of critical philosophizing being existential actually originated in Kant.⁶

Jaspers’ *Existenzphilosophie*, which essentially centers on the elucidation of the individual’s inner freedom and infinite potentialities, and with the ubiquitous presence of ineffably nonobjectified Transcendence in various modes of the Transcending, has profoundly influenced many Continental and American philosophers. Paul A. Schilpp is correct to claim that Jaspers is “indubitably one of the most seminal minds in the philosophy of the twentieth century.”⁷ Besides Heidegger, Jaspers was the most influential existentialist philosopher that ever emerged from Germany. E. L. Allen points out that in one of the volumes of his *Dogmatik*, Karl Barth, the preeminently influential theologian of the twentieth century, “pays high tribute to Jaspers and speaks of the ‘almost prophetic quality’ of his philosophy.”⁸

⁵George B. Pepper, “Jaspers’s Response to Modernity: Critical Reflections on Communication, Science, and Education,” *The Tasks of Truth: Essays on Karl Jaspers’s Idea of the University*, ed. Gregory J. Walters (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 56. Jaspers’ philosophizing is not without criticism. As Walter Kaufmann points out, even though both Heidegger and Jaspers shared certain affinities regarding human being’s concrete existence, Heidegger considered “Jaspers’ ‘philosophizing’ and ceaseless ‘transcending’ as an abdication before that which matters most” (*Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* [New York, New American Library, 1975], 28).

⁶See Olson, “Jaspers and Kant,” *Transcendence and Hermeneutics*, 72-90.

⁷“Preface,” *PKJ*, xi. Jaspers rejected the term “existentialism,” because it implies a doctrine or a school of thought. For Jaspers, the term *Existenzphilosophie* “is meant to be a protest against the betrayal of [the] primal and eternal philosophy by the professors who teach philosophy at modern universities” (Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, 22). Buber and Jaspers were considered by Hans Urs von Balthasar as “the two great dialogicians of our time.” Cited in Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber*, trans. Christopher Macann (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984), 353.

⁸Edgar Leonard Allen, *The Self and Its Hazards: A Guide to the Thought of Karl Jaspers* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 9; cf. Karl Barth, “Phänomene des Menschlichen,” *Karl Jaspers in der Diskussion*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1973), 319-34.

Jaspers was born on February 23, 1883 in Oldenburg, Germany. His father, a director of a bank, was a descendant of generations of merchants and farmers. His mother was born into a family of farmers as well. As a child Jaspers constantly endured bronchiectasis with cardiac decompensation, and because of this chronic illness he did not fully “participate in the joyful diversions of youth” (hiking, horsebackriding, swimming, or dancing).⁹ Even though, at the age of seventeen, upon reading Spinoza and considering him to be his philosopher, Jaspers was antipathetic with his philosophy professors’ “arrogant and opinionated” dispositions as well as with their philosophy courses which he thought were irrelevant to life’s real issues. With no intention of becoming a philosopher he dropped them and studied law for three semesters “with the purpose of later making the practice of law [his] life’s work.”¹⁰ However, in 1902 Jaspers changed his mind and decided to make a transition from jurisprudence to medicine (psychiatry and psychology), for it seemed to “open the widest vista” for him. He wanted to become “a doctor for the mentally ill” because it “was of greatest importance to [him] to learn to know actuality.”¹¹ Eventually Jaspers made another significant transition from being a psychiatrist to being a philosopher, in which he labeled philosophy a “strange career” (*merkwürdige Laufbahn*).¹²

After receiving the M.D. degree in 1909 at the age of thirty and after only four years of psychiatric experience, Jaspers published a major textbook on psychopathological phenomenology entitled *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (General Psychopathology) in 1913, which received critical acclaim, notably from Bumke, a famed German psychiatrist.¹³ From 1909-1915, he worked as a psychiatrist at the psychiatric clinic of University of Heidelberg; he was the only unsalaried *Privatdozent* (lecturer) in

⁹“Philosophical Autobiography,” *PKJ*, 10.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 8.

¹²“A Self-Portrait,” *Karl Jaspers Today*, 6.

¹³*Allgemeine Psychopathologie* was lauded as “a book of sovereign conception, a unique and magnificent achievement which occupies a place of epoch-making importance in psychiatry” (439). See Kurt Kolle, “Karl Jaspers as Psychopathologist,” *PKJ*, 437-66; cf. Ludwig B. Lefebre, “The Psychology of Karl Jaspers,” *PKJ*, 467-97.

psychology at this university (1913-16). He later became associate professor of psychology (1916-21). Jaspers' book *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (*Psychology of World Views*), considered his first work in philosophy, appeared in 1919. This book unconsciously led him to philosophy.¹⁴ In it he claimed that only philosophy and not psychology that can furnish one a view of the world.¹⁵ However, having been a psychopathologist, psychology always played a significant role in Jaspers' philosophizing. For him, what was consequential about *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* is that it not only paved the way for so-called "modern existentialism," but also jettisoned the notion of the dogmatic absoluteness of philosophical doctrines. Following this was a three-volume *magnum opus* entitled *Philosophie* (published in 1932), which officially inaugurated Jaspers as one of the premier philosophers.¹⁶ By 1921 Jaspers was appointed full professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, and on April 1, 1922 he took over the chair of philosophy. Unlike other "trained" philosophers of his time, specifically compared to his rival friend Heidegger, Jaspers decided to become a philosopher rather late after having established himself a well respected psychiatrist and psychopathologist. Only when he took over the chair of

¹⁴"*Dieses Buch wurde mir unbewußt mein Weg zur Philosophie,*" "Philosophische Autobiographie," *PW*, 303. It should be noted that from *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* Jaspers' nascent concept of the Encompassing (*das Umgreifende*) began to emerge, which later became the featured theme prominently expounded in his philosophy of *Existenz*. This concept was first outlined in *Vernunft und Existenz* (1935) and was later systematically refined in *Existenzphilosophie* (1937). Briefly defined, the Encompassing is that which unifies the dichotomy between subject (the thinker) and object of thinking. It is the horizon which "encompasses" all horizons; in other words, it is *the* horizon from which all new horizons emerge. (*[E]s ist aber nicht Horizont, worin unser jeweiliges Wissen steht, sonder das, was nie auch nur als Horizont sichtbar wird, aus dem vielmehr auch alle neuen Horizonte erst hervortreten*) (*EP*, 14).

¹⁵"*Nur Philosophie, nicht Psychologie gebe eine Weltanschauung,*" "Philosophische Autobiographie," *PW*, 303. Making a sharp distinction between science and philosophy, Jaspers elsewhere stated: "Philosophy has the sciences as presupposition, without itself being a science and without itself making any of the claims of science. But philosophy comes forward with the higher claims which arise out of the Encompassing" ("Reply to My Critics," *PKJ*, 794).

¹⁶In his Epilogue 1955 to the third German edition, Jaspers proclaimed: "Of all my books, *Philosophy* is closest to my heart" (*Phi I*: 5).

philosophy at Heidelberg did he begin to study philosophy anew and thoroughly.¹⁷ However, for political reasons, he was removed from his post by the Nazis in 1937 and was prohibited from writing and publishing from 1938. *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (1936) was the last book that Jaspers published before being dismissed from the university. Yet he continued to think and write, for he enjoyed writing, and most of all, “in case the overthrow [the Nazi regime] should occur someday, I do not wish to stand there with empty hands.”¹⁸

Like Kierkegaard, Jaspers often found himself hemmed in by “enforced loneliness” or overcome by melancholy that “[in] such moments [he] thought that everything would soon be at an end anyway.”¹⁹ Nonetheless, at the age of twenty-four, those existential moments or moods of loneliness and melancholy disappeared when he met his future wife Gertrud Mayer, German Jew through her brother Ernst Mayer in 1907.²⁰ By meeting and marrying Gertrud in 1910 Jaspers’ spirit was renewed and his life transformed. He confessed:

In her I saw the reality of a soul which refused to live by illusions. She was capable of infinite endurance in silence...In her my own affirmation of life encountered the spirit who from now on would prevent any premature acquiescence on my part. Now philosophy began, in a new way, to become a serious concern for me...I experienced the deep satisfaction of love which has been able to give meaning to each day even until now.²¹

¹⁷“Nun begann ich, das Studium der Philosophie auf neue und gründlichere Weise zu unternehmen,” “Philosophische Autobiographie,” *PW*, 313.

¹⁸“Philosophical Autobiography,” *PKJ*, 62.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁰Ernst Mayer was a medical doctor whom Jaspers not only credited for contributing some original ideas to his three-volume *Philosophie*, but he also stated it would be unthinkable not to include Mayer in his main work: “...daß mein Hauptwerk, die ‘Philosophie’ in drei Bänden, ohne Ernst Mayer überhaupt nicht denkbar ist. Er hat mitgearbeitet und wir waren auf der gleichen Linie. Manche Einfälle stammen sogar von ihm” (“Ein Selbstportrait,” *Karl Jaspers Today*, 12).

²¹“Philosophical Autobiography,” *PKJ*, 12. Jaspers’ profound understanding of faith, especially of the so-called “philosophical faith” (*philosophischer Glaube*) was heightened

Persecuted by political adversities Jaspers was despairingly lamenting the “loss of the guarantee of judicial rights among one’s own people and within one’s own country.”²² By being married to a Jewish wife, Jaspers’ personal as well as academic life was constantly threatened by the regime of National Socialism. However, after the forced retirement, Jaspers was reinstated as rector of the University of Heidelberg, which was occupied by the Americans, in 1945. And while musing and mulling upon many questions pertaining to German identity: What is German?, Who is German?, or What does it mean to be a German?, Jaspers did not fail to exhibit his indebtedness to the Allies, especially the Americans who saved his life and his wife’s.²³ After 1948, Jaspers taught at the University of Basel, Switzerland until he died of a stroke on February 26, 1969 at the age of eighty-six.

Gertrud’s courage and “infinite endurance in silence” enabled Jaspers to emotionally and intellectually survive the trying times of persecution during the years of Nazism. Gertrud had always faithfully stood beside Jaspers ever since he was just a youth, and it was such a “good fortune” for him to have such a loving and devoted wife.²⁴ Charles F. Wallraff calls Gertrud a “remarkable woman, to whom [Jaspers]...dedicated

heritage, she had transformed the orthodox Jewish faith in herself into Biblically grounded philosophizing. Her life was permeated by religious reverence...I felt myself wonderously related to her and became encouraged to bring into the focus of consciousness what, under the veil of the intellect had been, it is true, effective but hidden” (Ibid., 78).

²²Ibid., 62.

²³Jaspers found it ironic that while the Americans were saving his life and his wife’s, his own people the Germans, in the name of National Socialism, not only betrayed him but also wanted to annihilate him: “*Ein Deutscher kann es nicht vergessen, daß er mit seiner Frau sein Leben den Amerikanern verdankt gegen Deutsche, die im Namen des nationalsozialistischen deutschen Staates ihn vernichten wollten*” (“Philosophische Autobiographie,” *PW*, 353).

²⁴In Hannah Arendt’s words: “That good fortune is based on a marriage in which a woman who is his peer has stood at his side ever since his youth” (“Karl Jaspers: A Laudatio,” *Men in Dark Times*, 78).

many books.”²⁵ Wallraff indicates that Jaspers was acquainted with Jewish translations and interpretations of the Old Testament through his wife, a devout Jew, who also had an insane sister and a close friend who committed suicide. Gertrud could thus sagaciously comprehend Jaspers’ “boundary situations” (*Grenzsituationen*), where suffering, struggle, death, chance, and guilt are encompassed by the antinomial configuration of existence. Both Jaspers and Gertrud undoubtedly encountered and suffered these boundary situations (or what Karl Barth called “*insecuritas*”) mostly under the Nazi regime. Wallraff also points out that, highly competent with Latin and Greek and possessing a passion for philosophy, Gertrud “was ideally qualified to understand and share in [Jaspers’] life work.”²⁶

Jaspers’ close friendship and affection for Hannah Arendt²⁷ (and later with her husband Heinrich Blücher) not only brought “philosophical and human solidarity” to Jaspers and his wife Gertrud, but also helped sustain Jaspers’ faith in politics and philosophy. Jaspers admitted that he had learned to see many nuanced dimensions of political freedom from his student-friend Arendt as well as the pernicious configurations of totalitarianism, even though she had not appropriated (*angeeignet*) Max Weber’s political insights and methodical research as he had.²⁸ Hannah Arendt, a philosopher and political scientist (and for a time Heidegger’s mistress) commenced her friendship with Jaspers when she was studying philosophy under Jaspers at Heidelberg University in 1926. Their friendship, which lasted until Jasper’s death in 1969, was based on mutual

²⁵Charles F. Wallraff, *Karl Jaspers: An Introduction to His Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 4. See particularly his chapter “Jaspers’ Life and Writings,” 3-10.

²⁶*Ibid.* Jaspers acknowledges elsewhere that the presence of his wife Gertrud in his life since 1907 had helped him see the difference between living as a “man” (*Mann*) and as a “human being” (*Mensch*) and how to become an authentic “human being” (“Ein Selbstportrait,” *Karl Jaspers Today*, 13-4).

²⁷See *Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926-1969*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (München: R. Piper GmbH & Co. KG, 1985). English translation, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Correspondence 1926-1969*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1992).

²⁸“Philosophische Autobiographie,” *PW*, 360-62.

respect and admiration. Jaspers once compared the power of Arendt, the writer, to that of Lessing.

Prior to 1914, Jaspers' political attitude remained noncommittal; however, at the age of thirty-one when the guns of the World War I began exploding Jaspers underwent a political conversion, largely due to the influence of Max Weber, whom Jaspers always considered "the last genuine national German."²⁹ Profoundly shaped by Weber's sociological and political thought, Jaspers' understanding of politics began to deepen. Taking cues from Weber, Jaspers believed that politics must always be grounded in freedom and that its power must be conditionally fortified by spiritual and moral existence in order to extirpate the roots of totalitarianism (e.g., National Socialism). Affirming the spiritual-moral principle that indispensably underlines political power,

²⁹"Philosophical Autobiography," *PKJ*, 57. According to Ernst Moritz Manasse: "For Jaspers Max Weber was like Socrates." Manasse also shows: "One may say without exaggeration that Max Weber's personality appears in each of Jaspers' major publications. A reader who has become sensitive to Jaspers' enthusiasm and who is familiar with his style may discover silent references to Weber even within his most abstract discussions." Besides learning from Weber the privileging of human's existential freedom over the limits of empirical science, Jaspers' important distinction between "understanding" (*verstehende*) psychology (meaningful insight of psychic self or the subjectively intuitive states of mind) and "explaining" (*erklärende*) psychology (causal laws or objective data) was substantively directed by Weber's analysis of the sociological concept of *Verstehen*. See Manasse's essay, "Jaspers' Relation to Max Weber," *PKJ*, 369-91. In his "Reply to My Critics," Jaspers publicly announced that "Max Weber became for my wife and myself, ever and ever again the road to an irreplaceable assurance. Thinking of him, even in the dark hours, this was always still a guarantee. In him we could know what a man is capable of, what trustworthiness and depth of the spirit is, what German can be...[I]n this scientific world Max Weber showed by deed and insight, the limits of the greatest possible knowledge, the splendor as well as the foundering of knowledge; he realized a new form of not-knowing" (*PKJ*, 854-55). Weber's notions of "the foundering of knowledge" and "a new form of not-knowing" did shape Jaspers' metaphysical concept of the nonobjective Encompassing. It should be noted that, according to Lefebvre, Jaspers was not the first psychologist who introduced *Verstehen* into the field of psychopathology. Dilthey and Spranger had previously used this term. Dilthey made a distinction between "descriptive" and "dissecting" psychology; whereas Spranger employed the term *geisteswissenschaftliche* psychology. For a concise interpretation of Jaspers' *Verstehen* and explanation, see Ludwig B. Lefebvre, "The Psychology of Karl Jaspers," *PKJ*, 469-97. See also Jaspers, "A Self-Portrait," *Karl Jaspers Today*, 16-8.

Jaspers published his *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* in 1931 (English translation of 1933: *Man in the Modern Age*).

One of the memorable events in Jaspers' life was his tumultuous relationship with Heidegger who was seven years Jaspers' junior. Their estranged friendship, which at "the very beginning...was devoid of enthusiasm...[and] not grounded in the depths of [their] nature"³⁰ began in 1920 in Freiburg, where Jaspers and Heidegger met for the first time. Heidegger was in Jaspers' eyes an "adversary" (*Gegner*) and a "substantial opponent in the actuality of life and action."³¹ There existed a constant "combat" (*Bekämpfung*) in their friendship. Even though reciprocated by personal respect, professionally they never seemed to have shown any genuine interest in each other's published works. The strained and ruptured relationship between them seemed to begin when Heidegger, in his unpublished review, was critical of Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* in which Heidegger "questioned its statements with much less mercy than all the other critics together."³² The tension in their friendship kept escalating due to the differences in their philosophical thought as well as political ideologies. That irrevocable tension culminated during Heidegger's association with the Nazism, which Jaspers not only felt betrayed but was also convinced that Heidegger "had chosen the wrong road."³³ Their friendship

³⁰"Philosophical Autobiography," *PKJ*, 75/5. For a detailed account of their philosophical and personal antagonism, see Karl Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1978).

³¹Cited in Leonard H. Ehrlich, "Being and Truth: Heidegger vis-à-vis Jaspers," *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers: Philosoph unter Philosophen*, ed. Richard Wisser and Leonard H. Ehrlich (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993), 121.

³²"Philosophical Autobiography," *PKJ*, 75/3. When Jaspers' *Die Idee der Universität* was published in 1923, Heidegger commented that it "was the the most irrelevant of all the irrelevancies of the time" (75/5). Jaspers, on the other hand, upon reading a few pages of the early manuscript of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* concluded that it was "unintelligible" to him. "However, in spite of the brilliance of its powerful analysis, the book appeared to me unproductive for what I sought philosophically. I rejoiced in the achievement of a man with whom I was associated but did not have much desire to read it. I soon got stuck because of the style, contents, and way of thinking did not appeal to me" (75/6).

³³*Ibid.*, 75/9. Jaspers recalls: "Against my expectations [Heidegger] had become my intellectual enemy through his public activities as a National Socialist... We had become adversaries, not because of books but because of actions. The philosophical thoughts had

ended in bitterness in May 1933. Perhaps their friendship was analogous to Jaspers' paradoxical view of metaphysics - simultaneously based on attractiveness and repulsiveness. On the one hand, Jaspers publicly announced that through Heidegger he "became acquainted with the Christian, particularly the Catholic."³⁴ Heidegger "was the only one who appeared...to be of essential significance... [and who] alone addressed himself to complexes of questions that appeared to be the most profound,"³⁵ and he was the most brilliant thinker among his contemporaries; on the other hand, Jaspers has

to be understood in relation to the behavior of the thinker" (Ibid., 75/9-75/10). Whereas Heidegger considered his personal life and thought to be kept separated, in Jaspers' view a true philosopher cannot dissociate his/her life from thought, but they must inextricably complement one another. Richard Wisser comments that whereas Heidegger "was not interested in the biological facts, the life or the personality of a philosopher," Jaspers "not only gives us [the philosophers'] dates but opens their lives up for us so as to give them their due as persons in their time and to heighten our understanding of them and their works." See "Karl Jaspers: The Person and His Cause, Not the Person or His Cause," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1996): 413-27. Harold H. Oliver also perceptively points out: "Jaspers's approach to understanding Heidegger...would seem to proceed from an alternative assumption, namely, to understand Heidegger as a person. Accordingly, Jaspers reads Heidegger's writings in the light of the latter's personal life rather than the converse. No 'fusion of horizons' occurs; rather Jaspers is driven to make a *judgment* upon Heidegger as a person. Accordingly, his copious *Notizen* on Heidegger disclose the habits of mind of a 'psychopathologist' rather than of a critical thinker. Heidegger's writings are of interest to Jaspers primarily as illustrations of the enigmatic character of his person; for while Jaspers had a deep feeling for Heidegger as a person, he seems to exhibit no deep interest in his writings." See "The Psychological Dimension in Jaspers's Relationship with Heidegger," *Heidegger & Jaspers*, ed. Alan M. Olson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 65-76. Olson also adds, like Schelling and Hegel at the beginning of their professional careers, Jaspers and Heidegger "initially shared the common belief," but because of politics and "their disproportionate recognition as scholars after the war" their friendship had become estranged and finally terminated. "Introduction: A Dialectic of Being and Value," *Heidegger & Jaspers*, 1-15. See also Raymond E. Gogel, "Jaspers' Critique of Heidegger: The Arrogance of Thought," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 161-71.

³⁴"Philosophical Autobiography," *PKJ*, 75/4. See also 75/1-75/16.

³⁵Ibid., 75/1.

always considered Heidegger the “worst adversary among [his] contemporaries,”³⁶ and he “appeared to be a friend who betrayed you when you were absent.”³⁷

The Encompassing

*Was in Subjekt und Objekt gespalten die
Stätte der Erscheinung wird, nennen wir
das Umgreifende.*

Karl Jaspers

It is impossible to comprehend Jaspers' important concept of *Existenz* without first critically delving into his metaphysical doctrines of the Encompassing (*das Umgreifende*) and Transcendence. The Encompassing is the gateway leading to Jaspers' philosophy of *Existenz*, which, like that of Kierkegaard, is the negation of Hegel's philosophical system.³⁸ Calvin O. Schrag contends that even though the philosophical vocabulary employed in the doctrine of the Encompassing may be indebted to the classical German

³⁶ “...schlimmsten Gegner unter den Zeitgenossen,” Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger*, Note no. 239, p.255.

³⁷ “Philosophical Autobiography,” *PKJ*, 75/6.

³⁸ “*Existenz* philosophy, like the philosophy of dialectical materialism, is the avowed expression of a revolt against the Hegelian view...The *Existenz* philosophers are interested in man in his inwardness, as a concrete, individual, private being who possesses a unique, characteristic power of freedom; in contrast, the Hegelian is interested in truth, objective, discursive, cosmic, structured, systematized” (Paul Weiss, “*Existenz* and Hegel,” *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 8 [1947]: 206-7). Hannah Arendt points out that there is a difference between philosophy of *Existenz* and the so-called “existentialism,” which originated from a French literary movement. *Existenzphilosophie* has its roots in the later Schelling (whose ‘positive philosophy’ was a rebellion against ‘negative philosophy’; namely, purely idealistic thinking) and Kierkegaard; its movement was then carried on by Nietzsche, Scheler, Heidegger, and Jaspers. See “What is *Existenz* philosophy?” *Partisan Review* 13 (1946): 34-56.

Idealism; namely, Kant and Hegel, Jaspers is actually not “a filial descendent of this tradition.”³⁹

For Jaspers, philosophy is an action, it is an inner activity through thinking, which embodies with concrete events or experiences of life that Jaspers called “philosophizing.” Philosophizing “is thinking...[and] thinking means to deal with oneself...[I]t is an existential responsibility which my thoughts make clear and certain.”⁴⁰ “It is to risk piercing into the unapproachable ground of human self-awareness...that objective knowledge fails to do.”⁴¹ Philosophizing is a process of transcending an objectivity so that an awareness of the Encompassing (which itself is no object) becomes possible; in short, philosophizing is of a nonobjective reality which produces neither abstract concepts, doctrines nor systems. Philosophizing not only reveals the boundaries of science which are concerned with factual, objective knowledge of the world, but it also helps transcend these boundaries. Leaning on Weber’s sociological understanding of knowledge as foundering (*Scheitern*) and siding with Nietzsche’s attack on scientism, Jaspers castigates Descartes for absolutizing modern scientific knowledge. Because of his metaphysical doctrine of periechontology, Jaspers is resolutely against any idea of generality or universal knowledge. Following the existential footsteps of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, particularity or individuality is what Jaspers upholds, amply evidenced by his concept of *Existenz* (authentic self). Because of its infinite possibilities *Existenz* can never be circumscribed by ontological borders. Studies such as psychology, anthropology, or sociology all fail to capture the mysterious and incomprehensible *Existenz* into scientific research or universal validity. Science, bound by empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit, only discovers and apprehends parts of the world, but not the world

³⁹*The Self after Postmodernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 116. See particularly his chapter “The Self in Transcendence,” 110-48. In his *Vorwort* (1932), Jaspers enumerated ten philosophers who have enriched his philosophizing: Kant, Plotinus, Bruno, Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Nietzsche, and Max Weber. For Jaspers, Kant remains the philosopher *par excellence* (*der Philosoph schlechthin*). See “*Vorwort*,” *PH I*: vi.

⁴⁰*Phi I*: 13.

⁴¹“*Philosophie, das Wagnis, in den unbretbaren Grund menschlicher Selbstgewißheit zu dringen*,” “*Vorwort 1931*,” *Philosophie*, v.

itself. Only philosophy, by utilizing scientific methods and its objective knowledge, can probe into the depth dimension of Being or Transcendence. In addition, unlike science's existential detachment, philosophy involves the life and commitment of the researcher.

Scientific knowledge is about facts, not about awareness of being.
It is particular, aiming at determinate objects, not at being itself...
[thus] science cannot provide any answer to the question of its *own*
meaning.⁴²

Contrary to science, whose intellectual constructs are subject to corrections, revisions, or probabilities, philosophy enables us to "become aware" (*innewerden*) of the being of humankind and of the world. Philosophy is metaphysics (the philosophy of being) that attempts to search for the meaning of Being. For Jaspers, the Encompassing can only be procured through metaphysics, and this metaphysics is but a cipher. However, since Jaspers was once a psychiatrist and psychopathologist, science had always played a significant role in his thought. He never proclaimed that philosophy is totally independent of science; to the contrary, science still offers philosophy indispensable methods and categories though it is limited and not concerned with the possibilities of thought, and provides no moral guidance or values.⁴³ In order for philosophy to communicate its truth cogently it requires scientific categories and methods, because philosophizing cannot be done without worldly existence. Philosophizing becomes irrelevant once it plunges itself into the realm of pure idealism.

⁴²“*Wissenschaftliche Sacherkenntnis ist nicht Seinerkenntnis. Wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis ist partikular, auf bestimmte Gegenstände, nicht auf das Sein selbst gerichtet...Wissenschaft vermag keine Antwort zu geben auf die Frage nach ihrem eigenen Sinn,*” *EP*, 7-8.

⁴³Although Jaspers criticizes science for being *wertfrei*, he does not hold that it is *wertlos*; that is, lacking valuational elements, because “scientific work is sustained by the will to gain knowledge for its own sake” (James Collins, “Jaspers on Science and Philosophy,” *PKJ*, 133). In his *Von der Wahrheit*, Jaspers writes: “*Daher ist die ‘wertfreie Wissenschaft’ nicht ‘wertlose’ Wissenschaft, nicht das gleichgültige Wissen von dem bloß Objektiven in seiner Endlosigkeit, nicht das Wissen von Gleichgültigem und Beliebigem, nicht die Rechtfertigung eines Wissens allein dadurch, daß es richtig ist*” (322-23). For a detailed discussion of *wertfrei* and *wertlos*, see *VdW*, 322-23.

Philosophy can be called science insofar as it presupposes sciences. There is no tenable philosophy outside of the sciences. Although conscious of its distinctive character, philosophy is inseparable from science. It refuses to transgress against universally binding insight. Anyone who philosophizes must be familiar with scientific method. Any philosopher who is not trained in a scientific discipline and who fails to keep his scientific interests constantly alive will inevitably bungle and stumble and mistake uncritical rough drafts for definitive knowledge. Unless an idea is submitted to the coldly dispassionate test of scientific inquiry, it is rapidly consumed in the fire of emotions and passions, or else it withers into a dry and narrow fanaticism.⁴⁴

George Pepper articulates Jaspers' nuanced perspective toward philosophy and science as follows:

Scientific thinking for Jaspers was a way of life and provided a world view that is of the highest importance for modern man... Authentic philosophizing and an intensified consciousness of the present historical situation can be acquired only through an intimate awareness of the sciences...Philosophy and the sciences have common roots no matter how divergent they are in method and content.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 159. As regards the difference between scientific truth and philosophical truth, Jaspers enunciates: "Although scientific truth is universally valid, it remains relative to method and assumptions; philosophical truth is absolute for him who conquers it in historical actuality, but its statements are not universally valid. Scientific truth is one and the same for all - philosophical truth wears multiple historical cloaks; each of these is the manifestation of a unique reality, each has its justification, but they are not identically transmissible" (Ibid., 162). Therefore, for Jaspers: "There is really no struggle between philosophy and science, but there is a struggle for true science and for true philosophy, in which both are united" (*Es gibt daher keinen eigentlichen Kampf zwischen Philosophie und Wissenschaft, wohl aber einen Kampf um echte Wissenschaft und um echte Philosophie, in welchem beide verbündet sind*). See "Philosophie und Wissenschaft," *PH I*: 272-82.

⁴⁵George Pepper, "Karl Jaspers on the Sciences: In Retrospect," *Karl Jaspers Today: Philosophy at the Threshold of the Future*, ed. Leonard H. Ehrlich and Richard Wisser (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1988), 154. Pepper argues: "Jaspers's preoccupation with the limits of science forecloses the possibility of any such cross-fertilization [science and philosophy]. And where he recognizes that such efforts can be

Science fails to grasp the totality of being, and in contrast to philosophy, it does not operate in the realm of nonknowledge (or nonobjectification); science operates in the validly objective realm. Since the reality called "Transcendence" is unapproachable by science, the inner awareness of Being only becomes accessible through philosophizing. However, Jaspers realized that awareness of Being would not be achieved apart from objective thought or thinking, for "[p]hilosophizing is an objectification of a non-objectifiable reality!"⁴⁶ This is inevitably the dialectical element of Jaspers' philosophizing; that is, to approach Being or Transcendence which transcends all objectivity, objectifying thought is requisite. Thinking requires the subject-object dichotomy though "everything is an object for us, and it may be the greatest, still it is continually within another, it is not yet all."⁴⁷

We live, move, and have our being within a horizon. The field of awareness is circumscribed by a horizon. A horizon implies that there is still something further which encompasses the given horizon. From this phenomenon Jaspers derived his metaphysical

successful as 'speculative-metaphysical exegesis of ciphers,' his perspective takes on an ahistorical, timeless character that goes counter to the historic nature of philosophical truth which he stresses throughout his writings" (Ibid., 170). Jaspers criticizes Descartes, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche for confusing the functioning roles of science and philosophy. H.J. Blackham adds: "Beginning with a criticism of this confusion in Descartes, [Jaspers] can show the dogmatism and vanity of positivism in reducing all philosophy to science, the sterility of idealism in reducing all science to philosophy, the fatal neglect of science in Kierkegaard's leap into transcendence, the stultification of philosophy by Nietzsche's importation of biological concepts" (*Six Existential Thinkers* [New York: Harper & Row, 1959], 47).

⁴⁶Collins, "Jaspers on Science and Philosophy," *PKJ*, 135. Jaspers writes: "When we think of the Comprehensive [the Encompassing] in philosophical terms, we are making an object of what is essentially not an object. Hence we must always make a reservation: we must retract the object content of what has been said, if we would arrive at that experience of the Comprehensive which is not a communicable content resulting from inquiry but an attitude of our consciousness...Awareness of the subject-object dichotomy as the fundamental fact of our thinking existence and of the Comprehensive that becomes present in it gives us the freedom needed for philosophy" (*Way to Wisdom*, 36-7). See also his chapter "Knowledge of the Ground," *Philosophy is for Everyman: A Short Course in Philosophical Thinking*, trans. R.F.C. Hull and Grete Wels (London: Hutchinson, 1969), 21-30.

⁴⁷"Alles, was uns Gegenstand wird, und sei es das Größte, ist doch für uns stets noch in einem Anderen, ist nicht Alles," *VE*, 34.

concept of the Encompassing, which became the foundation of his philosophy from 1935. The Encompassing shares the same essential element with Kant's "*Ding an sich*" or the noumenon, for "the subject-object dichotomy originates, with Kant, in the transcendental synthesis, since objectivity as such is made possible by applying the categories of understanding to intuition. Objects are phenomena, they are given in possible experience which is the subject-matter of the Transcendental Analytic."⁴⁸ The Encompassing is the nonobjectifiably unlimited clearing that transcends the subject-object dichotomy so that Being can appear.⁴⁹ The Encompassing can also be analogous to Schelling's incomprehensible "unruly ground" (*das Ursprüngliche*). This "Being itself" (*Sein selbst*), which will always "recede" or "retreat" (*zurückzuweichen*) from us, from all

⁴⁸Janós Kelemen, "The 'Thing-in-itself' and the 'Encompassing'," *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher Among Philosophers*, ed. Richard Wisser and Leonard H. Ehrlich (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993), 19. While Jaspers synthesizes the phenomenal and the noumenal or tries to maintain the dialectical relationship between *Weltorientierung* and *Transzendenz*, Kant makes a sharp discontinuity between them as he does with his moral/ethical metaphysics. As an existentialist, Jaspers existentializes reason; it is firmly planted in *Lebenspraxis*. Reason and *Existenz* are inextricably connected. As Jaspers states in his second lecture "*Das Umgreifende*" in *Vernunft und Existenz*: "*Existenz* only becomes clear through reason; reason only has content through *Existenz*... Without reason, *Existenz* is idle, sleeping, as not there. Reason and *Existenz* are not two opposite powers struggling with each other for conquest. Each exists only through the other. They mutually evolve with one another and find clarity and reality through each other" (*Existenz wird nur durch Vernunft sich hell; Vernunft hat nur durch Existenz Gehalt ... Ohne Vernunft ist Existenz untätig, schlafend, wie nicht da. Vernunft und Existenz sind also nicht zwei sich gegenüberstehende Mächte, die untereinander um die Entscheidung kämpfen. Jede ist erst durch die andere. Sie treiben sich gegenseitig hervor, finden aneinander Klarheit und Wirklichkeit*) (48).

⁴⁹The Encompassing may be likened to Kristeva's psychoanalytic concept of "the abject," which shatters any objective boundaries or dual oppositions, for it is neither subject nor object. It is like the Lacanian "real," which is not conscious yet prowls around consciousness. However, Professor Robert Corrington has insightfully pointed out to me that even though the abject precedes the subject-object dichotomy, still it "is an object of fear, dread, and desire, while the Encompassing is much more in the honorific class; namely, as the source of a sense of healing and transcendence. We wrestle with the abject in ways that are not as true for the Encompassing. True, both precede the subject-object split, and both affect the ways in which the split is experienced, but the haunting of the abject is on the edges of embodiment and is tied to the body, while the Encompassing seems almost disembodied."

horizons, is what Jaspers terms the Encompassing.⁵⁰ In his 1937 *Philosophy of Existenz* lectures, Jaspers further elucidates the Encompassing:

But the Encompassing is not the horizon of our knowledge at any particular moment. Rather, it is the source from which all new horizons emerge, without itself ever being visible as a horizon. The Encompassing always merely announces itself - in present objects and within the horizons - but it *never* becomes an *object*. Never appearing to us itself, it is that wherein everything else appears. It is also that due to which all things not merely are what they immediately seem to be, but remain transparent.⁵¹

Pepper explains:

To appreciate the significance of “Encompassing” one has to grasp how it is related to Jaspers’ use of the term, “horizon.” The latter refers to a boundary within which we orientate ourselves in thought and action. Beyond every horizon there is another reality we anticipate, but not one whose anticipation is entirely predictable by what we know or can do within the horizon. The “Encompassing” refers to the reality beyond all horizons which defies any complete anticipation

⁵⁰See “Das Sein des Umgreifenden,” *EP*, 13-25. The Encompassing is the source of all horizons, it is not a horizon, not an object itself. “[E]s ist aber nicht der Horizont, worin unser jeweiliges Wissen steht, sondern das, was nie auch nur als Horizont sichtbar wird, aus dem vielmehr auch alle neuen Horizonte erst hervortreten” (Ibid., 14). Thus for Jaspers: “The Encompassing can never become cognized as a ‘something’ from which an ‘other’ is derived” (*Das Umgreifende kann niemals erkannt werden als ein Etwas, aus dem Anderes abzuleiten ist*) (VdW, 159). He posits: “Das Umgreifende ist das, worin alles Sein für uns ist; oder es ist die Bedingung, unter der es eigentliches Sein für uns wird. Es ist nicht alles als die Summe des Seins, sondern ist das für uns ungeschlossen bleibende Ganze als der Grund des Seins. Dieses Umgreifende suchen wir, wenn wir philosophieren” (Ibid., 39).

⁵¹Cited in Robert Corrington, “Naturalism, Measure, and the Ontological Difference,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 (1985): 29. Corrington remarks: “Horizons, both phenomenal and categorial, receive their measure, their being-measured, from the Encompassing which is never a horizon. This higher measure is itself *without* a being-measured” (29). He also adds: “The Encompassing can thus not be seen as the horizon of horizons which generates an abiding topology of all complexes and orders. Nor can the Encompassing be understood as a hidden ground or foundation which secures the architectonic reach of nature and human query” (30).

by either the scientific knowledge or the human powers at our disposal. For this reason, Jaspers holds that ciphers are the only fit expressions for the “Encompassing.”⁵²

1. *Periechontology vis-à-vis Ontology*

Before delving into Jaspers’ seven modes of the Encompassing, we must first examine his metaphysical concept called “periechontology.” Jaspers’ periechontology is the privileged anthropocentric concept, for it intimates humankind’s vast and varied experience, especially that of possible *Existenz* (*möglicher Existenz*). Periechontology means “beyond ontology” or “ontology modified by the intuitive awareness of the reality of the Encompassing within which one is, but which one can never know as an object.”⁵³ This concept, as an outline of Being (*Grundriß des Seins*), is commensurable with Jaspers’ doctrine of the Encompassing, which is prominently featured in his second lecture of *Vernunft und Existenz*. As opposed to ontology’s closed system of knowledge or Being, periechontology radically opens itself to all modes of Being. There are multidimensional levels or ways in which one can have awareness of Being. Belonging to the act of transcending thought the Encompassing of Being, unlike ontology, is not subject to any noetic propositions. Whereas ontology is conditioned by objective cognition and is immediately clarified in immanent thought, periechontology indirectly approaches Being or Transcendence via nonobjectively transcending thought.⁵⁴

⁵²George B. Pepper, “The Philosophy-Science Relationship in Jaspers, Heidegger, and Peirce” (Unpublished paper). One may be reminded of the Greek word *boros* (border), which also implies “concept.” Wolfhart Pannenberg insightfully shows that “whenever we think of a border, we have always thought at the same time of a something that lies beyond that border, however vaguely. As Hegel argues convincingly in his *Logic*, we cannot think the border without thinking the other that lies on the far side of the border” (*Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, trans. Philip Clayton [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990], 24).

⁵³Alan M. Olson, “Hegel and Jaspers on the Comparative Philosophy of Religion,” *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers*, 52.

⁵⁴*EP*, 17-8. For a detailed contrast between ontology and periechontology, see *VdW*, 158-61. Besides declaring that, since Kant, every ontology now must be rejected (...seit

Although Jaspers' Encompassing is considerably influenced by Kant's noumenon, which extends beyond empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit, it bears a striking resemblance to Plato's Idea, evidenced by the Greek word *periechon*, which "signifies not only an encompassing but also a superiority of the encompassing over the encompassed."⁵⁵

In his lecture given at the Cooper Union Forum in New York City on March 25, 1954, Paul Tillich offered a helpful distinction between Jaspers' and Heidegger's conceptual thought of existential anthropology. According to Tillich, Heidegger occupies himself with the question of Being; that is, what is the ultimate ontological structure of Being; or more essentially, what it means *to be*; whereas Jaspers plunges himself profoundly into the question of humanity; that is, what it means *to be a person*.⁵⁶ For Heidegger, human being "is the doorway to the mystery of Being"⁵⁷ and exists within a constant revealing and concealing of the so-called "ontological difference"; namely,

Kant - jede Ontologie verworfen), Jaspers adds: "The totality of Being is no longer known through any ontological concepts" (*Das Sein im Ganzen ist nicht mehr durch eine Ontologie begrifflich wißbar*) (*EP*, 17); cf. Leonard H. Ehrlich, *Karl Jaspers: Philosophy as Faith* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 6-8. As regards the periechontological concept of Being, according to Raymond Langley, "Jaspers innovatively incorporates the fundamental alternatives of the Western philosophical tradition into his Periechontology: Being is unthinkable (Kant), Being is thought (Hegel), Being is interpretation (Nietzsche), and Being is believing (Kierkegaard)" (Reviews of *Karl Jaspers: Basic Philosophical Writings* and *The Great Philosophers*, Vols. 3-4, by Karl Jaspers, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 [1996]: 355).

⁵⁵Gerhard Knauss, "The Concept of the 'Encompassing' in Jaspers' Philosophy," *PKJ*, 143.

⁵⁶Paul Tillich, "Heidegger and Jaspers," *Heidegger & Jaspers*, ed. Alan M. Olson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 16-28. Regarding Jaspers' "*to be a person*" and Heidegger's "*to be*," Tillich insightfully remarked: "This means that the relationship between them is dialectical, for in order to know the answer to the question of Being, one must know what it means to be a person, and to know what it means to be a person, one must know what it means to be" (17); cf. Paul Tillich, "Existential Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944): 44-70. For a detailed critique of Jaspers' periechontology *vis-à-vis* Heidegger's fundamental ontology, see Leonard H. Ehrlich, "Being and Truth: Heidegger *vis-à-vis* Jaspers," *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers*, 121-38.

⁵⁷Tillich, "Heidegger and Jaspers," *Heidegger & Jaspers*, 16.

“Being” (*Sein*) and the “things-that-are” or “beings” (*Seiende*).⁵⁸ Philosophical anthropology was not penetratingly pursued by Heidegger; instead he focused more on how profoundly a human being could probe into the question of Being. But, as Tillich indicated in his lecture, existentialism needs something that can transcend “the mere questioning and analysis of existence. It needs criteria, it needs a sense of ultimacy.”⁵⁹ The metaphysical concept of *Transcendence* substantively occupied Jaspers’ and Heidegger’s philosophy. While Heidegger is concerned with temporalized Transcendence, Jaspers is with a spatialized one. And in Jaspers’ view, only through the reading of metaphysical objectivity called “ciphers” (*Chiffre*), which is the language of Transcendence, not Transcendence itself, can Transcendence indirectly reveal itself to us. Only through living experience (*Erfahrung*) can cipher-script be read. Jaspers’ ciphers as *signa* point beyond the existential realm of the subject-object dichotomy to the nonobjectively veiled, inaccessible, unverifiable, and incomprehensible realm. Transcendence is aseity.

The commensurable ground that Heidegger and Jaspers share is that Being is not an object, evidenced by Heidegger’s ontological difference and by Jaspers’ Being transcending the subject-object split. Nevertheless, the fundamental difference centers on their understanding of Being: Heidegger’s ontology and Jaspers’ periechontology. For

⁵⁸For the difference between these concepts, see Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), #3-15, #38, and #230; cf., L.M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972). Vail says: “Heidegger’s formulation of the ontological difference as a difference between Being and the things-that-are is complicated by the fact that Heidegger later gives up the term *Being* (*Sein*) in trying to formulate his own thinking, especially in connection with such areas as thinghood and language” (4).

⁵⁹“Heidegger and Jaspers,” *Heidegger & Jaspers*, 25. Eugene T. Long says that Fritz Buri believes Jaspers’ periechontology “offers a more adequate model for contemporary theological thinking and speaking of God than does Martin Heidegger’s *Seinsdenken...Seinsdenken* results in a submissive attitude toward thinking which surrenders uncritically to currents and powers of the time and thus is in danger of becoming a mere tool of the prevailing powers” (“Jaspers’ Philosophy of Existence as a Model for Theological Reflection,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3 [1972]: 35). According to Alan Olson, Jaspers’ metaphysical concept of periechontology “determines that Transcendence is not only present to human experience but, in fact, accounts for its very possibility” (*Transcendence and Hermeneutics*, xxi).

Jaspers, Being is only approached through noncognitive intuitions or *via negativa*, and is clarified nonobjectively; whereas Heidegger's Being can be cognized or disclosed, and is clarified objectively. But Long argues differently, "In contrast to Jaspers, who seems content to point to the disclosure of Being as limit, Heidegger reflects on the disclosure itself, seeking to think Being, to bring Being into reflection without resorting to a type of objectifying thinking in which Being becomes merely an object of thought."⁶⁰

Ontology (the objectification of Being), so claims Jaspers, will never enable us to bridge the chasm between Transcendence and human existence (*Dasein*);⁶¹ in other words, it fails to enable us to move beyond the subject-object dichotomy of the "ongoing immanence" (*Hereinstehen*) or of existential experience (*Realität*). Ontology does not rise above the immanent modes of being: empirical existence (*Dasein*), consciousness-as-such (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), and spirit (*Geist*). It founders at providing a nonduality of experience (or *advaita* in Hinduism).

In addition to deductively systematizing Being ontology also reveals to us the "what" of Being; that is, "everything is what it is"⁶² and furnishes us "objective clarification."⁶³ For Jaspers, the deductive system of Being goes back to Aristotle.⁶⁴ Instead of letting the

⁶⁰Eugene T. Long, "Being and Thinking," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 9 (1971): 131.

⁶¹Jaspers' use of this term is a contradistinction to Heidegger's *Dasein*. By *Dasein* Jaspers means "empirical being" or "mundane existence" (Leonard Ehrlich). Hans Kunz points out that Jaspers "rejects any sort of ontology of man's being because of his concern for the preservation of the 'highest potentialities' of this very being"; hence Jaspers "does not reject Heidegger's analysis of being-there (*Daseinsanalytik*) by arguing directly to the point, but objects to it on the ground that 'instead of leading toward philosophizing, it leads to an overall knowledge of man's being'" ("Jaspers' Concept of Transcendence," *PKJ*, 501-2). However, according to James Collins, the distinction between *Dasein* and *Existenz* made by Jaspers is "not convincingly sustained," for Heidegger does distinguish the difference between inauthentic and authentic *Dasein* and how they relate to Transcendence. Therefore, Heidegger's *Dasein* and Jaspers' *Existenz* "have a definite kinship." See *The Existentialists: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952). See particularly chapter "Jaspers' Quest of Transcendence," 80-114.

⁶²"Alles ist, was es ist," *VdW*, 160.

⁶³"gegenständliche Klärung," *Ibid*.

⁶⁴"Sie [Ontologie] sagt, was ist, liefert ein Bestimmtheit und ein Gebäude des Seienden. Sie will ein System des Seins" (*VdW*, 160). Collins contends: "When Jaspers

stratum of Being disclose itself to us through the reading of cipher-script (*Chiffreschrift*) through intuitional or noninterpretable symbols, Heidegger's fundamental ontology attempts to grasp Being directly by way of universalizing it. For Heidegger, being-in-the-world need not be involved with Transcendence, for *Dasein* can still existentially, through its facticity, live with possibility and self-realization. Contrary to Jaspers, because Heidegger insists that human being is the gateway to the awareness of Being, human being never became the main subject or concern for Heidegger. So while Jaspers devoted his philosophical life to the central question, "What is human being?" Heidegger's sole interest revolved around the question, "What is Being?" *Dasein* becomes authentic only when it is fully aware of what Being is.

Being, for Jaspers, is not an ontological order so it is not determinately assembled into an edifice.⁶⁵ And this is precisely where Jaspers, taking cues from Plato and Kant, believes Heidegger's ontology should be supplanted by his periechontology, for "All that is, becomes *permeated* by the Encompassing,"⁶⁶ and also:

by its awareness and illumination of the antinomies and discontinuities [periechontology] makes room for us to be confronted by the multiple modes of beings. The former [ontology] says that everything is what it is; for the latter, everything becomes transparent in the face of the encompassing...For the latter, being can be illuminated, but not known, and therefore it would illuminate in what manner being

states that this conception of ontology goes back to Aristotle, even though the name is of modern origin, he is making an unsupported generalization" (418). See his review article, "Karl Jaspers' Philosophical Logic," *The New Scholasticism* 23 (1949): 414-20.

⁶⁵"[Periechontologie] sagt, worin das Sein ist, liefert kein Bestimmtheit des Seins, erbaut kein Gebäude. Sie will eine Systematik des Seienden," *VdW*, 160.

⁶⁶"Alles, was ist, wird noch durchdrungen vom Umgreifenden," *Ibid*. Unlike Aristotle who absorbed himself with objectively categorial knowledge; that is, to search for layers of Being (*Seinsschichten*), which is ontological, Jaspers instead urges us to search for origins of the subject-object relationship (*die Ursprünge des Subjekt-Objekt-Verhältnisses*). As he puts it: "...nicht ontologisch eine Welt gegenständlicher Bestimmungen, sondern periechontologisch den Grund dessen, woraus Subjekt-Objekt entspringen, ineins miteinander und aufeinander bezogen" (*PGO*, 130).

appears for us - not *what* being is, but *how* being is for us.⁶⁷

2. *Transcending*

To be cognizant of the Encompassing, to go beyond any given horizon, beyond the subject-object split that we are objectively conditioned, Jaspers offers the methodological source that is called “transcending” (*Transzendieren*), which substantially carries with it much of Kantian “transcendental method,” or specifically, “transcendental deduction.” The transcendental deduction is the categorial attempt to deal with the function of thought, and not specifically with the objective or cognitive content. The bounds of objectifying thinking or the limits of cognition Jaspers found in Kant’s *Kritik* helped him make the claim that metaphysical thinking is achieved not by intellectual knowledge but by transcending, which is an act of freedom. For Jaspers, “This transcending does not take him [Kant] to another realm, but a transcending it remains, because it is a totally different operation from any that we perform in our knowledge of the world.”⁶⁸ John Wager writes:

⁶⁷Oswald O. Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (Pittsburgh, PA.: Duquesne University Press, 1971), 229. See also his “Jaspers: Beyond Traditional Metaphysics and Ontology,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 5 (1965): 163-82.

⁶⁸Cited in Olson, *Transcendence and Hermeneutics*, 74. Olson writes: “Jaspers therefore suggests that Kantian transcendental philosophy is certainly not cosmo-ontological transcending, if by that is implied a logical and analytical preparation for a leap beyond the world of ordinary experience. It is rather a transcending-thinking which by remaining completely within the world goes beyond the world. While cognition is utterly dependent upon the material for the presentation of sensate phenomena, Jaspers believes nevertheless that in Kant (as well as in Plato and Plotinus) one encounters the conviction that where cognition stops, thinking continues” (*Transcendence and Hermeneutics*, 74). Olson also shows that, unlike ‘cognitive transcending’ (experience that is experientially self-conscious or reflective), Jaspers stresses ‘critical transcending’ which is “a transcending in thinking-itself, that is, it is ‘transcendental’ in the Kantian sense of reflection about the possibilities and limitations of cognition” (*Ibid.*, 75). It should be noted that Kant makes a distinction between “transcendental” and “transcendent.” He writes: “I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects insofar as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*. A system of such concepts might be entitled transcendental philosophy” (59). He continues: “We shall entitle the principles whose

The central importance which Jaspers attached to the “act of transcendence” ...is an attempt to place the methods of Kant in opposition to both a strictly positivistic account of concepts that saw nothing beyond what can be demonstrated objectively, and just as much an opposition to the kind of thinking that turns what is an “act” into some other objective content to be known... When Kant claims that transcendental thinking discloses no new trans-empirical objects for cognition, Jaspers takes this to mean that the “point” to Kant’s arguments is therefore to be located in the act of thought itself, not in any content to that act.⁶⁹

Jaspers makes it clear that, “Thinking that does not transcend is not philosophical. But it is either of the objectively immanent and particular cognition of science or of the intellectual playfulness.”⁷⁰ So the chief function of philosophizing is to transcend all objectivity; that is, “actual transcending means going beyond objectiveness into nonobjectiveness,”⁷¹ into noncognitive intuitions. Jaspers believes “Kant has wonderfully given us an elucidation of such transcending to nonobjectiveness,”⁷² which derives essentially from his transcendental unity of apperception. However, Jaspers maintains that transcending philosophy can be either true or false. A true transcending philosophy

application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, *immanent*; and those, on the other hand, which profess to pass beyond these limits, *transcendent*...A principle...which takes away these limits, or even commands us actually to transgress them, is called *transcendent*...Thus *transcendental* and *transcendent* are not interchangeable terms” (298-99). See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965).

⁶⁹*Existenz and Kantian Reason*, 57. In the section “Introduction to Philosophy” (volume I) of *Philosophie*, especially “The Modes of Transcending as a Structural Principle” (76-89), Jaspers gives a detailed analysis of Kant’s “transcendental method.”

⁷⁰“*Wo das Denken nicht transzendiert, ist keine Philosophie, sondern entweder immanente und partikuläre Gegenstandserkenntnis durch Wissenschaften oder intellektuelle Spielerei.*” *PH I*: 34. Jaspers never implied the term “transcending thought” (*transzendierendes Denken*) as going beyond or surpassing thought, which is impossible. For him, transcending thought is an act of “transcending *through* thought,” not through “cognition” (*Erkenntnis*).

⁷¹“*Eigentliches Transzendieren heißt jedoch: Hinausgehen über das Gegenständliche ins Ungegenständliche.*” *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁷²“*Dies Transzendieren zu einem Gegenstandslosen hat in wunderbarer Erhellung Kant getan.*” *PH I*: 35.

situates itself within the limit; in other words, even though it goes beyond the subject-object split, it is always in relation to it. Transcending is an act, not a result; it is not concerned with an object beyond the limit. Since it is impossible to reach for Being outside of the limit of this world, and since it is also equally impossible to have transcending adequately asserted in this worldly realm, the thought then lies only in transcending itself. Consequently, transcending philosophy, unlike its counterpart science, offers no noetic property (*Erkenntnis*) for one to possess (*besitzen*), but what it functionally does is to alter one's posture of consciousness (*Bewußtseinshaltung*), and one will also experience a yank or jolt (*Ruck*) that causes a formal change in attitude toward everything (*allem*) objective (*Gegenständlichen*).⁷³ Jaspers likens transcending thought to the state of consciousness; that is, without intentionality or without something to which it directs or points (*richtet*), consciousness cannot come into being. He thus explicitly puts his transcending thought in this dialectical formula: *no object without a subject or no subject without an object*.⁷⁴ Contrary to true transcending, which operates within the limit of object and nonobject and within its own interaction, false transcending is the attempt to reach an object beyond the limit, an object which is already in my possession.

⁷³“*Aber da ich weder über die Grenze hinaus in ein Sein, sad nicht Welt wäre, komme, noch in der Welt einen adäquaten Ausdruck des Transzendierens habe, so ist der Gedanke nur im Transzendieren selbst, und ohne dieses ist er nichts. Durch das Transzendieren gewinne ich keine Erkenntnis, die ich nun besitze, sondern meine Bewußtseinshaltung wird eine andere, es geschieht ein Ruck in mir, der meine Haltung zu allem Gegenständlichen, zunächst nur formell, wandelt,*” *PH I*: 36. Jaspers also argues: “*Philosophie steht als transzendierende an der Grenze. Da sie jenseits der Grenze keinen Gegenstand erwartet, ist das Überschreiten selbst nur als Vollzug, nicht als sein Resultat*” (*Ibid.*, 34). “We cannot get out of the subject-object relation. Whatever we may be thinking about it, we can never help thinking of something objective again and thus presupposing and at the same time establishing the very relationship we want to comprehend. This is why we tend to move in the subject-object relationship as though it were a matter of course, as though it might not be questioned. To grasp it directly, we must try to go beyond all objectivity” (*Phi I*: 79).

⁷⁴“*Der transzendierende Gedanke kann in die Formel gefaßt werden: kein Objekt ohne Subjekt...Demgegenüber ist der Satz mit demselben Recht umgekehrt auszusprechen: kein Subjekt ohne Objekt. Denn es ist kein Bewußtsein ohne etwas, worauf es sich richtet,*” *PH I*: 37.

Like Transcendence exceeding all forms - neither objectified nor circumscribed by any predicate (*Prädikat*) - Being-in-itself cannot be categorized; therefore, to attempt to reach the true Being and avoid having it become immanently particularized, all categorial configurations must be transcended. Jaspers calls this “formal transcending,” which is fundamentally a transitional act from the “thinkable” (*Denkbaren*) to the “unthinkable” (*Undenkbaren*). Aiming at Being itself is the chief function of formal transcending. However, as previously noted, influenced by Kant’s transcendental method, Jaspers contends that, since transcending thought or the “thinkable” (not the objectively or scientifically “knowable”) must always be done in categories, it will become dialectical.⁷⁵

George A. Schrader, Jr., is correct to say: “Transcending is thus an act of freedom, a rational act of openness which is the result of a will to let being manifest itself. Jaspers calls this carrying through the philosophical act of transcending ‘faith.’”⁷⁶ “Philosophical faith” (*philosophischer Glaube*) is Jaspers’ term to announce “the condemnation of ontology.”⁷⁷ Philosophical faith, neither conditioned by objective knowledge nor by universal validity, is an act of reflection, speculation, or thinking (*Denken*) that attempts to reach Transcendence. It is a concrete act, stemming from *Existenz*’s inner freedom. Here one clearly sees Jaspers’ affinity with Kant’s “rational faith.” For Kant, because of its limit knowledge must make room for faith. Nonetheless, philosophical faith is not opposed to reason or to knowledge, because it involves the “thinking person.” Faith is not to be equated with the irrational, for the irrational “is at bottom mere negation; our

⁷⁵“*Man wird mit ihnen jene transzendierenden Gedanken denken müssen oder gar nicht,*” *PH* III: 703. Because of his background in medicine and psychiatry, objective cognition or scientific knowledge/truth allows no room for paradox and contradiction. However, for Jaspers, as John Wager points out: “It is only when the object of our thought is not the knowable objects, but reflection upon the conditions of such knowledge and our regulative concepts pertaining to it, that the paradoxes and contradictions are essential, and then only because the point of such thought is not the knowledge of an object, but, as Jaspers says, a ‘posture of consciousness’ or to ‘enlighten myself, so that *in the world* I may become what I am”” (*Existenz and Kantian Reason*, 45).

⁷⁶*Existential Philosophers: Kierkegaard to Merleau-Ponty* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 121.

⁷⁷Paul Ricoeur, “The Relation of Jaspers’ Philosophy to Religion,” *PKJ*, 638.

faith cannot be a plunge into the darkness of antireason and chaos.”⁷⁸ Even though reason “treads” (*tritt*) on the subject-object split, it is in itself not affected by such split (*aber in sich selbst ist sie ohne solche Spaltung*). There are two reasons why “reason” is indispensable to philosophical faith. First, reason is not a system; it is always evolving (*werdend*) and not absolute or fixed in finite things, but will always remain indeterminately open; secondly, through reason all the modes of encompassing are bonded.⁷⁹

Contrary to the so-called “revealed faith” (religious faith), which is irrevocably rooted in authority and objectivity, reason, freedom, and philosophical faith are intimately conjoined. Philosophical faith encompasses both subjective and objective dimensions of faith; namely, *fides qua creditur* and *fides quae creditur*.⁸⁰ Transcendence or Being-itself

⁷⁸PSP, 6. See also Leonard H. Ehrlich, *Karl Jaspers: Philosophy as Faith* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 117-36.

⁷⁹“*Alle Weisen des Umgreifenden, im Sein selbst umgriffen von der Transzendenz, werden in uns umgriffen vom Band aller Weisen des Umgreifenden, der Vernunft,*” PGO, 127.

⁸⁰“Faith without a subjective side is reducible to mere dogma, tenets, to something dead (*ein gleichsam totes Etwas*); faith without an objective side becomes some sort of credulity (*Gläubigkeit*)” (Gentile Maria Sablone, “Man before God in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers,” *Philosophy Today* 11 [1967]: 157); see also pp.158-59; cf. PSP, 7-10. For Jaspers, “philosophical faith is forever immersed in a dialectical process of fusion and negation...Just as Being and Nothingness are inseparable, each containing the other, yet each violently repelling the other, so faith and unfaith are inseparable, yet passionately repel one another” (PSP, 18-9). Since Jaspers’ philosophizing is dialectically or antinomially structured, it is necessary to examine what he means by “dialectical process.” Dialectic, for Jaspers, “means the logical progress through antithesis to a solution in syntheses. Dialectic denotes the movement of reality with its contradictions that tilt into one another, unite, and produce something new. But dialectic also means the exacerbation of antitheses into insoluble antinomies, the fall into the insoluble and the contradiction, - it means also a process that leads us to the frontiers where beings seems absolutely torn apart, where my authentic being becomes faith, and faith becomes the apprehension of Being in the seemingly absurd. Philosophical faith contains such dialectical elements” (Ibid., 19). See also pp.1-46. In his book on Schelling, Heidegger provides a helpful definition of dialectic. “‘Dialectical,’ *dialegein* means... to understand one thing in transition (*dia*) through the other in its essential relation to the other...[T]he one *is* the other and the other *is* the one. A single thing *is* what it is, one, only *in contradistinction* to the other...‘Is’ precisely does not mean empty identicalness, for the one is precisely not the same as the other, but different. But in this difference as a relation

(*Sein-an-sich*) manifests through the act of philosophical faith or through the inner freedom of *Existenz*. But *Existenz*'s self awareness (*Innesein*) of Transcendence is made possible only through the metaphysical objectivity called "cipher" (*Chiffer*). As will be examined in detail, for Jaspers, ciphers can be anything, such as stories, paintings, experiences, creeds, or doctrines. These ciphers are indexical signs that point to Transcendence, and even though the cipher itself is not Transcendence it still involves an objectivity permeated with a subjectivity so that Transcendence can appear.

Transcendence is approached through two types of transcending: formal and existential. Formal transcending is externally and objectively grounded in the "immanent" (e.g., matter, form, life, consciousness); whereas existential transcending is inwardly and subjectively embedded in the relation to Transcendence (e.g., my own attitude or inner action). Existential relations to transcendence are dialectically characterized as defiance (*Trotz*) and surrender (*Hingabe*), fall (*Abfall*) and rise (*Aufstieg*), the law of day (*das Gesetz des Tages*) and passion for the night (*Leidenschaft zur Nacht*), the wealth of the many (*der Reichtum des Vielen*) and the one (*das Eine*).⁸¹

3. Three Modes of Transcending

Jaspers distinguishes three modes of transcending; namely, "world orientation," "the elucidation of *Existenz*," and "metaphysics."⁸² These three modes, like Peirce's three primal categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, interpenetrate and

it belongs together. They are both 'identical' in the higher, true sense" (*Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh [Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 1985], 79).

⁸¹For detailed elucidations of these terms, see *PH III*: 733-84; cf. Oswald Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 194-218.

⁸²Charles Wallraff shows that Kant's three metaphysical ideas (soul, world, and God) not only supplied the titles for Jaspers' three volumes of *Philosophie*, but they were also related directly to Jaspers' "three chief domains of perennial philosophy: *Existenzerhellung* or elucidation of the being that I essentially am, *Weltorientierung*, or the orientation within the world, and *Metaphysik*, or the deliberate search for true being." See "The Kantian Background of Jaspers' Philosophy," *Karl Jaspers: An Introduction to His Philosophy*, 93-6. Like Wallraff, John Wager also argues that Jaspers' *Philosophie*'s three modes of transcending resembles Kant's three *Critiques*. See his *Existenz and Kantian Reason*.

compliment each other. Transcending in world orientation points simply to the fact that the world in which we live has boundaries. The world is neither self-subsistent nor self-sustained, yet without it there will be no Transcendence. And though we are encompassed by these boundaries (“limits strike us everywhere”),⁸³ they will always seem to goad us to ask what lies beyond them. Hence philosophical transcending in world orientation is to distinguish “relative limits from absolute ones”⁸⁴ so that one may “get beyond the world without losing the world.”⁸⁵ Jaspers sums up his transcending in world orientation as follows: “Transcending in world orientation is to suspend one’s consciousness of being amid infinite possibilities.”⁸⁶

Transcending in the elucidation of *Existenz* (*Existenzerhellung*) means that even though living within the subject-object dichotomy and in boundary situations the individual who, through infinite possibilities, freedom, communication, historicity, and “absolute consciousness,” is able to transcend himself/herself from the empirical self (*Dasein*) to intrinsic self (*Existenz*). To move beyond these boundaries the individual must transcend from the empirical-historical individuality, which is an “object” to the historic depth of the intrinsic “I am,” which is *Existenz*.⁸⁷ Jaspers is at pains to remind us transcending is the act of thinking that is not necessarily involved with objective content or knowledge; consequently, in this original transcending I may not cognitively know *what* I am, but somehow I have an awareness *that* “I am.”⁸⁸ It is the “I am” of self-

⁸³ *Phi I*: 83. The consciousness of “boundary” is one of the underlying themes of Jaspers’ philosophizing. Human being is not only circumscribed by epistemological boundaries (the limits of objectifying thinking), but also by existential boundaries (guilt, suffering, struggle, or death).

⁸⁴ *Phi I*: 84.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ “*Transzendieren in der Weltorientierung bringt das Seinsbewußtsein in die Schwebe unendlicher Möglichkeit,*” *PH I*: 45.

⁸⁷ “*Wird von der empirisch-historischen Individualität, welche Objekt werden kann, zur geschichtlichen Tiefe des eigentlichen ‘ich bin’ transzendiert, das nie Objekt wird,*” *PH I*: 41.

⁸⁸ “*In diesem ursprünglichen Transzendieren zu mir weiß ich also nicht, was ich bin, sonder trete ein in ein Innewerden jenes ‘ich bin,’*” *Ibid.*

becoming and of inner freedom. And only in freedom, which is the sign of *Existenz*, can I escape objectification.⁸⁹

The final transcending is transcending in metaphysics, which is the act of *Existenz* breaking through the limits of scientific knowledge which inevitably leads to an intellectual foundering (*gedankliche Scheitern*). It is an act of transcending determinate objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*), of moving from an empirically existing consciousness or “consciousness-as-such” (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*) to the “encompassing consciousness” (*umgreifenden Bewußtsein*). Consciousness is a boundary, it is an object of observation. Because Transcendence can never be objectified, it will not appear in existence; and since Transcendence is neither consciousness nor *Existenz* and only manifests itself to *Existenz* dialectically through ciphers, *Existenz* must reach beyond its immanent consciousness in order to be illuminated by Transcendence. This process is termed “formal transcending”; that is, it is the transcending from the thinkable to the unthinkable, because for Jaspers, “It is thinkable that there exists the unthinkable.”⁹⁰ Formal transcending is, therefore, concerned with nonknowledge (the nonobjectifiable) and cipher-reading; in other words, it accentuates the *that* and not the *what* of Transcendence, and that makes the transcending in metaphysical elucidation become indispensable. It is important to remember that transcending in metaphysics is not ontology, for it does not fall prey to either metaphysical idealism, which stresses subjectivity or metaphysical realism, which leans heavily on objectivity.

4. The Encompassing⁹¹

⁸⁹“*Ein Signum der Existenz is Freiheit. Wo Freiheit ist, endet das zwingende Aufzeigen. Denn in diesem nur analogisch so zu nennenden ‘Aufzeigen’ der Freiheit ist Existenz selbst beteiligt,*” PGO, 156.

⁹⁰“*Es ist denkbar, daß es gibt, was nicht denkbar ist,*” PH III: 707.

⁹¹The metaphysical concept of the Encompassing, which transcends subject and object may be traced back to Spinoza’s monism or idea of one substance, and Nicholas of Cusa’s *coincidentia oppositorum*, which influenced Schelling’s philosophy of nature, especially his principle of identity. Kant’s antinomies also underline Jaspers’ periechontology.

As previously examined, periechontology is the metaphysical concept of the Encompassing. It is that which transcends both subjectivity and objectivity, and like Plato's the Idea of ideas, Jaspers' Transcendence is the Encompassing of encompassing. It is not horizon, but beyond horizon; it encompasses everything that is within a given horizon. Because the nonobjective Encompassing is not ontologically conditioned by the subject-object division, it is not an object. The Encompassing can only antinomically or dialectically be approached or appear through objective thought, it "is present in the object, in the subject, and in their mutual relations."⁹² Jaspers elucidates his concept of the Encompassing as follows:

We always live and think within a horizon. But the very fact that it is a horizon indicates something further which again surrounds the given horizon. From this situation arises the question about the Encompassing. The Encompassing is not a horizon within which every determinate mode of Being and truth emerges for us, but rather that within which every particular horizon is enclosed as in something absolutely comprehensive which is no longer visible as a horizon at all.⁹³

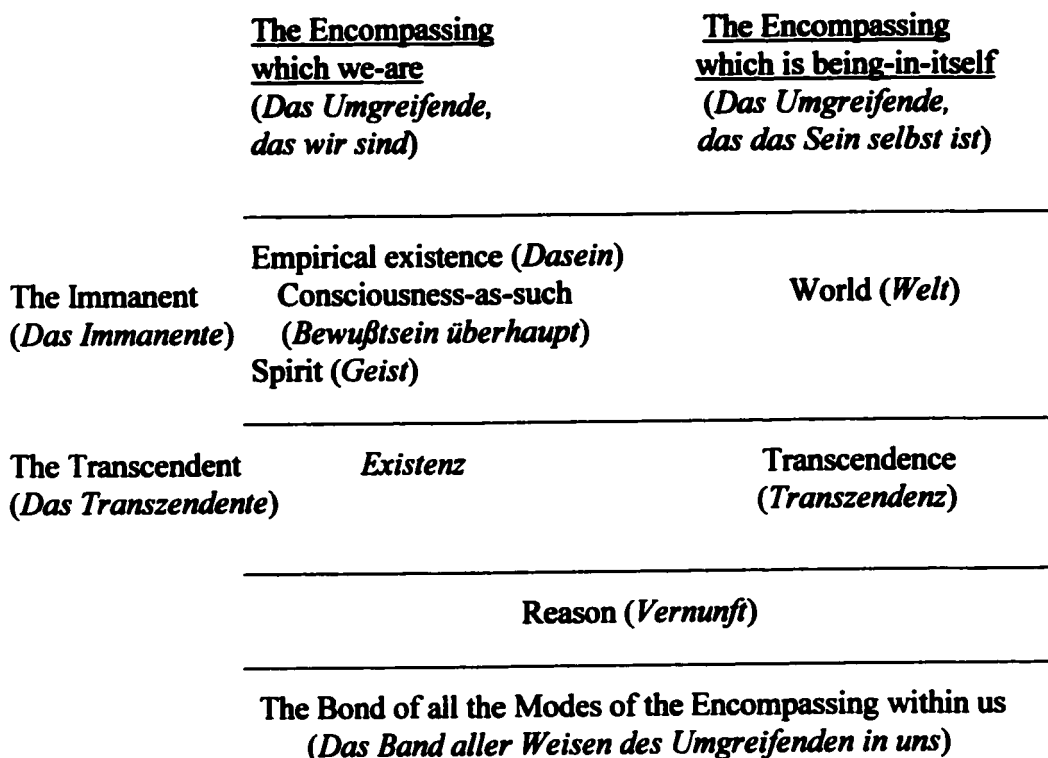
The Encompassing appears to us in two opposed perspectives (*zwei entgegengesetzten Perspektiven*) or two modes of Being (*Seinsweise*): (1) the Encompassing which is Being-in-itself (*das Sein selbst*) and (2) the Encompassing which we-are (*das wir selbst sind*).⁹⁴ And insofar as the Encompassing is cogitated it ruptures into "modes". The Being that encompasses us is called "world" and "Transcendence,"

⁹²Jaspers, "Reply to My Critics," *PKJ*, 791. The Encompassing is "a region that lies on both sides of the subject-object split. The common disjunction between 'subjective' and 'objective' has to be overcome by the recognition that there are experiences which cannot properly be described as merely 'subjective' or merely 'objective'" (John Macquarrie, *Studies in Christian Existentialism* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965], 81.

⁹³Cited in Kurt Hoffman, "Basic Concepts of Jaspers' Philosophy," *PKJ*, 104.

⁹⁴See *VE*, 34-56. See also Robert Donald Knudsen, *The Idea of Transcendence in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (Amsterdam: J.H. Kok N.V. Kampen, 1958), 51-72.

and the Being that we are is called “empirical existence,” “consciousness-as-such,” “spirit,” and *Existenz*. Below is the diagram of the Encompassing.⁹⁵



5. The Encompassing Which We-Are

a. Empirical Existence

For Jaspers, the self manifests in three modes of the Encompassing: empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit. As an empirical existent (*Dasein*), whose sources of behavior derive from impulses, will, thinking, and conduct, I am “being-an-object” (*Objektsein*) organically situating among other objects such as human beings, animals, and plants, and also among the inorganic matters; namely, tools and even thoughts, which are subject to scientific examination. Jaspers calls this “world orientation” (*Weltorientierung*);⁹⁶ in other words, it is spatiotemporally empirical

⁹⁵VdW, 50.

⁹⁶“Our knowledge of existing objects is called world orientation. It is only an *orientation* because it can never be complete and remains an infinite process, it is *world*

existence in which I am anthropologically, biologically, culturally, sociologically, politically, economically, and psychologically conditioned. Being an empirical existent I am determined by the world; namely, the superior Other.⁹⁷ “Encompassing existence” is what Jaspers wants to underscore, because unlike other physical materials or entities, human beings do possess possibilities that are not cognitively defined, scientifically researched, or noetically objectified. And only within this realm of encompassing existence serving as an indexical sign does it point me to potential *Existenz* (an authentic self composed by freedom, communication, and historicity) and eventually to Transcendence (or the *Ultimum*).

b. Consciousness-as-such

Jaspers' concept of consciousness-as-such is analogous to Kant's transcendental unity of apperception (*Ich-überhaupt*). Being consciousness-as-such (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*), I am acutely conscious of the subject-object split; in other words, things appear to our consciousness and have being for us only when they become cognized, intended, or experienceable objects.⁹⁸ Jaspers claims that consciousness carries two meanings. First, we are always conscious of being empirical existents whose living is conditioned by and confined to spatiotemporal reality, and, as objects, we are still subject to scientific investigation. In addition, we are the “particular individuals” (*besondere Individuen*) who are also conscious of our isolated or divided existence from those of others. Second, we are not just “innumerable single consciousnesses” (*zahlloses einzelnes*

orientation because it compiles what is known of a distinct being, of being *in the world*” (*Phi I*: 68).

⁹⁷“*Dasein als das übermächtig mich bestimmende Andere ist die Welt,*” *VE*, 37; cf. *VdW*, 53-64; 608-10. Schrag notes: “The being of the world is neither objective reality nor subjective empirical existence. World as subjective empirical existence becomes my world which is one world among others. World as objective reality tends to some form of naturalism or materialism; world as subjective existence tends to some form of idealism or panpsychism...The world remains boundless. It remains hidden between the transcendence that I am and the transcendence of the world” (*Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 45).

⁹⁸“*Nur was in unser Bewußtsein tritt, erlebbar und Gegenstand wird, ist Sein für uns,*” *VE*, 38.

Bewußtsein) who relatively share some similarity with one another, but that we are also consciousness-as-such;⁹⁹ that is, we participate in “the universally valid truth” (*der allgemeingültigen Wahrheit*).¹⁰⁰ And through consciousness-as-such, human beings are able to comprehend and relate to universally valid truth embodied in concepts or beliefs, for without these universals they would remain as empirical existents and find themselves connecting only with the corporeal world. “Whereas as mere consciousness of existence we are dull and undifferentiated part of our environment, as consciousness-as-such we achieve a clarity of reflection, in which everything appears in the subject-object division.”¹⁰¹

c. Spirit

The self is the spirit (possessing both actual existence and inward thought) who concretely synthesizes objective and subjective ideas, and coalesces the realms of empirical existence and consciousness-as-such. As such Jaspers’ characterization of spirit shares some “family resemblances” (to borrow Wittgenstein’s term) with that of Hegel. However, unlike Hegel’s *Geist*, Jaspers’ spirit, by engaging in an endless process, never attempts to strive beyond itself to reach for completion. Spirit attempts to bring everything into understanding, clarity, unity, and totality by way of forms, patterns, or worldviews that Jaspers calls *ideas*. Thus spirit is precisely “the totality of intelligible thought, action, and feeling that it does not become a closed object for my knowledge, but remains *Idea*.”¹⁰² Spirit not a natural object that will ineluctably be subject to scientific examination, but it is a “force” (*Macht*) penetrating everything (*alles durchdringende*).¹⁰³

⁹⁹Ibid., 37-9.

¹⁰⁰See *VdW*, 64-70; 605-8.

¹⁰¹Gerhard Knauss, “The Concept of the ‘Encompassing’,” *PKJ*, 153.

¹⁰²“...die *Ganzheit* verstehbaren Denkens, Tuns, Fühlens, die nicht in sich geschlossener Gegenstand für mein Wissen wird, sondern *Idee* bleibt,” *VE*, 39. Jaspers elsewhere states: “The totality of spirit is idea” (*Die Ganzheit des Geistes ist Idee*) (*VdW*, 610). “In the Idea, we do not have knowledge of something particular, but an interpretation of the present encompassing actuality as we experience it” (*Schrag, Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 91).

¹⁰³*VdW*, 71.

Not like the timeless abstraction of consciousness-as-such, spirit incarnates in spatiotemporal process; hence it is akin to empirical existence; however, contrary to the latter's "biologico-psychological operation" (*biologisch-psychologisches Geschehen*), spirit is steered by "reflexivity of knowledge" (*Reflexion des Wissens*),¹⁰⁴ ideas, or thought (spirit cannot exist without thought); thus it associates with consciousness-as-such. By moving beyond organic and inorganic life or matter, the self as spirit consciously and intelligibly comprehends and relates to the world by way of ideas.

d. *Existenz*¹⁰⁵

Unlike empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit *Existenz* is the authentic self that is not subject to scientific examination; it is neither object nor form. Like Transcendence, *Existenz* cannot be objectified, and since it is not "being-such" (*Sosein*), in its inner freedom it is "possible *Existenz*" (*möglicher Existenz*). "What I am really is the encompassing of self-being. The self-being called *Existenz*."¹⁰⁶

6. *The Encompassing Which is Being-in-Itself*

a. World

The Encompassing which we-are is the gateway to the Encompassing which is being-in-itself. The nature of the Encompassing which is being-in-itself is twofold: world and Transcendence. The world is Being itself and exists without any human references, such as empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit. The world is neither matter nor reality, but "it is the ground and origin of reality."¹⁰⁷ Unlike empirical existence, the

¹⁰⁴ See *VE*, 40; cf. *VdW*, 71-6; 610-18.

¹⁰⁵ Jaspers' significant concept of *Existenz* will be critically probed into in the next section.

¹⁰⁶ "Was ich eigentlich bin, ist das Umgreifende des Selbstseins. Selbstsein heißt *Existenz*," *VdW*, 76.

¹⁰⁷ "Es ist Grund und Ursprung der Realität." *Ibid.*, 90. It should be pointed out that while Heidegger's thought centers in temporality, Jaspers' centers in spatiality, specifically "the space of *humanitas*" (Hannah Arendt). "Jaspers' thought is spatial because it forever remains in reference to the world and the people in it, not because it is bound to any existing space. In fact, the opposite is the case, because his deepest aim is to

world, as the encompassing world-being (*das umgreifende Weltsein*), is not an object of cognition, but an idea (in the Kantian sense); it is an idea because it carries a task of progressing constantly in it, instead of being a closed whole.¹⁰⁸ Because the world is itself a being encompassing us, it is inexhaustibly vast and infinitely incomprehensible; it is thus neither restricted by empirical existence nor by consciousness-as-such (totality of knowledge). The Jaspersian world is indeterminately an ever receding horizon, never fully disclosing its being; therefore, it can only be indirectly and partially approached by transcending and not by objective knowledge; in other words, we can experience the world as it appears to us, but not beyond it; or we may encounter objects in the world, but not the world itself. And being the Encompassing which is being-in-itself, the world will never be perceived as a unified whole (*Weltall*). Insofar as the world provides existence and consciousness to the self, the “I” (*Ich*) and the world; namely, the “not I” (*Nichtich*) become inseparable. For Jaspers, the world is as both subjective existence (*subjektive Dasein*), in which the self as an existing individual is a part of the world, and as objective reality (*objektive Wirklichkeit*), in which the world is as “the Other” (*das Andere*) existing by itself.¹⁰⁹

b. Transcendence

What made Jaspers’ doctrine of Transcendence dialectically complex is the fact that it was not always clearly expounded.¹¹⁰ Contrary to world-being, which is pure

‘create a space’ in which the *humanitas* of man can appear pure and luminous.” Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 79.

¹⁰⁸“*Die Welt heißt also Idee, weil sie Aufgabe für ein ständiges Weiterschreiten in ihr, nicht ein geschlossenes Ganzes ist,*” *VdW*, 97.

¹⁰⁹See *PH I*: 53-72. Jaspers elsewhere writes: “World-being is the incomprehensible Other; it is itself neither a thing nor being-I” (*Weltsein ist das unfaßliche Andere, ist selber nicht Ding und nicht Ichsein*) (*VdW*, 89).

¹¹⁰Jaspers’ doctrine of Transcendence is not without criticism. Leszek Kolakowski questions Jaspers’ notion of Transcendence, especially how it correlates to the so-called philosophical faith, how it is ambiguous, unconvincing, and “viewed as a proof of huris or as unbelief.” He concludes that Jaspers’ Transcendence offers “no universally accessible God and consequently no salvation.” And regardless of Jaspers’ claiming to be a Christian, however unorthodox, Kolakowski believes Jaspers is “not a Christian.” See

immanence, Transcendence is a mode of the Encompassing which transcends objective cognition, rational understanding, or scientific knowledge. In a similar fashion like that of *via negativa*, Transcendence is characterized by Oswald Schrag as follows:

Transcendence is neither quantity nor quality, neither relation nor source, neither one nor many, neither being nor nothingness.

Transcendence stands over every concept and therefore it can neither be exhausted by the objective logical categories nor by the actuality categories, nor the freedom categories. It can neither be objectivized, nor naturalized, nor anthropomorphized.¹¹¹

his chapter "Philosophical Faith in the Face of Revelation," *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 108-119. Hans Kunz closely connects Jaspers' Transcendence with potential/future death. See "Jaspers Concept of Transcendence," *PKJ*, 499-522. See also Jaspers' reply to Kunz in "Reply to My Critics," *PKJ*, 820-28. In his book *Transcendence and Hermeneutics*, Olson says that Jaspers' use of the term Transcendence contains "attendant ambiguities." He adds: "Jaspers alone in modern thought devotes an entire career to the reinstatement of Transcendence in a way that will sacrifice neither epistemological clarity nor metaphysical depth" (xviii). See his brief introduction to the historical and hermeneutical developments of the concept of Transcendence (ix-xxiii).

¹¹¹*Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 200. Schrag also indicates that Jaspers' Transcendence and the Encompassing "cannot be wholly equated...the encompassing as the all inclusive horizon is comprised of seven manners of being, one of which the transcendence of the world and another is the transcendence that we ourselves are *Existenz*. A more important differentiation between the encompassing and transcendence is the inclusion of both the immanent and transcendent under the encompassing whereas transcendence and immanence are juxtaposed" (Ibid., 200-1). In his unpublished paper, "The Philosophy-Science Relationship in Jaspers, Heidegger, and Peirce," George Pepper notes that in Jaspers' later works he used the term Encompassing in place of Transcendence: "The motive for the shift is Jaspers' interest to distinguish his philosophical terms and ideas from any traditional metaphysical connotation that a term like transcendence had" (69). One may find Jaspers' concept of Transcendence comparable to Gabriel Marcel's "mystery" expounded in his books like *The Mystery of Being* or *The Philosophy of Existence*. Like Jaspers' Transcendence, Marcel's mystery, defined as "metaproblematic," can neither be scientifically cognized nor logically deduced. For a critical study of Marcel's and Jaspers' existential philosophy, see Paul Ricoeur, *Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers: Philosophie du Mystère et Philosophie du Paradoxe* (Paris: Éditions du Temps Présent, 1947). Ricoeur argues that Jaspers' metaphysical concept of foundering would not necessarily lead to nothingness or silence if ontology was given a central role. See also M. Dufrenne and Paul Ricoeur, *Karl Jaspers et la Philosophie de L'existence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1947); cf. Paul Ricoeur, "The Relation of Jaspers' Philosophy to Religion," *PKJ*, 611-42. See also Kurt

Jaspers clarifies:

I must not define transcendence by any predicate, must not objectify it in any idea, must not conceive it by any inference. Yet all categories may be used to say that transcendent being is neither a quality nor a quantity, neither a relation nor a cause, that it is not singular, not manifold, not being, not nothingness, and so forth.¹¹²

Transcendence is the absolute other, the primal source, or “the wholly other” (Kierkegaard). And because Transcendence is veiled, concealed, and unapproachable, a variety of names may be attached to it, such as Being (*Sein*), Reality (*Wirklichkeit*), Godhead (*Gottheit*), and God (*Gott*). The name Being is applied if we think of Transcendence as the Encompassing; it becomes the actual Reality if Transcendence is thought of as living; if Transcendence is that which demands, reigns over, and commands us, then it is Godhead; and if we think of Transcendence as person who personally encounters the individual, then Transcendence is termed God. Transcendence as Being, Reality, Godhead, and God is not an object, but these names relate to an experience on which they are based;¹¹³ in other words, they are, to use Peirce’s term, “indexical signs”

R. Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt: The Main Themes and Phases of Existentialism* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1960), 177-227. Jaspers’ Transcendence and Marcel’s mystery are metaphysically analogous to Heidegger’s Being (*das Sein*) as well as Schelling’s “absolute,” for they defy ontological categories and thus transcend the subject-object split. Heidegger’s Being, unlike human beings, is not a subjectivized entity, for Being is itself “*es gibt*.” Schelling’s “absolute” rises above all distinctions, content, and taxonomies; however, unlike Jaspers, Marcel, and Heidegger, Schelling’s “absolute,” which surpasses Fichte’s intuiting ego, is the self-objectifying absolute ego.

¹¹²*Phi* III: 35.

¹¹³“*Sofern wir die Transzendenz denken als das Umgreifende, nennen wir sie das Sein...Sofern wir mit der Transzendenz leben, ist sie die eigentliche Wirklichkeit...Sofern in dieser Wirklichkeit ein Forderndes, Herrschendes, uns Umfangendes zu uns spricht, nennen wir die Transzendenz Gottheit. Sofern wir als Einzelne uns persönlich getroffen wissen, als Person zur Transzendenz als Person einen Bezug gewinnen, nennen wir sie Gott. Als Sein, Wirklichkeit, Gottheit, Gott wird zwar Transzendenz kein Gegenstand, aber die Namen weisen hin auf die Erfahrung, in denen sie berührt wird,*” *VdW*, 111. Sablone, citing from *PH* III: 779, says that, for Jaspers, Transcendence and God “as each being one and the same” (“Man before God in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers,” *Philosophy Today* 11 [1967]: 162). Calvin Schrag, however, does not think Jaspers

pointing to an experience. Consequently, these different names and interpretations will create ambiguities as Olson has rightly shown.

Jaspers makes a distinction between “universal transcendence” and “authentic transcendence” as follows:

[W]e call transcendence in the authentic sense only the absolutely Encompassing, the Encompassing of all that encompasses. Its substance is primally unique. In distinction to the universal transcendence which is proper to each mode of the Encompassing, it is the transcendence of all transcendences...The universal transcendence can be brought to mind by penetrating it through cognition of the objects that issue from it. Authentic transcendence is not to be reached cognitively; it is only to be experienced existentially as something that offers itself gratuitously.¹¹⁴

Since Transcendence is neither objectively conceivable nor cognizable, it can only be expressed through ciphers, which, for Jaspers, substitute for Transcendence’s manifestation. Transcendence is the being-itself that reveals itself within the subject-object fissure (*Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung*). Jaspers labels this “metaphysics.”¹¹⁵ Not only is the Encompassing which we are finitely circumscribed in the world, but also in Transcendence. It is important for Jaspers to make clear that even though Transcendence

actually “equate transcendence with the traditional theo-metaphysical concept of God,” but that “his version of transcendence shares certain properties with this traditional concept” (*The Self after Postmodernity*, 117). He also argues that, unlike Sartre’s notion of transcendence which is horizontally planted in a “form of intramundane and intratemporal self-transcendence,” conditioned by self-actualization, Jaspers’ transcendence functions vertically (“an indeterminate range of the possible beyond all world horizons”) and horizontally (self-actualization) (117). According to Blackham, Jaspers’ Transcendence is neither theistic nor pantheistic; it is neither naturalistic nor anthropocentric. Idealism, positivism, revealed religion, materialism or physicalism, and atheism are equally rejected by Jaspers. See *Six Existential Thinkers*, 43-65.

¹¹⁴BPW, 174.

¹¹⁵Jaspers devotes the entire volume three of his *Philosophie* to discussing and elucidating the whole metaphysical concept of Transcendence. *Metaphysics* is the title of Jaspers’ volume three.

“is not the world; but without the world there is no Transcendence.”¹¹⁶ The “elusive presence/absence of Transcendence”¹¹⁷ exceeds all form; it is neither embodied in empirical existence as a materialized Transcendence nor located in another world, but it indirectly discloses itself in the “crack of immanence” (*Bruch der Immanenz*).

Transcendence stands on the boundary (*Grenze*) between the worlds of nonbeing and being.¹¹⁸

The concepts of cipher and foundering play indispensable roles in Jaspers' metaphysics. Jaspers calls a cipher (*chiffer*) “metaphysical objectivity” (*metaphysische Gegenständlichkeit*), for it is where Transcendence speaks, and human beings respond by listening. Thus, “[i]t is the immediacy of these two events, the speaking and the hearing, that constitutes a cipher.”¹¹⁹ Metaphysical objectivity is expressed through thoughts, symbols, images, through mythology, theology, and philosophy. Cipher is neither Being-itself nor Transcendence (if it were, then Transcendence would become a cognitive object; hence periechontology would transform into ontology), but is the language or form of Transcendence, for without particular language or form, Transcendence will never appear to human beings. Cipher is the intimation of the hidden Transcendence, and

¹¹⁶Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 191.

¹¹⁷This phrase is taken from Robert Corrington's essay entitled “Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History.” Corrington writes: “Jaspers often paints the Encompassing in passive terms, as the ultimate vista reached by Existenz through a profound use of *via negativa*. Thus he can say: ‘Transcendence, the Encompassing of all Encompassing, is that which, as the absolutely Encompassing, implacably ‘is,’ even as it is not seen, vanishes as it is thought, and hides behind any image or configuration’” (9). Transcendence is also termed the Encompassing because it “seems to open itself. Yet it disappears as soon as it becomes visible. If I try to lay hold of it, I grasp at nothing. If I want to press through to the source of being, I drop into the abyss. never do I attain to what is as a content of knowledge.” Cited in Sablone, “Man before God in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers,” *Philosophy Today* 11 (1967): 161. See also James Collins, “Jaspers' Quest of Transcendence,” *The Existentialists: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), 80-114.

¹¹⁸“*Die Erscheinung der Transzendenz steht an der Grenze zweier Welten, die sich wie Sein und Nichtsein zueinander verhalten,*” *PH III*: 689.

¹¹⁹Bernard F. O'Connor, *A Dialogue between Philosophy and Religion: The Perspective of Karl Jaspers* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1988), 19.

through cipher I participate in Transcendence.¹²⁰ Because an intimating cipher can indirectly enable me to be aware of the nonobjectified Transcendence, it becomes a symbol of Transcendence. Even though Jaspers at times uses the terms “symbol” and “cipher” interchangeably, he is primarily concerned with ciphers, for symbols still bear objective knowledge. Jaspers divides symbols into two types: “interpretable symbol” (*deutbare Symbolik*) and “intuitional symbol” (*schaubare Symbolik*). Interpretable symbols objectively manifest themselves via comparisons, designations, or analogies; they move in the realm of consciousness-as-such. On the contrary, intuitional symbols advance beyond the subject-object dichotomy and open themselves up for infinite possibilities of meaning. An intuitional symbol, as a symbol of Transcendence, allows no division between the sign and its meaning, but seizes both in one (*ergreift beides in Einem*).¹²¹ A cipher is not a sign. A sign objectively points to something beyond itself or refers to a sort of idea; whereas a “cipher is neither subject nor object. It is objectivity permeated by subjectivity, and that Being becomes present in the whole”;¹²² in other words, the cipher itself is not a determinable object, but encompasses both subjectivity and objectivity.¹²³ Ciphers “bring Transcendence to presence, but it is not interpretable.”¹²⁴ Transcendence is absolutely Being-itself, not a cipher-script (*Chiffreschrift*), model, sign, metaphor, representation, or comparison. Jaspers speaks of three languages of cipher through which Transcendence is expressed. These three languages characterize Jaspers’ philosophizing process; that is, to philosophize is to make

¹²⁰VdW, 1030-54.

¹²¹PH III: 801-2. While for Jaspers to speak of God or Transcendence as Being-itself the use of cipher or symbol becomes indispensable; for Tillich, to speak of God as Being-itself is a nonsymbolic statement. See Leonard H. Ehrlich, “Tillich’s ‘Symbol’ vis-à-vis Jaspers’ ‘Cipher,’” *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973): 153-56.

¹²²“Die Chiffer ist nicht Objekt, nicht Subjekt. Sie ist die Objektivität, die von der Subjektivität durchdrungen ist, und zwar so, daß im Ganzen das Sein gegenwärtig wird,” VdW, 1030.

¹²³“Denn sie selber ist kein bestimmbarer Gegenstand, sondern das im Gegenständlichen das Subjekt und Objekt Übergreifende,” *Ibid.*, 1031. Schrag is right to state: “The cipher is not so much object as it is a mode of communication and the source for all authentic communication” (*Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 227).

¹²⁴“Sie bringt Transzendenz zur Gegenwart, aber sie nicht deutbar,” PH III: 796.

leaps from empirical reality (world-orientation) to *Existenz* (existential elucidation) and finally to Transcendence (metaphysics). These three languages resemble Hegel's philosophical process: art, religion, and philosophy. The first language is termed "immediate language of Transcendence" (*unmittelbare Sprache der Transzendenz*). As metaphysical experience, this language is personal, intuitive, sublime, tangible, and living experience (*Erfahrung*) prior to any demonstration or inference. It is primitively existential immediacy (*primitivster Unmittelbarkeit der Existenz*). Through mundane experiences the language of Transcendence can be spoken and communicated. Universal communication (*der Mitteilung allgemein*) is the second language, which takes its form in myths (or narratives), religious revelation, a mythical reality (*mythische Wirklichkeit*). Unlike the first language, which is "immediate and personal, the second is perpetuated through the historical tradition and community."¹²⁵ And through the universal communication of myths and religions we encounter Transcendence (or God); myths and religions thus become ciphers of Transcendence. Jaspers calls the third language "speculative language" (*die spekulative Sprache*). It is "the highest, most communicable"¹²⁶ language. Through the language of philosophy (metaphysical speculation or conceptual formulation) Transcendence is found present in a newly written cipher-script (*Chiffreschrift*); that is, the first and second languages are now critically and conceptually thought, reasoned, speculated, or cogitated. "The original

¹²⁵*Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 225. For discussions of the roles of religious and philosophical ciphers in revealed faith *vis-à-vis* philosophical faith, see Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry into the Possibility of Religion without Myth* (New York: Noonday Press, 1958); Bernard F. O'Connor, *A Dialogue between Philosophy and Religion: The Perspective of Karl Jaspers* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1988); Leonard H. Ehrlich, *Karl Jaspers: Philosophy as Faith* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975); Eugene Thomas Long, *Jaspers and Bultmann: A Dialogue between Philosophy and Theology in the Existentialist Tradition* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1968); Karl Jaspers, *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*, trans. E.B. Ashton (London: Collins, 1967); Paul Ricoeur, "The Relation of Jaspers' Philosophy to Religion," *PKJ*, 611-42; Julius Löwenstein, "Judaism in Jaspers' Thought," *PKJ*, 643-66; Søren Holm, "Jaspers' Philosophy of Religion," *PKJ*, 667-92; and A. Lichtigfeld, "The God-Concept in Jaspers' Philosophy," *PKJ*, 693-701.

¹²⁶Sebastian Samay, *Reason Revisited: The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 190.

philosophical thought is a cipher.”¹²⁷ It “is a thinking that drives us to think the unthinkable. It is mysticism to the intellect that wants cognition, but it is lucidly to a self-being that transcends in it.”¹²⁸ The incarnation of Transcendence in existential reality is either metaphysically speculated or contemplated by thought, and this conceptual act can only be achieved by *Existenz*’s freedom. “Speculation is a kind of thinking that attempts a contemplative being with transcendence; this is why Hegel called it ‘divine service.’”¹²⁹ Metaphysical speculations, for Jaspers, must never surpass ciphers. It should be clear by now that Transcendence could be approached through the ciphers of nature, empirical reality, dogma, revelation, myths, metaphysical speculation, or contemplation.

Whatever names or terms are attributed to Transcendence or whatever languages of cipher are employed in order to approach Transcendence, they remain indexical signs, attempting to point to the ineffable Transcendence. All ciphers will eventually become silent, suffering from what Jaspers calls “shipwreck” (*Schiffbruch*) or “foundering” (*Scheitern*). For him, “where we look and what we grasp, the end is foundering.”¹³⁰ Foundering, as the final cipher,¹³¹ decisively signals the ultimate failure of all languages of ciphers (either grounded in consciousness-as-such or even in *Existenz*), in endeavoring to reach Transcendence. Since Transcendence has no thematic objectivity and will never be confined to the subject-object dichotomy, and since Jaspers wants to preserve a metaphysical “gap” between Transcendence and *Existenz*, everything and everyone will therefore inescapably face shipwreck or the foundering of silence.¹³² Uninterpretability is

¹²⁷“*Der ursprüngliche philosophische Gedanke ist Chiffer,*” *VdW*, 1038.

¹²⁸*Phi III*: 119.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 118.

¹³⁰“*Daß, wohin wir blicken und greifen, am Ende Scheitern ist,*” *PH III*: 870.

¹³¹“*Das Scheitern ist das Letzte,*” *Ibid.*, 866. “[F]oundering itself comes to be a cipher, a cipher determining all other ciphers” (Johannes Thyssen, “The Concept of ‘Foundering’ in Jaspers’ Philosophy,” *PKJ*, 312).

¹³²The gap existing between Transcendence and *Existenz* is what Corrington calls “anti-incarnational.” In his “Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History” (*History and Philosophy*, ed. Ray Langley [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998]), Corrington criticizes Jaspers for being “no friend of the incarnation, whether in the particular Christian sense, or in a more generic sensibility tied to the history of religions.

undefinably the ultimate foundering, it becomes the absolute void as the final fulfillment and remains open to silence.¹³³ This uninterpretable cipher, however, in its silence, can become a stillness (mystical experience?) for those whose freedom and sufferance (*Dulden*) enable them to cling to Being in spite of (*trotz*) their foundering. But this uninterpretable cipher's silence can transmute into abysmal senselessness (*abgründiger Sinnlosigkeit*) for those who fear to make a leap into foundering, and they thus will not be able to hear the voice of Transcendence. Since foundering or shipwreck befalls all, one must have the "courage-to-be" (Tillich) to encounter it.

7. Reason

Reason is chiefly identified with communication, even with the irrational. It is "mysticism for the understanding."¹³⁴ Yet reason constantly seeks to overturn (*Umsturz*) whatever has been acquired by the understanding (*Verstandeserwerbungen*). Jaspers' understanding of reason parallels to that of Kant. In the Kantian scope (*Kantische Weite*) Jaspers distinguishes reason (*Vernunft*) from objective thinking or understanding (*Verstand*), which situates itself in scientific cognition and connotes consciousness-as-such. Reason "is the limiting, recollecting, and progressive power whose contents are always derived from its own limits and which passes beyond every one of these limits, expressing perpetual dissatisfaction."¹³⁵ Jaspers also emphasizes: "Reason is not its own

His ciphers remain cold and bereft of erotic transforming power" (10). Commenting on Jaspers' Transcendence as the Encompassing of all Encompassing, Corrington puts: "It is as if we only encounter the Encompassing through its back draft in which all signs, symbols, and ciphers empty themselves of any historical or particular content so that they do not stain the elusive presence/absence of Transcendence. Jaspers deepens this anti-incarnational understanding by his sense that my encounter with Transcendence, '...loosens the adherence to embodiment...', while still finding its manifestation in symbols" (9-10).

¹³³"*Die Undeutbarkeit als letzte Chiffre ist aber nicht mehr als bestimmbare Chiffre. Sie bleibt offen, daher ihr Schweigen. Sie kann ebensogut die absolute Leere wie die endgültige Erfüllung werden,*" PH III: 877.

¹³⁴"*Vernunft ist 'Mystik für den Verstand,'* EP, 53.

¹³⁵Cited in George Pepper's "The Philosophy-Science Relationship in Jaspers, Heidegger, and Peirce" (21).

source, but because it is an encircling [or an encompassing] bond, it is like a source in which all sources first come to light.”¹³⁶ Since reason is present in all forms of the modes of the Encompassing, and since it is also an encompassing bond that unites all various modes of the Encompassing reason is not to be “suffocated” (*ersticken*) by the immanently Encompassing which we-are; namely, empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit.¹³⁷ To tie all the modes of the Encompassing together means not letting any one of them exist in isolation. Not itself possessing a primal source (*eigener Ursprung*), reason essentially functions as an indexical sign pointing toward the real source; namely, the inaccessible One (*das Unerreichbare*). Furthermore, “Reason smashes limitations, removes fanaticism, does not allow to be eased off by feeling or by the intellect.”¹³⁸

Reason and *Existenz* are interdependent, for they must be genuinely and mutually sustained, determined, and developed by one another’s clarity and reality, because “only through reason does *Existenz* become *lucid* [and] reason only has *content* through

¹³⁶“*Vernunft ist kein eigener Ursprung, aber weil sie das umfassende Band ist, ist sie wie ein Ursprung, in dem alle Ursprünge erst zutage kommen,*” *VE*, 46.

¹³⁷Sebastian Samay, in his book *Reason Revisited* (232-33), infers that Jaspers not only describes reason as a bond of all the modes of the Enveloping (or the Encompassing), but it is also a bond that affirms and unifies the truths and its limits of the other modes:

<i>pragmatic truth,</i>	as the truth of Empirical Being
<i>cogent truth,</i>	as the truth of General Consciousness
<i>ethical truth,</i>	as the truth of Spirit
<i>personal truth, (faith)</i>	as the truth of Existence
<i>ontic truth</i>	as the truth of World
<i>absolute truth</i>	as the truth of Transcendence

For Samay, “Reason can hold them together only by continuously moving among them. Its very movement is the unity of truth” (233).

¹³⁸“*Vernunft zerschlägt die Enge, löst den Fanatismus auf, erlaubt nicht die Beruhigung im Gefühl und nicht die im Verstand,*” *VdW*, 118. See also pp.113-21.

Existenz.”¹³⁹ Therefore for Jaspers, without reason *Existenz* will become irrational and rely on impulse or instinct, and likewise, without *Existenz* reason is pure intellectualism.

Existenz

Der Mensch ist nicht nur ein Gegenstand in der Welt neben anderen...Der Mensch ist immer noch mehr und zugleich ein grundsätzlich Anderes, als das, was als erkanntes Menschsein begriffen wird.

Karl Jaspers

What I can love in man is this, that he is a transition...

Nietzsche

The person is the question to which there is no answer.

Karl Rahner

Joining the company of Schelling (who had been one of the founders of idealism but later departed from it, evidenced by his 1809 treatise *Freiheitsschrift*), Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche, Jaspers continued to reaffirm the embodiment of philosophy in concrete existence. True philosophizing is life, it is “a personal affair, a questioning and replying of man *himself*,”¹⁴⁰ and not a system of self-enclosed rationality (*sich schließenden Vernünftigkeit*) embedded in abstract knowledge. For Jaspers as well as for other existentialists a philosophical system is the betrayal of true philosophizing, because

¹³⁹“*Existenz wird nur durch Vernunft sich hell; Vernunft hat nur durch Existenz Gehalt,*” *VE*, 48.

¹⁴⁰William A. Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1962), 5.

“system is for them the diversion from reality.”¹⁴¹ Also, as has been shown, Jaspers was not conceptually or existentially concerned with Heidegger’s *Dasein*. For him, true philosophizing is not much about *Dasein* (empirical being) as it is about *Existenz* (authentic being), who is individually original (*Ursprung*) and who is inexhaustibly endowed with infinite potentialities, decisions, and freedom. Influenced by Schelling, Jaspers declares that philosophy is not only the work of freedom, which essentially necessitates volition (decision),¹⁴² but also the entrance to existential reality. Philosophy must encompass the spatio-temporal realm of humanity and history; the power of philosophy must pervade all things, for no one can live without it.¹⁴³ Unlike the origin of philosophical insight, intellect and the sensory perception of the sciences are inadequate to probe deeply into the innermost being of true selfhood. This can be done only through metaphysics or through what Schelling calls “intellectual intuition” (*intellektuelle Anschauung*).¹⁴⁴ Not only does the right metaphysics enable us to fathom the depth

¹⁴¹“*Das System ist ihnen Ablenkung von der Wirklichkeit,*” *VE*, 12. Jaspers writes elsewhere: “Their [Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche] language, their ‘teaching’ and their apparent aims are so utterly different. But, at least, they have this in common that each of them has a vision of the age, a clairvoyant insight into the true facts of the situation which no one else in their age seemed to perceive, an insight which still amazes the present-day reader...When we study these three thinkers it is as if we were being initiated into the depths of our own age. Without them we remain as if asleep. They unlock the modern consciousness. They throw their light and growing shadow on to our age, whereas their own age refused their influence” (“The Importance of Nietzsche, Marx and Kierkegaard in the History of Philosophy,” *Hibbert Journal* 69 [1951]: 230).

¹⁴²“*Weil Philosophie ein Werk der Freiheit ist, ist sie im Ursprung ein Wille*” (*Schelling: Grösse und Verhängnis* [München: R. Piper & Co Verlag, 1955], 66).

¹⁴³“*Die Philosophie soll ins Leben treten.. Das gilt nicht nur für den Einzelnen, sondern für den Zustand der Zeit und für die Geschichte und für die Menschheit. Die Macht der Philosophie soll alle durchdringen, weil ohne sie nicht zu leben ist,*” *AP*, 252. Richard Wisser is correct to say “that in [Jaspers’] ‘philosophy of *Existenz*’ he is concerned not only about *human Existenz*, but also about the existence of *Philosophy*. It goes without saying that what is at stake for him in this struggle for philosophy is the ‘possible *Existenz*’ of being-human” (“Jaspers, Heidegger, and the Struggle of *Existenz*-philosophy for the Existence of Philosophy,” trans. Edith Ehrlich, ed. George Pepper, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 24 [1984]: 146).

¹⁴⁴“*Ursprung der philosophischen Einsicht sind nicht schon Verstand und sinnliche Wahrnehmung. Diese stellen der Alltäglichkeit ein Wissen zur Verfügung, in klarer Form als das Wissen der Wissenschaften, das zwingend und für jeden Verstand gleich gültig ist.*

dimension of the self, but it also offers us true understanding of the world.¹⁴⁵ Philosophy, not science, helps me risk piercing through the unapproachable ground of human self-awareness.¹⁴⁶

1. *The Self-Being of Existenz*

For Jaspers, “What I really am is the Encompassing of self-being; namely *Existenz*.”¹⁴⁷ *Existenz* is the source of philosophizing. As pointed out by Tillich, while Heidegger preoccupied himself with the question of Being, Jaspers, profoundly influenced by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, raised the question about human being or about what it meant to be a true self or *Existenz*. Unlike world orientation in which existence is empirical, conditional, finitely temporal, and cognitively objectifiable, *Existenz* is unknowable, free, and unconditional. It moves within its own decision/choice, its own passion, its own fulfilled time (*kairos*), or “the moment” (Kierkegaard). *Existenz* is the

Philosophische Einsicht ist anderer Herkunft. Nur wenn man innerlich sich vergewissert und antwortet mit dem, was Schelling intellektuelle Anschauung nennt, kann man Philosophie verstehen,” AP, 252. Grounded in his principle of identity, Schelling essentially characterizes intellectual intuition as being self-conscious of oneself subjectively and objectively; that is, “the I that thinks and that which is thought are the same” (*Im Ich ist Denkendes und Gedachtes dasselbe*) (Ibid., 253). Elisabeth Young-Bruehl points out that Schelling’s distinction of negative and positive philosophy helped Jaspers adopt his own positive philosophy; namely, communication. There are two types of positive philosophy: the ultimately self-defeating and the ultimately self-destructive. Positive philosophy becomes self-defeating “if it becomes ‘rational universal,’ if it becomes doctrinal and is expressed in direct statements rather than appeals.” Schelling’s positive philosophy, in Jaspers’ perspective, falls into this type because it “ended in an attempt to seize upon ‘an objectification that he thought would take him beyond the bounds of objectification.’” Nietzsche’s positive philosophy is also self-defeating, mainly because of his doctrines of “eternal return” and the will-to-power. Positive philosophy is self-destructive “if it slips into the place of assertion, creation, or generation, a disguised negation.” Because of his fundamental ontology, Heidegger’s positive philosophy falls into this type. See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Freedom and Karl Jaspers’s Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

¹⁴⁵“*Den wahren Verstand der Welt gibt eben die rechte Metaphysik,” AP, 252.*

¹⁴⁶“*Philosophie, das Wagnis, in den unbetretbaren Grund menschlicher Selbstgewißheit zu dringen,” PHI: v.*

¹⁴⁷“*Was ich eigentlich bin, ist das Umgreifende des Selbstseins. Selbstsein heißt Existenz,” VdW, 76.*

particular, the Kierkegaardian “individual”; hence it is neither universal nor absolute. It is the “becoming.” However, regardless of their dialectical reality, existence/world and *Existenz* are interrelated. To truly be (nonobjective) *Existenz* is also to live in objectively empirical existence. This dialectical reality resonates with Nicholas of Cusa’s *coincidentia oppositorum*,¹⁴⁸ the Kantian antinomies,¹⁴⁹ and Schelling’s transcendental idealism of the self.¹⁵⁰ For Jaspers, the word “I am” has a double meaning: the empirical (*empirische*) and existential (*existentielle*). He asserts that, “As empirical existence ‘I am’ not yet definite, I have possibilities in the future, for what I am is still decided by what I become. (Sartre’s “existence precedes essence”?). But essentially, as *Existence*, I am in a sense transcending time.”¹⁵¹ I come to my existence by participating in the world of which I am a member, but with my possibility I encroach the whole.¹⁵² Against *Dasein*, as *Existenz* who is an undefinable self-being, I have unconditionally and nonobjectively become an eternal being (*ewiges Sein*). And again, because of the inescapable nature of dialectical/antinomial reality, *Existenz* (*à la* Schellingian self) straddles worldly realm and Transcendence. Without the world *Existenz* does not truly exist, and yet without Transcendence it is deprived of the measure (*Maß*) of its own depth (*Tiefe*).

¹⁴⁸The infinite is actually present in everything that is finite, and the finite as a potentiality has its being in the infinite. There exists a mutual embracing or mutual interpenetration (*perichoresis*) between the divine and the world.

¹⁴⁹Kant applies the “dialectic” form in his three *Critiques* as a “decisive experiment” to disclose the limits of reason, of the world, and of the realms of ethics and aesthetics.

¹⁵⁰Resembling Nicholas of Cusa’s principle of *coincidence of opposites*, Schelling posits that the self *qua* self can be infinite becoming only when it is limited; that is, living in the boundedness of finitude. For Schelling, the self “can be unlimited only insofar as it is limited, and conversely, that it is limited as a self only insofar as it is unlimited... This contradiction is soluble only if the self in this finitude becomes infinite to itself, i.e., if it intuits itself as an *infinite becoming*. But a *becoming* is unthinkable save under a condition of limitation.” See his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978).

¹⁵¹“...*ich als empirisches Dasein bin noch nicht endgültig, ich habe Möglichkeit als Zukunft, da ich noch entscheide über das, was ich bin, durch das, was ich werde. Mein Wesen aber als existierendes ist in einem die Zeit transzendierenden Sinne,*” PH II: 334.

¹⁵²“*Ich komme zu meinem Dasein nur durch Teilnahme an der Welt, in der ich wirke; ich bin nur Glied und übergreife doch in der Möglichkeit das Ganze,*” Ibid., 335-6.

As the Encompassing, *Existenz* is not ontologically classified as an object, or cognized as a something derived from another source. The Jaspersian *Existenz* is existentially a metaphysical being (as opposed to Heidegger's *Dasein*). It should be obviously clear by now that any ontology of humankind's being is rejected by Jaspers, for he wants to preserve the infinite possibilities of self-realization of *Existenz*, and only in that self-realization does *Existenz* become a true self-being.¹⁵³ The term "possible *Existenz*" (*möglicher Existenz*) used by Jaspers not only proclaims *Existenz*'s "solitude of possibilities" (*Einsamkeit des Möglichen*), but also declares that, because of its infinite possibilities, *Existenz* will not be defined and delimited by the immanent mode of consciousness-as-such. "Consciousness-as-such is the universal and impersonal selfhood, making it possible to substitute one selfhood for another; *Existenz* as my unconditional acting, freedom, historicity, as the unique source of self-being which is given to itself out of transcendence, cannot be replaced or substituted for another."¹⁵⁴ *Existenz*'s self-being depends on its relation to Transcendence and to other *Existenzen*, and only through *Existenz* will Transcendence reveal itself.

Besides having "starry heavens above and the moral law within" (Kant), Jaspers, following the path of classical humanism, also elevates the human being's potentialities to the infinite regardless of human finitude. Jaspers has repeatedly enunciated this aphorism: Human being is always more than he/she knows about himself/herself. For Jaspers:

The mystery of existence in which we find ourselves is that of being-human. This focal point preoccupies philosophical thought from Augustine's "*quaestio mihi factus sum*" (*Confessiones*, X, 50)

¹⁵³"*Dieses Sein bin ich selbst als Existenz. Sie bin ich, sofern ich mir nicht selbst Objekt werde...Aus ihrer Möglichkeit lebe ich; nur in ihrer Verwirklichung bin ich ich selbst,*" Ibid., 295.

¹⁵⁴Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 125. Jaspers' "untranslated term, *Existenz*, is retained to differentiate it from 'existence' as used in empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit, all three of which are oriented toward immanence, whereas *Existenz* is oriented toward transcendence. Consequently, *Existenz*, although in time, is oriented beyond time, beyond the empirical, and beyond the rational" (Ibid., 123-4).

to Kant's formulation of the meaning of philosophy, that is, to show man's position in the universe and man's tasks.¹⁵⁵

Following Kierkegaard's concept of selfhood, Jaspers, first of all, maintains that the self's existential assurance is fortified and its origin is found in the Encompassing only when objective knowledge or universal validity is transcended. Secondly, since the self is dialectically structured it defies ontological determination. He also insists that doctrines claiming that human being possesses a place between angels and animals,¹⁵⁶ or that human being is structured by thinking, feeling, and willing, or by consciousness and unconscious have anthropologically failed to provide adequate answers to the question of being human.¹⁵⁷ Jaspers admires Kierkegaard for his transcending anthropology so that possible *Existenz* can become the human being's existential foundation:

Man defined himself first by means of great images, as though he already understood himself. He conceived of himself in the hierarchy of the creatures. As a sensual being, he is the highest of the beasts, as a spiritual being, the lowest of the angels; yet he is neither beast nor angel, but related to both by a part of his nature, superior to each by virtue of that which is lacking in one or the other, but which he possesses from his own origin, as the direct creation of God. Or man is conceived as the microcosm which contains everything that the world, the macrocosm, enfolds. Man corresponds to other being, only to the world as a whole.¹⁵⁸

If "Humankind is an immense abyss" (Augustine), then also for Jaspers true selfhood or *Existenz* can never be scientifically investigated, factually categorized, or rationally inferred as an abstract concept, but can only be elucidated (*Existenzerhellung*). Following Kant, Jaspers wanted to create a new humanism: a transcendental self who is

¹⁵⁵*The Great Philosophers*, Vol. IV, ed. Michael Ermarth and Leonard H. Ehrlich, trans. Edith Ehrlich and Leonard H. Ehrlich (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 238.

¹⁵⁶"Man cannot be understood on the basis of evolution from the animals," *PSP*, 61.

¹⁵⁷*The Great Philosophers*, Vol. IV, 238. "What man is, is not at all a self-evident fact" (239).

¹⁵⁸*PSP*, 49.

anointed with boundless possibilities, mystery, and freedom. The fourth question: “What is humankind?” that Kant has raised determines Jaspers’ philosophizing and is far more constitutively fundamental than the other three questions: “What can I know?” “What should I do?” and “What may I hope for?” According to Jaspers:

The fourth question, which in Kant’s words encompasses the other three, means that Kant does not start from God, being, the world, the object, or the subject, but from man, for man is the area in which all the rest become reality for us...Being remains the essential, but man can approach and apprehend it only through his existence as a man...Man is not subsumed under something else; in essence he is not a species in a genus including other species known to us. He is the medium of reality in which what is possible for us is situated.¹⁵⁹

The above quotation explicitly underscores the humanistic existentialism in Jaspers’ philosophizing.

In his book *Existenzphilosophie*, Jaspers maintains that if aesthetic theory fails to scientifically comprehend the actual reality of art, then no studies of anthropology or psychology can penetrate into the living existence and reality of humankind.¹⁶⁰ And in his *Nietzsche*, Jaspers claims that human being possesses two profoundly different attitudes:

He can *observe and investigate himself* as an existence that simply is of such and such a nature and that undergoes alterations in accordance with discoverable laws, and he can also submit to criteria and *impose upon himself demands* which must honestly be acknowledged of he is to insure his own regeneration...We call the observation of man’s

¹⁵⁹Kant, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962), 92-3; cf. William Earle, “Anthropology in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers,” *PKJ*, 523-38.

¹⁶⁰See also *Existentialism and Humanism: The Three Essays by Karl Jaspers*, ed. Hanns E. Fischer, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Russell F. Moore Company, 1952). Kurt Kolle, while not accusing Jaspers for relapsing into philosophical idealism, criticizes Jaspers for “overat[ing] the average man ...[and] idealiz[ing] man in an admissible way” (“Karl Jaspers as a Psychopathologist,” *PKJ*, 454).

existence “anthropology” and “psychology,” while the making of demands upon his innermost nature we call “philosophy.” Psychology investigates, makes discoveries, and predicts. Philosophy appeals, projects possibilities, and prepares the way for decision.¹⁶¹

The freedom of *Existenz* is safeguarded by the Encompassing against objective knowledge¹⁶² or “some kind of transcendental imposition of an a priori ground of intelligibility.”¹⁶³ So it is quite clear that, being a humanist *par excellence*, Jaspers seems not to have been satisfied with the idea of a physiologically, socially, psychologically, anthropologically, or historically circumscribed human being. Any humanly conceivable images attributing to the Jaspersian *Existenz* are considered too limiting, because the human person is more than he or she can know of himself/herself; in other words, human being swims in the sea of open-ended future¹⁶⁴ and travels on the “inaccessible ground”

¹⁶¹N, 127.

¹⁶²“*Keine Anthropologie erkennt, was das lebendige Dasein des Menschen wirklich ist. Das lebendige Dasein, das wir als umgreifend selbst sind, hat das biologisch von sich Wißbare nur als eine Perspektive oder benutzt es als ein Mittel...Keine Kunstwissenschaft erfaßt als Wissenschaft, was die eigentliche Wirklichkeit der Kunst ist, d.h. was in der Kunst als Wahrheit erfahren und hervorgebracht wurde...Keine Religionswissenschaft (Religionsgeschichte, Religionspsychologie, Religionssoziologie) erfaßt, was als Religion wirklich ist...Das Umgreifende hält gegen die Wißbarkeit mich selber frei,*” EP, 19. Jaspers puts it elsewhere that human being “cannot be derived from something else, but is immediately at the base of all things...All empirical causalities and biological processes of development would seem to apply to man’s material substratum, not to himself...Every insight into man, if it is absolutized into a supposed knowledge of man as a whole, destroys his freedom” (PSP, 59). See particularly chapter three “Man,” (PSP, 47-74). In *Way to Wisdom*, Jaspers reaffirms: “Man was no longer self-contained. He was uncertain of himself, hence open to new and boundless possibilities” (101).

¹⁶³Corrington, NR, 98.

¹⁶⁴Akin to Augustine’s statement, “I became a question to myself,” as regards metaphysical anthropology (philosophy of transcendentality) which explores the human person as the “essence of an unlimited transcendentality,” Catholic theologian Karl Rahner asserts: “The person is the question to which there is no answer...Experience gives answers, but no answer which would make what we are questioning - the human person as a unity and as a whole - intelligible...The philosophy of unlimited transcendentality makes the person an unlimited question without its own answer” (*The Content of Faith: The Best of Karl Rahner’s Theological Writings*, ed. Karl Lehmann and Albert Raffelt, translated and edited by Harvey D. Egan, S.J. (New York: Crossroad,

(*unbetretbaren Grund*). As such, the Jaspersian self is more than the Cartesian “extended substance” (*res extensa*) or “thinking substance” (*res cogitans*), and it is definitely not “thinghood.” As possible *Existenz*, the Jaspersian self is a traveler on a “journey without arrival.”¹⁶⁵ It is also analogous to Marcel’s *homo viator* or Nietzsche’s “a transition” that is “on the way.”

Like the Kierkegaardian leap of faith, to have an authentic existence (*eigentlich Existenz*), for Jaspers, is to make a leap (*Sprung*) from the empirical to Being itself (*Sein selbst*), from the Encompassing which *we-are* (*wir sind*); namely, empirical existence (*Existenz* not to be solely reduced to an objectified, empirical entity), consciousness-as-such (*Existenz* transcending universally absolutizing knowledge), and spirit (*Existenz* possessing future potentialities, thus rejecting the constructing notions of a totality) to the Encompassing which *we can be* (*wir sein können*), and from the Encompassing that we cognize as world to the Encompassing that Being-in-itself is (*das Sein an sich selbst ist*). This leap determines the freedom of *Existenz*, for without it encounter with Transcendence becomes impossible. Freedom exists only with and through Transcendence (*Denn Freiheit ist nur mit der Transzendenz durch Transzendenz*).¹⁶⁶ Through the transforming power of freedom, which enables *Existenz* to steadfastly sustain its boundary situations (lived experiences) so that it can rise above these finite realities of antinomies (e.g., life vs. death, chance vs. necessity), *Existenz* is able to approach Transcendence. The genuine relation of *Existenz* to Transcendence always occurs in the existence of the antinomies. The process of living (*der lebendige Prozeß*) ineluctably

1993), 73-4, 77. Jaspers also maintains, “[T]he ultimate aim of philosophizing is a question and, what is more, a question to which no answer is possible...A philosophical question becomes as meaningless as its object if it is denatured into scientific objectivity” (*Kant*, 94). As a psychopathologist, Jaspers affirms: “What Man actually is remains the great question that stands at the margins of all our knowledge” (*GP*, 31).

¹⁶⁵See Ernst Breisach, *Introduction to Modern Existentialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 109-32.

¹⁶⁶*EP*, 21.

conflates with boundary situations; in other words, humankind cannot exist without these “shells” (*Gehäuses*):¹⁶⁷

Situations are as follows: that I am always in situations, that I cannot live without struggle or without suffering, that I inevitably face guilt, that I must die; I call these things boundary situations. They *do not change*, except in its appearance.¹⁶⁸

2. *Psychic Life*

Jaspers' psychological analysis of *Existenz*'s psychic life is fundamentally characterized by the distinction between “understanding” (*verstehende*) and “explaining” (*erklärende*) psychology. As a psychologist and psychiatrist, Jaspers took the human being's conscious and unconscious life seriously; furthermore, he attempted to explore the problem of existence (*Dasein*) as well as the psychic life of *Existenz* in the context of psychopathology. Phenomenological psychopathology was Jaspers' expertise, evidenced by his 1913 book *Allgemeine Psychopathologie (General Psychopathology)*, nearly one thousand pages long. In Jaspers' view, the field of psychopathology is finite and incapable of offering a final, definitive psychoanalysis of human beings, and that “there is something hidden in every human individual which defies recognition.”¹⁶⁹ Jaspers'

¹⁶⁷See Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1954), 280-84. “Insofar as the human being sees himself situated in the whole of life as an ultimate, experiences his existence as encompassed by this unbroken medium, he stands in antinomies. It is only from the perspective of flowing life as a whole that the antinomies destroy and divide. This is the experience of the limit situation” (Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], 141).

¹⁶⁸“*Situationen wie die, daß ich immer in Situationen bin, daß ich nicht ohne Kampf und ohne Leid leben kann, daß ich unvermeidlich Schuld auf mich nehme, daß ich sterben muß, nenne ich Grenzsituationen. Sie wandeln sich nicht, sondern nur in ihrer Erscheinung,*” *PH II*: 469. Furthermore, boundary situations awake (*erwachen*) Jaspers from his unconcern (*Unbekümmertheit*); they are not mere ideas, but like a jolt, shaking and making Jaspers aware that there are decisions that must be made by him. (*Ich erwachte dann nicht durch einen bloßen Gedanken, sondern durch eine Erschütterung in der Situation, durch die ich in der Wurzel betroffen war und den Anspruch fühlte, daß etwas entscheidend auf mich ankomme*) (*Ibid.*, 315).

¹⁶⁹*GP*, 1.

underlying theme always focuses on the truth that, “human being is essentially incomplete and in himself he is inaccessible to knowledge. Our knowledge is piecemeal when it ends in enumeration and scattered elements; it is still piecemeal when we reach the multiplicity of complex unities. Rather in the end the human being himself remains an open question and so too our knowledge of him,”¹⁷⁰ it therefore must be approached by way of philosophical reflection. It is a mistake, so claims Jaspers, for psychopathologists to attempt to scientifically investigate, research, and define the human person as a whole. All complex unities are fragmented. Human being is eternally incomplete. And insofar as human being “becomes defined, he is no longer the whole man...[M]an preserved the total potentiality for himself.”¹⁷¹ Human being is the “undefined animal” (Nietzsche).

While other psychiatrists methodologically treat patients within the domain of psychoses (e.g., Jung), Jaspers paid attention to the realm of anthropology (e.g., his psychological analyses of Nietzsche, Strindberg, and van Gogh), treating his patients as human beings instead of pathological cases. Kurt Kolle remarks:

As a psychopathologist Jaspers summons the individual psychiatrist ceaselessly to look on his patient as a human being instead of a case. The single individual who, in distress, in suffering, is looking for help and submits to medical treatment (or is entrusted to the care of a physician) can never, or only in rare exceptional cases, be comprehended in a way which the totality and singularity of his being would demand...Jaspers’ basic thesis is that there is no total knowledge of Man, only partial insights. Such partial knowledge (frequently intuitive in origin) must be corroborated empirically, prove logically, and, thus given immediate living demonstration.¹⁷²

Psychopathology does not limit itself to biological, physiological, or forensic aspects, but extends itself to the humanities. If psyche is not an object to be methodically investigated, but “is a becoming, an unfolding and a differentiating, it is nothing final nor

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 748-9.

¹⁷¹GP, 761.

¹⁷²“Karl Jaspers as Psychopathologist,” *PKJ*, 463-4. Again, like Schelling’s notion of the self, Jaspers insists that, “Though we speak of ‘a human being as a whole’ we mean something infinite and as a whole unrealizable” (GP, 30).

is it ever fully accomplished,”¹⁷³ then human being is an unfinished product (Kierkegaard’s “infinite reflection”) that is always in the making, in process. Within human being there exists dynamic relationships between subjective (that which can only be grasped by “sympathetic insight”) and objective (that which can be “perceived by the senses”) aspects as well as between psychological “understanding” and psychological “explanation”; namely, psychic life’s events “from within” and “from without” respectively.¹⁷⁴

3. *The Kierkegaardian Selfhood in Jaspers’ Existenz*

Psychologie der Weltanschauungen, a “groundbreaking book which... inaugurate[d] German *Existenzphilosophie*,”¹⁷⁵ not only unveiled Jaspers’ break away from the traditional philosophy (thus joining the company of Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche), but also presented his new conception of the self (*Existenz*), profoundly influenced by Kierkegaard’s and Nietzsche’s philosophizing of selfhood. Hannah Arendt claimed that the word “*Existenz*” in the modern sense appeared for the first time in the later Schelling.¹⁷⁶ However, it was Kierkegaard who actually breathed life into this word. The being of *Existenz* embodies such infinite depths (*unendlicher Tiefe*) that it revolts against any conceptual thinking. Reality or Being is not ontologically grounded in *essentia*, but in

¹⁷³GP, 9.

¹⁷⁴For detailed descriptions and meanings of these phenomenological terms, see GP, 25ff. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl succinctly says: “One might say that *Verstehen* without explanation is empty, and explanation without *Verstehen* is blind” (*Freedom and Karl Jaspers’s Philosophy*, 132).

¹⁷⁵Kiesel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, 137; cf. Hannah Arendt, “What is *Existenz* Philosophy?” *Partisan Review* 13 (1946), 34-56.

¹⁷⁶“What is *Existenz* Philosophy?” *Partisan Review* 13 (1946), 37. The appeal to “Existence,” according to Tillich, emerged approximately a hundred years ago, in the decade from 1840 to 1850, especially when at the University of Berlin (during the winter 1841-42) Schelling delivered his lectures on *Die Philosophie der Mythologie und der Offenbarung*. Engels and Kierkegaard were among the audience. See Paul Tillich, “Existential Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944): 44-70; cf. Paul Weiss, “*Existenz* and Hegel,” *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 8 (1947): 206-216.

concrete, immediate experience of *existentia*. Jaspers understands reality as manifesting four different realms: matter, life, soul/psyche and mind.

Existentialist philosophizing like that of Kierkegaard or Nietzsche was diametrically opposed to rationalism as well as idealism, specifically against Hegel's dialectical system, which attempted to consume reality or Being in the purely ideal concept (*Begriff*).¹⁷⁷ An "existential thinker" (Kierkegaard's coined phrase), Jaspers also found fault with the Hegelian self.¹⁷⁸ Hegel's self is lonely, abstract, and will remain divided if it does not "objectify" itself; that is, moving from subjectivity to objectivity, from inward to outward, or from particular to universal. The self's consciousness (the "in-itself") becomes "self-consciousness" (the "for-itself") when it moves from self-identity to self-differentiation, and through the leading of *Geist* it will return to itself completely whole (the "in-for-itself"). The Hegelian self would continue to remain ideally abstract if it did not venture out to clothe itself with "concrete universals," such as science, art, religion, and philosophy; it yearns for objectivity, for the "material reality" (*Dingheit*), for that is where life becomes concretely actual. And while Hegel's dialectical self immerses itself

¹⁷⁷Not only did Kierkegaard severely attack Hegel's essentialist philosophy - the logically abstract understanding of reality/existence, but Schelling also criticized Hegel for his "first demand on philosophy that it should withdraw into pure thinking, and that it should have as sole immediate object the pure concept" (134). For Schelling, actual existence can never be reduced to abstract concepts; he thus protested against Hegel's claim in his *Logic* that the concept was everything. In Schelling's view, "There is nothing earth-shaking about the *Logic*. Hegel *must* come to reality" (154), and that "what is logical also presents itself as the merely negative aspect of existence" (147). Armed with his positive philosophy, Schelling argues: "When Hegel says philosophy begins with withdrawing completely into pure thinking, he has splendidly expressed the essence of the truly negative or purely rational philosophy" (145). See Schelling's chapter on Hegel in his *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 134-63.

¹⁷⁸"The Existential thinker needs special forms of expression, because personal Existence cannot be expressed in terms of objective experience. So Schelling uses the traditional religious symbols, Kierkegaard paradox, irony, and the pseudonym, Nietzsche the oracle, Bergson images and fluid concepts, Heidegger a mixture of psychological and ontological terms, Jaspers what he calls 'ciphers,' the Religious Socialist concepts oscillating between immanence and transcendence" (Tillich, "Existential Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944), 55).

in essentialism and immanentalism, the Kierkegaardian self subsists in existentialism and transcendence.

Despite Jaspers' opposite perspective regarding Kierkegaard's appeal to Jesus as *the* authoritative founder of Christianity and the "absolute paradox" (God becoming human), the Jaspersian self intimately mirrors itself in the Kierkegaardian self, who relates itself to its own self, to Transcendence, to freedom, to existential decisions, to indirect communication, and to its own situation. Both Kierkegaard and Jaspers emphasize the individual's self-being and reject Descartes' *cogito*, Hegel's *Geist*, and Kant's transcendental self. Kierkegaard's notion of freedom has considerably shaped Jaspers' understanding of *Existenz*. For Kierkegaard, a human being is spirit, and spirit is the self. And what is the self? Kierkegaard's selfhood is defined as follows: First, the self as the synthesis of opposites (reflecting the thought of Parmenides' fixity, permanence, eternal and Heraclitus' change, flux, temporality): the infinite/finite, the eternal/temporal, and necessity/possibility; second, the self is "a relation that relates itself to itself" ("disrelationship" entails despair); and third, the self in relating to itself relates itself to another; that is, it will ultimately embed itself in Transcendence or God.¹⁷⁹ Freedom is the third element that relates the self to itself. Without the self, freedom will never unfold; yet, the self cannot be the self if it remains in its possibility. The self can only become a self when it is inserted in some type of actuality or necessity. Consequently, freedom is neither possibility nor necessity, but it is the means that synthesizes or harmonizes both the self's possibility and necessity. The Kierkegaardian self is thus divided between the "real self" (necessity), which is the past, and the "ideal self" (possibility), which is the future. Freedom is present; it is decision. With freedom the self wills itself to make decisions as an "individual," and not to become an unknown or undifferentiated person in the "crowd" or in the "public," or what Heidegger, having adopted Kierkegaard's concept, calls "*das Man*." For Kierkegaard, the authentic self is the self that lives in dependence on God, for God is the primal source from which the self derives. Insofar as the self sustains its transcendent relationship with God, it will continue to exist as an

¹⁷⁹See Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

authentic self. However, the self must realize that it can only make existential decisions within its own situation. Despair or “unhappy consciousness” befalls the self when it denies the divine-human relationship with God, when it refuses “not to will oneself”; namely, not to risk making decisions for itself, not to exist as an individual fully embracing its possibility and necessity, and not to exercise its existential freedom.

4. *The Nietzschean Selfhood in Jaspers' Existenz*

Besides Kant and Weber whose thought and ideas Jaspers continued to revere, Nietzsche's existential philosophizing, more than that of Kierkegaard, also empowered and enriched Jaspers' philosophical faith. In his philosophical career Jaspers wrote and published more on Nietzsche than on any other philosopher. His major work on Nietzsche entitled *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* was published in 1936.¹⁸⁰ Walter Kaufmann points out that Jaspers was actually interested in “Nietzsche's way of philosophizing and not in his philosophy.”¹⁸¹ Nietzsche's philosophizing, so Jaspers claims, is indispensable because it compels us to concretely confront existential problems, although Nietzsche (and other existentialists) have never actually offered us adequate solutions.¹⁸² Deeply immersed in the classical humanistic

¹⁸⁰See Walter Kaufmann, “Jaspers' Relation to Nietzsche,” *PKJ*, 407-36; see also Jaspers, “Reply to My Critics,” *Ibid.*, 857-62. For different interpretations of Nietzsche expounded by Heidegger and Jaspers, see Richard Lowell Howey, *Heidegger and Jaspers: A Critical Examination of Heidegger's and Jaspers' Interpretations of Nietzsche* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). Excellent studies on Nietzsche are written by Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 4 vols., trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1979 [vol.I], 1984 [vol.II], 1987 [vol.III], and 1982 [vol.IV]); and Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁸¹“Jaspers' Relation to Nietzsche,” *PKJ*, 423.

¹⁸²Perhaps drawing from his so-called “method of correlation” (the positing of existential questions and the divine revelation of theological answers), Paul Tillich perceptively remarked: “When you deal with existentialists, don't go to them in order to find answers.” For instance, the answers that one finds in the later Heidegger only come from the medieval Catholic mystical tradition, but not from existentialism; in Jaspers, only from the classical humanist tradition or German idealism; in Marcel, from classical Catholic orthodoxy; in Kierkegaard, from Pietistic Lutheranism; and in Nietzsche, from “the philosophy of life with all of its romantic ambiguities and divine-demonic

tradition, Jaspers has naturally found Nietzsche's psychological and existential understanding of human being more congenial and appealing to his own philosophizing than Kierkegaard's Christian selfhood of *Existenz*. But what Jaspers has learned from Nietzsche (as well as from Kierkegaard) is his existential definition of human being as "the becoming."¹⁸³ Influenced by Heraclitus' philosophy of becoming, Nietzsche considers human being "as the source of as yet undetermined possibilities...[M]an is 'the animal that is *still not fixated* (*das noch nicht festgestellte Tier*). That is to say that man is indeed no longer merely an animal, but a being whose nature is still to be determined."¹⁸⁴ Therefore, for Jaspers, "all determinateness is transcended,"¹⁸⁵ and:

while the intellect is a means to life, still it cannot grasp what most truly *is*, namely, constant becoming: 'Our intellect is not contrived to understand becoming; it strives to demonstrate the universal cold inflexibility of everything.' But 'the character of the world of becoming' is 'incapable of being expressed in formulae'; it is 'false,' 'self-contradictory,' and incommensurable with logic. 'Knowledge and becoming are mutually exclusive...'¹⁸⁶

For Jaspers, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard both probed deeply into the depth dimension of *Existenz*, striving toward genuine truth that is not hampered by philosophical speculation. They were not romantically engaged in a "philosophy of feeling" (*Gefühlphilosophie*), but in philosophizing, in creating a new reality of authentic feeling grounded in *Existenz*, and in asking the right question, such as "What will become of human being?" (*Was aus dem Menschen wird?*). In Jaspers' eyes, these two existentialists were exceptions in every sense.¹⁸⁷

dimensions." For Tillich, all of these answers arise from religious traditions, and not from existentialism. See "Heidegger and Jaspers," *Heidegger & Jaspers*, 26-7.

¹⁸³"To be a man is to become a man," Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom*, 73.

¹⁸⁴*N*, 130.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 350.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 212-3.

¹⁸⁷"*Ausnahmen sind sie in jedem Sinne*," *VE*, 22.

Jaspers finds in Nietzsche a man who was concerned about human being, about the “longing for the realization of genuine human possibilities”;¹⁸⁸ in other words, in Nietzsche, one finds human being swimming in “the ocean of the infinite.”¹⁸⁹ Jaspers finds his existential notion of freedom congenial to that of Nietzsche insofar as the human freedom of self-realization is exercised; however, unlike Jaspers’ or Kierkegaard’s, Nietzsche’s freedom as creation exists without Transcendence.¹⁹⁰ Nietzsche’s freedom is immanently established in one’s own self-being, in its own source of life; that is, the Nietzschean self lives with self-reliance and self-creation, with anthropological hubris.¹⁹¹ While Kierkegaard leaps into Transcendence via Christianity of the New Testament, Nietzsche also makes a leap, not necessary into Transcendence, but into pre-Socratic Hellenism, the “eternal return,” and the *Übermensch*. By the will-to-power (the self-overcoming), Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* wants to conquer and transform human finitude

¹⁸⁸N, 125.

¹⁸⁹“...dem Meer des Unendlichen,” VE, 20.

¹⁹⁰Corrington keenly shows that, dictated by his “conceptual self-capturing of the will-to-power” which causes the abandonment to “any search for extra-horizonal structures or constraints” and “[b]y transforming metaphysics into the elucidation of the internal meaning and sign-values of horizons, Nietzsche destabilizes his own enterprise and cuts off any genuine relation to Transcendence...By collapsing metaphysics into a horizon morphology of the will-to-power, Nietzsche pushes the depth dimension of the human process into a self-encapsulated region from which it cannot emerge to govern the evolution of the self. Radical Existenz ceases to open out the relational power of Transcendence” (“From World Exegesis to Transcendence: Jaspers’s Critique of Nietzsche,” *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers: Philosoph unter Philosophen*, ed. Richard Wisser and Leonard H. Ehrlich [Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993], 79).

¹⁹¹“A new pride my ego taught me, and this I teach men: no longer to bury one’s head in the sand of heavenly things, but to bear it freely, and earthly head, which creates a meaning for the earth,” Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra: First Part,” *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 144. Richard L. Howey is correct to comment: “Nietzsche and Jaspers might have many disagreements about the articulation of the fundamental problem of immanent transcendence and its intelligibility, but in the end both are in agreement that authentic existence can never merely be an acceptance of what is, nor can authentic thinking merely be a description of what is. It is this latter fact that distinguishes philosophizing from science” (“Jaspers’s Nietzsche: The Lonely Iconoclast,” *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers*, 73).

and harmonize Dionysian passion with Apollonian order; whereas, for Jaspers as well as for Kierkegaard, the authentic selfhood's freedom historically and theologically exists because of the integration between temporal and eternal, between self and God (Kierkegaard) or between *Existenz* and Transcendence (Jaspers). Following Kierkegaard, Jaspers announces that authentic selfhood radically depends on God's help, particularly by way of listening.¹⁹² Consequently, as far as freedom as creation is concerned, it is not quite accurate to equate Nietzsche's self-overcoming self with Jaspers' *Existenz*. And while the Nietzschean self defiantly exceeds beyond moral, traditional, or religious restraints in order to become a "master," Jaspers' *Existenz* transcends dichotomies and antinomies of world orientation's immanent modes of existence in order to encounter Transcendence.

5. *Existential Communication*

There are three existential categories that help elucidate *Existenz*: communication, historicity, and freedom. First, by communicating with or relating to other *Existenzen*, *Existenz*'s self-being will cease as isolated ego; secondly, only because of time and space and historic singularity it will cease as a purely justifiable intellect; and thirdly, only because of freedom it will cease as an empirical existence.¹⁹³ Jaspers explains further:

The existential categories, such as freedom, historicity, possibility, and communication, are to be regarded as mere signals or signs and not as objective universals. As signs they have a universal aspects, but this universality cannot be equated with the general world-orientation categories, nor with Kant's categories... We cannot assert that *Existenz*, freedom, or communication falsify themselves. To speak of *an Existenz*, a freedom or *the* freedom does violence to the intent of such existential terms. The statement "I am an *Existenz*" has no meaning

¹⁹²"In life, freedom gives us a sense of receiving help from transcendence...God works through the free decisions of the individual...A man's humanity depends on how deeply he gains guidance through...listening [to God]," *Way to Wisdom*, 71-3.

¹⁹³"*Selbstsein hört auf als isoliertes Ichsein; es ist in Kommunikation. Es hört auf als vertretbarer reiner Verstand; es ist nur in geschichtlicher Einmaligkeit zu dieser Zeit an dieser Stätte. Es hört auf als empirisches Sosein; es ist nur als Freiheit,*" PH II: 337.

and is deceptive, because the being of *existenz* is no objective category.¹⁹⁴

Like Peirce's "scientific community" that configures and defines the semiotic self's identity, for Jaspers, *Existenz* achieves its self-realization only when it breaks into reciprocal relation with other *Existenzen*. Because existential communication is the source of *Existenz*, it decides *Existenz*'s self-being; in other words, if there is no communication or community (*Gemeinschaft*), there is no *Existenz*'s selfhood. There exists a close-knit communicative life among *Existenzen*; hence the moment *Existenz* isolates/insulates itself, its self-being will suffer the shipwreck of lostness. "An isolated human being only lives as a border concept, not as fact."¹⁹⁵ It is important to note that, since each *Existenz* is indefinable and ineffable, genuine communication does not occur in empirical existence (*Dasein*). Relationships occurring within social or psychological reality are subject to scientific investigations; thus genuine communication can only be philosophically elucidated.¹⁹⁶ Although genuine communication demands existential unity and mutual responsibility, *Existenzen* are not to be commingled, lest they lose their distinctive individuality as well as solitude (*Einsamkeit*). They are united, but not commingled. This is Jaspers' understanding of the dialectical nature of communication. Two *Existenzen* always remain as two separate individuals while encountering each other in communication;¹⁹⁷ and as previously stated, *Existenz*'s self-realization would not come

¹⁹⁴Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 127.

¹⁹⁵"Ein isoliertes Menschenwesen ist nur als Grenzvorstellung, nicht faktisch," *PH* II: 343.

¹⁹⁶"Not only is *Existenz* confined to the individual; it is a profound and scientifically undiscoverable source. Being impalpable and *unanschaulich*, it cannot be directly expressed" (Charles F. Wallraff, *Karl Jaspers*, 138).

¹⁹⁷"Such a communication is an interplay of solitude and union. Union alone produces only the joiner, the social self which is never quite an individual, a little too much like everyone else, and hence with nothing to communicate to the other. Solitude, which does not dare to go out to the other, produces only the isolation of a 'torpid, empty I'" (Grabau, "Communication through Transcendence," *Existential Philosophers*, 135).

into existence if communication was jettisoned.¹⁹⁸ The true community/communication of *Existenzen* is founded on truth. Communication among *Existenzen* also manifests “loving struggle” (*liebender Kampf*), because of the questioning, of the challenging, of the fighting of one possible *Existenz* with another in order to mutually illuminate, affirm, and recognize each other’s own self-realization. “In existential communication a mutual disclosure of inwardness takes place between *Existenzen*.”¹⁹⁹

Love existing in communication is not a blind love (*blinde Liebe*), but it is the fighting love (*kämpfende Liebe*) with mutual transparency (*gegenseitige Durchsichtigkeit*). Jaspers makes clear that this loving struggle is not about fighting for one’s own mundane existence, survival, power, or superiority; this loving struggle transcends the concealed communication of immanent modes of being (empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit). True existential communication is characterized by *Existenzen* who dare to disclose their self-being or unique individuality. It is not *Existenz* against *Existenz*, but it is the fight for mutual selfhood, for its own truth (*allein Kampf um Wahrheit*); it is “a fight for the truth of *Existenz*, not for general validity.”²⁰⁰ Since each *Existenz* possesses its own existential truth, communication/community becomes the place where each *Existenz* encounters one another to clarify its own truth. Jaspers rejects the idea of uniform or universal truth for *Existenzen*. And insofar as *Existenz*’s selfhood is a process, communication is an unfinished product.

6. *Existenz as Historicity*

When positing *Existenz* as “historicity” Jaspers employs the German word *Geschichtlichkeit* (*Existenz*), not *Historie* (existence), which connotes generality and objectively static facts of *Dasein*; whereas, *Geschichtlichkeit* authentically divulges the self-realization of *Existenz*’s selfhood, it manifests an open-ended future fused with

¹⁹⁸“*Kommunikation findet jeweils zwischen Zweien statt, die sich verbinden, aber zwei bleiben müssen - die zueinander kommen aus der Einsamkeit und doch Einsamkeit nur kennen, weil sie in Kommunikation stehen,*” *PH II*: 348.

¹⁹⁹Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 133.

²⁰⁰*Phi II*:61.

boundless potentialities that will be actualized by *Existenz*, and that *Existenz* is no longer determined by the past (*Historie*).²⁰¹ Because of temporality, *Existenz* becomes aware of its historicity. Jaspers defines historicity as existentially concrete and contingent; temporal, not timeless; and radically opposed to the universal. Historicity is “the moment” (Kierkegaard); it is not *chronos* (the passing time), but *kairos* - the fulfilled time when particular decisions are made, transcending the past and future, and when *Existenzen* encounter each other in authentic communication. Jaspers’ historicity positively bears an irrational element:

Irrational is not only what is beyond the limits of the general, but there are non-rational generalities as well, such as the validity of character types in poetry and art. Historicity...has as its medium that which is rational, as well as the irrational that has taken on form. It is superational, rather than irrational.²⁰²

Against Descartes’ rationalism, *Existenz* as historicity, is an existential decision-making being; namely, an *eligo*, and not absolutely a *cogito*. And in contrast to Hegel’s idealism, Jaspers’ historicity unveils the irreducibility of *Existenz*’s individuality and particularity, which can neither be conceptually systematized nor objectively universalized.

Existenz neither emanates from nothingness nor from itself, but is deeply incarnated in time and objective historical consciousness (*Historie*);²⁰³ and because of the boundary situations, *Existenz* will always be temporally and historically situated, and specifically confront each situation in its own historic moment. Nonetheless, because of its infinite possibilities *Existenz* antinomically transcends all. And as historicity, *Existenz* “is also the

²⁰¹For a detailed distinction between *Geschichtlichkeit* and *Historie*, see John Henning, “Jaspers’ Attitude towards History,” *PKJ*, 565-91.

²⁰²Cited in Kurt Hoffman, “Basic Concepts of Jaspers’ Philosophy,” *PKJ*, 102.

²⁰³The term “historical consciousness” (*geschichtliche Bewußtsein*) connotes a twofold meaning: (1) objective consciousness (*Historie*), which is of objective facts or knowledge of the past, and (2) existential consciousness (*Geschichtlichkeit*). See chapter “*Geschichtlichkeit*,” *PH II*: 397-422.

unity of time and eternity. *Existenz* is neither timelessness nor temporarity as such. It is always the one in relation to the other, and never the one without the other.”²⁰⁴

7. *Existenz's Existential Freedom*

Kierkegaard and Jaspers both declare that because of freedom the self avoids being objectified. To be truly a self is to possess freedom, for without freedom the self becomes existentially inauthentic. Following Schelling and especially Kierkegaard, Jaspers affirms the actualized freedom of human existence, which is not plagued by pure, abstract thought or logical necessity. The original freedom (*ursprüngliche Freiheit*) is the fundament (*Grund*) of *Existenz's* own self-being; in other words, only through this freedom does the self recognize its true self; namely, *Existenz*. And its individual decision/choice (the present) inextricably coalesces the past and future. Existential freedom, according to Kurt Reinhardt:

carries with it and within it its own certitude: not in the *cogito* (I think) but in the *eligo* (I choose) lies the guarantee of existence, so that the *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) of Descartes becomes an *Eligo, ergo sum* (I choose, therefore I am) in the formulation of Jaspers.²⁰⁵

For Jaspers, because “[f]reedom is the beginning and the end of existential elucidation,”²⁰⁶ it cannot be known or objectively cognized. Freedom can only be concretized in action, in existence, and not in examining (*Betrachten*) or in asking (*Fragen*). Freedom is not an expression, but decisively is an act, a movement or motion (*Bewegung*), a self-determination that empowers *Existenz* to transcend its immanent modes of being. These modes of being do not authentically represent or characterize true selfhood. And only through transcending thought does the true self existentially find its

²⁰⁴Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 149.

²⁰⁵*The Existentialist Revolt: The Main Themes and Phases of Existentialism*, 182.

²⁰⁶“*Freiheit als das erste und letzte der Existenzerhellung*,” *PH II*: 446.

own meaning.²⁰⁷ Freedom enables me to test my selfhood, to know who I really am, what I can do or can be; with freedom *Existenz* will always live, move, and have its being within boundary situations, and it will ultimately seek to relate itself to Transcendence via ciphered messages. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl is correct to claim that:

Jaspers did not define freedom. He indicated dimensions, he opened spaces or appealed for the opening of spaces, in which freedom can appear, in which *Existenz* can manifest itself communicatively and know freedom as the gift of self.²⁰⁸

While Sartre absolutizes freedom or Hegel totalizes his concept of absolute freedom, Jaspers' notion of existential freedom (*existentieller Freiheit*) is limited, essentially because it is antinomically located in boundary situations. Moreover, because of its paradoxical nature freedom must always be circumscribed and unfold in process as well as in conflict.²⁰⁹ For Jaspers, the whole notion of absolute freedom is absurd (*sinnwidrig*), for without antithesis (*Gegensatz*), freedom becomes empty (*leer*). "Freedom is not absolute, but it is always bound at the same time, not to possess, but to gain."²¹⁰ And since freedom plants itself in possibility, necessity becomes inevitable. However, for Kierkegaard as well as for Jaspers, freedom is neither possibility nor necessity, but it is the means that conjoins these two essential elements of the self. Without actuality or necessity (the past), *Existenz* would not become authentic being, and yet without possibility (the future) there will be no "possible *Existenz*" (*mögliche Existenz*). "Human *Dasein* is not 'existence' ...but man in his *Dasein* is 'possible existence...As 'possible

²⁰⁷"Freedom exists only in the act of transcendence where the self enacts its own being and thus it can be grasped only in the act of transcending thought. This understanding is not mere observation or contemplation, but a matter of self-constitution. Therefore freedom is never apprehended with detachment as a thing, but through feelings of responsibility and obligation" (Schrader, *Existential Philosophers*, 130).

²⁰⁸*Freedom and Karl Jaspers's Philosophy*, xiv.

²⁰⁹"Jede Freiheit, die Freiheit eines Einzelnen ist, muß aber im Gegensatz stehen, sich im Prozeß und Kampf entfalten, und darum immer beschränkt sein," *PH II*: 461.

²¹⁰"Freiheit ist nicht absolut, sondern zugleich immer gebunden, nicht Besitz, sondern Erringen," *Ibid.*, 454.

existence,' man is capable of taking steps, of positing acts which either bring him nearer the fulfillment of his being or, conversely, carry him away from his being, toward nothingness."²¹¹

²¹¹Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt*, 181.

CHAPTER 4

NATURE'S PRIMAL SELF IN ECSTATIC NATURALISM

Initially, ecstatic naturalism can be defined as that moment within naturalism when it recognizes its self-transcending character.

Robert S. Corrington

I don't think nature should be defined in any final way. In other words, it's a metaphysical category which is...ubiquitous and all-embracing.

Justus Buchler

Ecstatic Naturalism

Ecstatic naturalism, as a new movement founded by philosophical theologian Robert S. Corrington, is both a semiotic theoretical method and a metaphysics that probes deeply into the mystery of nature's perennial self-fissuring of *nature naturing* (*natura naturans*) and *nature natured* (*natura naturata*).¹ This fundamental divide or ontological

¹In his Foreword to Corrington's *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*, John Deely writes: "Insofar as he is trying to tell us that the world *is* this way, Corrington's book is a work of metaphysics. Insofar as he reveals that what the world *is* is a natural totality that achieves its orders ("nature natured") by semiotic means and reveals its puissance ("nature naturing") through semiotic modalities, his book is a work of semiotics" (ix). For the ecstatic naturalism's system of semiotic metaphysics, see Corrington's semiotic trilogy: *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*, *Nature's Self: Our Journey From Origin to Spirit*, and *Nature's Religion*. However, for those who are interested and want to explore further into the metaphysical and semiotic perspectives of the so-called ecstatic naturalism, see his new book *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*. This is an important book to begin with, because it "is the natural outgrowth of my previous six books," as the author has put it.

difference resembles Peirce's three primal categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) and Heidegger's Being (*das Sein*) and "being" (*das Seiende*); however, both Peirce and Heidegger still privileged the anthropocentric aspect of the self, thus ignoring the preordinal dimension of *nature naturing* or the underconscious of nature. Even though drawing from the writings of American pragmatists like Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, and Buchler, and Continental philosophers like Leibniz, Hegel, Schelling, Heidegger, or philosophical theologians like Tillich, and Continental psychoanalysts such as Jung and Kristeva, ecstatic naturalism remains uniquely original in its conceptual configurations, metaphorical language, and methodological query.²

Articulated through its own metaphysical, cosmological, and semiotic perspectives, ecstatic naturalism manifests the convergence of the three streams of thought - classical pragmatism, naturalism, and postmodern depth psychology; however it has transformed the anthropocentric concepts of the self (e.g., in Peirce's semiotic pragmatism and in Jaspers' periechontological existentialism) so that it can locate nature's primal self in *nature naturing*. As will be explored and examined in detail, from a restricted view, *nature natured* is defined as a "domain-orientation" or a "trait-orientation" (an order/complex with traits). Nature restricted is a world-located; it is as innumerable orders of the world or the provided. And from an unrestricted view, *nature naturing*, as the innumerable unconscious potencies of nature, "contains" all worlds or orders; it is inordinally or preordinally "located." *Nature naturing* plays the role of "engendering condition" or "providingness" (Buchler).³

²Both Corrington and Buchler preferred the term "query" to the term "inquiry," because it denotes the infinite possibilities of probing of traits. To speak in a more generic fashion, a natural complex can be limitlessly probed into or analyzed. Richard Bernstein points out that Buchler's metaphysical doctrine of natural complexes "is closely related to [his] conception of query. For although a particular query has beginning points and terminal points, there are no absolute beginnings or endings of query in any of its modes. There are no ultimate foundations, and no ultimate terminus to query" ("Buchler's Metaphysics," *Nature's Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal Metaphysics*, ed. Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington [New York: SUNY Press, 1991], 41; see also pp. 44-47).

³For Justus Buchler, nature is not divine providence, but is a perennial provision of traits or orders. See his "Probing the Idea of Nature," *Process Studies* 8 (1978): 157-68. Utilizing Buchler's "metaphysics of natural complexes," ecstatic naturalism attempts to

Ecstatic naturalism, as a descriptive (in its application to *nature natured*) and revisionary (in its application to *nature naturing*) metaphysics, attempts to explore beneath the surface layers of the anthropocentric self postulated by American pragmatists like Peirce and German existentialists like Jaspers in order to elicit the self's hidden powers of origin, which are directly and infinitely sustained in its "primal ground" (*nature naturing*). In addition, as a new metaphysical and semiotic stream of thought and as a formal perspective on nature, ecstatic naturalism is neither confined to nor circumscribed by metaphysical or existential anthropology or by textuality. Its starting point is not that of human process, but that of nature (*nature naturing*) via semiotic modalities, for the human process is only a product (*nature natured*) or sign of *nature naturing*. Nature is humankind's "enabling ground and goal."⁴ The human self, as an order of nature, is not only a finite and fragile product of the undefined vastness and encompassing of nature, but it is also mysteriously fissured by the ontological divide - between *nature naturing* (the presemiotic potencies) and *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world).⁵

penetrate into the precategorical realm of *nature naturing*. See Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, ed. Kathleen Wallace, Armen Marsoobian, and Robert S. Corrington (New York: SUNNY Press, 1990; cf. *Nature's Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal Metaphysics*, ed. Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington; and Corrington, "Justus Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics and the Eclipse of Foundationalism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1985): 289-98. Corrington suggests that the concepts of "chora" (Plato), "Firstness" (Peirce), "material maternal" (Kristeva), or "potencies" (Schelling) may all point to toward the primal concept of *nature naturing*, and the concepts of "signs," "world semiosis," "positioning," and "meaning" can be employed to point toward the primal concept of *nature natured* (EN, 11). Regardless of appropriate analogies or metaphors, Corrington warns: "In the spirit of Wittgenstein, we must be wary of any one image which attempts to explain nature as a whole" ("Naturalism, Measure, and the Ontological Difference," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 [1985], 29).

⁴NaS, 22.

⁵The Latin medieval *natura naturans/natura naturata* distinction was introduced in the 12th century, and was popularized through the writing of Spinoza regarding his metaphysical concept of pantheism. Despite using these terms, Corrington has never applied them in its classical pantheistic content as expounded by either Bruno or Spinoza. Also, unlike Aquinas, Corrington does not identify God with *natura naturans*, because for Corrington, God is one order among others of the world (EN, xi).

Unlike Aristotle's taxonomic conception of genus (one class competing with other), "nature" (as a metaphysical concept), as expressed in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, is a precategory; it is beyond genus and all genera; in other words:

nature per se cannot be conceived in any but the *most* elliptical way. It is impossible to give a definition of nature. To define nature would be to locate it within a genus with a specific difference. In the barest sense, nature is the availability of orders, as well as the 'sum' of the orders themselves. Nature has no location, that is, it is not *in* anything.⁶

Nature inexhaustibly transcends scope, power, and meaning. Thus, for Corrington, the term "nature" may not even be theologically, semiotically, and philosophically used, because it neither manifests nor signifies anything in particular. Because nature is beyond good and evil and indifferent to its offspring, it does not possess any *providential* or teleological contrivances. Nevertheless, nature does continually "provide" possibilities, actualities, or semiotic significations for its complexes/orders. It must be said that nature provides *everything* (e.g, from an atom or divine being to a laugh). Justus Buchler conjures up the image of "providingness" in order to describe accurately what nature is. It is always present and available to its complexes.

⁶NR, 3. While the genera belong to *nature natured*, "nature" is also the dimension of the presemiotic and preformal potencies (*nature naturing*). This metaphysical concept of *nature naturing*, as already alluded, may be likened to Heidegger's "Being" (*das Sein*) and *nature natured* to "being" (*das Seiende*). However, Heidegger's Being is still absorbed with space-time dimensions and anthropocentrism. Corrington points out that, by "following Kant, Heidegger insisted that Being was not a predicate that could be added to the being-thing by an act of thought. Rather, Being faces the being-thing from across an abyss that can only be traversed, if at all, by a leap into another kind of thinking. Ecstatic naturalism reenacts this insight into the ontological difference but radicalizes and broadens it to open up the even more basic divide between the potencies of *nature naturing* and the attained and emerging orders of *nature natured*" (NR, 3). It is also worth noting that ecstatic naturalism's concept of "nature" is not commensurate with Whitehead's definition of nature. For Whitehead, "Nature is that which we observe in perception through senses." Here Whitehead accentuated the restricted view of "nature"; namely, *nature natured*, which may be called "the order of nature," but not by Corrington. (An "order" is a complex of traits). See his *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930).

Paradoxically, nature is the nonlocated location; it is measureless measure, “endless” (Emerson) and “ubiquitous and all-embracing” (Buchler). This concept of nature may be equivalent to Jaspers’ metaphorical concept of “the Encompassing” (*das Umgreifende*). *Nature naturing* prevails as a “clearing”⁷ within which all prehuman and human orders of meaning originate. The self possesses only limited prospects within nature as a whole (Santayana). It is important to know that the naturalistic presupposition of ecstatic naturalism is that all possible and actual existence (both nonhuman and human and even God or divinities) is encompassed by nature; hence there is no super/supranatural realm. It is utterly impossible to exhaustively comprehend or objectify the ever elusive and mysterious *nature naturing*. Perhaps by comparing with the Tao, the self-transforming dimension or aseity of the presemiotic potencies of *nature naturing* will become more clarified. In *Tao Te Ching*, the Tao is understood as the Ground of being and nonbeing, the ultimate reality of the universe. “It existed before heaven and earth, and indeed for all eternity. It causes the gods to be divine and the world to be produced...Though prior to heaven and earth, it is not ancient. Though older than the most ancient, it is not old.”⁸ Since “maternal” is the imagery connecting with the Tao, it is akin to Kristeva’s “material maternal” who births/ejects innumerable orders into the world (*nature natured*). And if the eternal Tao cannot be talked about or named, then *nature naturing*, likewise, can neither be described nor defined. Hence, only through the human unconscious (often through dreams) can the unconscious of nature (*nature naturing*) be made known; in other words, “[t]he dream, whether public...or private, is an expression of the semiotic codes and structures of the unconscious...[T]he dreams of the self will emerge as gateways into the unconscious of the individual, his or her social order, and the underconscious of nature.”⁹

⁷This notion resembles Heidegger’s *Lichtung*, for humankind is not the opener of truth (as Aristotle or Descartes would declare), but the “opening for it,” the “clearing” in which it will reveal its hiddenness. However, from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, *Lichtung* still carries anthropocentric connotations.

⁸Cited in Alan Watts, *TAO: The Watercourse Way* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 40-1.

⁹*STTP*, 64.

The meaning and ramifications of “naturalism,” as enunciated in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, should be adequately grasped. It is, therefore, worth quoting at length the following passage:

Nature cannot be characterized by any single metaphor or conceptual scheme. Its vastness and sheer multiplicity belie our attempts to frame a compelling and adequate metaphysics that would somehow open out the ultimate essence or trait contour of nature...All of philosophy is a form of naturalism if by “naturalism” is meant the recognition of the utter indefiniteness and plenitude of nature...In recognizing the utter scope of nature and its lack of an outer boundary or ultimate shape, naturalism refuses to reduce nature to one essence or genus...Nature is elusive in the sense that it encompasses all categorial and natural perspectives while refusing to envelop these located perspectives within some superorder of meaning and transparency. At the heart of naturalism is an abiding sense of mystery that refuses to devolve into specific problematic situations and their amelioration...Naturalism affirms that there is only one nature even if it obtains in innumerable orders and functions in an infinite variety of ways. The realm or realms of the supernatural are actually events or structures within nature and represent a version of nature’s self-transcendence. This transcendence does not generate a realm beyond nature so much as quicken possibilities for growth and transfiguration within nature itself.¹⁰

As a mode of thought and method, and a “still-evolving perspective” ecstatic naturalism either transforms or radicalizes the perspectives of pragmatism (Peirce’s ontological categories and semiotics), naturalism (Dewey’s metaphysical inquiry and

¹⁰EN, 16-7. It is interesting to note that Corrington’s perspective of ecstatic naturalism resembles two of David Ray Griffin’s eight dimensions or kinds of “naturalism.” The first one is that of *epistemic naturalism*, which is “the denial of *epistemic supernaturalism*, which holds that some ideas are to be accepted because of their alleged mode of origin in an infallible revelation, in which a divine being supernaturally overrode the fallibility that characterizes most human thought, thereby making the message error-free” (104). The second is that of *ontological naturalism* (also called *fc*: for “finite causation”). This doctrine states that “there are no causal powers beyond the totality of finite causes” (109); in other words, there exists neither objective transcendent ground nor mysterious transcendent powers beyond the realm of natural or finite causation. See his “Religious Experience, Naturalism, and the Social Scientific Study of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68 (2000): 99-125.

Buchler's "ordinal metaphysics") and psychoanalysis (Jung's "archetypes" and the "collective unconscious" and Kristeva's concepts of the "semiotic" and "symbolic" and the "material maternal"). The current perspective makes use of other thinkers' ideas, not as definitive interpretations but as guiding sources. It affixes itself to the so-called "emancipatory reenactment" (Corrington), and through various acts of the emancipatory of reenactment, ignored or hidden concepts of different philosophical perspectives will be transformed or reconfigured so that incipient possibilities within the tradition may emerge for the first time. The emancipatory reenactment is:

[t]he hermeneutic strategy...in which genuine potencies from past conceptual horizons are freed to play a new role in a contemporary and expanding horizon of meaning...[T]he emancipatory reenactment carried out by ecstatic naturalism brings about a deeper transfiguration in which the nascent possibilities within the tradition can come into their own for the first time...Emancipatory reenactment seems more violent, in that it reaches down into a past horizon and alters the correlation between local and regional features so that unthought and alien aspects can emerge in new guise as regional structures of great scope.¹¹

Also as a form of thought, ecstatic naturalism can be defined as:

that moment within naturalism when it recognizes its self-transcending character. Naturalism is self-transcending when it understands the eternal power of the transition from preformal potencies to the realms of signification within the world. The movement from a presemiotic potency to a signifying structure or a signifying position is ecstatic insofar as the potency stands outside of itself and gives birth to its own self-other as a sign or sign system."¹²

¹¹EN, 8. For excellent introduction to ecstatic naturalism, see these two papers: Todd A. Driskill, "Beyond the Text: Ecstatic Naturalism and American Pragmatism," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 15 (1994): 305-23; and Roger A. Badham, "Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington's Naturalism," *Soundings* 79.3 (1999): 201- 225.

¹²EN, 18-9.

As aforementioned, ecstatic naturalism is unapologetically structured by a system of semiotic metaphysics. Commensurate with Peirce's universe "perfused with signs," ecstatic naturalism "affirms that the entire world is composed of semiotic interaction even if the rudimentary forms of semiosis are alien to the conscious structures that pertain to the human process."¹³ Without semiotic activity (semiosis), the orders of the world will become hopelessly hidden and its signification remain unintelligible. As Deely correctly stated in his foreword to Corrington's book *Ecstatic Naturalism*, by "semiotic" Corrington means that the world as a "natural totality" achieves its orders (*nature natured*), and also through semiotic modalities *nature naturing's* puissance is disclosed. Furthermore, as a form of semiotic ontology, ecstatic naturalism not only "replaces the substance-derived anthropologies,"¹⁴ but also directs its hermeneutical semiotics beyond structuralism (e.g., Saussure) and poststructuralism (e.g., Derrida), which privilege both textuality (or what Sebeok called "glottocentrism") and human construct/subjectivity over nature, thus neglecting its extra-linguistic configurations. It must be remembered that the precategoryal *nature naturing* is not a sign. Over against pantextualism (which ignores the inevitable bond "between signification and the prelinguistic and prehuman orders"),¹⁵ ecstatic naturalism stresses that hermeneutics must detach itself from its narrow confinement to anthropocentric language.

To be able to explore the presemiotic and preformal potencies or features of *nature naturing* and understand how they mysteriously infiltrate and function in nature, the role of metaphysics in ecstatic naturalism becomes radically pivotal. Because of its embeddedness/locatedness in nature (*nature natured*) semiotics is incapable of probing into the depth dimension of nature (*nature naturing*). Similar to Peirce's methodological concept called "precision" (an act of mental separation which attentively focuses on one element and ignores the other), Corrington maintains that to "engage in metaphysics is to probe into the most generic features of a given order and to isolate those features for special treatment. This process moves from the less to the more generic, so that private or

¹³Ibid., 32.

¹⁴NS, 10.

¹⁵NS, 11.

limited traits are located within larger orders of relevance.”¹⁶ The metaphysical perspective of ecstatic naturalism functions to locate “all forms of semiosis within a self-transforming nature that represents the seed bed for all powers and potencies, be they semiotic or presemiotic.”¹⁷ Corrington’s metaphysical query certainly exhibits the influence of Dewey’s metaphysics of pragmatism. Metaphysics “meant for [Dewey] reflective analysis aimed at disclosing what he called the ‘generic traits of existence’ or the pervasive features which manifest themselves in *every* subject matter which defines or marks off a distinct field of inquiry.”¹⁸ Without metaphysics, ecstatic naturalism’s two fundamental methods: “horizontal hermeneutics” and “ordinal phenomenology” will suffer shipwreck and thus fail to supply a metaphysically relevant and cogent perspective for ecstatic naturalism. For Corrington, the “relation between semiotics and metaphysics is not, however that of product and ground. The correlation is dialectical in the sense that semiotics helps to shape the very metaphysics that wishes to locate it in a presemiotic framework.”¹⁹

From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, “ecstatic” is not a psychological term connoting emotional excitement, but the function of the term “ecstatic” (akin to Peirce’s “indexical sign”) is to dynamically and causally point to the self-transcendent possibilities within the orders of nature. “Naturalism becomes *ecstatic* when it probes into its own somber tone to find an even deeper momentum within nature and, in consequence, its own categorial array.”²⁰

The metaphysical concept of “potency” must also be elucidated here, for it holds an integral place in ecstatic naturalism. According to the current perspective, a potency,

¹⁶*NaS*, 3.

¹⁷*EN*, 2.

¹⁸John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 143. Smith also indicates that, for Dewey, philosophy “is understood as a reflective enterprise of *criticism* pointing in two directions. There is first the task of interpreting or functioning as a liaison between the technical languages of special areas of inquiry, and secondly, a focusing on the goods or values ingredient in science, art, and social intercourse” (Ibid.).

¹⁹*EN*, 12.

²⁰*STTP*, 39.

deeply embedded in *nature naturing*, is an unconscious momentum that outwardly ejects or births orderly signs into the realm of *nature natured*. Corrington understands potencies as ejective of potential power and meaning. Because potencies, like Peirce's concept of infinitesimals, are presemiotically self-othering and thus operate in *nature naturing*, the term "potency" cannot be phenomenologically characterized. Potency is therefore the transcendental term, which can be traced back to Schelling's metaphysical concept of *die Potenzen*. However, while "[t]he transcendental strategy can inform us about what might be behind the effects of the potencies of nature...phenomenological description can unfold how these effects are encountered by human sign users."²¹ What distinguishes ecstatic naturalism from other perspectives of naturalism (e.g., Dewey or Buchler) is that it is a form of theistic naturalism.²²

²¹Ibid., 365. Corrington points out that, since the term "potency" is derived from Schelling's *die Potenzen* (which was transported from mathematics into philosophy), it cannot be equated with the term "possibility." Buchler also holds that all possibilities or potentialities are "real," they are presuppositions and reflections of traits of actuality. For him, "A potentiality is not an actuality, but the 'possession' of a potentiality...is an actuality" (*Metaphysic of Natural Complexes*, 152). Corrington defines a potency as follows: "A potency is an unconscious momentum within the heart of *nature naturing* that moves outward into the world of orders by ejecting some kind of orderly sign or system from its hidden depths" (*NS*, 98). Furthermore, "[t]he potencies, as deeply tied to nature naturing, are ejective of potential power and meaning but not themselves meaningful or powers of interaction" (*EN*, 108). It is important to note that, "For some order to be a possibility is for it to already occupy some location within *nature natured*. Possibilities come and go as actualities do, as many of them can be plotted and allowed for. The potencies, on the other hand, are more like Peirce's infinitesimals; namely, as prespatial, pretemporal, and presemiotic powers awaiting a sudden entrance into the world of orders" (*STTP*, 245). See also pp.245-50.

²²Corrington's philosophical theology is prominently displayed in his book entitled *Nature's Religion*. See particularly chapter "The Divine Natures," *NaS*, 162-95. See also his "Ordinality and the Divine Natures," *Nature's Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal Metaphysics*, ed. Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991); "Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 393-408; "Beyond Experience: Pragmatism and Nature's God," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 14 (1993): 147-60; "Nature's God and the Return of the Material Maternal," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 115-32; "Neville's 'Naturalism' and the Location of God," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 18 (1997): 257-94; "Peirce's Ecstatic Naturalism: The Birth of the Divine in Nature," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 16 (1995): 173-87; and "A Unitarian Universalist Theology for the Twenty-

As a post-Christian universalist perspective and partially associating itself with empirical theology,²³ this form of theistic naturalism is radically divergent from classical theism, which affirms that religious traits are supernatural. God, divinities, and the so-called “sacred folds” are orders of nature; that is, they have ordinal locations. From the naturalistic view of ecstatic naturalism, nature is the genus of which God is a species. (It is important to remember that nature transcends all genera). Unlike panentheism (Hartshorne) whose God is transcendently greater than nature, ecstatic naturalism rejects any symmetrical categorizing between God and *nature naturing*. Ecstatic naturalism also finds itself opposing Spinoza’s pantheism, essentially because of Spinoza’s positing God as one substance, thus God is *natura naturans* but not in every sense. And unlike process naturalism (Neville), ecstatic naturalism discards the notion of a transcendent/infinite God, who, as an indeterminate Being, independently created the world *ex nihilo* and exercises divine providence upon creation.²⁴ From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, since creation itself “is a trait within nature, not a trait that could be lifted out of nature as

first Century: Toward an Ecstatic Naturalism,” *Voice* (Unitarian Universalist Journal) 3 (1997): 3-7. In this article, Corrington succinctly defines ecstatic naturalism as “a postmonotheistic conception of nature that has profound room for emancipatory and sacred energies, while also honoring the utter indifference of nature to many of our deepest longings” (4).

²³*Empirical Theology: A Handbook*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992).

²⁴See Corrington, “Neville’s ‘Naturalism’ and the Location of God,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 18 (1997): 257-94, and *NR*, 109-32. In his *STTP* (188-89), Corrington takes panentheism, process naturalism, and classical theism to task. Regardless of a shared view of God’s immanentism, one of the profound difficulties that the current perspective confronts in panentheism is that “the concept of god risks becoming so trivial as to make it an unlikely candidate for a genuine discriminadum.” As a form of naturalism, process naturalism’s God is actually finite, and that without ordinal locations, God cannot be said to have encounter with “something of great and overwhelming meaning within the orders of the world.” Despite its upholding the divine’s distinctive traits (commensurate with classical theism) *vis-à-vis* other natural complexes, ecstatic naturalism still finds classical theism’s ubiquitous God is really a nowhere God, for “[w]ithout an ordinal location, no divinity has any chance of being even weakly relevant to the sign using self.” For a study of American naturalism and its perspective of religion, see William M. Shea, *The Naturalists and the Supernatural* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984).

its alleged generative source,²⁵ the *creatio ex nihilo* doctrine is jettisoned. There is neither a supernatural nor extranatural realm since nothing exists outside of nature. Taking cues from Schelling's metaphysical notion of "unruly ground" (*das Regellose*)²⁶ and Peirce's evolutionary cosmology (synechism), ecstatic naturalism has the "courage to accept a smaller God so that we can become permeable to a much larger nature."²⁷

Ecstatic naturalism phenomenologically locates God in four dimensions. As to divine reality *vis-à-vis* the world, while Whitehead emphasizes the continuities and Barth the discontinuities or Neville stresses the creator-created distinction, ecstatic naturalism mediates both, for they are all orders located within and among themselves. The natures of God in these four divine dimensions are not isolated, but are closely interconnected.

1. *First Divine Dimension*

Tending toward so-called "ordinal monotheism," ecstatic naturalism not only acknowledges the absolute unity of God, regardless of God's multiple locatedness, but also asserts the fragmented and evolving nature of God in the orders of the world. As a natural complex, God is an order of traits and is plurally located (shadowed by nondivine orders) in the innumerable orders of *nature natures*. Humans encounter God's natural complex through divine epiphanies, and the illuminations of God in these orders are semiotically achieved via "the realm of the sacramental," which is intimately connected

²⁵*STTP*, 11. Corrington also argues elsewhere that, "God is either coemergent with the other orders of nature, or is a later emergent. To talk of a creator prior to creation or, more precisely, of a creator who *becomes* the creator in the very act of creation, is to posit by fiat some reality that is discontinuous with all other realities" ("Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought," *Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives*, ed. Roger A. Badham [Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998], 169).

²⁶"The unruly is that which is prior to any of the manifest orders of creation. Schelling even hints that it may be prior to God, as a kind of churning or striving that births even the divine. The unruly ground, as heterogeneous momentum, is the ultimate abyss (Plato's *chora* or Julia Kristeva's *material maternal*) out of which the world emerges" (Robert S. Corrington, "Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought," *Christian Theology*, 176).

²⁷Corrington, "Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought," *Christian Theology*, 176.

to the unconscious (Tillich and Jung). The divine appearance manifest to the human process is but a fragmented origin (a mystery), because the signs of the divine remain fitfully and elusively opaque to human orders; hence, God's scope may be circumscribed by the reticence of the nondivine orders:

God is located and fragmented in the orders of history, imagination, art, human striving, sacred texts, sacramental structures and events, language, gesture, human categorial structures, and communities. In each case, the divine is located in orders which have traits outside of the divine scope. God is strongly relevant to some of the subaltern orders within each order and weakly relevant to other subaltern orders...God is both relevant and non-relevant to the orders of the world. Insofar as God is relevant to orders and their subalterns, God is either weakly or strongly so.²⁸

2. *Second Divine Dimension*

Even though God is a plurally fragmented natural complex God, in this second dimension, God, as a divine lure, plays the socially eschatological role that "moves selves beyond the opacity of origins toward the community of justice,"²⁹ toward ontological parity, and toward theonomy. Also, as the ground (not personality), God "propels and goads finite personalities into existence."³⁰ Here one can see the divine sympathy mirroring the creative tension between social justice and eschatological expectation, which is akin to Whitehead's and Hartshorne's God who lures actual occasions toward creative novelty and prehensions in the world. God's power of origin, however fragmented, dialectically interfaces with the power of expectation, and that this "dialectical tension between origins and goals remains central to divine evolution."³¹ Being fragmented and finite in scope God is only strongly relevant to some but not all natural complexes/orders in this dimension, for the God's luring power must face some

²⁸Corrington, "Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 403.

²⁹*NaS*, 173.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 176.

³¹*Ibid.*, 175.

obstinate resistance, such as the demonic powers of injustice. In addition to residing in temporal relativity, Corrington insists that, because of the originating potencies (God participating in both realms of the ontological difference), God is also pretemporal.

3. *Third Divine Dimension*

God is apparently finite in the first two dimensions of *nature natured*. In this third dimension God is neither a natural complex nor is finite, essentially because the divine life now correlates to *nature naturing*; however, it is important to note that:

God in its third dimension is one of the manifestations of nature naturing and is not equivalent to the preformal potencies as a 'whole'...God sustains all the orders of the world and has its own potencies, but does not exhaust all the potencies in nature... God is subaltern to nature, even while sustaining the complexes that prevail at any given time.³²

In this dimension God and nature mutually sustain each other; that is, God as the “ground of Being” (Tillich) sustains the orders of the world while at the same time is sustained by nature. God is not only omnipresent in nature, but also is as the “providingness” (Buchler) that offers “natural grace” to all innumerable complexes of nature. It should be pointed out that Tillich’s “ground of Being” and Buchler’s “providingness” are analogous to Corrington’s concept of the “sustaining infinite.” The sustaining infinite is that which sustains all of the innumerable orders (the good, the bad, and the ugly) of *nature natured*. It is beyond good and evil, and possesses no axiological distinctions.

The divine nature in this dimension is not origin (first dimension) or lure (second dimension), but “abides as the still availability of providential grace which never forsakes complexes.”³³ And while in the other two dimensions God is either strongly or weakly relevant to orders’ trait constitutions, in this dimension God is neither strongly nor weakly relevant but, as sustaining grace (not an epiphany or a lure), is sheerly relevant to

³²NaS, 179.

³³Corrington, “Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 406.

all orders, meaning that there is no interaction with or modification of any traits of orders. Corrington employs the metaphor of “detachment” to add to his concept of “sheer relevance.” In this dimension ecstatic naturalism concurs with Pannenberg’s notion of *creatio continua*; however, it radically diverges from his theological/biblical doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, because ecstatic naturalism affirms *nihil ex nihilo*. Ecstatic naturalism insists that God is creatively evolving and growing along with the universe. And as the sustaining ground, God is coextensive with all prevalent natural complexes (but not with *nature naturing*); nevertheless, unlike process thought, God in this dimension is not conditioned by temporality, but is pretemporal and preordinal (God cannot be defined like other natural complexes).

4. Fourth Divine Dimension

In this final dimension there exists a sharp tension or contrast between God and the Encompassing (equivalent to *nature naturing*) from which God, as an eject, emerges. Both God and the world are transcended by the Encompassing of nature. In this infinite Encompassing of nature God experiences God’s own growth and transformation.

Corrington cautions:

Our understanding of the relation between God and the Encompassing must reject the use of analogy and affirm the necessity of *via negativa*. Analogy is appropriate whenever we are comparing or contrasting natural complexes. The Encompassing, as the measureless measure, is not a natural complex and cannot be rendered available through the use of analogy or metaphor. We can only advance our apprehension of this elusive reality by a careful series of statements as to what it is not.³⁴

The Encompassing is not a horizon, for all horizons are ordinarily located or finitely embedded in nature. And since within the Encompassing God encounters God’s own

³⁴“Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 407. As the pioneer of the concept of the Encompassing, Karl Jaspers made a clear distinction between the reality of the Encompassing and that of

locatedness, Corrington finds flaws in Hartshorne's surpassability proposition ("God is that than which nothing greater can be thought but is, itself, self-surpassable"), essentially because Hartshorne did not conceive that what makes the surpassability possible is not the divine but the Encompassing of nature. Nature is precategoryal and not plurally located while the divine is ordinally located. Grounded in the principle of "ontological parity" (Buchler), ecstatic naturalism asserts that, however powerful God may be, God is just another natural complex³⁵ among others. God is no more or less real than others; in other words, *contra* classical theism, ecstatic naturalism's God is not unconditional. This certainly confirms Buchler's rejection of the term "unconditional." Unconditional implies the idea of being free of qualification, and that would contradict the principle of ontological parity as well as metaphysics of natural complexes or ordinal metaphysics:

Put in positive terms: divine growth is possible because of the 'space' continually provided by the encompassing. Divine evolution would be impossible were it not for the eternal "not-yet" that confronts the divine life. Put in negative terms: the encompassing 'reminds' the divine that it is eternally incomplete, and that no stage of divine fulfillment is adequate. The restlessness within the divine natures derives from the lure for self-transcendence provided by the encompassing. God cannot fill in the encompassing any more than the human process can encompass nature.³⁶

From the above quotation one can clearly see that God, although possessing unlimited scope and being the ground of *nature natures* in the third dimension, will always remain a product/eject of the Encompassing or *nature naturing* in this final divine dimension. Nature gives birth to the encompassed God and constantly activates God for divine self-surpassing (to use Whiteheadian language, God's subjective aim is to actualize all possibilities). Furthermore, this divine dimension hardly correlates with Aristotle's God as a "prime mover" or Spinoza's *deus sive natura*. Neither does

Transcendence. George Pepper also mentions Jaspers' nuanced distinction in his unpublished paper "The Tragic Individual and Foundering in Jaspers's Philosophy."

³⁵This metaphysical concept will be examined in detail.

³⁶*NaS*, 187.

Whitehead's philosophical theology share affinity with ecstatic naturalism's conception of God as a product of nature. For Whitehead, God is not the creator *ex nihilo*, but only the co-creator or one "actual entity" among others, because there are only self-constituting actual occasions in the processive order of the world.³⁷ It should be added that these four divine dimensions do not actually occur separately in different stages, but they, resembling Peirce's three phenomenological categories, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, must be present in any phenomenon.

Besides ecstatic naturalism, Corrington identifies three other forms of naturalism: "descriptive" naturalism, "honorific" naturalism, and "process" naturalism.

5. "Descriptive" Naturalism

As cosmologically structured by material and efficient causes, "descriptive" naturalism discloses the utter indifference of nature to human inclination or objectives.

³⁷See Wolfhart Pannenberg's critique of Whitehead's process philosophy in "Atomism, Duration, Form: Difficulties with Process Philosophy," *Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, trans. Philip Clayton (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1988). Also, for criticisms of Corrington's ecstatic naturalist dimensions of God, see Robert Neville's review of Corrington's *Nature and Spirit* in *International Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1994): 504-5; and Roger A. Badham, "Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington's Naturalism," *Soundings* 79.3 (1999): 201-225. Neville considers Corrington's assertion that "God is a product of *nature naturing*, yet the ground of *nature natured*" in the fourth dimension a kind of novel Gnosticism. Neville, despite his positive review of the book, wonders: "Why not worship nature naturing, the 'encompassing,' as Corrington calls it, and eliminate middling gods?" (505). Badham echoes the same view: "If God cannot be spoken of as synonymous with nature naturing and spirit, then my rather brazen suggestion (especially brazen coming from a theist) is that Corrington would do well to unburden the logic of his system by doing away with the concept of God altogether and seeking instead to demonstrate the remptive and sustaining potencies of nature insofar as they can be shown" (221). See also John Ryder's review of Corrington's *Nature and Spirit* in *Metaphilosophy* 26 (1995): 138-46. Ryder also questions "why a naturalist ontology, or more specifically an ordinal ontology cannot get along without some conception of God" (143). Corrington responded to these "god problematic" criticisms in his book *Nature's Religion* in which he ameliorated with some form of "conceptual rotation." He maintains that "the categorial delineations in *Nature and Spirit* remain very much present in the current enterprise. However, there is a movement to invert the concept of god so that deeper phenomenological structures can emerge. Readers of both works will notice certain shifts of emphasis and certain sublations, but in neither case is there any attempt to return to the patriarchal monotheisms" (xvii-xviii).

Not only does nature bear no accountability to anyone or anything, but also has no intrinsic meaning in itself (Fichte). It is ethically beyond both good and evil, and since descriptive naturalism immerses itself in “hermeneutics of suspicion,” divine footprints are hardly traced. Religious traits or God are socially or culturally portrayed as axiological dimensions. This form of naturalism may also be called “perennial naturalism” (Plantinga).³⁸ Three prominent philosophers of this form are Dewey, Santayana, and Buchler. Dewey’s naturalistic metaphysics centrally focused on social/cultural values, and that the experience, the “transaction” between (human) organism and the natural environment, proceeded logically from concrete situations. Dewey’s form of pragmatism was grounded in both naturalistic empiricism and “instrumentalism” (how thought is functioned in a “problematic situation”). And in search of truth, his epistemological approach (influenced by Peirce) scientifically operated through so-called “warranted assertibility” (a practical project successfully inquired). Unlike James’ individualism, Dewey’s naturalism was more socially functional. His pragmatism was “the pragmatism of the people” (Santayana).³⁹ In Corrington’s assessment, Dewey’s “naturalism has a local and regional horizon, where control is the means for social advance and the eventual taming of nature.”⁴⁰

A professed materialist/naturalist who assumed that efficacy was materially causal, Santayana denied any notion of God or Over-Soul providentially governing the universe. His descriptive naturalism was noneulogistically tinged with pessimism. For him, “the human creature is tethered to a particular place and has no sense of a center or circumference for nature as a whole. The ultimate upshot and value of the human process

³⁸According to Alvin Plantinga, “perennial naturalism” rejects any religious traits (God) in nature, and human beings are only seen as finite parts of nature. This perspective has its roots in the ancient world, but can be found spreading in the medieval world (among the Averroists). Hobbes, the Enlightenment Encyclopedists, Baron D’Holbach, Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, and Willard van Orman Quine were among notable thinkers subscribing to this naturalist perspective. See his “Christian Philosophy: Sociological Category or Oxymoron,” *Monist* 75 (1992): 283-320.

³⁹See George Santayana’s review of Dewey’s book *Experience and Nature* in “Dewey’s Naturalistic Metaphysics,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 22 (1925): 673-88.

⁴⁰*STTP*, 25.

is unknown and there can be no extranatural salvation for the self that is caught in the whirling eddies of an indifferent cosmos.”⁴¹

Even though indebted to Dewey, Buchler still declared that “Dewey himself corrupted the idea of naturalism,”⁴² and that Buchler’s “ordinal naturalism” (Singer) did not have much in common with Dewey’s instrumentalism; for instance, the concept “proception” employed by Buchler as a replacement of Dewey’s term “experience.”⁴³ For Buchler, whatever “is” is a complex or order, and since nature is unlimited, it can neither be an order nor domain. And there is no order without delimitation; namely, it is ordinally circumscribed by scope and integrity. Therefore, Buchler’s notion of “nature” was radically different from Kant’s concept of “world” or “nature,” for either term was metaphysically conditioned by ordinal location. From the perspective of ordinal metaphysics, nature is infinitely and measurelessly vast and absolutely indifferent to the human process. The finitude of the anthropocentric self and the utterly indifferent vastness of nature are two commensurate aspects that ecstatic naturalism shares with descriptive naturalism. But as a form of naturalistic theism, ecstatic naturalism refuses to subscribe to descriptive naturalism’s denial of divine reality. Although nature (*nature naturing*) is infinitely vast and indifferent, the footprints of divine Being, however finite, are traced in the ontological realm of *nature natured*.

⁴¹Corrington, “Ecstatic Naturalism and the Transfiguration of the Good,” *Empirical Theology: A Handbook*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), 205.

⁴²“Conversation between Justus Buchler and Robert S. Corrington,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 3 (1989): 261-74.

⁴³According to Buchler: “The interplay of the human individual’s activities and dimensions, their unitary direction, constitutes a process which I shall call *proception*. The term is designed to suggest a moving union of seeking and receiving, of forward propulsion and patient absorption. proception is the composite, directed activity of the individual” (*Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979], 4). See also Beth J. Singer, *Ordinal Naturalism: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Justus Buchler* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983).

6. "Honorific" Naturalism

"Honorific" naturalism not only eulogizes the role of "spirit" (Emerson) or consciousness which embeds itself in nature and the doctrine of panpsychism (Peirce), but it also privileges the formal and final causes. It "remains monistic in the sense that its singular genus (usually spirit or some form of evolutionary reason) is the motor force within nature, compelling all that lives toward its own inwardness and wholeness."⁴⁴ And unlike descriptive naturalism, honorific or eulogistic naturalism allows room for a natural religious dimension; that is, divine Being or providence is supplanted by nature's powers of origin (e.g., Peirce's evolutionary God). Corrington considers Emerson and Peirce (both were monists) as representing this form of naturalism in the Euro-American tradition. For Emerson, spirit rose above nature by empowering and bestowing meaning upon it, and the human process was also guided by the pulsations of spirit. Emerson posited that, "these pulses can be counted on to move the self beyond a closed and leaden horizon of meaning toward the open horizon in which the plenitude of nature is allowed to reshape the contour of the self in process."⁴⁵ Honorific naturalism could also be viewed through Peirce's Thirdness with its semiotic ramifications of concrete reasonableness and developmental teleology.

Corrington also includes Heidegger in honorific naturalism, mainly because of his concept of "worldhood" (*Weltheit*). Worldhood is that which locates and encompasses all worlds or the innumerable orders of the world; it belongs to the realm of *nature natured*, and as a structure and process worldhood is the "sum" of all meaning horizons. *Nature naturing* is the primal ejecting ground out of which worldhood is emerged. And as ejective of *nature naturing*, worldhood functions as the enabling condition, giving humans an epistemological clearing to comprehend all "intra-worldly complexes." It is necessary to understand that worldhood only pervasively provides the clearing for the human process, but it cannot configure the human process; nor is it molded by the human

⁴⁴STTP, 27.

⁴⁵EN, 21.

process. The concept of “eject,” in Corrington’s view, “is meant to convey the forward-moving quality of worldhood as the seedbed of the ‘not-yet’.”⁴⁶

Ecstatic naturalism shares a common ground with honorific naturalism insofar as spirit, is an “agent” who possesses a renewing or transforming power on human process and living orders. It also partly shares Heidegger’s ontological difference between Being and a being. Nonetheless, Corrington stresses that ecstatic naturalism:

thus emerges out of the creative tensions between descriptive and honorific forms of naturalism. Each form has its own type of natural piety and each serves to guide personal and communal interaction. What makes ecstatic naturalism compelling is its refusal to content itself with a foreground position and its insistence that the potencies are continual goads to transfiguration within world semiosis...Ecstatic naturalism affirms the absolute supremacy of nature and its internal tensions as manifest in the fundamental divide between nature naturing and nature natured.⁴⁷

7. *Process Naturalism*

Despite their distinct emphases, Whitehead, Hartshorne, Neville, and Teilhard de Chardin (evolutionary concepts of the “Noosphere” and *Omega*) are listed by Corrington as the main proponents of this form of naturalism. While honorific naturalism is monolithic (spirit as a unitary source of power), process naturalism is atomically and pluralistically constructed; that is, it “pluralizes the spirit and prefers instead to speak of centers of awareness that become aware of each other through a kind of final cause, namely, the feeling of feeling in which an event ‘chooses’ to let another event, now

⁴⁶*NaS*, 138. Corrington writes elsewhere: “The concept of ‘worldhood’ (*Weltheit*), as partially developed by Heidegger, refers to the sheer availability of worlds to the human process on the most generic level. Worlds have content while worldhood does not. Worldhood is the sheer availability and *unavailability* of semiotic worlds to and for the self” (*STTP*, 169).

⁴⁷*EN*, 60. “Ecstatic naturalism is honorific when it points toward powers of transformation and renewal within the world that are themselves evocative of the primal potencies that represent the birthing ground of actuality and possibility” (*ibid.*, 20).

objectified, become relevant to it.”⁴⁸ Because of its pluralistic and evolutionary elements, process naturalism (e.g., Hartshorne’s “psychicalism” or Cobb’s “panexperientialism”) shares equivalent traits with Peirce’s doctrine of panpsychism (“matter is effete mind”). Peirce radicalized the conception of mentality through this doctrine. For him, material realities are psychical; they are forms of mental phenomena, and to make any statement about reality or phenomenon is to describe it in a mental term. To ascribe “effete mind” to reality is to assert that it anthropocentrically and anthropomorphically has its own purposes.⁴⁹ In the perspective of process naturalism, not spirit but “creativity” is the processive source that prehends the evolving universe. In his book *Process and Reality*, Whitehead writes:

‘Creativity’ is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complex unity.⁵⁰

Contrary to descriptive naturalism, process naturalism’s creative God, who processively grows and develops alongside finite creatures (“actual occasions”) and is posited with primordial and consequent natures, does exist, regardless of the difference between Whitehead’s (God as a single actuality) and Hartshorne’s (God as “personally ordered society” or as a “society of occasions”) - all metaphysical concepts of divine Being.⁵¹ Corrington is, however, persuaded that Robert Neville’s form of process

⁴⁸Corrington, “Ecstatic Naturalism and the Transfiguration of the Good,” *Empirical Theology: A Handbook*, 208.

⁴⁹Peirce’s naturalism cannot be neatly categorized in one particular form of naturalism, but his, according to Corrington, may be “vacillated between descriptive, honorific, and process traditions in the framing of his three categories of firstness (pure possibility and feeling), secondness (binary opposition and resistance), and thirdness (law and generality as intelligible habit); cf. *EN*, 16-26.

⁵⁰Cited in *EN*, 23.

⁵¹For Whitehead, the subjective aim of God as *a single actuality* or as a non-extensive actual entity is to positively prehend each finite actual entity; whereas Hartshorne’s God as *personally ordered society* or as a society of actual entities/supreme

naturalism is “more satisfactory” because of its semiotic understanding of an evolving nature. For Neville, the transforming power of nature and its meaning can only be shown forth through human semiosis. And as regards philosophical theology, contrary to personalism’s perspective or Hartshorne’s panentheism, Neville’s God as the indeterminate Being (who created the world *ex nihilo*) and the created order are asymmetrically distinct, called by Neville “the creator-created distinction.”⁵² Neville’s creator-created distinction is undeniably dialectical, for the “presence of God” in the created realm simultaneously discloses “the transcendence of God”; consequently, there exists discontinuity within nature.

Process naturalism’s doctrines of pluralism and of creative God processively prehending evolving nature and its finite actual entities are congenial to ecstatic naturalism. Yet, while process naturalism (Whitehead and Hartshorne) stresses the continual internal relation of actual occasions, ecstatic naturalism ontologically maintains the fundamental divide between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*.

The view that nature is the genus and other orders are only species is the fundamental theme that binds ecstatic naturalism with the other three forms of naturalism, regardless of their errors; such as, “Descriptive naturalism will privilege efficient

social being is “more plural and more directly analogous to the structure of the human self...God becomes deeply relevant to the human self (which is a society of actual occasions dominated by a primary occasion), both internally as a felt actuality and as the guarantor of objective immortality” (*STTP*, 28). See also Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948); cf. Charles Hartshorne, “Two Forms of Idolatry,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1 (1970): 3-15.

⁵²“...God or being-itself as the conditionally and unconditionally transcendent creator, the created determinations in their specific determinate characters and in their metaphysical natures, the power of God that creates, and so forth. For want of a better name, the distinction between God and the created order can be called the creator-created distinction” (Neville, *God the Creator: On the Transcendence and Presence of God* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1992], 94-5). Presupposing the concept of eternity, Neville concludes that the created is the world (*natura naturata*) and the creating is God (*natura naturans*). See his *Eternity and Time’s Flow* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993). Wolfhart Pannenberg also shares the same theological view with Neville, see *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*, ed. Ted Peters (Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); cf. Cornelius A. Buller, *The Unity of Nature and History in Pannenberg’s Theology* (Maryland: Littlefield Adams Books, 1996).

causality and remain less open to formal and final causes. Honorific naturalism will err in the opposite direction by downplaying efficient causes. Process thought will privilege mentality (Neville excepted), thus ignoring the sheer inertia of nonmental aspects of nature.”⁵³ What makes ecstatic naturalism a viable alternative to these forms of naturalism, especially to Buchler’s descriptive naturalism and Neville’s process naturalism (because both of them fail to probe deeply into the underconscious of nature), is that it not only incorporates their essential themes into its perspective, but also moves beyond them in such a way that, according to Corrington, the phrase “radical naturalism” must be necessarily coined so that it “could transfigure key features of the earlier forms and quicken the latent potencies within them.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Corrington thinks that this phrase, while appropriate, it lacks the “descriptive force” to fully transport the significant features of this new form of naturalism. For him, the phrase “ecstatic naturalism” is more adequate, essentially because it can distinctively reveal the central components of naturalism articulated from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, such as “1) to honor the stern requirements of ontological parity, 2) to allow full scope for the underconscious of nature, 3) to radically deprive the human, and, 4) to unfold a fully generic semiotics that deals with signs, sign unfolding, infinite semiosis, and the evolution of meaning (the heart of semiotic cosmology).”⁵⁵ Besides Corrington, thinkers like Peirce, Tillich, Bloch, Jung, and Kristeva have contributed their seminal ideas and concepts to this new form of naturalism.

8. *Horizontal Hermeneutics*

“Horizontal hermeneutics” and “ordinal phenomenology” are the two fundamental methodological means employed by ecstatic naturalism in order to probe deeply into human orders of relevance or the innumerable orders of natural complexes in the realm of *nature natures*. Corrington’s first book *The Community of Interpreters* scrupulously describes in detail a dynamically ramified system of ecstatic naturalism’s horizontal

⁵³STTP, 30.

⁵⁴STTP, 31.

⁵⁵Ibid., 30-1.

hermeneutics, which predominantly focuses on nature. Drawing from the hermeneutical theories of Peirce and Royce, in his “emancipatory reenactment,” Corrington takes the Continental hermeneutics, specifically those of Gadamer and Heidegger to task. In his view, the Continent’s hermeneutical theory, especially its so-called “language mysticism” “has tended to stress the finite self in its private relation to a text or utterance”;⁵⁶ in other words, both Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” and Heidegger’s “primal Saying” have obtruded “a priority scheme that reduces the status of nonlinguistic sign meanings.”⁵⁷

Since nature is pretextual, it must not be “defined” as a text among others. And this is also the principal reason why Corrington also takes Emerson to task. He believes that Emerson, despite his eulogizing of nature, erred in making nature as the ultimate text; for attaching nature to textuality means negating “the ‘infinite semiotic’ process that is nature in its naturing capacity. To conceptualize nature as one text among others is to make it and its ‘products’ static objects with fixed horizontal boundaries that ultimately deny the ecstatic quality of reality.”⁵⁸ Horizontal hermeneutics argues for a hermeneutics that does not limit itself to human linguistic or textual artifacts, but must extend itself to extra-linguistic structures such as the semiotic nature of communal life (e.g., Peirce’s “scientific community of inquirers” and Royce’s “Beloved Community”), for “the community functioned as the liberating horizon for interpretation.”⁵⁹ Corrington, however, faults both Peirce and Royce for their narrowly normative definitions of community. According to Corrington:

We need here a more generic account of community and its bearing on the horizontal structures of interpretations. We must transcend the idealistic frameworks of Peirce and Royce, while serving their deeper impulses and insights. To do so entails an analysis of the notions of order, community, sign, and horizon. In the redefinition of these actualities, hermeneutics can find a categorial clearing that is adequate

⁵⁶*CI*, 31.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁸Todd A. Driskill, “Beyond the Text: Ecstatic Naturalism and American Pragmatism,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, 311.

⁵⁹*CI*, 48.

to its inspirations.⁶⁰

As the term “horizontal hermeneutics” suggests, hermeneutics must be horizontal in scope;⁶¹ that is, with a perspectival view, it semiotically attempts to ascertain the most generic traits/features of the world (e.g., the human process of personal and communal life and experience). Ecstatic naturalism claims that any spatial analogues pertaining to the concept of “horizon” (perspective) must be removed. The ever elusive horizons, never confined to any thematizations, furnish meaning and hermeneutic clearing for the human process. Horizon connotes the notion of “indefinite boundaries and an intrinsic hunger for generic expansion”;⁶² it “serves as the clearing within which identity can be generated and sustained.”⁶³ Since all interpretive matters are firmly established in orders of relevance, hermeneutics “is concerned with ...locating each interpretation within its proper order or location. As such, hermeneutics is the self-conscious moment within topology. The finding of place (*topos*) is basic that determines its scope and direction.”⁶⁴ In short, horizontal hermeneutics is a drive “toward the encompassing perspective in which all signs are located vis-à-vis each other and in terms of the human communities that sustain and articulate them.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹“It drives toward the encompassing perspective in which all signs are located vis-à-vis each other and in terms of the human communities that sustain and articulate them. Of course, such an encompassing view is unattainable within the relentless constraints of finitude. yet it remains as the fundamental lure for our interpretive transactions” (*CI*, 47).

⁶²*NaS*, 21. In his well-written manuscript on manic-depressive disorder, *Riding the Windhorse: Manic-Depressive Disorder and the Quest for Wholeness*, Corrington briefly gives a clear definition of the term “horizon”: “All interpretive acts take place within a total horizon of meaning that locates each act. The horizon is the full field of experience in which we live and move...The horizon surrounds me like an extended body and it grants me both possibilities and actualities” (96).

⁶³*NaS*, 17.

⁶⁴*CI*, 48.

⁶⁵Ibid., 47.

9. Ordinal Phenomenology

A transition from horizontal hermeneutics to ordinal phenomenology is inevitably a logical step in examining the metaphysical method of ecstatic naturalism, which is substantially featured in Corrington second book, *Nature and Spirit*. Relatively akin to Dewey's metaphysical concept of "generic traits of existence," ordinal phenomenology is a metaphysical movement from the less; that is, from the limited traits or the process of human selving to the more generic - larger orders of relevance; namely, worldhood (the encompassing of all horizons/worlds) and four dimensions of divine natures. And if Corrington's horizontal hermeneutics is a radical divergence from the "language mysticism" of Gadamer and Heidegger, his ordinal phenomenology is certainly a deviation from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, which manifests such "a narrow concern with human subjectivity and the constitutive acts of alleged transcendental ego."⁶⁶ Driskill is correct to say that, "Corrington seeks to steer us away from the 'spectatorial view of the world' that often fails to take seriously its own subjective location (embeddedness) in orders of relevance or various forms of life which a subject participates."⁶⁷ While horizontal hermeneutics situates itself in the semiosis of personal and communal life, ordinal phenomenology systematically and descriptively explores and examines the most fundamental and pervasive features of reality (traits of the world). It attempts to "track down" the elusive aspects of worldhood. To expand the phenomenological scope, ordinal phenomenology not only moves beyond both panpsychism and anthropocentrism (human finitude), but it also encompasses prehuman and preordinal orders:

Ordinal phenomenology marks a distinct departure from this more traditional way of understanding the tensions between phenomenological method and metaphysical aspiration. It redefines both phenomenology and metaphysics in such a way as to show that they require each other. Ordinal phenomenology is...the analysis and description of orders of relevance. As such,

⁶⁶*NaS*, 1.

⁶⁷Driskill, "Beyond the Text: Ecstatic Naturalism and American Pragmatism," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, 316.

it does not privilege consciousness by assuming that it must be the mysterious origin of all phenomenal features. The concept of “order” is in a sense pre-phenomenological in that it enables phenomenology to proceed toward a description of any order no matter how constituted or how located. Without such a metaphysical concept, phenomenology would be confined to finite subjectivity, that is, to an idiosyncratic order that has only dubious relevance to all others.⁶⁸

Nature or naturalism is still the heart of the matter for Corrington’s ordinal phenomenology as it is with horizontal hermeneutics.⁶⁹ Not related to Peirce’s method of abductive reasoning or interpretive musement, ordinal phenomenology not only identifies, describes, and analyzes nonhuman and human orders of relevance, but it also unveils the depth dimension of the ontological difference. The prefix “ordinal” informs the fact that all nonhuman or human traits are inherently subject to orders of relevance, and that phenomenology is in and of orders of relevance to which the human process belongs. It should be remembered that in the realm of *nature natured*, the human process is one among other processes:

“Phenomenology” is here defined as the sensitive exploration of traits as they become manifest within and as orders or relevance... The phrase “order of relevance” is a generic phrase denoting any thing that can be pointed to in any way. Orders need not be orderly or especially transparent. The only requirement here is that a grouping of traits be relevant to each other in some minimal respect. Ordinal phenomenology is thus nothing more (or less) than the description of anything that can be pointed to by the human process.⁷⁰

⁶⁸*NaS*, 2-3.

⁶⁹“Ordinal phenomenology relies upon a very different conception of naturalism and the natural standpoint. The ordinal perspective understands naturalism to be inevitable and to entail that the human process be fully embedded within a nature that is forever beyond its own making. Yet naturalism, in this view, does not entail materialism, physicalism, or any other type of reductive monism” (*NaS*, 13).

⁷⁰*EN*, 14.

Influenced by Buchler's doctrine of ontological parity, ordinal phenomenology deprivileges both foundationalism and essentialism, for a natural complex cannot be reduced to an essence, and an ordinal location must not be more foundational than the other. Consequently, ordinal phenomenology finds a threefold disagreement with Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. First, while Husserl's notion of the transcendental ego elevates human subjectivity or pure consciousness (the phenomenon is constituted by Ego or the self), ordinal phenomenology views to human process as one among nonhuman natural processes:

The ordinal perspective recognizes that the human process gives shape and texture to innumerable orders of relevance and that it will continue to do so. At the same time, it recognizes that nonhuman orders arrange themselves without human help and that phenomenology is as much an act of discovery as it is an analysis of internal acts of constitution...The human process is in and of nature...and cannot prescind from the power and potency of extrahuman orders.⁷¹

Secondly, since whatever "is" is a complex/order and that all orders are "real," there will be no phenomenological need to apply any form of "bracketing" (*einklammern*) to suspend natural experiences in order to concentrate on or classify some particular experience or consciousness in its pure and intrinsically subjective state. Thirdly, since nature has no contours and is undefinably vast and measureless, ordinal phenomenology, unlike Husserl, does not equate naturalism with physicalism (or with materialism).

"Contiguous" to and "commensurate" with each other, horizontal hermeneutics (semiotics) and ordinal phenomenology (metaphysics) are two integral elements in Corrington's semiotic cosmology. Semiotic cosmology affirms the absolute ubiquity of nature, which has become the underlying setting of ecstatic naturalism. Because of its embeddedness in nature, semiotics is mute as to the depth dimensions or structures of nature; whereas metaphysics is able to explore deeply, if incompletely, into all

⁷¹NaS, 10.

presemiotic features or potencies of nature. As regards the roles played by semiotics and metaphysics, Corrington writes:

Semiotics is here defined as the systematic description of all forms of signification, whether natural or cultural. Metaphysics is here defined as the equally systematic description of orders of relevance, whether semiotic or not...The focus shifts to semiotics when the immediate concern is with tracing out how signs function within a particular order of relevance. The focus shifts to metaphysics when the immediate concern is with reaching down into the more basic enabling conditions of nature itself that make semiosis possible.⁷²

10. *Justus Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics*

Because metaphysics is still inevitably a viable option in philosophizing, following the classical pragmatist tradition Corrington has adamantly challenged the neopragmatists who privilege and eulogize pantextual glottocentrism and thus deny or distort the function of metaphysics. Metaphysics is indeed the backbone of ecstatic naturalism's perspective. While the methodological functions of both horizontal hermeneutics and ordinal phenomenology semiotically and metaphysically serve to describe and analyze orders of relevance embedded in the ontological realm of *nature natured*, as a metaphysical method, ecstatic naturalism attempts to probe into the depth dimension of *nature naturing* in order to reveal the ever-fissuring relationship between these two realms of this fundamental divide. Only in and through this revealing will nature's primal self emerge.

Buchler's ordinal metaphysics, Peirce's pragmatic semiotics, and Kristeva's psychoanalytic concepts of semiotic and symbolic are either refined or reconfigured by Corrington's emancipatory reenactment. These concepts have essentially supported ecstatic naturalism's metaphysical method and system. (These concepts and their ramifications will be clarified and demonstrated in the next two sections when they penetrate into the self-fissuring of nature and the primal self as nature's foundling). However, it is important at this stage to specifically examine Buchlerian ordinal

⁷²EN, 2-3.

metaphysics, mainly because it foundationally provides ecstatic naturalism metaphysical tools as to probe into the ontological dimension of *nature natures*.

While traditional metaphysics attempts to present a coherent/unified view of an ultimate reality or of the world that is deeply seated in such concepts like Being, actualities, possibilities, substance, cause-effect relationships, or ontological priority, Buchler not only rejected this heavy laden “substance” metaphysics, but he also offered an alternative and seminal system of categories called “ordinal metaphysics” (or metaphysics of natural complexes), which centers itself on concepts like natural complexes, traits, orders, contour, weak and strong relevance, and ontological parity. In the words of Singer:

Buchler’s ontology is a metaphysics of complexes, or orders, in contradistinction to a metaphysics of substance, a process philosophy, and Absolute Idealism, an atomism, or any ontology that divides the world into realms...His concepts of complex, order and trait, prevalence and alescence, and weak relevance and strong relevance are not new names for older categories, but make distinctions that have not hitherto been made.⁷³

Singer characterizes Buchler’s principle of ordinality as follows:

It defines nature to be an infinitely dense, indefinitely extended and ramified mutiplicity of orders, intersecting in limitless ways. The principle entails that every discriminable complex is a network of related components and is embedded in an indefinitely ramified network of relations. There are no discrete or independent or atomic entities. The principle of ordinality, the statement that every complex is an order of complexes and belongs to an indefinite number of orders, is the fullest expression of what it means to say that whatever is, is a natural complex, and the concept of natural complex is not fully intelligible apart from it.⁷⁴

⁷³Singer, *Ordinal Naturalism*, 150.

⁷⁴Cited in Corrington, “Naturalism, Measure, and the Ontological Difference,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 (1985): 23-4.

Ecstatic naturalism's ordinal phenomenology, as a metaphysical method, is certainly indebted to Buchler's ordinal metaphysics, particularly his concepts of complex, order of relevance, traits, and contour. The concept called "natural complex" is the chief component of Buchler's metaphysical system. For him, whatever is, is a natural complex (e.g., feelings, possibilities, duties, human products, laws, qualities, physical bodies, thoughts, etc.). For both Buchler and Corrington, since whatever is, is a natural complex, God is also ontologically a natural complex prevailing in some order. Hence the relevant question should be asked, "In what order(s) is God located?" instead of, "Does God exist?" because:

[t]he question whether God "exists" or does not is a symptom of deficiency in the categorial equipment of a metaphysics... In the metaphysics of natural complexes it could be said that God prevails, not for this reason or that, but because God is a complex discriminated, and every complex prevails, each in its own way, whether as myth, historical event, symbol, or force; whether as actuality or possibility. The critical question must be, not whether God exists, nor whether there is an "entity" which satisfies this scheme of traits...but in what way a natural complex thus discriminated is to be understood, analyzed, and experientially encompassed; or, in what way it is to be further discriminated and found related.⁷⁵

It is now quite clear that since God is a natural complex and is ordinally located, classical theism's doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is rejected by Buchler's naturalistic metaphysics. And since no complex is more real or basic than any other (the principle of ontological parity), there exists neither "non-natural complexes" nor "supernatural complexes." Sharing Buchler's philosophical theology (or specifically his religious humanism), Corrington posits the sacred⁷⁶ within the realm of *nature natured*, for nature itself is

⁷⁵Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 8.

⁷⁶Corrington posits that the sacred manifests itself in four ways: sacred folds, sacred intervals, providingness, and the unruly ground. Again, grounded in the principle of parity, not only are these four sacred's modes equally real to one another, but they are

neither constituted nor encompassed by the sacred. As products of *nature naturing*, both humans and the sacred are “ejects” of nature. And as a result, the theistic concept of Logos and God’s natural attributes such as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience must be radically reformulated. This radical reformulation also applies to Hartshorne’s process doctrine of *panentheism*, which postulates God as being within and beyond nature. Corrington makes it quite clear that “the sacred is located within the world of *nature natured* and prevails as a muted ubiquitous presence tied to the betweenness structures sustaining the tension between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*.”⁷⁷

From the standpoint of Buchler’s ordinal metaphysics, an *order* “is a sphere of (or for) relatedness. It is what ‘provides’ extent, conditions, and kinds of relatedness.”⁷⁸ An order is made up of specific traits. Every natural complex is an order, and all natural

also ontologically and ubiquitously coequal with the nonsacred. To grasp an adequate understanding of Corrington’s philosophical theology, see his *Nature’s Religion*.

⁷⁷NR, 7. While Corrington stresses the ontologically circumscribed role of the sacred in *nature natured*, hence the nonexistence of divine omnipotence, Pannenberg, on the other hand, insists that nature or the natural world is indeed a creature created by the “all-determining” God. God, for Pannenberg, is the *source* of nature and humans. See his *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*; see also Cornelius A. Buller, *The Unity of Nature and History in Pannenberg’s Theology*. Pannenberg’s theological doctrine of God as the source of creation/nature also echoes the philosophical view of the ninth century Irish philosopher John Scottus Eriugena (c.810 - c.877), whose Scholastic thought had such considerable influence on Meister Eckhart’s mysticism and Nicholas of Cusa’s concepts of *coincidentia oppositorum* and *docta ignorantia*. In Eriugena’s fourfold division of nature (*natura*), Eriugena inferred that God was both the primary causes and effects of creation. And since God is the Alpha and Omega, the primal Source of all things, nature was created by God. Everything, including the realm of nonbeing, participates in the ineffable transcendence of God. Eriugena’s understanding of God and nature is contrary to that of ecstatic naturalism. First, Eriugena acknowledged God’s transcendence; second, God is the genus of which all creatures of nature are species; and third, like Spinoza’s pantheism, Eriugena elevated nature to God, not vice versa. George Pepper has perceptively pointed out that, for Eriugena, the Incarnation was the motivating thought to conceive God and creature in a continuous flowing process. See Joannes Scotus Eriugena, *Periphyseon: On the Division of Nature*, trans. Myra L. Uhlfelder (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1976). For an extended study of Eriugena’s philosophical theology, see Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁷⁸Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 95.

complexes are not only indefinitely ramifiable, but are also inherently relational; that is, “whatever is, is in some relations.” Their traits and integrities are inexhaustibly infinite. However, a particular complex may not be related to another complex, but cannot be unrelated to any other. Buchler infers that all natural complexes are relational, “though not only relational. Any complex is related to others, though not to all others; and its traits are related to one another, though not necessarily each to every other...A complex related to another complex in one respect may not be related to it in another respect.”⁷⁹

Although each complex is also an order and is located in either an order or many orders to which the term “ordinality” denotes, Buchler cautions:

Complex and order, complexity and ordinality, are coextensive but not wholly the same in meaning. Each requires the other for its definitional coherence, and the difference is one of emphasis. An order is a complex in so far as it comprises a *multiplicity* of traits. A complex is an order in so far as it *delimits* traits and serves as a *location* of traits. The phrase “an order” here carries the sense of a sphere or a domain rather than the sense of an arrangement or a structure.⁸⁰

Corrington argues that orders can be both orderly or disorderly and that “[t]he concept of ‘order’ does not entail that a given complex is somehow orderly or has a specific formal integrity. Some orders are quite disorderly, or even random, in their constitution.”⁸¹ He adds: “Each order, whether orderly or not, is constituted by subaltern orders and it is impossible in principle to ever find a rock-bottom foundation which will produce and explain the ‘derived’ complexity of the order itself.”⁸²

According to Buchler, “A complex finds itself in orders, so to speak, and is simultaneously an order for and locates other complexes. It may participate in generating

⁷⁹Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 24.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 239.

⁸¹*NaS*, 15-6.

⁸²Corrington, “Justus Buchler’s Ordinal Metaphysics and the Eclipse of Foundationalism,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1985): 292.

new locations (relations) for itself and other complexes.”⁸³ Since each complex is “real,” its “realness” essentially depends on ordinal location. Ordinal location transcends spatiality or geography, for whatever is, is located:

The principle of ordinality insists that complexes are part of a densely ramified nature that has no predetermined shape or boundary...In order to understand any given complex, whether it be a space-time particular, a thought, a possibility, a gesture, an utterance, or anything whatsoever, it becomes necessary to rotate it through its vast relational chains so as to gain some sense of its overall shape.⁸⁴

Every natural complex possesses its own *integrity*, *scope*, and *contour*. For a natural complex to hold its own status, relations, and constitution is to have an *integrity*. The term integrity cannot be likened to “individuality,” because since whatever is, is natural complex, evidently not all natural complexes are individuals. Not only does a natural complex have an integrity, but also has a *scope*, which includes such forms as inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, and pervasiveness. For Buchler, each complex:

has an *integrity* for each of its locations. The continuity and totality of its locations, the interrelation of its integrities, is the *contour* of the complex. The contour is itself an integrity, the gross integrity of that which is plurally located, whether successive or simultaneously.⁸⁵

⁸³Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, xviii. Buchler gave this example: “To be a resident of London - to be located in that complex of geographical, political, social, economic, cultural, etc. orders - is to be related to, that is, determined by a variety of characteristic traits of that order, London. Thus, in this respect, London is the more inclusive order and the individual is located in London. On the other hand, the individual *qua* individual is also an order. Therefore, since being a resident of London is a trait, a subaltern complex, of the individual, the individual is a [weakly relevant] constituting relation to London. Thus, in another respect, London is located in the individual, the individual being the more inclusive order.”

⁸⁴NaS, 23.

⁸⁵Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 22.

Compared to terms like “quality,” “property,” and “attribute” (which all associate with the kind of “whatness”), Buchler argues that the term “trait,” a constituent of a complex, is more ontologically neutral and general. Every complex has its own traits (or as subaltern complexes). And a trait is always deeply seated in an order. Every trait of a complex is either an actuality or a possibility, depending on its present situation (actuality) or its prospect (possibility). However, as Gelber and Wallace point out, a prospect is a continuation or extension of a natural complex, it is not temporally about the future. To show the limits of complexes or orders, Buchler introduces the concept of a possibility and an actuality: “A possibility, like an actuality, is a relative limit, immanent in (determined by) the relevant traits of the complex.”⁸⁶ Because natural complexes are intrinsically relational in one way or another, there are no “pure” possibilities or “pure” actualities (and neither do “pure” entities exist). A possibility and an actuality relationally prevail or arise in an order; neither can a possibility nor an actuality be by itself; and neither can one be prior to the other metaphysically, logically, and epistemically.⁸⁷ For both Buchler and Corrington, “trait” replaces “essence.”

Not only is each complex ordinaly (and determinately) located, thus relating to others in some respect, but also is either *prevalent* or *alescent*:

What it means “to be” is formulated by the pair of concepts, prevalence and alescence...Buchler criticizes what others have singled out as the relevant ontological differences: “being and becoming,” “permanence and change,” “the static and the dynamic,” “stability and instability,” “determinateness and indeterminateness.” Buchler conceptualizes the differences in terms of prevalence and alescence, which together are meant to be exhaustive of what it means “to be.”...Prevalence and alescence are modes or dimensions of being.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Sidney Gelber and Kathleen Wallace, “Nature, Power and Prospect: Justus Buchler’s System of Philosophy,” *Nature’s Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal Metaphysics*, ed. Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 55.

⁸⁷See Buchler’s chapter “Possibility and Actuality,” *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 129-85.

⁸⁸Sidney Gelber and Kathleen Wallace, “Nature, Power and Prospect: Justus Buchler’s System of Philosophy,” *Nature’s Perspectives: Prospects for Ordinal*

Buchler uses the term *prevalent* to refer to a complex's excluding traits from its contour, and the term *alescent* to a complex's admitting traits into its contour.

The same complex may be prevalent (or prevail) in one order and be alescent in another, for a complex cannot be prevalent to *all* respects or orders.

Every natural complex has relational traits, for whatever is, is in some relations. As previously explored, each complex will have both integrity and scope. A complex is called *strongly relevant* if it either alters or affects the *integrity* (its location or presence) of another. Buchler elucidates further: "To say that one complex is strongly relevant to another, then, is to say that it is a condition of the other's integrity, that it either reinforces and sustains or modifies and perhaps destroys the integrity (a given integrity) of the other."⁸⁹ A complex becomes *weakly relevant* if its *scope* is elementarily altered or affected by another. Corrington says: "The distinction between weak and strong relevance opens up the true plurality of ways in which relations may obtain across numerous ordinal locations. Relationality need not be founded upon a naive belief in strict one-to-one internal reciprocity."⁹⁰

One of the integral elements that holds Buchler's system of ordinal metaphysics together is that of "the principle of parity." This principle essentially postulates that no natural complex is more "real," "natural," or "ultimate" than any other; every complex is just as genuine as any other. For Buchler, whatever is, is a natural complex, and that all complexes (traits or orders) are positioned on the same ontological rank; in other words, all possess the same ontological status. This principle is diametrically opposed to the principle of "ontological priority" (Whitehead and Heidegger). The latter eulogizes what

Metaphysics, 54. See also Buchler's chapter "Prevalence and Alescence," *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 52-92.

⁸⁹Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 107. Citing an example of the rain and the growth of wheat, Buchler says that while rain is strongly relevant to the growth of wheat, the growth of wheat is weakly relevant to the rain, because the wheat would not grow at all if there were no rain, but there would still be rain though the wheat did not exist or grow. "In this order, the rain is strongly relevant to the wheat in the sense that it is a condition of the integrity of a complex other than itself."

⁹⁰Corrington, "Justus Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics and the Eclipse of Foundationalism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1985): 296.

Corrington calls “metaphysical hierarchies”; that is, it privileges some natural complexes or orders (e.g., experience or reality) to be “more real” or central than others. Ontological priority is thus a form of foundationalism:

The principle of ontological parity scarcely implies that there are no differences among natural complexes. On the contrary, it presupposes that no two complexes, in whatever order and however discriminated, are similar in all respects. Their discriminability forces us to preserve their integrity, or better, to acknowledge it...The principle of parity obliges us to receive and accept all discriminanda. The conception of ontological priority, on the other hand, makes all ascertainable differences suspect, and instead of interpreting their relative character and ordinal location, always stands ready to efface them.⁹¹

The Self-Fissuring of Nature

[N]ature [is] an infinitely dense, indefinitely extended and ramified multiplicity of orders, intersecting in limitless ways.

Beth Singer

For Corrington, since nature is *precategorical*, its metaphysical concepts must be either refined or rethought. All metaphors, imageries, or analogies ascribed to it will eventually fail;⁹² yet his creative metaphors such as “spawning,” “birthing,” “fissuring,”

⁹¹Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 32-3.

⁹²Corrington makes clear that, “All analogies and metaphors become strained when pushed in the direction of nature naturing” (*NaS*, 138). Consequently, metaphors such as “the ultimate concentric circle, the container of all ‘stuff’, the perspective of perspectives (as in Absolute Idealism), the series of series (as in Bradley and Royce), the undifferentiated substance with its finite appearances (as in Spinoza), or the monistic will-to-power as enhancement and preservation (as in Nietzsche)” will founder in striving “to exhibit the ordinal reality of natural complexes and their endless ramifications and relations” (“Naturalism, Measure, and the Ontological Difference, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 [1985], 24). In his review article of Corrington’s book *Ecstatic*

and “ejecting,” and imageries like “sign bloom,” “sign root,” and “vehicle,” however imperfect or distorted, can still extensively help illuminate some basic metaphysical categories of ecstatic naturalism. And by painstakingly explicating, clarifying, and distinguishing his own “language game” from those of others, Corrington wants to be certain that readers who are not acquainted with metaphysics, phenomenology, or semiotics will be able to adequately grasp his highly conceptual thoughts as well as technically coined terms. There is undoubtedly “a sense in which a trace of Heideggerian language mysticism appears in Corrington’s mode of thought; and learning Corrington’s language is integral to an engagement with the text on the plane of phenomenological breadth and existential depth.”⁹³

At the heart of ecstatic naturalism lies the metaphysical concept of nature. What makes ecstatic naturalism radically different or divergent from other forms of naturalism is that it attempts to explore the eternal fissure of the ontological difference, to probe into the depth dimension or “mystery” of *nature naturing*, and to assert that nature is all there is. Corrington holds that:

[T]he concept of “nature”...is in no way merely equivalent to the concept of physical nature in the sciences, nor is it confined to what antecedent naturalisms have said about the sheer scope and density of nature. Nature is the availability of orders (Buchler) and the *unavailability* of orders. It is also its own underconscious

Naturalism, Christopher Hookway offers some congenial viewpoints with respect to Corrington’s use of metaphors and analogies. For Hookway, any description to concepts such as presemiotic or preformal potencies will eventually “distort their characters and deny their presemiotic status. In that case, it seems, their description must be essentially metaphorical” (178). The use of metaphors or analogies is thus necessary, even though one must always realize that metaphors or analogies are given only limited functions. Hookway is right to remark that, “The idea that metaphor is unavoidable in forming new concepts and moving beyond the range of everyday experience is well established, so it would be wrong to object to Corrington’s argument on that score” (179). Nevertheless, Hookway also adds: “[O]ne could object that [Corrington] says far too little to help us to see how these metaphors should be used and developed, and what the rules are which should guide us in employing these metaphors” (179). See Hookway, “Metaphysics and Semiosis,” *Semiotica* 114-1/2 (1997): 169-80.

⁹³Driskill, “Beyond the Text: Ecstatic Naturalism and American Pragmatism,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 15 (1994): 315.

dimension (Coleridge) and the potencies therein “contained” (Schelling and Tillich). On the deepest level, nature is the self-othering and heterogeneous momentum that can never be captured by analogy or metaphor, not to mention a bound set of categorical structures.⁹⁴

This concept of nature articulated and manifest in the perspective of ecstatic naturalism is well enunciated in Corrington’s semiotic trilogy,⁹⁵ where the functions of semiosis, the self, and religion *vis-à-vis* nature are expounded.

As already discussed, nature is not to be categorized (e.g., the dialectic of paired opposites: “being” and “nonbeing”), defined, theorized, or systematized. Nature is pre-categorical because it has no opposite. Nature is not a “portion” of the universe (Whitehead); it is not *physis*; and it is neither *cosmos*⁹⁶ nor a formed matter (Aristotle) that was essentially combined by “form” (*eidos*) and “matter” (*hyle*). From the perspectives of Buchler’s ordinal metaphysics and Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism, nature is infinitely vast and utterly indefinite, having no absolute shape or contour; it therefore cannot be posited as a “natural complex” or “the order of nature” (Peirce). Nature is not a domain or an order of traits, for to be an order is to be delimited and have an integrity. Since nature is not ordinally located, it is not limited in scope and thus has no integrity. And because it is not ordinally located or ontologically conditioned, nature cannot be defined or categorized in any final way. Nature is ubiquitous and all-embracing; its concept “lies on the volatile cusp between the categorical, where generic

⁹⁴*STTP*, 141.

⁹⁵*Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (1994), *Nature’s Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit* (1996), and *Nature’s Religion* (1997).

⁹⁶Buchler interprets the concepts of world and nature as follows: “World is a concept which is, so to speak, extensively approached, and nature is a concept which is approached in terms of attributes and in terms of generic meanings. We would elaborate on world by multiplying the number of contents, or the type of contents, that are to be found anywhere, that have to be designated and enumerated. Nature is a term involving many more poetic characteristics, if that makes any sense, that notion” (“Conversation between Justus Buchler and Robert S. Corrington,” 264). Buchler also rejects the way in which Kant identifies the meaning of the terms “world” and “nature.” See his article “Probing the Idea of Nature,” *Process Studies* 8 (1978):162-3.

categories are framed in language, and the precategorical, where all such categories are pulled back into the abyss that has no contour and no history.”⁹⁷ This kind of radical naturalism reveals Corrington’s notion of “semiotic cosmology,” which acknowledges the sheer ubiquity and measureless contour or circumference of nature. Semiotic cosmology is essentially structured by two disciplines; namely, semiotics and metaphysics:

The discipline of semiotics is primarily concerned with the structure and dynamics of signification as manifest in any order whatsoever. The discipline of metaphysics is concerned with a slightly larger use of categories to evoke, describe, and show the innumerable ties between signification and nature. Both disciplines need each other if each is to fulfill its own self-chosen tasks. To talk of signification is ultimately to talk of the enabling context of signs and their involvements, while to talk of nature is to talk of nature as signifying, although it is much more than the “sum” of actual and possible forms of signification. This latter clause points to the other side of the categorial and precategorical paradox of thought.⁹⁸

Corrington’s book *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* offers a continued probing into the depth dimension or structure of nature through four convergently conceptual horizons that “support and nourish” so-called semiotic cosmology:

(1) a transformed philosophical naturalism that is open to the depth dimension of nature, (2) a more generic psychoanalysis that honors the insights of Freud, Jung, Reich, and Kristeva, but moves toward the depth-fields that undercut the narcissistic frameworks of Western psychology, (3) a genuine paleopragsmatism that honors the spirit of Peirce and Dewey while avoiding the subjectivism and historicism of neopragsmatism, and (4) a truly universalistic religious consciousness that can move thought beyond the patriarchal tyranny of the three Western monotheisms.⁹⁹

⁹⁷*STTP*, 6.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁹*STTP*, ix-x.

Breaking away from classical pragmatism's doctrine of continuity (e.g., Peirce's panpsychism) and Leibniz's metaphysical idea of preestablished harmony, ecstatic naturalism contends that there are fissures in the continua of nature. Nevertheless, these fissures or splits are only partial and not absolute diremptions, because nature inherently encompasses innumerable natural complexes. Furthermore, one of the fundamental reasons why ecstatic naturalism radically distinguishes itself from the other three forms of naturalism (descriptive, honorific, and process) is that it insists on the primordially pervasive dimension of the underconscious or unconscious of nature, and also on what Corrington calls "psychosemiosis." Corrington argues that the depth structure or mystery of nature can be psychoanalyzed, as it were. However, the term "psychosemiosis" must supercede the word "psychoanalysis," because categorially and methodologically the latter term is too narrowly confined; in other words, it only connotes the dyadic function of the human or selving process (e.g., between the analyst and analysand):

Unlike the stress on analysis, the focus on semiosis locates the self within infinite semiotic processes that shape its trajectories. A psychosemiotic understanding of the self would continue to probe into the dream work, the personal and collective unconscious, and the underconscious of nature, but always do so in the light of world semiosis (all orders that surround the human) and the generic perspective of semiotic cosmology...By definition, psychosemiosis cannot be narcissistic, as it lives in and through an infinite series of ellipses that flow through the self in process from an indefinite number of originating points just beyond the reach of any finite horizon. The *discipline* or *practice* of psychosemiosis entails a semiotic understanding of the structure of *nature natured* as well as the potencies of *nature naturing*...In the transformation of psychoanalysis into psychosemiosis it became clear that much of the work of the selving process takes place outside of or prior to language and information models.¹⁰⁰

The term "psychosemiosis" points beyond the finite horizons of the human process or psyche as well as its collective and personal consciousness. The primal depths of nature (*nature naturing*) cannot be delimited by the human process, because in the face of

¹⁰⁰STTP, 87, 96.

the infinite vastness and the underconscious of nature, the human process is but a species or an eject. It is important to realize that, even though psychoanalytic perspectives (e.g. those of Kristeva, Freud, and even Jung) are anthropocentrically and anthromorphically directed, they still furnish ecstatic naturalism many invaluable concepts and categories, such as “(1) projection, (2) unconscious complexes, (3) transference and its corollary countertransference, (4) the dream work, (5) the interactive field, and (6) the unconscious, both personal and collective.”¹⁰¹ And through Corrington’s “emancipatory reenactment,” these psychoanalytic concepts “will be delineated in terms of its usual conceptual habitat, and then transformed into a structure that exhibits more scope and density.”¹⁰²

Ecstatic naturalism poses the challenge that without exploring semiotically and deeply into the inner cunning of the unconscious and the processes of psychosemiosis, any attempt to gain a profound understanding of the primal nature’s self and the depth dimension of the precategory aspect of nature (*nature naturing*) will become impossible. It is important to understand what Corrington means by the word “depth.”

In his manuscript *Riding the Windhorse: A Manic-Depressive Disorder and the Quest for Wholeness*, while discussing his theory of creativity, Corrington uses the word “depth” to refer to two realities: the human unconscious and the unconscious of nature. (He uses the terms “the unconscious of nature” and “the underconscious of nature” interchangeably. The latter is used prominently in his *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*). As will be discussed in detail, ecstatic naturalism affirms a direct connection between the unconscious of human process and the unconscious of nature. Corrington laments the fact that many philosophers have rejected the notion of a depth structure to the world, because for him, to negate such a notion is equivalent to abjecting the dynamically pervasive depth dimension of the unconscious of nature, because “[t]he power of the unconscious lies in its uncanny ability to shatter or transform anything on the surface level. Thus to

¹⁰¹Ibid., 43

¹⁰²Ibid.

believe in depth is to make oneself vulnerable to structures and dynamics over which one has no control.”¹⁰³

1. *Nature Naturing and Nature Natured*

The realm of *nature natured* is constituted by innumerable orders, which are semiotically available to the human process. These attained orders of the world or worldhood are ejective products of *nature naturing*, and the manifest traits of *nature natured* are incommensurate with those of *nature naturing*. The dimension of nature called *nature naturing* connotes innumerable presemiotic and preformal potencies. It is precategoryal, pretemporal, prespatial, prepositional, and preordinal. Because of its preformal potencies, *nature naturing* is not an order of orders; rather, it plays the role of an “enabling condition” (Corrington) or takes on the image of “providingness” (Buchler) whose primary function is to “make it possible for possibilities and actualities to prevail and thus have their own ordinal locations.”¹⁰⁴ It must be recalled that potency is prior to possibility, for both possibilities and actualities have ordinal locations within *nature natured*; whereas potencies as ejective of both potential power and meaning (like Peirce’s infinitesimals) are presemiotically and preordinally self-othering and perform within the dimension of *nature naturing*. *Nature naturing* not only “embodies” both the “no longer” (the powers of origin) and the “not yet” (the transfiguration of the spirit), but it also “is the restless birthing ground of the potencies that lie beneath all form and content...[and is] a self-othering momentum that moves outward into the innumerable orders of relevance that constituted nature as natured.”¹⁰⁵ It is therefore correct to say that, “*Natura naturans*

¹⁰³ *RW*, 156. Like Jung, Corrington argues that by probing deeply into the depth structure of the human unconscious or the “feeling-toned complexes” (Jung) and the unconscious of nature or what Jung called the “collective unconscious,” the manic-depressive person will find the path to wholeness or “individuation” (Jung); cf. Sean Kelly, *Individuation and the Absolute: Hegel, Jung and the Path toward Wholeness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁴ *NaS*, 127.

¹⁰⁵ *EN*, 109.

is that which prevails, pervades, apportioned (as ejective) these uttermost depths which are the matrices of the potencies.”¹⁰⁶

Corrington suggests that *nature naturing* can be characterized as the “sum” of the potencies, and he employs the phrase the “unconscious of nature” as the metaphor. This metaphor is extremely crucial to his version of the ontological difference. For him, the innumerable orders of the world (*nature natured*) are spawned by the “prepositional dynamics and rhythms” of the unconscious of nature, and from the unconscious of nature the concept of the powers of origin derives.

One will not truly comprehend and appreciate ecstatic naturalism without acknowledging the crucial element of the theory of the unconscious¹⁰⁷ which anchors the

¹⁰⁶Guy Woodward, *Cleaving the Light: The Necessity of Metaphysics in the Practice of Theology*, MA Thesis at Loras College (Dubuque, Iowa, 1997), 51-2.

¹⁰⁷Whether approaching the unconscious from the perspective of depth psychology (e.g., Freud, Jung, Lacan, and Kristeva) or philosophy (Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Peirce), no one can deny its pervasively, primordially, and irrationally powerful function or role in both nature and the human process, however cloaked in different names or theories. In his *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*, Eduard von Hartmann divides the unconscious into different kinds, e.g., epistemological, physical, psychic, metaphysical, and psychological. (For a detailed study of von Hartmann’s philosophy of the unconscious, see Dennis N. Kenedy Darnoi, *The Unconscious and Eduard Von Hartmann* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967]). As regards the concept of the unconscious from the philosophical standpoint, Edward Allen Beach gives the following examples: Leibniz’s *petits perceptions* - “undetectable perceptions and feelings that reside in the hidden recesses of the mind, often without ever coming to consciousness”; Kant’s ‘obscure representations’ (*dunkle Vorstellungen*) “that remain just below the surface of consciousness.” Beach is right to say that Schelling’s notion of the unconscious undoubtedly impacted the period of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, and that Schelling’s philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*) and philosophy of identity (*Identitätsphilosophie*) coupled with his revisions of Kant’s and Fichte’s transcendental idealism indeed “produced one of the first systematic theories of the unconscious” (See Edward A. Beach, *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology* [Albany: SUNY, 1994], 47-57). Hegel’s notion of “being-in-itself” connotes the unconscious and through the process called “being-for-itself” does it become consciousness. The purpose of mentioning these examples is (1) to show that the role of the unconscious centrally played in ecstatic naturalism is not unprecedented, and (2) what makes ecstatic naturalism’s concept of the unconscious radical (as compared to other perspectives which still either textually, psychologically, or cognitively delimit or “finitize” the unconscious in the anthropocentric context) is that the unconscious preformally and *precategoryally* encompasses the abyss of nature. For Corrington: “The

current perspective. Nature, from ecstatic naturalism's view, "is not just what is manifest to consciousness, but what appears in the rhythmic momenta of the unconscious."¹⁰⁸

Because Freud, Lacan, and Kristeva failed to realize that the domain of the unconscious actually remains outside the realm of the human process, they have thus tied the unconscious to the human process. Therefore, unlike those psychoanalysts, Corrington finds Jung's concept of the unconscious¹⁰⁹ more aligned to his, essentially because the

underconscious of nature (different in scope and its *how* from the unconscious of the self) transfigures the logic of finitude so that both horizons are brought into a pulsating space of betweenness in which their respective sign series hover, however briefly, over an abyss that cannot be filled in by the omnipotence of thought" (*STTP*, 19-20). It is quite clear by now that, from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, the unconscious, especially the unconscious of nature is the unifying or ultimate ground of all experience of the human process, and not the ego, the self, or self-consciousness as posited by Kant or Fichte. See Pannenberg's chapter called "The Problem of Identity" (191-242) in his *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁸Corrington, "Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought," *Introduction to Christian Theology*, 176.

¹⁰⁹Corrington argues that Jung remained an agnostic on the issue of nature, mainly because of his Kantian influence of the phenomenal and noumenal distinction. Yet, unlike Freud who fundamentally interpreted the dreamer's dream as a hidden wish, Jung's theory of dreams extended beyond the sphere of the human process; in other words, dreams are "ejects of nature" (to use the language of ecstatic naturalism). Corrington understands dreams to "ply the terrain between the phenomenal and the noumenal and open up aspects of both domains" (*NR*, 31). And for him, if dreams ply the terrain between the phenomenal and noumenal distinction, then Jung's archetypes are ontologically located "at the mysterious nexus between nature naturing (the preformal and presemiotic potencies) and nature natured (the orders of the world that are formal and semiotic)" (*EN*, 153). Corrington affirms the unconscious of the self (Jung's "feeling-toned complexes") as the connection to the fundamental divide between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. This notion may be likened to Jung's *anima*, which serves as a link between conscious and unconscious; but it should be noted that Jung's archetypes of *animus* and *anima* are personifications of the unconscious. However, Jung's theory of the archetypes of the collective unconscious does enable the reader to understand the presemiotically dynamic working of the unconscious in nature from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism. Again, speaking from the psychoanalytic perspectives, unlike Freud's anthropocentrically personal unconscious, Jungian hypothesis of the collective unconscious is much more commensurate with ecstatic naturalism's understanding of the unconscious of nature. Like *nature naturing's* presemiotic dimension spawning forms of signification into the realm *nature natured*, Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious primally and universally "produce" myths, religious images, symbols, ideas,

unconscious, which is not circumscribed by the human domain, performs its pervasive and cunning role in the orders of nature and world semiosis. The unconscious, in the semiotic view of ecstatic naturalism:

participates in the drama of negativity insofar as it holds open possibilities for sign systems and provides goads for semiotic transformation. The unconscious is not only a 'repository' of sign material but functions as an active transforming power that can generate both random and meaningful patterns.¹¹⁰

In his book *Nature's Self*, Corrington shows that the unconscious is the basic link between the realm of *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world) and *nature naturing* (the preformal and presemiotic potencies), and through it this fissure is unveiled to us. More specifically, only through the human unconscious can we be made aware of the unconscious of nature (*nature naturing*); in other words, the path leading to the ontological difference is that of the unconscious of the self. However, Corrington is at

or esoteric visions. Jung stressed that "the collective unconscious is anything but an incapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world." For him, "Archetypes are complexes of experience that come upon us like fate, and their effects are felt in our most personal life." See *The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung*, ed. Violet de Laszlo, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). See particularly sections: "On the Nature of the Psyche" (39-98), "Archetypes of the Unconscious" (299-337), and "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype" (339-74). By "complex" Jung meant a collection of personal characteristics (e.g., emotional reactions). In his Tavistock Lectures of 1935, Jung defined a complex as having "the tendency to form a little personality of itself. It has a sort of body, a certain amount of its own physiology. It can upset the stomach. It upsets the breathing, it disturbs the heart - in short, it behaves like a partial personality" (Cited in Anthony Storr, *Jung* [New York: Routledge, 1991], 22). Along the line with Jung, Corrington writes: "[T]he human process becomes permeable to the ultimate fissure of nature through its unconscious structures. Consciousness is brought into the process much later, if at all...[And that] the intersection of human consciousness with the natural unconscious is one of the most dramatic in the known semiotic universe" (NR 30, 31). For a comparative study of the unconscious of Freud and Jung, see Liliane Frey-Rohn, *From Freud to Jung: A Comparative Study of the Psychology of the Unconscious*, trans. Fred E. Engreen and Evelyn K. Engreen (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1990).

¹¹⁰EN, 48.

pains trying to show that while signs serve as the link between consciousness and the unconscious:

there is a breakdown in the human/nature analogy. The human process has a form of consciousness that is not shared by nature itself. That is, nature is not some kind of consciousness of all consciousnesses. Nature is best understood to be an unconscious momentum that spawns finite and fragmented centers of consciousness...Ecstatic naturalism insists that nature is indeed dark and taciturn, even though it hungers for an incarnation of power and meaning within certain semiotic orders.¹¹¹

As will be examined, from the perspectives of depth psychology and semiotic ontology the unconscious is the principal medium in which the sign-using self gains the entrance into its primally self-fissured nature. For the ecstatic naturalist, the unconscious is the basic link between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*; it encompasses these two dimensions of nature, but in different respects. Corrington expounds further:

The domain of *nature natured* is the domain of attained signs and interpretants. The unconscious 'contains' these in the form of memories, complexes, images, and constructs of all kinds. Dream material presents us with the semiotic contents of the self. The domain or dimension of *nature naturing* is the domain of presemiotic rhythms that appear before the self in terms of somatic states and highly charged dream contents.¹¹²

And that:

On the deepest level, our dreams are, by analogy, nature's dreams. This does not mean that nature is a dreamer per se, but that the energies of the potencies are *akin* to dreams, even though they have far greater efficacy and sheer power than their human analogues.¹¹³

¹¹¹NS, 13.

¹¹²Ibid., 4.

¹¹³NR, 4.

Unlike the concept of incarnationality (which is conditioned by ordinal location and particular meanings or signs), the unconscious of nature possesses neither signs nor ordinal location, but it is the “heterogeneous momentum” providing a hermeneutic clearing for the human process or spawning signification or attained meanings into *nature natured*. Unlike Jung’s developmental teleology of archetypes, the unconscious of nature “is preformal and represents the dark hunger of nature for expansion and self-articulation. The unconscious is not itself purposive, but it does contain the momentum that can generate purposes within the orders of the world.”¹¹⁴

As the ground of purpose or what Corrington calls “the seedbed for novelty and power,” the unconscious of nature “goads” the human process toward innumerable possibilities and meanings. Aside from his primal Firstness being cloaked in anthropocentric terms and her overprivileging of human conditions in postmodern psychoanalysis, Corrington still finds Peirce’s category of Firstness¹¹⁵ and Kristeva’s *chora*¹¹⁶ respectively and *roughly* analogous to his concept of the unconscious of nature (*nature naturing*). Peirce’s Firstness is presemiotically and preintelligibly the realm of pure possibility. It is monadically solipsistic yet self-othering because it dynamically acts as the spawning ground/condition for any emerging experience; namely, Seconds. Peirce’s Firstness is the birthing ground producing interpretants that move away from Firstness and toward Thirdness. Ontologically and phenomenologically, because of its

¹¹⁴EN, 49.

¹¹⁵For a psychoanalytic treatment of Peirce’s abjected unconscious, see Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, ed. John Deely (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 91-103; cf. Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjection of the Maternal,” *Semiotics 1993*, ed. Robert S. Corrington and John Deely (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 590-94; and Vincent Colapietro, “Notes for a Sketch of a Peircean Theory of the Unconscious,” *Transactions 31* (1995): 482-506.

¹¹⁶Corrington perceptively points out: “When Kristeva speaks of the *chora*, that is, the open space or womb lying within the unconscious, she opens the door to a larger conception of the self than the one that animated Freud himself. The *chora* points not only to the primitive form of signification within the human body, but towards the cosmic and natural form of signification that stand as the semiotic enabling conditions for all life” (EN, 10).

monadic nature Firstness is what it is without any reference to brute reaction (Secondness) or thought (Thirdness). To put it through the lens of ecstatic naturalism, Peirce's Firstness can be characterized as follows:

Firstness is self-othering insofar as its own internal restlessness generates dyadic oppositions within and through which firstness can become more fully actualized within and as the innumerable orders of the world (*nature natured*)...[Peirce's] primal category of firstness can provide us with a much needed conceptual goad that compels us to acknowledge the presemiotic potencies that drive outward into manifest orders of signification, whether inorganic, and hence virtual, or organic, and hence obtained.¹¹⁷

Kristeva borrows the metaphor of the *chora* (the "womb" or maternal receptacle) from Plato's *Timaeus* as a poetic language to speak of the nongeometrical space where the maternal drives, psychical energies, and semiosis are infinitely housed so that they can presymbolically and semiotically interrupt, resist, or reject the paternally symbolic language and signification and the law (social functioning) in the Name-of-the-Father.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Corrington, "Nature's God and the Return of the Material Maternal, *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 119.

¹¹⁸Kristeva understands a *chora* as "a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated...[T]he *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality...Although the *chora* can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitely posited: as a result, one can situate the *chora* and, if necessary, lend it a topology, but one can never give it axiomatic form...The *chora* is not yet a position that represents something for someone (i.e., it is not a sign); nor is it a *position* that represents someone for another position (i.e., it is not yet a signifier either); it is, however, generated in order to attain to this signifying position. Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal and kinetic rhythm...The *chora* is a modality of significance in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between real and symbolic" (Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 25-6. John Letche elucidates further: "In particular the *chora* is the locus of the drive activity underlying the semiotic. The drives being both positive and negative, creative and destructive, set up both stases and attacks against these. In short, the drives set up a continuous tension of energy charges and their dissipation" (*Julia Kristeva* [London: Routledge, 1990], 129).

Following Lacan, Kristeva identifies the symbolic (the Father) as the domain of symbolization, language, and signification, and she calls the “break-into” of the symbolic the “thetic phase” (the threshold between the two heterogeneous realms of the semiotic and the symbolic), which, as the result of the “mirror stage” (Lacan), signifies the breaking up of the dyad mother/child. The phrase the “Name-of-the-Father” symbolizes the separation of the child from the mother, and by entering into the realm of language the child has now become what Lacan terms, the “split subject.” Consequently, Kristeva’s metaphorical use of the semiotic *chora* as the abject maternal body (the presymbolic object) points to the fact that without the semiotic the symbolic would lack signification or language. “The mother-child dyad provides a foundation for all social relations. It provides the basis for an ethics of love that operates outside of the Law of the Father.”¹¹⁹ Kristeva’s child will always be a subject-in-process (*sujet en procès*), a subject is in constant dialectical tension between the maternal and paternal realms; in other words, the child will neither fully remain in the semiotic *chora* of the maternal body (maternal regulation) nor will it totally dwell in the realm of the Name-of-the-Father. The child will forever live under the shadow of the “double bind” (Oliver). And for the child, the abject mother is both attractive/desirable and repulsive. As will be explored, Kristeva’s symbolic-semiotic dyad parallels Corrington’s notions of positioning (akin to Freud’s “pre-Oedipal complex” and Lacan’s “pre-mirror stage”) and depositioning (the selving process).

Corrington’s naturalistic concepts of grace and spirit will become more distinctively clear in the section on the ecstatic naturalist self. However, it is fitting that these two concepts should be generally characterized. While grace is nowhere to be found in Kant’s moral philosophy, ecstatic naturalism stresses the significant role of grace in nature. This concept of grace, however, is radically different from that of Christian orthodoxy in that it does not presuppose the supernatural aspect and thus jettison or deprivilege human autonomy. If God is a natural complex or an order among others in *nature natured*, which

¹¹⁹Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 65. To understand Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection (or abject mother), see her *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

is encompassed by *nature naturing*, then grace cannot be supernatural or extranatural, but must come from nature itself. Grace is “natural” and not sacred, but it does encroach upon sacred orders. If providingness has no provider, then natural grace also has no “bestower of grace” or agent. Likewise, it provides “sheer availability,” but contains no intentionality, and is a “seedbed for consciousness with no consciousness in the seedbed.” Related to traditional theism, natural grace is omnipresent and unearned. Further, it cannot be “canceled by acts of the self. Anything whatsoever in the domain of *nature natures* is already a recipient of natural grace if it has any traits at all.”¹²⁰ Natural grace not only sustains all sign orders in the world, but also supports individuation and alleviates the individual’s existential experience of the “shock of nonbeing” (to borrow Tillich’s phrase). Corrington brings up Heidegger’s phrase *es gibt* (it gives) to show how natural grace is a gift to the human process as well as to nonhuman orders. Because natural grace sustains the human process and engenders healing, all we can do is to offer thanks to this incessant giving. It is worth noting that besides detaching itself from human aspiration natural grace is also beyond good and evil; that is, it possesses no axiological ramifications. The underlying reason why natural grace transcends moral value is that “it does not ‘acknowledge’ any differences of value within the world that is sustained.”¹²¹

The second form of grace is called the grace of the spirit; this grace not only quickens, but also transforms the sustaining power of natural grace. The grace of the spirit “moves toward healing forms of convergence in which the sheer uniqueness of given orders is gathered up into lines of reciprocity that do not cancel uniqueness, but bring individuality into a communal or aggregate structure that can provide a new measure for the individual.”¹²² While natural grace “conveys a bare-bones sense of

¹²⁰NS, 136. Corrington writes elsewhere: “Natural grace does not come from an extranatural agent or power but appears from out of the depth of the *chora*. Insofar as an order or a sign stands from the *chora* and is positioned within natural and/or conventional structures, it lives within the grace that secures it against premature closure and absolute negation” (EN, 42).

¹²¹Ibid., 137-8.

¹²²Ibid., 136.

prevalence,”¹²³ the grace of the spirit empowers the self to develop and enhance its own selfing process as well as those of others. And as the enabling condition, the grace of the spirit not only provides a religious clearing in which the human process can encounter sacred folds, but it also supplies a hermeneutic clearing for the community of interpreters so that it can live an enriched and enhanced interpretive life that is free from the worst obscurities of past interpretations. The spirit “does not hand specific interpretations over to interpreters so much as goad the interpretive process toward worldhood and the potencies of nature.”¹²⁴ Corrington believes the term “betweenness” is appropriate to describe the locatedness of the spirit. And this illustrates why his notion of spirit is far more enriching than that of Emerson, centrally because Corrington deprivileges the spirit-matter dualism. As an order, the spirit is naturally part of the innumerable orders of the realm of *nature natures*; yet at the same time it preordinally and presemiotically lies outside of the chaotic underconscious of the world. Corrington also talks about the paradox of the spirit; that is, even though the spirit is uniquely anti-entropic, it still has to “live in entropic orders and in some sense ‘feel’ or even assimilate their entropy. Hence the spirit admits entropy into its evolving contour, although it will be subject to it in a different way, precisely because it has principles of organization that are preordinal and presemiotic.”¹²⁵

¹²³*STTP*, 217.

¹²⁴*NaS*, 144.

¹²⁵*STTP*, 221.

Primal Self as Nature's Foundling

At the heart of the self is a cleft, a wound that emerges with the first dawn of consciousness and remains with the self until its death...From the standpoint of nature, the self is but one curious and fragmented product that crosses the stage of life for a brief moment and then moves on to another vastly different stage.

Robert S. Corrington

As has been discussed, ecstatic naturalism is a perspective that attempts to introduce philosophy, semiotics, and theology to the depth dimensions or structures of nature and spirit in new and profound delineations through the languages of depth psychology and semiotic ontology, so that some kind of transformation will take place in these three disciplines; in other words, ecstatic naturalism serves as “the vessel” within and through which they can be redefined or reconfigured:

The transformation of philosophy focuses on the basic categorial structures that locate and define the world, the self, and the divine in an ecstatically transfiguring nature. The transformation of semiotics focuses on a more capacious understanding of sign activity as one of the primal ‘hows’ of nature as it ‘seeks’ to become more and more transparent to the human process and to the divine natures. The transformation of theology focuses on the specific traits of the divine life as they must be reconfigured in the light of the enlarged conception of nature and the ontological difference.¹²⁶

¹²⁶NS, 135-36. It is necessary to mention again that the term “ecstasy” does not mean joy, elation, or bliss in the ordinary sense, but it “refers to the momentum of self-transcendence in which an antecedent state welcomes an internal transfiguration in which its plenitude is enhanced” (ibid., 63). Corrington also defines the terms “ecstatic” and “naturalism” elsewhere: “Initially, ecstatic naturalism can be defined as that moment within naturalism when it recognizes its self-transcending character. Naturalism is self-transcending when it understands the eternal power of the transition from preformal potencies to the realms of signification within the world. The movement from a

Corrington believes that without reconfiguration or transformation philosophy (e.g., Continental or pragmatic philosophy), semiotics (e.g., poststructuralism), and theology (e.g., process theology) will specifically continue to hold a misguided or distorted concept of the self or the human process as it relates to nature and vice versa. All these three disciplines have not only ignored the perennial chasm in nature's self-fissuring; namely, *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, but also omitted the essential features of the human unconscious and the unconscious of nature, and especially the inevitable link, made possible via infinite sign activities, between the unconscious and consciousness which is individually and socially embedded in the "wound" as well as in the depth structures of nature's self. As the product of nature, and because nature is self-fissuring, the self will forever bear within itself this internal fissure, which unveils itself by way of the unconscious and consciousness. Corrington stresses that "[t]he self is a gift of this self-fissure within nature, but receives this gift with an ambiguous configuration of melancholy and love."¹²⁷

It is not surprising to see Corrington criticize the current philosophical perspectives for not paying much attention to semiotic theory, and most of all, for not critically exploring the depth dimensions of the unconscious and its relationship with nature, all of which have played such central roles in the human process. And as regards the poststructuralists who have located nature within human constructs and the deconstructionists whose misreadings of Nietzsche have caused them to pronounce the hiding secrets of nature from the "will-driven self," Corrington accuses them of "ha[ving] shriven the self of its depth structures and ha[ving] masked the innumerable connections between the self and the nature that spawned it."¹²⁸ Corrington also faults Peirce, who was so steeped in his panpsychism, for privileging the mental dimension of the self and thus neglecting the presemiotic fissuring of nature. As previously discussed, rejecting descriptive forms of naturalism which inductively subscribe to efficient causality, ecstatic

presemiotic potency to a signifying structure or a signifying position is ecstatic insofar as the potency stands outside of itself and gives birth to its own self-other as a sign or sign system" (*EN*, 18-9).

¹²⁷*NS*, 1.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 131.

naturalism centrally focuses on the presemiotic potencies of *nature naturing* and the innumerable orders of *nature natured*, which mysteriously permeate and encompass the ontological and hermeneutic horizons of the human process.

Attempting to scrupulously explore and delineate the true foundling status of the self in nature as well as of its eternally embedded self-fissuring in the ontological difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, Corrington wrote the book entitled *Nature's Self*. In this book, while engaging in dialogues with various thinkers like Peirce, Kristeva, Heidegger, Jung, Jaspers, and Schelling, Corrington probes deeply into the ontological place of the self in nature via his perspective of ecstatic naturalism. He contends that the self is actually nature's foundling, and it is neither manifest in *imago Dei* nor partakes of God's glory. (Schelling once announced that nature had the divine glory in itself). There is a deeply tied bindingness between the self and nature; after all, nature is the genus (or pre-genus) of which the self (or the sacred) is the species. Whether the self is defined as a substantive self, "thinking substance" (Descartes), "empirical self" (Locke), "semiotic self" (Peirce), "transcendental self" (Kant), or decentered self (Nietzsche and Derrida), from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism the self is the locus of innumerable sign systems, one fact which makes it inexhaustibly mysterious. Or from the standpoint of Buchler's ordinal metaphysics, the self is one natural complex/order among the innumerable orders of nature. The ecstatic naturalist's self is never just socially nor individually constructed, but it is a foundling among other interpretants. Drawing from the perspectives of semiotic ontology and depth psychology, ecstatic naturalism takes the third or mediating position *vis-à-vis* the so-called substance tradition and postmodern semiotics. The ecstatic naturalist's self is multilocated or multipositioned (in numerous locations) as well as multirelational (in semiotic relations), and whether unconsciously or unintentionally "it has a cumulative directionality that can be mapped in a variety of ways."¹²⁹ Consequently, the ecstatic naturalist's self will not be identified with the substance tradition that statically restricts the self from its various involvements or with the postmodern semiotics that anarchically denies the self its own self-identity.

¹²⁹NS, 5.

In a broader spectrum, ecstatic naturalism can also be seen taking on another third position with respect to the marked difference psychologically, philosophically, religiously, and theologically between Western and Eastern conceptions of the self as illustrated in the dialogue between Carl Jung and Shin'ichi Hisamatsu in the chapter entitled "The Self in Jung and Zen."¹³⁰ As it was adeptly pointed out in this particular chapter, deeply shaped by Plato's idea of the immortal soul, Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, and Christian doctrine of divine incarnation (God become human/self), the West firmly asserted and eulogized the self; whereas the East (Buddhism) resolutely negated the self by adhering to the concept of *anàtman* (no-self).¹³¹ Avoiding this dyadic position and thus opting for the third position, ecstatic naturalism neither denies the self's existence nor privileges the self; and unlike Hinduism, ecstatic naturalism does not divinize the self. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the self is but a fragile and fragmented product of nature and a foundling ejected from the prepositioned potencies of *nature naturing*, and continues to exist in a self-transforming nature. And because of its wound inflicted by the fundamental divide the self will be finitely embodied in the ontological triad of positioning, de-positioning, and re-positioning. The wound is the product of the self being ejected from the maternal ground or *chora* of the *naturing's* potencies, and now it lives, moves, and has its being in the realm of *nature natured's* public interpretants. Through conscious and unconscious awareness, the self as a foundling in nature, semiotically recognizes its eternal wound.

¹³⁰See *Self and Liberation: The Jung-Buddhism Dialogue*, ed. Daniel J. Meckel and Robert L. Moore (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

¹³¹Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism maintains the concept of *atman* (individual soul), who identifies itself with *brahman* (the absolute being or ultimate Reality). Even though ecstatic naturalism finds Buddhism's conception of *anàtman* or *'sùnyatà* (emptiness) incongenial, it still concurs with Buddhism's denial of God's aseity or self-existence. Rooted in its second Dharma Seal (*Dharma mudra*); namely, nonself or the doctrine of dependent origination (inter-being), Buddhism teaches that nothing possesses a separate existence; everything depends on one another, God included. Since ecstatic naturalism is a form of ontological naturalism (or nonsupernaturalism), it discards the classical understanding of supernaturalism; hence its God is but a natural complex/order among others; in other words, God simultaneously sustains and is sustained by nature. Ecstatic naturalism affirms nature is the genus (or pre-genus) of which God is the species.

As will be thoroughly explored, the self unconsciously makes a transition from the pretemporal and prespatial modes to temporal and spatial modes. For Corrington, to grasp the depth structures or meanings of these modes, the perspective of semiotic ontology, which supersedes the Cartesian “substance-derived anthropologies,” will become indispensable. Furthermore, looked at from the perspective of psychoanalysis, specifically the post-Freudian standpoint (regardless of its insistence on internally isolating the self from nature), the self becomes deposed by moving into the “mirror stage” (Lacanian theory of subjectivity) of semiotic autonomy; hence suffers detachment from the maternal or matricide. It is therefore by examining from the perspectives of semiotic ontology and depth psychology that one can clearly see that the self cannot “write itself large across the face of nature...[and] [t]he perennial curse of the self is to see itself as much larger than it can be.”¹³² As an “inscribed and finite product” of nature, the self is not actually deprived of possibilities; however, it is to pronounce that the self is encompassed by the powers or conditions of origin and resistance that have spatially and temporally constructed the self.

As human orders, selves share their ontological and cosmological place with other nonhuman orders, for both are products of the encompassing and measureless nature. Thus, our anthropocentric and anthropomorphic concepts of the self must not be privileged over nature. Corrington argues that it is time to rethink or reformulate the relationship between nature and the human process from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism; that is, “a naturalism that is nonreductive and that illuminates the structures of renewal and transformation within nature itself. This entails a description of the fundamental divide within nature; namely, that between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*.”¹³³ For Corrington, even though the human process is ontologically finite, it infinitely hungers for generic expansion.

Like Kristeva’s “subject-in-process,” who will constantly experience the dialectical tension between the semiotic and the symbolic, the ecstatic naturalist’s primal self will eternally become the locus of nature’s self-fissuring (*nature naturing* and *nature natured*). And this self-fissuring within the heart of the primal nature’s self is “a cleft, a

¹³²NS, 23.

¹³³Ibid., vii.

wound that emerges with the first dawn of consciousness and remains with the self until its death.”¹³⁴ Corrington admits that the post-Freudian, the Peircean pragmaticist, and the ecstatic naturalist perspectives are the three fundamental approaches to probing into the self-fissuring of nature’s primal self:

Post-Freudian accounts stress the momentum of the pre-Oedipal maternal that both spawns and weans the self in a rhythm that is eternal and highly compulsive. Ecstatic naturalism stresses the movement from the potencies of *nature naturing* to the manifest orders of *nature natured*. Peircean pragmatism stresses the transition from the infinitesimal to the innumerable points of the spatial order...It is important to note that these three formulations are all commensurate and that each in its own way points to the self-fissuring of the ontological difference. On a deeper level, ecstatic naturalism encompasses the post-Freudian and pragmaticist approaches and moves from one formulation to the other as the context requires.¹³⁵

To deepen its own understanding of the self-fissuring of the ontological difference, ecstatic naturalism incorporates both post-Freudian and Peircean pragmaticist approaches and contextually utilizes each of them.

As has been discussed, the self is an “eject” or product of the preformal and presemiotic potencies of *nature naturing*, spawned from the “material maternal” (Kristeva), thrown into the world (Heidegger), and shaped and molded by a “natural debt” (Buchler). The self traverses life, having experienced the eternal wound of ejectedness as well as fissuredness. And this is precisely what the term “primal self” connotes: the self was *birthed* by the other side of nature; namely, *nature naturing*, its ontological origin did not derive from human history. Jettisoning the descriptive forms of naturalism which inductively honor efficient causality, ecstatic naturalism attempts to show the self is not only configured by the mysterious potencies deriving from the presemiotic rhythms of *nature naturing*, but obtains also semiotically and ontologically as one of the manifest

¹³⁴Ibid., 1.

¹³⁵NS, 33-4.

orders of the realm of *nature natures*. The primal self will forever be bifurcated by this ontological difference. Corrington sums up nature's primal self as follows:

Nature's self rides on the back of a self-transfiguring nature and derives its own rhythms and momentums from the unlimited domains of the world. In one sense, the self is as inexhaustible as the world, while in another sense, the self represents but one perspective on the world as a whole...The self has an awareness of the presemiotic rhythms of *nature natures*, even if this awareness is continually suppressed in favor of the manifest and more manageable codes of the domains of *nature natures*. The self is ejected from the heart of nature, rides precariously on both sides of the ontological difference, and forges a cumulative and multipositional identity that represents but one aspect of nature's semiotic plenitude...The mysteries of the self are in the end the mysteries of a self-fissuring nature.¹³⁶

As a finite semiotic order, the self travels its journey and spans its life in this sad and lonely place called *nature natures*. In his Foreword to Corrington's book *Nature's Religion*, Robert C. Neville adeptly captures the existential moods and ontological conditions of the ecstatic naturalist's self:

For Corrington, the central ontological fact is that the Mother, *nature natures*, gives birth to us and *nature natures* leaves us like foundlings. We are whelped and abandoned. We are thrown into existence and left with no help but what can be manipulated from the brutal powers of nature and our semiotic inventiveness.

¹³⁶NS, 6. As regards the self's participating in both sides of the ontological difference, Corrington is quick to affirm that this fundamental divide (the fissuring between *nature natures* and *nature natures*) does not resemble the Cartesian notion of a divided substance (*res extensa* and *res cogitans*). It is "totally different in kind from that envisioned by the Cartesian tradition, which uses spatial constructs in a misguided way." From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, "spatial concepts can be applied to the human process in an endless variety of ways, but certain aspects of the self are prespatial and, in the religious sense, postspatial" (NS, 2). And speaking from the language of psychoanalysis, specifically the idea of the lost object, by being deeply attached to the personal and biological maternal the self finds itself connected to "chronological temporality" (i.e., with pre- and posttemporal dimensions of the maternal) and "geometric spatiality" (i.e., with pre- and postspatial aspects of the maternal presence/absence).

Between the powers of origin and our world there is an abyss. We long to rejoin those powers but cannot get across...[L]ife is lonely and sad, alienated from its ground and beat up by a blind nature that has no special place or protections for things of the human scale.¹³⁷

For Corrington, nature's primal self becomes ecstatic, therefore it is not necessarily and ontologically plagued with melancholy insofar as it looks past its "own somber tone" and seeks deeply into its own "categorical array"; in other words, the self must probe into the mysterious realm of the underconscious of nature from which both melancholy and ecstasy emerge. Further, "melancholy and ecstasy open the self to *natura naturans* (nature naturing), while their complex dialectic *within* any given horizon colors the articulation and encounter with *natura naturata* (nature natured)."¹³⁸

Between what Corrington calls the "primal moods," which are the "horizon transforming basic moods" of melancholy (the "lost object") and ecstasy/eros (the "not yet"), the self will spatially traverse three momentums of finitude: positioning, depositioning, and repositioning. It will also temporally experience the power of the pretemporal, the temporal, and the posttemporal. While hopelessly longing for the forever-beyond-reach of the lost object; namely, the material maternal, the self will

¹³⁷NR, xiii. In her review of Corrington's book *Nature's Self*, Nancy Frankenberry offers the same remark: "Depicted meditatively in terms of feeling-tones, the world is fundamentally a sad place; naturalism of the ecstatic variety embraces the truth of nature's utter indifference to its human ejects...As finite semiotic orders of nature we long for the lost object, the 'material maternal,' that is forever beyond our reach. Caught between melancholy and eros, each thing of the world is a foundling, looking for love in all the wrong places and hoping for erotic transfiguration in the future" (Review of *Nature's Self* in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 [1998]: 171). Cosmologically, upon looking at Caspar David Friedrich's painting called *Ziehende Wolken* (Drifting clouds), Roger Badham perceptively observes that "the human process is re-presented as occupying a small and chastened spot on the horizon facing into the vast powers of a real and overwhelming cosmos, the orders of which, with few exceptions, are entirely unimpressed by the human attempt to inscribe its signature upon its world" (See his review of Corrington's book *Nature's Self* in *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 1996 [Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1997], 360-65). Friedrich's painting was chosen by Corrington as a cover for his 1992 book *Nature and Spirit*.

¹³⁸STTP, 40.

encounter the presemiotic and semiotic clearing “behind” it as well as the transfiguration or the not yet “before” it through the working of the spirit whose underlying function is not only to vanquish the self’s self-fissured wound, but also essentially help move the lost object from the pretemporal to the posttemporal. Without this movement or transition, the lost object will never be transfigured to attain the ultimate healing; namely, love (eros). This sad and lonely place will be metamorphized once the self is transfigured by the return of the maternal and empowerment of the spirit, both of whom are manifest in the form of eros. This transfiguration process is possible because of the spirit whose presence between and among the selves brings transformative prospects of personal and social healing to the self’s fissured wound caused by the ontological difference.

It must be pointed out that Corrington rejects Protestant neo-orthodoxy’s divine concept of agape. Recognizing agape as a “divine mystery” or something coming from outside of nature violates the principle of ontological parity and deprivileges the role of eros, which “is the bond that links the post- and pretemporal momentums of time to the asymmetrical unfolding of temporal orders.”¹³⁹ Like the encompassing maternal, the spirit-interpreter provides interpretive clearing for the community of the sign-using selves; hence, without the presence of eros or the spirit, healing communication between semiotic selves will become impossible. As pointed out in *Nature’s Religion*, Corrington finds his ecstatic naturalist concept of the spirit’s eros akin to Jaspers’ notion of “reason” (*Vernunft*). Jaspers transforms reason into the encompassing bond that unites all various modes of the Encompassing - empirical existence, consciousness-as-such, and spirit.

1. *Umwelten and Lebenswelten (Human Horizons)*

In the section entitled “Beyond Anthropocentrism: *Umwelten*” of his book *Ecstatic Naturalism*, Corrington scrupulously examines his own concept of human horizon *vis-à-vis* Jacob von Uexküll’s biological concept of *Umwelt*, Deely’s term “objective world,” Husserl’s term “*Lebenswelt*” (Corrington calls it “horizon”) as well as the ontological

¹³⁹NS, 93.

meanings of anthroposemiosis and zoösemiosis.¹⁴⁰ Regardless of the difference between *Umwelten* and *Lebenswelten*, Corrington's ecstatic naturalism concludes that the realm of anthroposemiosis cannot be ontologically severed from the larger order of zoösemiosis. Pragmatist naturalists or semioticians like Corrington, Deely, or Sebeok have agreed that whatever is organic (human and nonhuman) must exist in its own *Umwelt* (environment) or what Sebeok would prefer to translate it as "species-specific modeling system."¹⁴¹ For Corrington, it is the biological system out of which humans, in particular, move depending upon circumstances and levels of awareness. Sebeok offers his ontological definition of *Umwelten* as follows:

Nothing exists for any organism outside its bubblelike private *Umwelt*, into which, although impalpably to its observer, it remains, as it were, inextricably sealed. The behavior of every organism - "behavior" being defined as the sign trafficking among different *Umwelten* - has its basic function the production of nonverbal signs for communication, and first of all for communication of that organism with itself.¹⁴²

Corrington also reminds that there is no such thing as the super-*Umwelt*, for as "bubblelike," each specific *Umwelt* has built-in scope, semiotic meaning and signification as well as density.

As far as the human process is concerned, the transition from zoösemiosis to anthroposemiosis is indispensable and complex, essentially because the ontology of signification systems changes. Unlike the built-in biological make up of the *Umwelt's* life

¹⁴⁰EN, 178-90. In his review of John Deely's book *The Human Use of Signs or Elements of Anthroposemiosis*, Corrington also deals with these essential concepts. In this review, Corrington agrees with Deely that it is impossible to bypass the forms of semiosis in the domains of zoösemiosis, phytosemiosis, and physiosemiosis in order to locate the human process or anthroposemiosis within the worlds of semiosis. For Corrington, as far as semiosis is concerned, the anthroposemiotic self inevitably finds itself dwelling in the animal kingdoms as well as in the "virtually semiotic" inorganic orders. See "A Web as Vast as Nature Itself," *Semiotica* 111-1/2 (1996), 103-15.

¹⁴¹Cited in EN, 181.

¹⁴²Ibid.

forms, the order of anthroposemiosis is intricately interwoven with ontological stages like transformation and depositioning. And insofar as human language plays the integral role in the human process it “undoes the rigid proportion between *Umwelten* and biological heritage.”¹⁴³ With respect to the realm of anthroposemiosis, while ecstatic naturalism declares that, as orders of relevance, human horizons are embedded in the orders of nature, perspectives like panpsychism or crypto-behaviorism have been inclined to inflate the self, making it larger than nature.

Corrington believes that the transition from *Umwelten* to the open horizons of *Lebenswelten* is best brought about in the context of an ecstatic naturalism, essentially because it “honors orders of relevance that surround all sign-users, human or not.”¹⁴⁴ Taking cues from Milton Singer’s semiotic self functioning in all three orders of the iconic, indexical, and symbolic, Corrington infers that human meaning horizons (*Lebenswelten*) and *Umwelten* have the three common features: “species-specific integrity,” “openness to other horizons/*Umwelten*,” and the “dynamic transformation.” It should be pointed out that, “Human meaning horizons are not simply augmented versions of animal *Umwelten*, but have distinctive features that radically alter the semiotic structures of the world.”¹⁴⁵

2. *The Human Process*

It is appropriate to first look into Corrington’s essential notion of the human process and then proceed onto the related conceptions of the powers of origin, finitude, embodiment, and transcendence before delving into ecstatic naturalism’s three fundamental stages or momentums of the human process.

From ecstatic naturalism’s perspective, as noted, nature is the genus (or pre-genus) of which the self is a species; that is, the primal self will always find itself semiotically enveloped by a vastly indifferent nature. Therefore, as nature’s foundling, the self must learn to cast off its “anthropomorphic hubris” (Corrington), which for example, has

¹⁴³EN, 184.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 185.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 188.

plagued postmodernist, structuralist, and panpsychistic forms of semiotic. Corrington maintains that, not only the human process, but textuality (e.g., Derrida's glottocentrism), when radically promoted to a form of anthropocentrism, will corrode naturalism. Since nature is self-recording, he does acknowledge that:

[M]any of nature's records are textlike and can be read as if they had textual and internal structures. Yet there are features of human written texts that are unique within the orders of the world, and these order-specific features must not be imposed on nature as a whole...[N]ature is not a text of texts so much as a clearing within which meanings emerge, some of which are textual in the full human sense, but most of which are not.¹⁴⁶

From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the human realm is best seen as the dimension of the human process; that is, it "has indefinite boundaries and an intrinsic hunger for generic expansion"; yet it "remains the finite process that it is."¹⁴⁷ It can also be said that the concept of the human process, "best describes the full scope, the astounding intensity, of the human."¹⁴⁸

As already discussed, the human process or the self is a product or natural complex of *nature naturing*. By being circumscribed by ontological finitude and physical embodiment, and conditioned by the powers of origin the self is shown as a product of nature. On the other hand, the self or the human process is also a producer who may consciously or unconsciously produce countless traces of products, which do not always embody "unique or distinguishable features." Corrington not only states that whatever emerges from the human process is a product (e.g, an idea, a movement, or an introspection), but also reminds that if the self's products are constantly corroded, then

¹⁴⁶EN, 180. It is worth noting that as regards anthropocentrism *vis-à-vis* nature, Corrington finds Josiah Royce's idealist version of pragmatism considerably close to ecstatic naturalism's conception of nature as a self-recording semiotic system. Corrington points out that, while Dewey still privileged anthropocentrism regardless of his moving toward pansemioticist view of nature, Royce was able to move beyond that standpoint.

¹⁴⁷NaS, 21.

¹⁴⁸Guy Woodward, *Cleaving the Light: The Necessity of Metaphysics in the Practice of Theology*, 39.

the scope of the self is impermanent and unstable, which causes the self's dissatisfaction with its "productive life." Although horizons are the products of the human process, the human process is still "indebted to semiotic and interpretive horizons that give it its fundamental shape and direction. At no point can the full meaning of a horizon ever become available to the self."¹⁴⁹ Corrington sums up:

The human process can thus be approached either through a description of its interior semiotic life or through a description of its products...[T]he innumerable products of the self, some consciously formed and some mere random expressions of physical embodiment, contains values and meanings that lie forever beyond human assimilation. A phenomenological account of the so-called inner and outer reaches of the self must honor the elusive and mysterious traits of the self and its products. The shifting domains of our products can either empower us for further growth and transformation or limit and blunt the evolution of the self.¹⁵⁰

Because the human process is a producer it is not hopelessly confined to the realm of zoösemiosis. As a producer, the self moves outward to either transform its own environment into semiotic significations or produce infinite interpretants within its own human horizons. Grounded in Buchler's metaphysics of ordinality, ecstatic naturalism emphasizes that not only is the human process configured by innumerable orders of relevance, but it also forms or gives texture to innumerable orders of relevance. Yet, at the same time, the human process recognizes that nonhuman orders organize and perform their own sign activities in the realm of zoösemiosis without human support. But this does not imply that both human and nonhuman orders segregate themselves biologically and ontologically from one another; on the contrary, they can do the imprinting or impressing upon with one another without committing the sin of the ontological priority. It is thus "hubris to imagine that humans are the only ones doing the impressing, for the other orders of nature press upon one another in ways that humans do not, and they press

¹⁴⁹*NaS*, 50.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 47.

upon humans in ways that humans do not.”¹⁵¹ As seen from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, not all complexes are encompassed by human orders, and not all natural orders function within human horizons. Human subjectivity is but one order among the others (non or pre-human).¹⁵² It is now clear that the human process may be “unique” (Woodward), but it must not be exclusively privileged; in other words, as Corrington has already declared, it cannot “write itself large across the face of nature.” For Woodward, what makes the human process unique is that it possesses human intelligence combined with “ceaseless inquiry and quest.” He adds, as constitutive of orders of relevance the human process “ceaselessly generates and deploys horizons.”¹⁵³ Intelligence is one of the “foremost” features that Woodward has found in Corrington’s concept of “access structure,”¹⁵⁴ essentially because it “is that dynamic access structure which constitutes the human process as that generator of...horizons [which] ceaselessly address and explore the topologies in which the human process is embedded.”¹⁵⁵ As noted, because nature is self-recording, the human process, regardless of its intelligence, cannot configure or create semiotic processes out of thin air; actualizing them from antecedent semiotics is what it can do.

3. *The Powers of Origin, Finitude, Embodiment, and Transcendence*

¹⁵¹Badham, “Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington’s Naturalism,” *Soundings* 79.3 (1999): 203.

¹⁵²*NaS*, 21.

¹⁵³Woodward, *Cleaving the Light: The Necessity of Metaphysics in the Practice of Theology*, 45, 46.

¹⁵⁴“All access structures...represent ways in which beings funded with mind become open to the orders of the world.” The concept of “access structure” suggests that natural conditions or structures (e.g., temporality) are part of nature, connecting the self to its world, but they are not “simply located within the self.” Access structures are “the ultimate enabling conditions of human awareness.” And because they are natural conditions and evolutionary products, access structures are neither transcendental nor *a priori* respectively. See *NaS*, 12.

¹⁵⁵Woodward, *Cleaving the Light: The Necessity of Metaphysics in the Practice of Theology*, 46.

Described by Corrington as one “curious and fragmented product” indebted and spawned by the infinitely indifferent and immeasurable nature, the self, conditioned by the so-called powers of origin, is finite and embodied, most notably evidenced by the powers of “chronological time and geometric space.” The powers of origin, which may either be transformed or modified, but not effaced, can both empower and limit the human process; in other words, they can either enable the self to broaden its horizon of possibilities and meanings or delimit the self from expanding and enhancing its semiotic scope. “The powers of origin empower the self by giving it its unique location and place within the world. On the other hand, the powers of origin also, and at the same time, limit the reach and scope of the self to particular forms of embodiment.”¹⁵⁶ Further, the powers of origin “are the potencies that connect us, positively, and bind us, negatively, to that which has preceded the present moment...Powers of origin form us and limit us, and our boundaries often become too fixed by the semiotic structures which explain our world.”¹⁵⁷

It is necessary to note here that origins, or what Corrington calls “prepositional momentums of *nature naturing*,” are prior to axiological or moral dimension; in other words, they are not yet distinguished by good or evil. This distinction is contextually made possible by communities of interpretation. And because the prepositional momentums of *nature naturing* do not denote “internal or direct moral value. Hence the powers of origin, manifest to the human process in the lost object, are not yet moral. The

¹⁵⁶NS, 24. Race, class, and gender structures, according to Corrington, give a relevant example how the powers of origin function in both modes; that is, “[t]o be gendered is to be ‘granted’ some possibilities and actualities, while being denied others” (Ibid.).

¹⁵⁷Badham, “Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington’s Naturalism,” *Soundings* 79.3 (1999): 209-210. While pointing out the influence of the Heideggerian primacy of futurity in Corrington’s work, specifically his dialectical notion of the powers of origin, Badham also perceptively remarks: “But contrary to the nostalgia in Heidegger and Gadamer for a pristine past, origin generally takes on a profound negativity for Corrington. It is linked to a sense of historical inertia or oppression. Historical progress is interpreted as the result of the potencies of life, or of transcendence while the inert or oppressive forces of history are interpreted as the result of the powers of origin. His progressivist desire causes him to apply a hermeneutics of suspicion to all origins” (Ibid., 210).

moral dimensionality only fully emerges in the posttemporal and posttemporal aspects of the return of the maternal on the edges of signification.”¹⁵⁸

Taking cues from Peirce’s semiotic triad and Kristeva’s psychoanalytic understanding of the mother-infant relationship, Corrington illustrates the inextricable connection between the powers of origin and the self. For him, if all objects, signs, and interpretants are derived from antecedent conditions, the sign-using self, as composed by three aspects of the ontological triad (sign, object, and interpretant), has also become an ejected self thrown out from the “prepositioned potencies of *nature naturing*.” Therefore, whether the self is an immediate or dynamic object,¹⁵⁹ a sign (“the semiotic dimensions of the self are among the most pervasive and important for self-identity across time and place”),¹⁶⁰ or an interpretant (an interpreted sign turning into an interpretant or a new sign that either augments or diminishes the antecedent sign), it is the case that “the heart of the self contains a presemiotic mystery that can never be exhausted, let alone violated and ‘penetrated,’ by a full semiotic probe...The self, then, is what it is because of a prior positioning that brings it into the location of other selves and their signs.”¹⁶¹ Corrington therefore employs terms like “thrownness” (Heidegger) and “natural debt” (Buchler) to

¹⁵⁸NS, 32. Corrington finds Peirce’s concept of the infinitesimal highly relevant to the concept of origin in semiotic anthropology, particularly as Peirce “struggled to show how the infinitesimals move outward from a kind of zero state toward the manifest orders of the geometric spatio-temporal world” (ibid.). Corrington also points out that Peirce’s metaphysical concept of the continuum (a potentiality) is applicable to the powers of origin as well. Being potentialities and being self-othering, both the infinitesimal and continuum respectively “use” the realm of Secondness to spawn attained orders of relevance and manifest themselves. The continuum itself is “the prespatial ‘space’ of possibility that gives the infinitesimal a means for its manifestation” (ibid.,33). Like the potencies, the infinitesimals are self-othering; in other words, “It is as if the infinitesimal is a pregnant potency awaiting a birthing process” (ibid.). According to Corrington, since they have some kind of “proto- ‘self’” they can become open to otherness, both externally and internally internally; cf. *STTP*, 245-50.

¹⁵⁹According to Corrington, the term “phenomenon” in the phenomenological tradition, or the term “object,” need not be associated with spatial connotations, for in the pragmaticist tradition, the term ‘object’ “functions...to cover all modes and forms of the world insofar as they function underneath the manifest signs of interaction” (NS, 27).

¹⁶⁰NS, 27.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

portray the self as being inescapably governed by “antecedent structures” (the powers of origin).

Corrington initially found the terms or metaphors “thrownness” and “natural debt” useful in illustrating his conception of the powers of origin, which can be sketched in three forms. The first form shows how Heidegger’s “thrownness” and Buchler’s “natural debt” closely point to the ordinality of the human process. While Heidegger’s term helps remind us that the self is but a natural order/complex “thrown” into an infinite number of other complexes, Buchler’s term stresses that the self is also “indebted” to countless powers of origin (the emancipatory potencies in past products, the semiotic achievements or inheritance of the past, or potential accomplishments in the future), even if some powers of origin are demonically resistant and limiting to the self’s growth.

The second form of indebtedness is that of critical common sense, which indispensably provides not only the self but its community with stability and validation structures. Corrington speaks of ambiguity and incompleteness as two significant hermeneutic features that enable us to comprehend our world:

We are thus indebted to a cumulative and practical hermeneutic that makes it possible for us to function with less conscious effort. The outward expression of critical common sense is personal and social habits...Critical common sense seeks to locate the human process within antecedent forms of validation that have proven their worth for social stability and social transformation.¹⁶²

It should be pointed out that Corrington argues that his notion of critical common sense differs “in form and direction from the common sense of natural [i.e., preinterpretive] communities.”¹⁶³ Even though the term originated in Peirce and was amplified by Satanyana and Buchler, Corrington has further developed his own version, which essentially involves interpreting or clarifying of the difference between “precritical and genuinely critical forms of common sense.” Contrary to Peirce’s conception of critical

¹⁶²*NaS*, 51,52.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, 51.

common sense which connotes the logic of vagueness or indubitable perceptual beliefs, Corrington's focuses more on communal Secondness but with an interpretive and conscious dimension.¹⁶⁴

To be born into the world means that the self already exists in the "primal indebtedness" (Corrington) or natural debt. As long as the self lives, moves, and has its being in the world, it is indebted to nature's innumerable powers of origin or to the potencies of *nature naturing*, which enable the self to go beyond its past achievements or configurations in order to move toward a more fulfilling and complex state. It is therefore, in Corrington's view, this third form of indebtedness which lies at the deepest level. The self is indebted to the "matters" because it cannot exist without the nurturing of the potencies of nature. However, at the same time, the self is also indebted to the "forms" of intelligibility, for that is where critical common sense has indispensably and relevantly furnished the self and its interpretive community stability and validation structures.

Even though helpful, Heidegger's and Buchler's metaphors did not quite characterize the true semiotic and ontological identity of the self for Corrington. For example, Heidegger's "thrownness" did not fully express or depict the ontological state of the human process, because, for Corrington, "The human process is neither more nor less 'thrown' into the world than other complexes. Rather, it slowly discovers the innumerable lines of relation that bind it to structures and powers not of its own making."¹⁶⁵ Instead, Corrington thinks the "ontological wound" is the best metaphor to truly delineate the self's positioning and its constant facing of the haunting presence of the powers of origin. The self is inflicted with this ontological wound insofar as it is spawned from the womb (*chora*) of the material maternal and struggles to search for its own semiotic identity amid public interpretants. To use Kristeva's psychoanalytic language, as long as the two

¹⁶⁴In our private dialogue, Corrington gave the following example: "I can read a social action quickly as one involving some wisdom combined with some deceit, and I quickly sort out the difference using habitual ways of interpretation that have a deep evolutionary warrant. Critical common sense is meant to be a balast against our current obsession with the hermeneutics of suspicion."

¹⁶⁵*NaS*, 53.

heterogeneous realms of the semiotic and the symbolic irreconcilably and dialectically exist, the self will continue to carry and live with its own ontological wound (*nature naturing* and *nature natured*). “To be a self is already and always to be guilty of a primal act of symbolic murder in which the maternal body must give way before the alleged lucidity of public and patriarchal codes.”¹⁶⁶

The powers of origin do not ontologically and exclusively act alone, for “within” and “against” them is the operation of the so-called powers of transcendence. While the self’s meaning horizons and scope are determined or circumscribed by the powers of origin (evidenced by the self’s embodiment), the powers of transcendence sets the self free; in other words, the fundamental purpose of the powers of the transcendence is to supply the human process a hermeneutic clearing which enables the self to move beyond its semiotic configurations or arrangements and explore novel possibilities. Corrington calls this movement of transcendence “a gift of the spirit,” which connotes the power of liberation. While the spirit assists the self in widening its ontological boundaries, the self still faces the opposition or oppression of the powers of origin. And since the self is inextricably bound by the conditions of origin, to flee from them is to avoid facing its own finitude and embodiment. Nowhere is this more clear than in the following passage where Corrington clarifies the dialectical tension between finitude and transcendence:

Nothing is more basic to the human process than the perennial tension between finitude and transcendence. These two dimensions encompass all aspects of experience and ideation, and govern the various ways in which persons encounter themselves and their world. Finitude is most sharply manifest in the boundary situations that limit and alter the outward movement of the self. Transcendence is most clearly manifest when the human process is grasped by a natural grace that relocates the center of the self within the New Spirit, which serves as the measure for transfiguration. Neither dimension can assume priority, even though one will prevail at a given time. Transcendence should not be understood, however, as a power that can lift us beyond or outside of the constraints of finitude. Transcendence is always operative within and against finitude and cannot cancel or annul

¹⁶⁶Corrington, “Nature’s God and the Return of the Material Maternal,” *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 124.

the various traits of our finite existence.¹⁶⁷

The self will truly understand its finitude when it realizes and accepts the ontological fact that it is nature's foundling whose whence and whither are not clearly revealed. As a fragmented product of an indifferent nature, the self will forever be "wounded" or fissured by the ontological difference until its death and perhaps beyond. The self is bound by the conditions of origin and resistance, which will "shape it through time, space and its products. These conditions of origin provide vectors and momentums that tie the self to antecedent states, even while goading it beyond them. Resistances surround and permeate the self acting as a kind of semiotic friction...If the self tries to leap out of these conditions of semiosis, it risks a psychic inflation and consequent collapse of meaning that can spell closure and decay."¹⁶⁸ One may find a resemblance between Corrington's concept of finitude and Jaspers' concept of "boundary situations" (*Grenzsituationen*). For Jaspers, humankind is both delimited by an epistemological boundary (the limits of objectifying thinking) and by an existential boundary (guilt, suffering, struggle, and death). Nevertheless, unlike Jaspers, who attributes negativity to *Existenz's* boundary situations and positivity to transcendence, Corrington applies these two aspects equally within each finite dimension of the primal self and only in specific respects; in other words, certain aspects of the self's finitude may be negative while others may be positive. Furthermore, even though the concept of finitude and embodiment may commensurately share some similarities or points of overlap, they are not quite equivalent. And like the dual involvement of finitude and transcendence in the specific aspects of the primal self's finite dimension, the idea of finitude is found appropriate in certain natural orders, while in other orders the concept of embodiment is more applicable for "framing the relevant complexes." To be embodied, in Corrington's view, is to be virtually or semiotically the locus of traits and to furnish these traits for semiotic interaction.

¹⁶⁷NaS, 40.

¹⁶⁸NS, 23-4.

The powers of origin may be equated to Peirce's "dynamic objects" (which presemiotically and preinterpretively determine the sign) or to Jung's notion of the unconscious complexes or his theory of the "archetypes," which not only impersonally reflect, but configure the typical human experience and self-understanding. What makes Peirce's concept of dynamic objects more akin to ecstatic naturalism's theory of the powers of origin, as compared to Jung's archetypes, is that Jung's archetypes are still anthropocentrically oriented (e.g., "shadow," Self, *anima*, and *animus*) and do not operate within the realm of future possibilities. Jung's archetypes are confined to "vast antecedent structures"; whereas Peirce's category of Thirdness implies developmental teleology. Corrington claims that while Jung's theory of the archetypes "is not incorrect, it needs to be augmented and challenged by an ecstatic naturalism that always honors the not yet that hovers within and around all dynamic objects, be they particular or general."¹⁶⁹

It is important to understand that the powers of origin can be demonic when they ignore the powers of transcendence.¹⁷⁰ Because transcendence, like finitude, is finitely conditioned it will not be able to remove the self from the confines of finitude. Transcendence either operates "within or against finitude and cannot cancel or annul the various traits of our finite existence."¹⁷¹ Unlike finitude, transcendence is not confined to the human process, but it is "fitful transcendence" (Corrington) that reveals the moment when a natural grace helps relocate the self to move it toward transfigured life. Grounded in the principle of parity, Corrington makes clear that neither finitude or transcendence

¹⁶⁹EN, 151.

¹⁷⁰According to Badham, transcendence and spirit "nevertheless seem to float 'above' and 'higher' than finitude/origins, even though Corrington proposes them to be understood as natural." And contrary to Corrington's concept of the powers of origin, Badham claims that the powers of origin envelop both "oppressive *and* emancipatory sign-systems in our past. Only very few people would claim that every formative power in their lives was oppressive, even if many were. The very ambiguity of origins points towards the equal ambiguity of the 'content-free realms of transcendence' which seeks to press against limitations and move towards new horizons. Certainly transcendence can be form-shattering, but it may as easily shatter previously liberated and liberating forms as oppressive forms...The demonic irrupts within both the powers of origin and transcendence" ("Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington's Naturalism," *Soundings* 79.3 [1999], 211).

¹⁷¹NaS, 40.

assume priority, even though at a given time either one of them will prevail. Consequently, Corrington's naturalist concept of transcendence is quite distinct from Kierkegaard's the "wholly other" or Jaspers' notion of transcendence. Jaspers' transcendence is the absolute other who is veiled, concealed, and unapproachable, and who is designated with names like Being, Reality, Godhead (*Gottheit*). Corrington's ecstatic naturalist concept of transcendence also differs greatly from that of John Hick. Hick understands transcendence as the ultimate reality or divine, something that which is "other" and "greater," not in a spatial but in an Anselmic sense. He "speak[s] of transcendence, and of the Transcendence as that which, according to the religions, transcends the multiple forms of discharging energy constituting the natural or physical universe."¹⁷² Corrington defines transcendence as follows:

Transcendence is neither free-floating nor eternal. It emerges fitfully from the innumerable shifting conditions found on both sides of the ontological difference. From the side of *nature naturing*, transcendence is manifest in the seemingly opaque forward movements of the potencies as they emerge from their heterogeneous state to open up prospects of and for the spirit. From the side of *nature natured* transcendence is manifest whenever signs and products open out novel and transformative prospects for further semiotic interaction and integration. In both senses, transcendence is in and of a self-transforming nature and therefore cannot lift the self outside of the potencies and orders that collectively constitute nature.¹⁷³

From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, the momentums of transcendence are both forward and backward looking. These momentums "look forward insofar as they groan toward a realization of the lost object in the posttemporal dimension of the spirit.

¹⁷²John Hick, "Transcendence and Truth," *Religion Without Transcendence?*, ed. D.Z. Phillips and Timothy Tessin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 41. In addition, for Hick, Transcendence connotes "the putative dimension or range or reality that transcends this and that cannot be accommodated within a naturalistic understanding of the universe" (42).

¹⁷³*NS*, 61. See also Corrington, "Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self," *Semiotics 1989*, ed. John Deely, Karen Haworth, and Terry Prewitt (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 339-45.

They look backward insofar as they long for a return of the pretemporal maternal precisely in the embrace of the posttemporal spirit.”¹⁷⁴ These movements not only “operate” within the realms of finitude and embodiment, but they are also conditioned by a threefold momentum; namely, positioning, depositioning, and repositioning. (This threefold momentum will be explored and examined).

It must be pointed out that Corrington’s naturalist concept of transcendence is shared by a number of pragmatic naturalists and theologians, notably by Jerome Stone, Nancy Frankenberry, and Victor Anderson. Anderson shows that in spite of their own terms for transcendence (e.g, Stone’s “situated transcendence,” Frankenberry’s “revisionist theism,” or Corrington’s “the innumerable potencies of nature”), they all at least acknowledge the naturalistic function of transcendence, especially pertaining to the public significance of pragmatic naturalism.¹⁷⁵ However, unlike Stone and Frankenberry whose minimal use of theological categories in their pragmatic naturalism restricts their understanding of transcendence, Anderson finds Corrington’s ecstatic naturalist concept of transcendence (and of finitude) more theologically and substantively enriching:

On Corrington’s proposal [transcendence as one of the gifts of the spirit in the interpretive communities], a publicly significant theology also seeks to disclose in its theological languages the signs of transcendent grace in human actions and public life. I think that such a construal of human possibilities not only provides an adequate conception of the public signification of pragmatic naturalism, but it also is a conception that is faithful to the internal languages of theology.¹⁷⁶

Furthermore, Anderson fundamentally concurs with Corrington: “I accept both finitude and transcendence as regulative ideas in the interpretation of human existence and public life. This recognition means that there are limits to human capacities toward altering

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵See Victor Anderson, *Pragmatic Theology: Negotiating the Intersections of an American Philosophy of Religion and Public Theology* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998).

¹⁷⁶Anderson, *Pragmatic Theology*, 119.

environmental conditions which paradoxically sustain them, while often threatening human flourishing.”¹⁷⁷

4. *Positioning*

Corrington’s semiotic ontology becomes more concretely relevant and significant when it probes into the three momentums or three forms of finitude: positioning, depositioning, and repositioning that configure the semiotic and ontological contours of the self or of the human process. These three momentums semiotically reveal the gradual transformations of the depth structures of the self from the powers of origin of the no longer to the transfigured state in the not-yet. As noted, since the self is a finite and embodied product of nature and is encompassed by the powers or conditions of origin, it will not escape the primal positioning from which it is derived and conditioned. It should be mentioned that this first momentum, looked at from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, also helps illuminate the functional role of semiotic anthropology. Because of the powers of origin, the self is conditioned by its initial positioning. This initial positioning or original position (the mysterious whence) can ontologically be likened to Freud’s pre-Oedipal stage, Kristeva’s *chora*, Lacan’s the pre-mirror stage. And from Peirce’s semiotic perspective, the self is shaped by the ontological triad. The transforming momentums of depositioning and repositioning would not take place if the positioning, regardless of the self’s semiotic resistance, did not antecedently occur. For Kristeva, prior to the mirror stage - the symbolic (the Name-of-the-Father) or the Oedipal complex, the maternal body is the semiotic *chora* (a receptacle) from which the nonspeaking child/subject emerges. Kristeva’s “thetic phase” (the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic) will not be actualized and hence perpetrate a disruption to mother-child symbiosis if there exists no semiotic *chora*. However, ecstatic naturalism “sees positioning as a natural phenomenon that is only rarely tied to the human process and to the ‘Name of the Father’ of cultural codes.”¹⁷⁸ Kristeva’s semiotic positioning (*chora*) is still anthropocentrically laden, amply evidenced by her understanding of the “thetic

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 112.

¹⁷⁸EN, 43.

phase.” While Corrington posits that the maternal ground of the potencies from which the self is ejected is presemiotic and preinterpretive, Kristeva’s semiotic *chora* is “the drives that become manifest in language.”¹⁷⁹ Corrington contends that what has caused Kristeva’s psychoanalytic perspective to be so closely tied to anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism is that it is not willing to abstract itself from the psychoanalytic form of narcissism¹⁸⁰ and delve into the depth dimensions of the unconscious of the self as well as of nature (*nature naturing*) and its dialectical relationship with the conscious self. Taking cues from Jung’s understanding of psychogenesis, Corrington argues that the lost object/the material maternal need not be tied to biological parents, but its psychic structures can be configured by and open to *nature naturing*; in other words, “the genetic code ‘uses’ its material carrier to pass on its traits, nature ‘uses’ the finite ego to abject its own biological antecedents so that they are deprivileged in the drama of separation and selving.”¹⁸¹ Corrington wants to clarify that:

When ecstatic naturalism gathers psychoanalysis within its own provenance, it is compelled to release its narcissism and to serve a more capacious framework in which anything that takes place in the self is an infinitesimal corollary to the perennial dialectic of *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. The lost object (or material maternal) becomes transfigured into

¹⁷⁹Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-bind*, 104. Unlike Judith Butler who interprets Kristeva’s semiotic *chora* as prelinguistic and precultural, Oliver shows that, because Kristeva’s semiotic *chora* alludes to the interaction between biology and culture, and is not exclusively grounded in brute biology, it is thus neither precultural nor prelinguistic. Oliver also points out that: “With Kristeva it is always impossible to pinpoint an origin: in addition to an oscillation between poetry and dense theory in her own writing, there seems to be an oscillation between assigning the semiotic priority and assigning the symbolic priority. In some places Kristeva says that the semiotic is both logically and chronologically prior to the symbolic, while in other places she maintains that the symbolic is both logically and chronologically prior to the semiotic” (105).

¹⁸⁰“It is a wonderful historical irony that at least the Freudian forms of psychoanalysis set about the deconstruction of grand self-delusions, while fostering the greatest delusion of all; namely, that the human process is what it is without any relation to the pretemporal, prespatial, and presemiotic conditions that make it possible in the first place” (*STTP*, 42).

¹⁸¹*STTP*, 42.

the underconscious of nature, which seems to mock the self in its icy indifference to the tenuous structures of awareness that play themselves out in the continuing evolutionary drama of the human process.¹⁸²

As noted, Heidegger's metaphor of "thrownness," Buchler's image of natural debt, Kristeva's *chora*, and Corrington's term "ontological wound" all connote the powers of origin or a prior positioning from which the self is ejected. The powers of origin or the potencies of nature may also be viewed from the psychoanalytic and semiotic perspectives. Like Peirce's perceptual judgment that is always self-othering and existing, projection (from the standpoint of depth-psychology) always exists and is unconscious in the human process; it "moves silently to externalize internal content onto some order of relevance that will have triggered it."¹⁸³ Approached from Husserl's phenomenological sense, Corrington also adds:

An unconscious projection is always intentional...that is, it is related to a specific order than itself in a specific respect. Projections ply the great between, located in the matrix where the unconscious has its own horizon that enters into orders of relevance that surround it in the domain of *nature natured*...[A]ny given projection will have a point of origin (the unconscious complex) and will have a specific trigger that represents its "other."...The unconscious complex *must* externalize itself through projections, and thereby become at least potentially knowable...Projections occupy space and time in their own way, that is, they ply into and through meaning horizons that have a public aspect...The unconscious must struggle toward consciousness in order to fulfill its own developmental teleology. Without projection, emergent from complexes, the unconscious would remain mute.¹⁸⁴

From the standpoint of psychoanalysis, the selving process takes place within unconscious projection; however, for Corrington, because psychoanalysis erroneously

¹⁸²Ibid., 42-3.

¹⁸³*STTP*, 43.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 43-4, 47, 50.

privileges human language it should be transformed into psychosemiosis, essentially because “much of the work of the selving process takes place outside of or prior to language and information models. While a projection is an unconscious ‘seeing as,’ it is not a language. The projection may contain information, but this can only be unpacked through a strenuous process that can be better understood through different models.”¹⁸⁵ Speaking from his semiotic ontology, Corrington contends that by eulogizing the “evolutionary product human language,” signs will be constricted from conveying nonhuman significations or extra-human traits.

From the semiotic perspectives, particularly that of Peirce, the phrase “unconscious projection” (or abjected maternal unconscious) may be likened to his ontological category of Firstness (undifferentiated quality or vague potentiality). For Peirce, signs are self-othering; that is, they move from a wherefrom to a whereto. It is worth reiterating that, because of his doctrine of synechism, Peirce very seldom made an absolute distinction between consciousness and the unconscious. Unlike the image of the glassy essence, his analogical image of the bottomless lake does provide the reader a clear difference between the unconscious and consciousness. Similar to the powers of origin or an unconscious projection, Firstness is precategoryally dynamic and self-othering; it is the birthing ground of emerging experiences; namely, Seconds.

Corrington sees that Peirce’s Firstness and Kristeva’s *chora* make the transition from potency to sign possible. The *chora* can be characterized “as the most dynamic and rhythmic dimension of the unconscious of nature, and thus as that dimension that is the most responsible for the creation of the innumerable orders of signification.”¹⁸⁶ It is the maternal body’s birthing ground that “‘hungers’ to give birth to time and form as they are rendered actual through processes of semiosis.”¹⁸⁷ The *chora* functions as the “momentum of pulsation” that spawns/ejects innumerable series of signs and symbols

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 96

¹⁸⁶Corrington, “Nature’s God and the Return of the Material Maternal,” *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 24.

¹⁸⁷EN, 27. Corrington equates Kristeva’s “semiotic *chora*” to the presemiotic (the realm of the potencies) and her concept of the “symbolic” to the semiotic (the realm of meaning and communication).

into the realm of *nature nutured*. Because the presemiotic *chora* is self-othering, heterogeneous, prepositional, precategoryal, and preformal, it does not belong to the semiotic orders or is itself a sign. And like the child entering the thetic phase of the symbolic (language or signification), departing from the semiotic *chora*, once the sign is spawned from the presemiotic pulsation or potency (the pretemporal realm of *nature naturing*),¹⁸⁸ it breaks into semiotic interaction and integration with other innumerable sign orders in the realm of *nature nutured*, thus leaving behind the ‘no longer’. While the *chora* represents the dimension of the ‘no longer’ (the phenomenon of melancholy), sign systems connote the ‘not yet’:

Once a sign has emerged from the *chora*, it is ‘on its own’ and has to derive its semiotic nutrition from the growing web of interpretants rather than from the material maternal source from which it has come. Once ejected from the *chora*, the sign experiences a kind of melancholy (at least in an analogous sense) for the lost object that is now receding further and further from view...The self-othering and heterogeneous ground of the *chora* (or of firstness) continues to exert an uncanny lure on the self-in-process making all outward movements masks of the deeper longing for a return to the pretemporal potencies of nature.¹⁸⁹

The dual movement of a sign - a deep backward longing for the lost *chora* and a forward movement for infinite signification and possibilities in the realm of semiosis runs parallels to Kristeva’s psychoanalysis of the dialectical tension between the semiotic and the symbolic. In the language of ecstatic naturalism, a sign is caught between two realms; namely, the “no longer” (the presemiotic potencies of *chora*) and the “not yet” (the prospective infinite of signification in *nature nutured*). The ontological wound is caused by the rupture between *nature nutured* and *nature naturing*,¹⁹⁰ the split between the

¹⁸⁸Corrington uses the generic term “potency” for all orders of the world organically or nonorganically, and the term “pulsation” for the human process.

¹⁸⁹Corrington, “Nature’s God and the Return of the Material Maternal,” *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 123-4.

¹⁹⁰For Corrington, if the unconscious gives rise to consciousness, then *nature naturing* also gives rise to *nature nutured*. However, the deepest logic; namely, the

mother-child relationship and the self-fissuring of the self as it semiotically moves toward the public order of infinite signs and codes.

The sign-using self undergoes two fundamental forms of death. First, by restlessly moving toward the domain of differentiation or signification the self suffers the death of its lost object (the originating potency) or the abjection of the maternal. Kristeva defines the abject as the jettisoned object that is dialectically attractive and repulsive, disgusting yet fascinating; it “simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject.”¹⁹¹ Second, as soon as the self enters the realm of infinite signs and codes it will encounter the death of possibilities; that is, even though the self will be exposed to meanings and values that will enhance and enrich its scope and integrity, “finite constraints within nature [will] foreclose many possibilities and compel signs to let go of a desired plenitude.”¹⁹² The deaths of the lost object and possibilities are internally connected. And that, “The search

ultimate whence of nature’s self-othering potencies will always remain a mystery. This notion is deeply seated in his understanding of the prepositioned potencies of *nature naturing*, which seems analogous to Schelling’s metaphysical concept of the *Daß*. Schelling’s the *Daß*, like *nature naturing*, possesses the self-othering power; however, what crucially distinguishes Schelling’s the *Daß* from Corrington’s *nature naturing* is that the former is ascribed to the divine status (according to Beach, “the highest reality of the *Daß*...is the supreme personality God”); whereas for the latter God is but a natural complex/order of *nature naturing*. In his book *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), Edward Allen Beach writes that in order to make a transition from essence to existence Schelling needed to posit a metaphysical concept called the *Daß*. Beach calls this “an extrarational ‘leap’ by a creative *Daß*,” which has since exerted considerable influence on thinkers like Heidegger, Jaspers, Tillich, and Habermas. Schelling made a distinction between the *Was* (“whatness”) and the *Daß* (“thatness”). While the *Was* denotes spatial and temporal reality or existence (akin to Corrington’s *nature natured*), the *Daß*, as Beach interprets, is “an ‘over-existing’ (*überexistierende*) principle, which is at the same time an existentializing Act - a causal agency transcending the universe of both real and ideal identities.” Beach contends, for Schelling, the *Daß* is the pure fiat upon which both being and the possibility of being depend. It is “the transcendent cause (*Ursache*) of the whole of existence and therefore stands above and beyond the pinnacle of the universal chain of being. As *das Überexistierende*, the *Daß* is the creative breath of life that calls the Potencies, along with all the conceivable relations derivable from them, out of the void of not-being and into the realm of actual being.” See particularly pp. 136-46.

¹⁹¹See *Powers of Horror: An Essay of Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

¹⁹²EN, 31.

for semiotic plenitude, by a sign or a sign system, is a response to the lost object. The death of possibilities is part of a necessary ‘recognition’ that no sign can replace the originating potency with formed semiotic content.”¹⁹³

For Corrington, two forms of death within semiosis will also correspond with two forms of transfiguration. First, if the lost object or the powers of origin, embedded in the pretemporal (the no longer), cannot be “recaptured by the emergent sign,” it will be transfigured by relocating its loss within the not yet of the future (the posttemporal); that is:

the powers of origin participate in the powers of expectation, thereby freeing the sign from a longing that cannot be fulfilled. The sign becomes open to the radical possibility that its not yet is actually the home of the no longer. In a striking sense, the lost object awaits the sign in the future and comes toward it out of expectation.¹⁹⁴

Second, unlike the death of possibilities, within the omnipresent powers of world semiosis and its process of signification, the self’s interpretive possibilities will be abundantly expanded.

Through two forms of death and transfiguration, it is clear that the lost object is both pretemporal and posttemporal. It is pretemporal because, like the potencies of nature spawning time for the prehuman orders of the world, it generates time for the human process. And it is posttemporal insofar as it awaits the sign/self in the realm of the not yet. The pretemporal, unlike the dimension of *nature natures*, is preordinally the “radical and content-free ‘space’ of originating power” that itself is not an order or contains an order. It is a kind of infinite whence “that can never be constricted to the conditions of origin that mark the specificity of the self.”¹⁹⁵ The sign using self, in its reciprocal relations with other “foundlings of time” will always be haunted by the pretemporal’s lost origin (“the lost object must be the shocking reminder of what lies buried in the

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁹⁵*STTP*, 142.

background of origin”).¹⁹⁶ This kind of haunting, according to Corrington, manifests through the religious mood of melancholy. Like the pretemporal, the posttemporal is also preordinal (or postordinal) and holds no order. It is a kind of infinite whither, but without being constituted as an ultimate meaning. Emerging from the religious mood of melancholy the posttemporal discloses itself through the religious mood of ecstasy. It is necessary to point out that interrelationship between the pretemporal whence and the posttemporal whither does exist; that is, the pretemporal whence becomes ecstatic when the posttemporal whither emerges and the posttemporal whither can also be melancholic when the pretemporal whence surfaces.

In their dual movement - the backward longing for the lost object and the forward movement for semiotic plenitude, the sign-using selves become the products of what Corrington calls “primal negativity,” for they inevitably participate in both “death and transfiguration,” the two basic dimensions of interaction in world semiosis: death and transfiguration. The first dimension of death experienced by a sign is that of the death of its lost object as it moves outward into “spheres of involvement.” This death is “masked by the restlessness” of the sign. The death of possibilities marks the sign’s second dimension of death; that is, since a given sign is conditioned by the “finite constraints” within nature, its desire of meanings and values will be forced to let go. The deaths of the lost object and of possibilities are internally related. It is important to remember that, “The search for semiotic plenitude, by a sign or a sign system is a response to the lost object. The death of possibilities is part of a necessary ‘recognition’ that no sign can replace the originating potency with formed semiotic content. Negativity works between, within, and among signs to keep them from attaining self-closure with natural orders.”¹⁹⁷ The “transformation of the lost object” discloses the first form of transfiguration. Once the sign emerges and moves outward into the spheres of involvement, the lost object (a given potency) can only “relocate” its loss within the “not yet” of the future; in other words, “the powers of origin participate in the powers of expectation, thereby freeing the sign from a longing that cannot be fulfilled. The sign becomes open to the radical

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 143.

¹⁹⁷EN, 31.

possibility that its not yet is actually the home of the no longer. In a striking sense, the lost object awaits the sign in the future and comes toward it out of expectation.”¹⁹⁸ In spite of nature’s finite constraints, signs still receive the “support” of world semiosis and thereby will be transformed by meaningful prospects of semiotic meaning as well as signification which are made available from the omnipresent powers of world semiosis (signs are part of natural conditions configured in the prehuman origin. World semiosis is constituted by interpretants). This is the second form of transfiguration. For Corrington, the aspects of death and transfiguration of the lost object and spawned signs are necessary: “It is as if the sign had to be ejected from the dark *chora* in order to return to a transfigured *chora* in the not yet. Negativity and death are masks for transfiguration. In a striking sense, the *chora* gives birth to its own future and ‘uses’ signs as intermediary means of self-realization...From the standpoint of the sign, the *chora* dies only to be reborn in the not yet.”¹⁹⁹ What makes this rebirth possible is what Corrington calls “natural grace.”

Corrington also suggests the same logic holds for space. In its pre-mirror stage, the newly positioned self lives and moves around in what Corrington calls “a rhythmic spatiality”; namely, the prespatial potential space (akin to Kant’s manifold) where the object pole is yet to be split into here and there. The prespatial and the spatial collide as soon as the mirror stage or the possibility of differentiation occurs. The so-called postspatial can be spoken of “whenever configured and positioned space opens up to a nonlocating momentum on the other side of the fissures of spatial life. This momentum comes from the potencies of nature, which spawn both time *and* space as they are transfigured through the spirit.”²⁰⁰

It is important to investigate how Corrington’s metaphysical concept of the “ontological wound”²⁰¹ (a movement from the realm of “dreaming innocence” of the

¹⁹⁸ *EN*, 31-2.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁰⁰ *NS*, 30-31.

²⁰¹ The ontological wound also brings forth both consciousness and social positioning. Corrington points out that “the frenzy of public semiosis, which ignores the betweenness structures of signification in favor of semiotic plentitude, points to the

prespatial to the realm of semiotic signs and codes as well as the powers of “chronological time” and “geometrical space”) correlates with Kristeva’s *chora* (the womb), especially when ecstatic naturalism claims that both the world and the self were spawned from nature’s self-othering potencies. And by drawing from Kristeva’s insights of the maternal body and its birthing process, Corrington sees the mother as “the locus for the self-fissuring of nature insofar as she is the origin of the self *and* momentum that propels the self outward into the postmaternal orders of semiosis.”²⁰² As soon as the child/self is propelled or abjected from its mother, it will be ontologically haunted by a double movement;²⁰³ that is, a longing (backward) for a return to the origins (the maternal material) and a desire (forward) to venture itself into the infinite semiotic life of *nature natured*:

The potencies of nature, which ‘use’ the maternal for their own

constant presence/absence of the ontological wound [and that]...[i]nsofar as the lost object lies in the past it points to a kind of dreaming innocence that lures the self back toward the preconscious (a manifestation of the death drive). Yet the deeper logic of this temporality points to the domain of the not yet in which the lost object returns from out of a transfigured future to bring the self back into the heart of the self-fissuring of the ontological difference” (*NS*, 30).

²⁰²*NS*, 29.

²⁰³This double movement also recalls Corrington’s concept of the “fold.” In his book *Nature’s Religion*, Corrington introduces a concept called “fold.” Folds, embedded in hidden potencies of *nature naturing*, are nature’s complexes or layered orders (or may be referred to as epiphanies of power) that extrahumanly and semiotically direct or intensify the human process to the depth, vertical, or hidden dimensions of nature and the powers of origin. Corrington defines the “sacred fold” as “a way of indicating that there is something about the *how* of nature that generates unusual orders of great semiotic density and scope that cannot be said to derive their efficacy from human projection alone...Sacred folds are analogous to intense radiating stars that send out streams of semiosis from conditions of origin” (*STTP*, 161, 162). A fold not only participates in the unconscious of the sign-using self, but also in the underconscious of nature. In the innumerable orders of *nature natured*, folds manifest themselves in both numinous folds or spatial folds. A fold involves itself simultaneously in a double movement - forward and backward; that is, it “invites us forward with its open and fragmentary power, promising us a glimpse of the mysteries of nature itself. Simultaneously, it invites us backward to our own lost object (the childhood point of origin in the unconscious) and the lost object of nature itself” (*NR*, 24).

'ends,' spawn the prespatial and the pretemporal, which are manifest to the human process in the form of dreaming innocence. This floating domain connects the infant to the maternal presence and makes all subsequent forms of positioning possible. This domain becomes fractured through the mirror stage in which the nascent self is compelled to recognize its finite and located status within the semiotic codes and orders of the world...The self is cast out of the garden of dreaming innocence and feels the innumerable lures of the semiotic orders.²⁰⁴

Corrington sees in the ontological wound a tension existing between the so-called "purposive aspects of positioning" and the "prepurposive." The purposive dimension signifies the movement of the child away from its mother; and not only when the child is well situated in the mirror and Oedipal stages or in the public semiotic codes will its ontological wound become fully realized, but as the "embodied and sign-using self" it also comes into being. This purposive dimension is represented by the concept of matricide. The maternal's self-othering power denotes the prepurposive dimension, which has two subaltern dimensions: "The depth dimension is the self-othering of nature as it moves outward from the potencies toward the attained orders of signification. The other dimension is the self-othering of the maternal as its own bodily states propel the child toward the mirror and Oedipal stages."²⁰⁵

The purposive dimension of the self/child also manifests its *actual infinite* status, which "can be defined as the sum of all currently operating signs in the world of *nature*

²⁰⁴NS, 31. The self, with a sense of loss and despair (as the maternal material recedes from view), is continually and hopelessly yearning for the return to the origin, to the arms of the material maternal, or to the "garden of dreaming innocence" (the no longer). In this ontological state, the self suffers the nostalgic mood of melancholy. Kristeva adeptly and poetically depicts this kind of mood as follows: "Melancholy lover of a vanished space, he cannot, in fact, get over his having abandoned a period of time. The lost paradise is a mirage of the past that he will never be able to recover...For in the intervening period of nostalgia, saturated with fragrances and sounds to which he no longer belongs and which, because of that, wound him less than those of the here and now, the foreigner is a dreamer making love with absence, one exquisitely depressed. Happy?" (*Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 9-10).

²⁰⁵NS, 29.

natured.²⁰⁶ Since the self was ejected from the propositioned potencies of *nature naturing*, it now operates within the realm of *nature natured*. As a given sign, it:

is both an actual infinite in itself and a full participant in the actual infinite of all signs that are currently in the world...The actual infinite is...fully within the world of temporality and spatiality (provided time and space can be configured in extra-dimensional ways as well). To put it in more dynamic terms, it can be said that the actual infinite is *actualizing* in the sense that it makes signs efficacious within the innumerable orders of the world.²⁰⁷

The self not only manifests its actual infinite status, it also necessarily participates in all other three infinities: the prospective infinite, the open infinite, and the sustaining infinite. All four infinities interpenetrate each other; however, each is uniquely defined and functions separately. The *prospective infinite*, as presemiotic vector force, provides the infinite space/clearing, the opening momentum, or as an enabling condition for the given self as the actual infinite to actualize itself or move into new possibilities of semiosis. The prospective infinite “is like anti-matter, constituted by anti-signs, in that it does have a very different ontological reality than signs and their series, but it cannot be totally different as it would then lack all relevance to anything semiotic.”²⁰⁸ Corrington also draws the analogy of a river bed (the prospective infinite) and water (the actual infinite), for without the river bed water “would disperse and evaporate”; in other words, if there were no prospective clearing semiotic meanings would never come forth. The prospective infinite plays an integral role in shaping and forming the principle of individuation.

While the self/actual infinite is provided an ontological clearing or plentitude by the prospective infinite, the *open infinite* (Peirce’s the “ground”), on the contrary, particularly and maximally offers a pragmatic space for the self’s individuation. The open infinite

²⁰⁶*STTP*, 101. By applying the concept of the “sum” Corrington does not refer to quantity or number but to “the sheer plentitude and utter thereness of signs in the world.”

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 108.

helps or empowers each given sign/self to unfold its own meaning horizons as well as possible signification. The last form of the infinite is termed the *sustaining infinite*, which may be likened to Buchler's "providingness." However, Corrington believes it resembles more directly Tillich's the "ground of Being."

Although the sustaining infinite, embedding itself "on the cusp" of the realms of *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, "sustains" all of the innumerable orders in *nature nature* it is only "sheerly" and not directly or strongly relevant to any sign systems or traits; in other words, the semiotic self is still sustained by the sustaining infinite even though its own particular space or individuation will not be directly empowered as it is by the open infinite.²⁰⁹

5. *Depositioning*

Unlike the original position which is both pretemporal and temporal, depositioning is temporal. The moving across, through, and back and forth of the temporality of depositioning delivers the self and its products to the dialectical relationship between intimacy and abjection. Within this temporality of depositioning the self not only encounters what Freud termed the "return of the repressed" (which will be examined later), faces the conditions of origin, finitude, and embodiment, but also experiences the fitful operation of the transcendence in and through the self and its products.

By detaching itself and moving away from the material maternal (the lost object) or from the pretemporal whence, the self has already entered into the momentum of "depositioning" - the second form of finitude. This is the ontological move (not necessarily conscious) toward semiotic autonomy, toward what Corrington calls "denial" instead of the act of matricide as both Freud and Jung have termed it. Viewed from psychoanalytic perspectives, the self's centrifugal movement from positioning to depositioning is the move from the pre-mirror stage to the mirror stage; and from semiotic perspectives, it is the transition from the realms of Firstness to Secondness. Kristeva is right to predicate the emergence of the self from the *chora* (the maternal domain); however, Corrington finds her analysis still plagued by the poststructuralist

²⁰⁹For a closer examination of these four forms of infinite, see *STTP*, pp.100-114.

glottocentrism (the privileging of the language of human construct over the forms of extranatural or nonhuman interpretive signification). He too criticizes Peirce for neglecting the ontological dimension of the lost maternal by “converting it into the domain of firstness and pure feeling.” Even though depositioning plays an essential role in the orders of personal and social interaction, signs need not be depositioned. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, depositioning, like both positioning and repositioning, is only a natural process that may or may not hold a strong moral value. Corrington maintains that the primal powers of negativity operate in all three modes of sign function or in three momentums of positioning, depositioning, and repositioning. He explains:

In the irruption of the original position negativity drives a wedge between the nascent sign and the birthing ground of the *chora*. In repositioning negativity compels a sign to let go of its lost object long enough to allow for new traits to enter into its constitution. On a deeper level, negativity preserves a ‘place’ for the not yet that comes to the sign from out of its future. In depositioning negativity functions to invert or confound positions attained, thus either moving the sign to dramatic augmentations of meaning or breaking the sign in such a way that it soon ceases to occupy a recognized position within a given region of world semiosis.²¹⁰

After having been quickened by the liberating powers of the mirror stage and having detached itself from the realm of dreaming innocence (the pre-mirror stage), the depositioned self still carries the ever-haunting traces of the original position within itself. Only by being coaxed by the power of the spirit and by the hovering power of the spirit-interpreter into the momentum of repositioning will the self expel these melancholy traces and encounter the transfigured lost object that has returned out of the not yet.

For Corrington, depositioned self is not a murderer of the maternal but it is a “passive participant” in a natural process. The purpose of depositioning (or what Kristeva

²¹⁰EN, 45.

calls 'transgression'), like Peirce's indexical sign enabling the self to possess a reactive awareness of existence, is to propel the self away from the dreaming innocence (positioning) into the process of selving. Akin to Heidegger's concept of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) which functions as the existential field or clearing in which all events or possibilities actualize, Corrington's process of selving not only provides the fundamental powers of origin for the self or for the "process of individuation" (to use Jung's term), but it also goads the self's new semiotic contour to emerge into the public realm of interpretants as well as into the interpretive possibilities of the infinite potencies of *nature naturing*. Without the deposing momentum the self will not be able to manifest or realize its own identity, and neither will it advance toward the transfiguration of the spirit that makes the selving process possible. More importantly, the developmental teleology of the unconscious which helps usher the self into the depth dimensions of transcendence will not occur if the transition from the original position to deposing does not transpire. After all, human possibility or the empowerment of the human process derives from the aspects of transcendence. For Corrington, transcendence is the power that lifts the self into the movement of the not yet. It is a way of letting go of those clinging aspects of origin that holds the self back. Furthermore, without the deposing, the self as an unlimited sign series, will not be encompassed by the "healing power" of the not yet even though the melancholic longing (the sense of loss and despair and the constant haunting of the lost object) is still a part of the selving process, which constantly reminds the self of its ontologically fragile status in nature. In this movement, the melancholy self becomes a foundling in the world of interpretants, although it now autonomously enters into the semiotic world of personal and social codes. It should be noted that the ontological transition from the original position to deposing is a recurrent process, not a product (once and for all event).

As regards the human process, Corrington postulates two forms of empowerment: the weak form is manifest in the form of natural grace, and the strong form in the drive toward what he calls "selving." Selving is that which is:

the most complete moment within the power of individuation,
and not as a ubiquitous trait of nature...Selving is the most striking

manifestation of the power of origin, and is thus strongly relevant to the human process. The identity of the self is forged under the impress of selving...[T]he power of selving...compels the human process to transform finitude and become a locus of the various forms of transcendence...[S]elving derives its fullest measure from the divine life itself...[I]t helps to shape the identity of the self to move it beyond the empty repetition of bare origins.²¹¹

The selving process will not fully emerge to offer the sign-using self meaning horizons or furnish a semiotic clearing for the self's unconscious complex to externalize via projections. Only through the interconnection with "surplus semiotic value" can the self (*nature natured*) be closely linked with nature (*nature naturing*). The selving process becomes weakly relevant to the human process if there is no surplus semiotic value; and conversely, without the "energy of selving," the surplus semiotic value would be "strongly effervescent." Projections can fully "expand" its functional role into a wider horizontal field when there is surplus semiotic value; in other words:

In the clearing provided by surplus semiotic value, in which signs can operate without being fully embedded in opaque conditions of origin, projections have the scope to arch out into the larger horizontal field and color other selves with the textures emergent from the originating unconscious complexes.²¹²

Corrington's concept of "product" is richly nuanced. For him, the self is the locus of innumerable products, and so long as the self remains in the original position, its products are "random and without particularity." However, greater particularity, as well as an autonomous position within social and personal codes, will appear once the selving process (at the post-mirror stage) begins to take place and quicken its own momentum. It is that:

the concept "product" is an exceedingly broad one. A yawn is as much a product of the self as is a detailed public artifact that plays

²¹¹NS, 60,61,65.

²¹²STTP, 49.

a role in social history. The finitude of the self is sharply manifest in the products that emerge from the self and have their own inertia and density...[T]he self is as much characterized by sheer drift and waste as it is by novel and rich semiotic products. The self is continually productive, even in sleep, and its products radiate out from it like an expanding field, with varying degrees of density or transparency.²¹³

Corrington emphasizes that most of the products are not intentionally produced, even though they are bound by the temporal and spatial dimensions and are configured by bodily motions (e.g., trying to maintain the balance after skipping a step) as well as intentions. Not all of the self's products are semiotic in all respects. Adjustments to gravity, for example, need not be semiotic; and dreams are as much the self's finite products as are public artifacts. Corrington uses the example of a comedian slipping on a banana peel in a movie to illustrate the emergence of the momentum of depositioning, "in which a stable presemiotic background suddenly shifts into an unstable and thematic configuration."²¹⁴ The relationship between the sign-using self and its products is symmetrical; that is, the self is both reshaped by its spawned products and augments new products and extends them into the world. The self being reshaped by its products implies the fact that the product itself is a momentum of the powers of origin that has a "unique vector directionality"; in other words, even though the self may jettison its products naturally, they will come back in "a series of orbits" to draw closer to the originating self.

When discussing the theological meanings of the terms "being and finitude," Tillich employed the now-famous phrase the "shock of nonbeing" to delineate humankind's ontological existence/constitution or the revelation of human finitude in the face of the mystery of being. For Tillich, to truly exist, humankind must participate in both being and nonbeing, for that is the ground of one's ultimate concern; existential meaning derives from this dialectical participation. Ontologically, being precedes nonbeing. Like Tillich, Corrington also applies the phrase the "shock of depositioning" to attest the "greater meaning" of the self's products. If for Tillich, the word "shock" connotes the shaking of

²¹³NS, 46.

²¹⁴Ibid., 47.

one's own state of mind or existential structure, then for Corrington, it also points to the self's profound decentering from positioning to depositioning. In order for the self's products to generate more meanings, this "ontological shock" (to use Tillich's phrase) is inevitable. And as for Tillich, the ultimate concern involves both being and nonbeing, Corrington's products have both presemiotic and semiotic features.²¹⁵

Corrington sees the momentum of depositioning and of constricted products point to the self's finitude, which not only causes self-alienation (from the standpoint of postmodernism), but also productive alienation (from Marx's socialist view). He also insightfully likens the self's finitude to Freud's image of the "return of the repressed."

The alienated product returns to us like a repressed content that we wish to deny and place under erasure. Our own most intimate products often become abjected from us and quickly speed to the edges of our horizons of meaning. Yet they return from these recesses to haunt us and to remind us of the iron bands of finitude.²¹⁶

Corrington, however, moves beyond Freud's one dimensional psychoanalytic notion of the return of the repressed, which chiefly focuses on the repressed material (or what Corrington calls the "return of the same"). In this dimension, the self is haunted and abjected without any hope for transfiguration. But within the temporality of depositioning, the dimension of the return of the repressed contains the possibility of reshaping and transforming the self; that is, after having been enhanced and enriched by "novel or generic conditions of world semiosis," the self's inner states and products can return to itself in a richly new guise of transformed meaning horizons and signification.

6. Repositioning

In the momentum of depositioning, the self not only experienced loss (as a foundling), but was also "shaped and molded by a mobile network of resistances that

²¹⁵See particularly Tillich's chapter "The Reality of Revelation" in his *Systematic Theology*, Vol.I., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

²¹⁶NS, 49.

actively give the self its inner and outer contours, [and that] [t]he phenomenon of de-positioning and loss manifests these resistances in terms of inertial drift and the drag of what could be called ‘semiotic mass’.”²¹⁷ Again, unlike Freud’s image of the return of the repressed wrapped up in the impossibility of transformation, Corrington’s “the return of the same” not only trespasses the inert domain of loss and resistance, but also moves forward toward a new prospect for transfiguration or toward the “new liberating rhythms” (Badham). This is the third form of finitude, which marks the momentum of repositioning and return. The self realigns itself under the profound force and power of repositioning. After having been spawned from its original position and de-positioned, the self, its products, and with the selving process are now advancing toward transformed repositioning, toward what Corrington calls “the final kingdom of meaning.” To use Peirce’s semiotic terms, the self moves from Secondness to Thirdness (where the logical interpretant, teleological structures of intelligibility, or meaning horizons of a sign is produced). Without the transforming power of repositioning and the offering of its capaciously enriched interpretants, the self’s inner and outer contours will continue to be circumscribed by semiotic mass. If for Heidegger, death (the constant threat) completes the possibility of *Dasein*, for Corrington, repositioning completes (and transfigures) the sign-using self’s inner state as well as its products. Because signs interpenetrate one another and augments semiotic meanings, the momentum of repositioning becomes inevitable. Furthermore, repositioning will liberate the self from its oscillating desire (abjection) - of returning to the dreaming innocence (the lost object) and of entering into the realm of infinite public signs and codes (Kristeva’s the symbolic). In repositioning, as far as the primal powers of negativity are concerned, “negativity compels a sign to let go of its lost object long enough to allow for new traits to enter into its constitution. On a deeper level, negativity preserves a ‘place’ for the not yet that comes to the sign from out of its future.”²¹⁸

Corrington posits the function or role of the spirit, as a semiotic momentum, to stress the self’s ontological movement from positioning to de-positioning and to repositioning.

²¹⁷NS, 50.

²¹⁸EN, 45.

The spirit, from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, is in and of nature, but not of God. Nevertheless, both ecstatic naturalism and Christianity affirm the spirit as an opening power within the realm of *nature natured*. Contrary to Christian theologians who have taught that the tasks of the economic Trinity flow from its intratrinitarian relations or from *perichoresis* (circumincession) of the immanent Trinity, Corrington postulates the spirit as existing within “the shifting and fragmented orders of the world,” which resembles the divine function of the economic Trinity. The spirit is not a complex of nature, for both nature and spirit are “preconceptual in the sense that they point to that which has no outer shape or circumscribed dimension.”²¹⁹ The spirit is thus transordinal in the sense that it concurrently occupies more than one order of relevance.

²¹⁹NS, ix. In his review of Corrington’s book *Nature and Spirit*, John Ryder argues that Corrington’s concept of spirit is inconsistent with his ordinal ontology; that is, “On the one hand spirit is not identical with nature, yet it is not a complex of nature either, because it is not a complex at all...Spirit appears to be a trait of nature, that which enables *natura naturans*, yet it is a trait which is not a complex, which means it is a trait which has no relational location and no constitutive traits of its own, both of which are categorial impossibilities in an ordinal ontology” (142). Also for Ryder, Corrington’s concept of nature itself “runs into trouble when imbued with the theological significance which Corrington wants to ascribe to it”; that is, while nature is not an order, yet it “is” or “has” the seedbed of potencies which are not themselves orders. This is, in Ryder’s view, ordinally impossible, for it is one thing to assert that “‘nature’ is not an order, that the term does not refer to or pick out a complex. But to say that there are ‘potencies’ which are not orders is, from an ordinal point of view, oxymoronic” (142). See *Metaphilosophy* 26 (Jan/April 1995): 138-146. Insofar as Ryder is a Buchlerian dogmatist and a materialist, his criticisms of Corrington’s concepts of spirit and nature are not pertinent because Corrington is neither a Buchlerian nor a materialist; he is an ecstatic naturalist who probes into nature through four basic categories: 1) orders of relevance within *nature natured*, 2) the presemiotic abyss of *nature naturing*, 3) potencies which are both preordinal yet within nature, and 4) the spirit is not specifically an order with multiple locations but is analogous to nature as a whole while yet being a part of it. For Corrington, the spirit is too far complex and protean to be a mere location of traits or a trait of nature, essentially because it cannot, like nature, be encompassed. Borrowing Jaspers’ term *das Umgreifende*, Corrington describes both the spirit and nature as “encompassing,” even though the spirit is the movement within nature; in other words, “there is nowhere where nature is absent, while there are innumerable orders bereft of the spirit” (NS, 153). It must be remembered that since Corrington’s ecstatic naturalism is not a “product” but a project, or rather a “still-evolving perspective,” his concept of the spirit will certainly need to be worked out much more. It should be noted that in his recent

Corrington makes clear that the prefix “holy” cannot be applied to the term spirit, essentially because that will privilege the principle of ontological priority. Rooted in its theistic naturalism or the so-called post-Christian universalist perspective and the principles of parity and ordinality, ecstatic naturalism emphatically rejects the Christian doctrine of “Spirit” as the third Person of the Trinity as well as Hegel’s denaturalized spirit whose imposed intelligibility and self-consciousness have become alienated from “finite orders of interaction.” On the contrary, the spirit of ecstatic naturalism is anti-supernatural, finitely naturalized, and plurally located in human and nonhuman sign orders. It neither possesses a self nor a (self) consciousness, but is a kind of postconsciousness that, however ontologically ambiguous and not possessing intelligibility or teleology, goads and guides the human process toward enriched meaning horizons, and directs its own momenta toward the principles of universality and parity, and:

undermine[s] vertical hierarchies and to open out sign horizons to each other so that walls of alienation are broken down... Phenomenologically, it is clear that the spirit is elusive in its manifestations and ambiguously related to attained orders of power and meaning. Yet it is equally clear that that spirit is the source for the forms of power and meaning that punctuate world semiosis and give it its more intense epiphanies of power.²²⁰

The spirit presemiotically and semiotically sustains and participates in the primal tension between *nature naturing* (the preformal potencies of nature) and *nature natured* (the innumerable attained orders/complexes of the world). The spirit also operates in the innumerable “betweens” among signs in world semiosis, thus making communication possible. Here the concept of the “ground” must also be examined, because of its essential role in ecstatic naturalism. Without the ground, the spirit will not be able to perform the “betweenness” relation. Peirce’s semiotic conception of the ground has

book, *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*, Corrington pluralizes the notion of spirit in a new way. See pp.212-25.

²²⁰EN, 53.

provided a groundwork for Corrington's concept of the ground/spirit.²²¹ In attempting to define his concept of the "ground," Peirce likened it to the Spirit (the third Person of the Christian Trinity). For him, the ground is what connects the sign and its object together and therefore generates interpretant(s); in other words, it is an enabling condition that not only makes the semiotic relation or activity (semiosis) between sign and object possible, but also deepens semiotic meanings. The ground will always presemiotically remain outside of the triad of signification (sign/object/interpretant):

The ground is what it is by giving over its directionality to the unfolding sign system. Semiotic depth is a function of the self-giving ground. Thus the ground not only provides a space of possibility within which an interpretant can unfold; it also gives depth to the sign triad so that it can resonate with more complex actualized meanings...The ground is not a representamen nor an interpretant but stands between them helping to give depth and directionality to the sign triad...Like the spirit, the ground lives by giving its inner wealth away. Never becoming *a* sign or *an* interpretant, the ground is nevertheless the enabling condition for the unfolding of the prospective infinite of interpretants.²²²

As Corrington points out, in spite of its directionality or vector force, it has a trajectory "intimately tied to specific semiotic configurations," the ground is analogous to the presemiotic *chora*. The *chora* and the spirit(s) both function as grounds; that is, while the *chora* is the ejective ground the spirit is the mediating ground. Furthermore, like the spirit, the ground presemiotically functions as a "between" (sign and object) and is also termed the "open infinite." The ground as the "open infinite" is the enabling condition that presemiotically furnishes interpretants possibilities, directionality, and depth for actualized meanings. Akin to Peirce's ground, the open infinite is the principle of individuation that surrounds each sign, object, and interpretation/interpretant, granting the

²²¹In a conversation with him, Corrington stated that his reconstruction of Peirce's concept of ground has room for: 1) the open infinite as individuating ground, 2) the prospective infinite as luring ground, 3) the *chora* as ejecting self-othering ground, and 4) the spirit as mediating ground via developmental Thirdness. In his view, Peirce did not quite work out these distinctions properly.

²²²EN, 120, 121.

mobile space for uniqueness. Speaking from the Peircean language, the open infinite situates itself between Secondness and Thirdness. Like the open infinite, the prospective infinite, as opening momentum and enabling or luring condition, is also the ground relation which gives the presemiotic clearing within which sign orders can occur. It supplies a semiotic space in which the actual infinite (the sum of all functioning signs in *nature natured*) can encounter novel possibilities. However, *contra* the open infinite (not conditioned by anything semiotic), the prospective infinite is a general open to whole sign series within the realm of *nature natured*.

What obtains between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* is betweenness.

Betweenness belongs to the realm of mystery:

it is the realm of mystery in that it ‘...points to the depth mystery that...remains reticent about its products...all mysteries point toward the ultimate mystery that is...the consummation...’ Betweenness, as that realm in which *natura naturans* ejects its products, as that realm in which ultimate mystery is intimated in the prevailing and apportioning of the potencies, is the realm of God: God is of the betweenness, sustaining *natura naturata*, *nature natured*, structuring *natura naturata*, while holding open this betweenness to empower *natura naturata*.²²³

From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, there are four basic locations for the betweenness relation (which have already been explored in this section): “They are: that which obtains between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, that which obtains between the *chora* and world semiosis, that which obtains between the open and the prospective infinite, and that which obtains between potencies and the archetypes.”²²⁴

²²³Woodward, *Cleaving the Light: The Necessity of Metaphysics in the Practice of Theology*, 52-3.

²²⁴*EN*, 122. For a detailed study of endlessly ramified signs, see the section on four infinities (the actual infinite, the prospective infinite, the open infinite, and the sustaining infinite) in *STTP*, 100-114. Corrington maintains that any given sign will necessarily participate in all four infinities, and that all forms of infinity interpenetrate with the others.

The transition between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* requires a leap across the abyss that delimited traits are not able to fill in. The betweenness relation is indeed a complicated process due to the fact that, unlike sign orders of the world of *nature natured*, *nature naturing* is prepositional, presemiotic, prespatial, and pretemporal. Corrington holds that even though Heidegger provided the so-called the event of “Appropriation” (*Ereignis*) to hold open the primal abyss between Being and time, his concept of Appropriation actually calls to human beings or to a human response to encounter the space of the ontological difference (Being and beings) and to gain an understanding of the difference. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, this kind of calling is anthropomorphic, especially evidenced by Heidegger’s existential notion of “History of Being,” which is diametrically opposed to *nature naturing*. Corrington suggests that Heidegger’s concept of “Appropriation” as betweenness relation must be rejected, and that term should be replaced by a more appropriate term called “emptying,” essentially because it:

conveys the pouring out of plenitude from the elusive ground that is ever-reticent to show its face...The betweenness relation (emptying) does indeed grasp and transform semiosis and the human process, but not in terms of some kind of History of Being or a return to the originating momentum of nature. Rather, the human process is shriven and opened out to the ever-emptying abyss that compels it to acknowledge its precarious tenure within the orders of the world. The process of emptying holds open the most primal form of the betweenness relation.²²⁵

In addition not to being an interpretant (a Third), the spirit is neither an order nor a process; it is a nonconscious momentum, the potency (*nature naturing*), or the “ground” (Peirce) that makes worldhood and semiosis (interpretants) possible. The spirit’s omnipresence, however barely conscious, is embedded in the selving process as well as

²²⁵EN, 127, 129.

present in all three momentums of positioning, de-positioning, and reposition. In the momentum of repositioning, the spirit, like the ground (“betweenness”), provides the self semiotic directionality and “serves to open out dimensions of reality that may be hidden behind the current web of interpretants.”²²⁶ And as a presemiotic enabling condition or betweenness (which is prepositional), the spirit helps the self expand its horizon of actualized meanings and goads the self toward a transfigured future. The spirit not only lies “beneath” the ontological triad of sign/object/interpretant, but it also lies in the betweenness structures that make the movements of the self/sign from positioning to de-positioning and to repositioning possible. The continual movement of the spirit in the betweenness structures prevents the self from falling back to the return of the repressed. It is important to understand Corrington’s ecstatic naturalist concept of betweenness:

Betweenness is not some kind of black hole that pulls in all attempts to render it intelligible. It is evocative of power and meaning and thus has its own hunger for incarnationality and intelligibility. Betweenness not only makes *any* finite form of intelligibility possible, but it provides strong clues about its *own* inner workings so that it too can be disclosed to phenomenological insight.²²⁷

²²⁶ *EN*, 120. In his new book, Corrington writes that: “Only the spirit, while not infinite in traditional senses, is large enough to invite the self into the space where an encounter with contrary material can take place. In this sense, the spirit that which opens the self, and its relevant community, to its own past in such a way that it can participate in the ambiguities that are still operative in the present. The spirit is thus an agent of connection, making the possibility of creative historical retrieval available to the self in process” (*STTP*, 212-13). Corrington distinguishes between the “spirit-interpreter” and the “spirit.” Both of these terms must be used in proper contexts. When employing the term “spirit-interpreter” Corrington does not imply it as a person, but it is the momentum that is “deeply connected to structures that are personal.” Its function is to enhance and enrich the self’s horizon of interpretive meanings and open up the depth correlation between the three momentums of positioning, de-positioning, and repositioning. The spirit, on the other hand, is defined as “the healing extra-personal power within the semiosis. The spirit is most clearly present to sign users in its movement between and among signs” (*NS*, 86). And since the spirit does not create extra-natural meaning, its main task is to enrich the self’s scope and contour of meaning.

²²⁷ *EN*, 122. It is worth noting that Corrington’s spirit, since it is the “ground” that furnishes the depth of meaning to the sign triad, is not a form of Peircean Thirdness.

The spirit's presence and power, which manifests itself in the powers of origin, not only goads and guides the sign-using self toward repositioning or the "would be" (Peirce) so it can eschatologically attain a self-understanding as well as a transfigured future, but it also antecedently enables the self to "fight" against the dyadic resistance in the momentum of de-positioning as well as the abjected relationship in the momentum of positioning. For Corrington, this movement may be considered the movement from semiotic anthropology to semiotic eschatology; that is, the spirit moves toward the future to illuminate the inner and outer realm of interpretants.

While psychoanalytic perspectives, such as Freud's the return of the repressed, or Kristeva's semiotic (the abjected material maternal) and the symbolic (the Name-of-the-Father), are dyadically conditioned by the past and present, Corrington's "the return of enriched meaning" is deeply and triadically grounded in the momentum of the spirit. The return of enriched meaning is triadic because it:

creates a space for a new and more encompassing meaning (a third) that gathers up the opaque dyad of the same and moves it into the future of the new. The spirit is eschatological, even if it must always work with antecedent structures and powers. Yet the transition from dyadic opacity toward triadic transparency is only possible through the often hidden enabling presence of the spirit that lives out of an open future...The spirit then, moves between and among signs in the form of relational communication that keeps semiosis moving toward convergence in the future.²²⁸

The spirit is this unique power because it:

can coax [the self] back toward the lost object that leaves its traces between and among interpretants and codes. The spirit is thus the power that underlies the selving process, bringing the de-positioned self back around toward the lost object by showing how all

Peirce's Thirdness may be likened to Schelling's "third Potency," the potency that plays the mediating interface between the moments of subjectivity and objectivity.

²²⁸NS, 54.

interpretants are actually servants of the darker rhythms of *nature naturing*. In the return of the spirit that takes place in repositioning, the wrath of depositioning gives way to the love that comes from the spirit-interpreter, a love that is itself rooted in the grace of the ontological difference. The melancholy of the depositioned self opens into the love of the repositioned self of the spirit.²²⁹

The triadic momentum of the spirit is deeply rooted in the posttemporal dimension of time. While repressing itself in the presemiotic momentum of depositioning, the self's abjected relation to its lost object is conditioned by the past, and the return of the same/repressed is limited by the present, the repositioned self not only moves toward its private and public future, but also toward what Corrington terms the "posttemporal." The posttemporal is that which "is meant to connote a domain that has lived in and through time, but has gathered up the products of time into a new qualitatively rich integrity that is not part of the mere reiteration of time's flow."²³⁰ The sign-using self permeates both the pre- and posttemporal. And while remaining in the realm of dreaming innocence, the self belonging to the pretemporal dimension (the self-othering momentum or the birthing ground) also has the spawning power to generate temporal orders from the original position into chronological time. However, once the self is repositioned by the enabling ground of the spirit (or the return of the spirit), it is opened to the posttemporal dimension of time. Both the pre- and posttemporal are preordinal; that is, they are not constituted by orders or natural complexes. The posttemporal (the hovering or clearing momentum) can also be seen as the "infinite whither." It deeply denotes a religious transformation or mood; in other words, the posttemporal "is encountered by the religious mood of ecstasy that can only emerge from the heart of the equally religious mood of melancholy."²³¹ The self not only moves from the mood of melancholy and loss (depositioning), where its

²²⁹Ibid., 57.

²³⁰*NS*, 87. In Corrington's ecstatic naturalist view, insofar as there is a continuing relation to time in the thermodynamic sense, the posttemporal differs from the eternal.

²³¹*STTP*, 142. Corrington holds that the posttemporal dimension of finite existence "is manifest on the extreme edges of the interpretants that permeate inner and outer life" (*NS*, 56). For a further examination of his pretemporal, temporal, and posttemporal dimensions of time, see *STTP*, 141-46.

product returns to the conditions of origin, to the mood of ecstasy²³² and love (repositioning), but it also escapes from semiotic emptiness to semiotic plenitude. Because of the third momentum, there exists the correlation between the conditions of origin with the presence of transcendence, and this is where the repositioned self is reunited with its transfigured lost object. The emergence of the future and the posttemporal makes it possible for the lost object to return with a “transfigured guise”; that is, through the momentum of the infinitesimals and through the enabling power or Thirdness of the spirit, the material maternal is able to make a transition from the pretemporal to the posttemporal. This transition enables the material maternal to move beyond its own circumscribed birthing ground and to be “reborn out of the heart of the spirit.”

Corrington’s ecstatic naturalist concept of eros can be compared to Jaspers’ concept of reason. If for Jaspers, “reason” (*Vernunft*) is the encompassing bond/source that unites all various modes of the Encompassing together without letting any one of them exist in isolation, then for Corrington, *eros* is the link that connects “the post- and pretemporal momentums of time to the asymmetrical unfolding of temporal orders.” This erotic link reveals the agapastic dimension in all three modes of time, which is not only deeply seated in the spirit-interpreter’s grace-filled presence, but it also shows forth a “profound form of transcendence.” Because of the participation of eros in the spirit, all boundaries are shattered so that the self can attain the infinite wealth of meaning that flows from the spirit. “The agapastic element is the grace giving moment in which the spirit gives the

²³²It is worth noting again that, from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, the term “ecstasy” does not mean joy or bliss, but “refers to the momentum of self-transcendence in which an antecedent state welcomes an internal transfiguration in which its plenitude is enhanced.” For Corrington, “This sudden increase of scope and density is ecstatic insofar as new energies are released that can sustain and integrate the new semiotic material” (*NS*, 63). While ecstasy exudes the forward movement into the power of transformation, love, healing, and hope in the not yet, melancholy divulges the abjected relationship and loss of meaning. Melancholy is the lament of a “finite human mood” that derives from the yearning anguish of *nature natured*. Melancholy is the ontological mood that “can never be felt for a finite object *within* the world, but always points to the nonfinite domain of the elusive whence that produces dissatisfaction with all finite orders of meaning” (*NS*, 160).

self the love that cannot be found in the human order. The erotic element is the invitation to participate in the rhythm of the spirit as it enters into the transference/countertransference world(s).”²³³

It is important to note that, because of its naturally finite dimension, the pretemporal cannot lead the self/sign back to the original position (no longer), for it only has “a one-way relations to the signs.” The lost object also becomes powerless in attempting to make the return, and thus will remain in its own preintelligible domain. And here is where Corrington’s concept of the symmetry of time becomes creatively significant. In all three dimensions of time, the posttemporal is the only unique dimension that “possesses” the power of transfiguration to guide or coax both the sign-using self and the lost object into the realm of the not yet. By dialectically moving away from the no longer and entering into the realm of the not yet, both the self and its products will encounter transcendence, the eschatological spirit:

The backward movement, made possible because of the symmetry of the pretemporal, actually serves to bring the lost object forward. Yet, as pretemporal, the lost object cannot be brought forward as it is, but must enter into the liberating presence of the posttemporal spirit. The symmetry of the posttemporal also has its own backward and forward dialectic. The movement of the spirit is toward interpretants, that is, toward what is already prevalent within the orders of *nature natured*. It moves from the posttemporal into the temporal. When it moves into the temporal it ‘finds’ the pretemporal within the heart of the interpretant. It enters into the pretemporal in order to coax it outward into the liberating power of the not yet. By ‘allowing’ itself to move into the not yet, the pretemporal becomes wedded to the posttemporal. In this process it becomes transfigured in its inner being.²³⁴

Ecstatic naturalism’s concept of transfiguration radically, profoundly, and triadically sets itself apart from either Freud’s or Kristeva’s psychoanalytic perspectives, where the self is dyadically trapped between the realms of the lost object and the return of the

²³³NS, 158. To probe into Corrington’s ecstatic naturalist concept of spirit’s eros, see NR, 133-66.

²³⁴Ibid., 92.

repressed, or between the pre-Oedipal stage of dreaming innocence and the mirror stage. Following from the gospel of Matthew 17:2, where Jesus ontologically underwent divine transfiguration, Corrington defines transfiguration as the breaking open of *nature natured*'s most basic structures to the potencies of *nature naturing*. Transfiguration not only signals the last stage or final consummation of the human process under the confinements of time, but it also gathers all three momentums into the eternal fissure of the ontological difference. Not only does the self undergo the transfiguring power of the spirit by making the ontological transition from depositioning to repositioning, the lost object will experience its own inner transfiguration only when the spirit "must enter into the human process to protect the self against the devouring aspects of the lost object while at the same time bringing forward the grounding and healing powers of the lost domain."²³⁵ Also for Corrington, the ultimate goal of transfiguration is to bring all embodied/finite meanings toward the transparency of *nature naturing*.

²³⁵NS, 155.

CHAPTER 5

NATURE'S PRIMAL SELF : AN ECSTATIC NATURALIST CRITIQUE OF PEIRCE'S SEMIOTIC CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF AND JASPERS' ELUCIDATION OF *EXISTENZ*

The human process is not so much a level within nature as a dimension of nature. The human self is only one semiotic order within innumerable other orders.

Robert S. Corrington

A General Appraisal

Whether nature is defined as the “availability of orders” (Buchler) or the sheer “unavailability of orders” (Corrington), or as “consciousness” or “the unconscious,” nature has become the quintessential subject matter exhaustively explored and dissected by both philosophy and theology. However, whether called *nature naturing*, the precategory, the unconscious or underconscious of nature, many times philosophers and theologians have misread the depth-dimension of nature. Further, because of the profound or potential misreadings, they have often failed to probe deeply into the presemiotic depth-dimension of nature. Of course, ecstatic naturalism, like any foundational perspective, has an ambivalent relationship to its own metaphors and analogies, fully acknowledging their ambiguous status within its categorial framework. Regardless of appropriate analogies or metaphors, one must be wary of any one image which attempts to explain nature as a whole.

Philosophers like Peirce and Jaspers and psychoanalysts like Jung have entered into the unconscious territory, yet their understanding of this particular realm remains

largely anthropocentric and anthropomorphic. Their understanding of nature may be described as an anthropologization of the idea of nature. “Unconsciousness,” Corrington has once remarked, “is a sin in therapy and in philosophy, precisely where the unconscious aspect gains power and disrupts otherwise remarked, “is a sin in therapy and in philosophy, precisely where the unconscious aspect gains power and disrupts otherwise healthy features of the self and its perspective(s).”¹ And as has been already discussed, all three prior forms of naturalism (descriptive, honorific, and process) have not been able to fully explore into what Corrington calls “the other side of an abjected nature”; namely, the underconscious of nature. To probe into the other side of an abjected nature is to understand how *nature naturing*’s potencies mysteriously operate within the semiotic world of innumerable orders (*nature natured*). Unlike the concept of incarnationality, which connotes location, the underconscious of nature (as the precategory and presemiotic), contains no signs or locations; but within the underconscious of nature there is:

only a heterogeneous momentum that may or may not spawn signification through its own other; namely, the innumerable orders of the world...The underconscious of nature, which has no relevance (or irrelevance) per se, provides the ever-receding clearing within which meanings can be embodied in whatever way their measure dictates, suggests, or compels. There are degrees of incarnationality, of semiotic saturation and density, and the underconscious of nature provides the ultimate hermeneutic space for this unfolding. These degrees of semiotic density do not entail degrees of reality or being.²

It should be noted that the scope and the how of the underconscious of nature differs from that of the unconscious of the self. Through the unconscious of the self, the underconscious of nature pulsates its own potencies or rhythms.

Not only does ecstatic naturalism’s new metaphysics attempt to examine the realm of *nature natured* (the categorial) or what Dewey called “generic traits of existence,” but

¹*STTP*, 9.

²*Ibid.*, 21.

it also probes deeply into the realm of *nature naturing* (the precategory). Refusing to scrupulously explore the ontological difference means deprivileging the precategory aspect of nature. And as already discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to reemphasize that in order to probe deeply into the ubiquity of nature - the presemiotic and preformal realm of *nature naturing* or the underconscious of nature, ecstatic naturalism's semiotic cosmology is required to merge itself in the other two disciplines: semiotics and metaphysics. For Corrington, the discipline of semiotics "is primarily concerned with the structure and dynamics of significations as manifest in any order whatsoever."³ The discipline of semiotics helps ecstatic naturalism not only systematically describe cultural or natural forms of signification, but also understand how signs or sign-using selves function within a particular order of relevance. Unlike metaphysics, since semiotics is in and of nature it has nothing to state about nature as a whole. The discipline of metaphysics "is concerned with a slightly larger use of the categories to evoke, describe, and show the innumerable ties between signification and nature."⁴ The discipline of metaphysics is evoked when it not only probes into the precategory or presemiotic features of nature, but it can also bring forth the elusive dimension of worldhood (the pregenus for any world), semiotic or not. (Worldhood is not *a* world, but it is *behind* all worlds; it is the ultimate enabling condition for any ordinal complex *vis-à-vis* the human process).

Corrington argues that, because *nature naturing* (the precategory) is presemiotic, transcending analogies or gluttonism, phenomenological description of the underconscious of nature must give way to a transcendental argument.⁵ Thus, metaphysical language becomes inevitable when the term or function of "nature," whether categorial or precategory, is discussed. It provides both descriptive and

³*STTP*, 10.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵"Since there is no Archimedian point from which to lift nature outside of itself to peer into its real or alleged underconscious dimension, the validation structures of ecstatic naturalism seem to stand on quicksand. But the enterprise itself is neither impossible nor precipitous. In this domain, phenomenological and transcendental strategies require each other, but extreme precision and care are called for. Motives and potential categorial powers will unfold only in the telling of the metaphysical tale" (*STTP*, 39).

explanatory tools, however limited in scope, for probing into the depth dimension of the unconscious of nature, or in Corrington's words, "to get closer to what it seeks."

Corrington painstakingly stresses:

Every metaphysical term *other* than the term "nature" must be recognized to have a finite provenance of meaning within certain orders and not others. This may be the hardest lesson to integrate from a radical naturalism that finally wants to let nature per se remain free from predicates of any kind. Is it possible? We must be prepared to accept degrees of failure rather than insist on absolute methodological and conceptual purity...Metaphysics thus lives out of its own paradox: a certain confidence in its categorial array combined with an absolute humility that nature gets the final vote and that mystery will envelop even the most complex and judicious frameworks...Metaphysics, insofar as it is attuned to this dialectic, will let the mystery of nature continue both to humble and to reinforce its categorial choices.⁶

Although Jung's psychoanalysis, especially his understanding of the conscious and unconscious (the "feeling toned complexes") and dream interpretations, shows a significant influence on Corrington's ecstatic naturalism, Jung's psychoanalytical perspective is still laden with both anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism that failed "to probe more deeply into the natural enabling conditions that empower the intense dialectic of consciousness and its own unconscious traces."⁷

Based on the principle of entropy (the concept borrowed from physics) and the principle of individuation,⁸ Jung believed the search for wholeness or the ultimate goal of

⁶*STTP*, 11, 12. Corrington makes clear that the disciplines of semiotics and metaphysics are interdependently commensurate; that is, these "two disciplines need each other if each is to fulfill its own self-chosen tasks. To talk of signification is ultimately to talk of the enabling context of signs and their involvements, while to talk of nature is to talk of nature as signifying, although it is much more than the "sum" of actual and possible forms of signification. The latter clause points to the other side of the categorial and pre-categorial paradox of thought" (*STTP*, 10).

⁷*Ibid.*, 42.

⁸Even though Jung's principle of individuation is somewhat "heroic and narrow," Corrington believes it can still provide an analogue to the selving process, which

life (akin to Maslow's self-actualization) is to realize the self by reconciling or integrating the opposing forces (e.g., animus and anima, ego and shadow, or conscious and unconscious). And once the self, as an archetype, rises above its opposites, transcendence becomes possible. However, from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism and from Peirce's concept of dynamic objects, Jung's archetypes are not only anthropocentrically oriented, they do not operate within the realm of future possibilities or the not yet. It is also important to see that while Jung's self, through the process of individuation, can transcend constitutive oppositions, nature's primal self of ecstatic naturalism will never be able to "conquer" or transcend the ontological difference, essentially because there is always a cleft between the self (as an order of *nature natured*) and the ineffable dimension of nature (*nature naturing*). Ecstatic naturalism's primal self can only attain its true identity by acknowledging itself as both a "gift" and "ontological wound" of nature's self-fissuring: *nature natured* (the categorial) and *nature naturing* (the precategoryal).⁹ The self is "eject" or a product of the preformal potencies of *nature naturing*; it is spawned from the "material maternal" (Kristeva).

As already discussed, the term "primal self" implies the metaphysical notion that the self was *birthed* by the other side of nature called *nature naturing*. *Nature naturing* is not conditioned by the principle of entropy. And as a result, the primal self will forever be bifurcated by the ontological difference. Nature is not only radically and ontologically

possesses no built-in entelechy. (For Corrington, "heroic" implies the idea of the hero slaying the dragon, and "narrow" connotes a patriarchal *mythos*). Selving is the "most complete moment" or process through which the self displays its own true identity by being aware of its own unconscious and the underconscious of nature. Selving is especially strongly relevant to the human process and that "it helps to shape the identity of the self and move it beyond the empty repetition of bare origins" (*NaS*, 65).

⁹Badham is right to point out that the "precategoryal" is not a real term; it is only an ideal, for "[a]s a natural order, we are equidistant from the abstract concept of nature as is any other order; i.e., there is no such ontological category as nature that may be posited over against anything else, for nature is that which begets the sum of all its orders." See his "Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections upon Robert Corrington's Ecstatic Naturalism," *Soundings* 80 (1999): 201-25. For Corrington, "Nature is not some kind of superorder that can be mapped by phenomenological description but the seedbed of innumerable potencies that are not yet themselves orders of relevance." Quoted in Badham's "Windows on the Ecstatic: Reflections on Robert Corrington's Ecstatic Naturalism," 205.

other than the human process or the self, but it is also the enabling ground. Nature's primal self can only be transfigured when it moves from the pretemporal (melancholy) and its lost object to the posttemporal where ecstasy "is the ultimate sign-post of fitful transcendence."¹⁰ This whole process is made possible by the spirit that, as an enabling condition, opens up the space for the self to make a transition from the pretemporal to the posttemporal.

As previously mentioned, because Peirce's semiotic pragmatism and Jaspers' existentialism are grounded in traditional phenomenology, their semiotic construction of the self and elucidation of *Existenz* have become incomplete respectively. Ecstatic naturalism's metaphysical concept of ordinal phenomenology liberates traditional phenomenology from anthropocentrism. By analyzing and describing orders of relevance, ordinal phenomenology, unlike traditional phenomenology, "does not privilege consciousness by assuming that it must be the mysterious origin of all phenomenal features. The concept of 'order' is in a sense pre-phenomenological in that it enables phenomenology to proceed toward a description of any order no matter how constituted or how located."¹¹ Lacking the methodological tool of ordinal phenomenology, Peirce and Jaspers were not able to identify, delineate, and analyze nonhuman orders of relevance; hence human subjectivity was highly elevated above nature.

¹⁰STTP, 41. It must also be noted that Jung's concept of transcendence differs from that of ecstatic naturalism. For Jung, the transcendent "functions" as the facilitator unifying or integrating sets of oppositions (e.g., the conscious and unconscious); whereas Corrington understands transcendence (not necessarily confined to the human process) as a potency of nature that is itself manifest when the self is radically conscious of its selving process. The term "transcendent" (akin to Peirce's "indexical sign") can be likened to the term "ecstatic." Ecstatic is a functional term; that is, it dynamically and causally points to the self-transcendent possibilities within the orders of nature. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, "Naturalism becomes *ecstatic* when it probes into its own somber tone to find an even deeper momentum within nature and, in consequence, its own categorial array" (STTP, 39). Transcendence always exists in tension with the finitude of embodiment, and that it emerges against the three orders of the self - the public, the introspective, and the archetypal. For Corrington, the power of transcendence is a postsemiotic power that cannot be determined by or confined to any semiotic system.

¹¹Corrington, *NaS*, 2-3.

Neither Peirce nor Jaspers developed an adequate concept of nature's primal self; that is, the self in its Firstness. Peirce exalted his ontological category of Thirdness (community, continuity, intelligibility) over Firstness (pure possibility or the unintelligible). Jaspers underlined how the self (*Existenz*), as unique and irreplaceable, can achieve its existential freedom, communication, and historicity in the "boundary situations" (*Grenzsituationen*), and how authentic existence may be realized through encountering Transcendence. While the anthropocentric self of Peirce and Jaspers is ontologically located in the realm of *nature natures* (finitude and embodiment), ecstatic naturalism probes deeply into the speculative and creative realm of *nature naturing* in order to unfold the eternal rhythms of the ontological difference or the self-fissuring of nature's primal heart. Ecstatic naturalism thus moves beyond the anthropocentric concepts of the self that are delineated in both Peirce's semiotic pragmaticism and Jaspers' periechontological existentialism.

While the Cartesian self is nothing but an immaterial substance privileged by the cognition of the *cogito* and the Kantian self, as transcendental subject, hopelessly disappeared in the noumenal realm, Peirce's semiotic self is defined as an external sign absorbed, shaped, and endowed with identity only by and through the community of interpreters. Without the social/communal context, the self is incomplete, for there exists no solipsistic or even personal self in Peirce's semiotic construction of the self. Under Peirce's ontological category of Thirdness (general aspect of phenomena), the self is essentially and socially a sign who partakes in the continuity of consciousness. For Peirce, "the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarist delusion of vanity" (CP 7.571). The whole notion of the community of consciousness derives from Peirce's doctrine of synechism (continuity); his logic operates exclusively according to the social principle.

In spite of his concept of the dynamic object (the hidden but operative dimension of the object) and theory of the unconscious in 1880's, Peirce remained preoccupied with the semiotic dimensions of human subjectivity as well as with the metaphysical concept of pansychism to the extent that he still privileged Thirdness over Firstness (as relevant to the presemiotic self). As a result, Peirce's semiotic self was not fully developed, and

psychoanalytically speaking, it has become more or less an abjected self (the self that exists simultaneously in fear/denial and desire). Unlike Peirce's objective idealism which attaches itself to panpsychism (matter is effete mind), ecstatic naturalism, based on Buchler's "principle of ontological parity," deprivileges and decentralizes such distinction as mind over matter, for "whatever is, in whatever way, is real." Every natural complex is just as real as every other; traits or orders are positioned on the same ontological rank, having the same ontological status even if different functions.

Jaspers' *Existenz*, synonymous with human selfhood, is not a Cartesian *res cogitans*, but it is the unique individual with will, emotion, body, and the unconscious. It emerges out of *Dasein* (empirical existence). *Existenz* will never be conceptualized, objectified, or universalized; it can only be elucidated (*Existenzerhellung*) by reference to concrete situations. *Existenz* is grounded in freedom; namely, the possibility of decision, and the fundamental form of freedom is to be able to decide for oneself, and this is where the authentic self is fully realized. It is "the personal decisiveness by which the individual determines how he relates himself to the world at the limits of cogency and in overcoming endlessness."¹² Unlike Sartre's groundless freedom, Jaspers' *Existenz* is embedded in the mysterious origin - the dark abyss or the irrational, which the self only acknowledges through what Schelling termed "*intellektuelle Anschauung*" ("intellectual intuition"); in other words, *Existenz* cannot be grasped through conceptualization. For Jaspers, through *Existenz*, not *Dasein*, we will reach the dark ground of selfhood and existential freedom - the abyss or the irrational which never becomes transparent to consciousness-as-such" (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*).

Jaspers' understanding of *Existenz* shows that he still privileges human meaning horizons insofar as they have their own kind of lucidity; thus the depth dimension of the self in its primal ground in nature (*nature naturing*) has not sufficiently been explored or examined. Like Heidegger, Jaspers, perhaps because of his Kantianism, would not conceptualize nature or the abyss of freedom without attributing the notion of space and philosophical anthropology to it. He explicitly maintains that, "what seemed an abyss

¹²George B. Pepper, "Science and Philosophy in Jaspers, Heidegger, and Peirce." Paper delivered at Jaspers Society Annual Meeting in Boston 1980., 21.

becomes space for freedom; apparent Nothingness is transformed into that from which authentic being speaks to us.”¹³ Like Peirce’s semiotic theory of selfhood, Jaspers’ *Existenz* privileges human freedom and communication over nature’s primal self; thus he is guilty of replacing “ontological parity” with “ontological priority”; namely, privileging one or more modes of reality, experience, or nature over others.

Even though the realm of the unconscious was explored by both Peirce and Jaspers (and Jung), its implications and demands were evasive, essentially because they were eclipsed by anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. Consequently, they fell short of probing into the depth-dimension of nature called the underconscious of nature. Peirce’s semiotic self and Jaspers’ *Existenz* are not made aware of the presemiotic rhythms of *nature naturing* (the unconscious of nature). Understanding nature as an order and subscribing to the principle of priority, both Peirce and Jaspers have magnified the self on the face of nature, thus not acknowledging that the self is ejected from the vast abyss of nature. The self “rides on the back of a self-transfiguring nature and derives its own rhythms and momentums from the unlimited domains of the world. In one sense, the self is inexhaustible as the world, while in another sense, the self represents but one perspective on the world as a whole.”¹⁴

By either denying or overlooking the realm of the unconscious, which occupies a central “place” within the self, the ontological divide between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* will continue to remain hopelessly separated. At nature’s expense, both Peirce and Jaspers assigned the self the highest human forms of signification; hence the elevation of the self. And by eulogizing the human forms of signification, Peirce and Jaspers did not pay heed to what Corrington calls “the twin sources of semiotic momentum; namely, the extrahuman orders of the world and the potencies of *nature naturing*.”¹⁵ From the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, Peirce and Jaspers have failed to illuminate the self/self correlation and the self/*nature naturing* correlation; in other words, the self-identity of Peirce’s and Jaspers’ self lacks correlation with the infinity of

¹³*Way to Wisdom*, 38.

¹⁴*NS.*, 6.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 12.

nature. Furthermore, both Peirce and Jaspers have also fundamentally failed to understand that, first, the self is nature's primal self in the sense that it is deeply embedded in the vast and sovereign nature, even though nature may be indifferent to its offspring. Nature furnishes its foundling "the conditions for an intensification of centers of signification within the world."¹⁶ Second, nature's primal self "is the place where the unconscious of nature becomes transfigured through a finite conscious center that can turn back toward the hidden conditions of its origin and find traces of its spawning source."¹⁷ Ecstatic naturalism insists that nature "is indeed dark and taciturn, even though it hungers for an incarnation of power and meaning within certain semiotic orders."¹⁸

As already mentioned, in his book *Nature's Self*, Corrington shows that only through the human unconscious can the underconscious of nature be brought to awareness, and that the unconscious serves as the basic link between the realm of *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world) and *nature naturing* (the preformal and presemiotic potencies). The unconscious is the fundamental principle in which the sign-using self gains the entrance into the self-fissured nature. Corrington also shows that the link between consciousness and the unconscious is connected by semiotic ontology (positioning, depositioning, and repositioning), and this correlation is made possible by the "work" of the spirit-interpreter acting as an enabling condition. Ecstatic naturalism insists that the spirit-interpreter has no conscious mind of its own; however, it possesses an uncanny ability to react or respond to the momentums coming from consciousness and the unconscious. As an enabling condition, the spirit "lives and moves" between the realm of potencies and the natural orders of the world. Corrington has stressed however that there is an unavoidable breakdown when it comes to the analogy of the human and nature, mainly because nature does not "have" human consciousness; in other words, it "is not somekind of consciousness of consciousness." But nature (like Jung's collective unconscious giving birth to the archetypes) is an unconscious momentum (transcending meaning horizons) that "spawns finite and fragmented centers of consciousness."

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 13.

¹⁸Ibid.

What makes nature's primal self of ecstatic naturalism a viable alternative to Peirce's semiotic construction of the self and Jaspers' existential self in periechontology is that, as a "still evolving" perspective converging cosmological, semiotic, and psychoanalytical dimensions, ecstatic naturalism probes deeply into the presemiotic mysteries of a self-fissuring nature. While Peirce's semiotic pragmatism and Jaspers' existential anthropology have overlooked the dialectical and dynamic tension between *nature natured* and *nature naturing* of the ontological difference, the current perspective, as "radical naturalism," honors the principle of parity (as opposed to the principle of priority), deprivileges glottocentrism, "allow[s] full scope for the underconscious of nature, [and]...unfold[s] a fully generic semiotics that deals with signs, sign unfolding, infinite semiosis, and the evolution of meaning (the heart of of semiotic cosmology)."¹⁹

Peirce's semiotic self and Jaspers' *Existenz* are individually and socially confined to the realm of *nature natured* (the innumerable orders of the world) of the ontological difference. Without what Corrington calls the "fourth order of the self" (which transcends analogies), the self's true unity will not fully manifest. Like other three semiotic orders of the self: the public (Peirce's Thirdness and Jaspers' empirical existence [*Dasein*] and consciousness-as-such), the introspective (Peirce's interpretive musement and Jaspers' *Existenz*), and the archetypal (Peirce's dynamic object as manifestation of developmental teleology) whose embodied signs are confined to the human process, Corrington's fourth order of the self, still an embodied sign, transcends semiosis; that is, its semiotic identity cannot be explicated or characterized through analogies. Similar to Jaspers' concept of "cipher" (*Chiffer*), Corrington argues that once a given sign/self

¹⁹*STTP*, 31. It should be noted that, from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the concept of *nature* "lies on the volatile cusp between the categorial where generic categories are framed in language, and the precategoryal, where all such categories are pulled back into the abyss that has no contour and no history...[The precategoryal] has no *side* at all, language is left in suspension yet continually drawn into a dialectic with the categorial" (*STTP*, 6,7). In his review article of Corrington's *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*, Hooker is right to state that Corrington, like Peirce, wants to see nature "larger' than the domain articulated by the sciences." However, unlike Corrington's ecstatic naturalism, since Peirce was never interested in the ontological difference between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*, thus ignoring "the depth dimension of a self

encounters transcendence or the postsemiotic power it will become a cipher, thus ceasing to be a sign. Consequently, the true unity of the self must not be circumscribed by any semiotic system.²⁰ Ciphers enable the self/sign to move beyond its embodied forms (*nature natured*) and open them up to the realm of *nature naturing*. It is important to understand that ciphers themselves “are not conventional but derive their peculiar potency from nature naturing”²¹ and that the “self enters into the evanescent cipher script whenever it lets go of its semiotic plenitude and becomes permeable to the abyss that stands beneath all signs.”²²

Taking cues from Royce’s notion of “natural communities,” Corrington defines the “natural community” as the community where there are anthropologically no structures of resistance within the self and within the self/world correlation. This is the community where the flattened “introspective self” (a product of the “public self”) is situated, and from this community no novel sign possibilities are allowed to emerge. Not only does the internal conflict between consciousness and the unconscious not exist, but the selving process is also denied in this community. Corrington uses Heidegger’s existential concept of *das Man* to describe the essence of natural community. In the natural community, the “natural self” is not aware of the existence of a genuine unconscious; in other words, the natural self’s “life world (or what there is of it) is all there is, and it makes no sense to probe into anything pre- or posthuman if these orders resist the imperial needs of the

transfiguring nature,” his metaphysical concept of nature proved to be inadequate. See Christopher Hookway, “Metaphysics and Semiosis,” *Semiotica* 114 -1/2 (1997): 169-180.

²⁰Because, following Deely, a non-embodied sign does not exist, Corrington makes clear that: “Yet the category of embodiment has its own other in the category of transcendence and must efface itself before this order...If signs are embodied, ciphers live on the razor’s edge between embodiment and non-embodiment. On the deepest level, ciphers actively overturn all of the embodied forms that are used to express them” (333, 334). For detailed elucidations of all four semiotic orders of the self, see his “Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self,” *Semiotics 1989*, eds. John Deely, Karen Haworth, and Terry Prewitt (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 339-345.

²¹Corrington, “Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self,” *Semiotics 1989*, 344.

²²*Ibid.*, 344.

self.”²³ The natural community exhibits a kind of primitive narcissism and atemporal understanding of the self. Unlike the “interpretive community” (emerging from natural community), the natural community lacks an open-ended, temporal, pre- and posttemporal understanding of the self. It must be noted that, “If the natural community has an empty self tied unconsciously to conditions of origin, then the interpretive community has a thicker self that is stretched between the whence and the whither while fully knowing that this stretch is essential to its emerging self-understanding.”²⁴ For Corrington, the interpretive self, being fully revolutionary, makes the selving process possible, and it also can alter some of its originating conditions in some respects. What makes the interpretive community uniquely different from the natural community is that it not only allows for the equal existence of nonhuman orders but also for moral rights.

Even though Peirce’s semiotic self derives its existence from the community of interpreters, it is actually, from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, “natural” in the sense that it refuses to penetrate deeply into its own unconscious as well as the social unconscious. In addition to being anthropologically and anthropocentrically oriented, Peirce’s semiotic self was not allowed to face the lost object or the powers of origin, it therefore would not participate in the powers of expectation (the posttemporal).

Because of Peirce’s fear of the inexplicable (his grounding category Firstness was not fully explored) and Jaspers’ concern of existential human freedom, their concept of the self lacks the *ecstatic* aspect; that is, it is not able to “experience” the mysterious potencies of nature, the presemiotic rhythms of *nature naturing*. Peirce’s and Jaspers’ self will never fully achieve its true identity, unity, and self understanding until it dialectically moves from being the melancholy of a deposed self to the ecstasy (eros) of a repositioned self. This whole transition (from the pretemporal to posttemporal dimensions and from the primal mood of melancholy to that of ecstasy) will not be made possible without the ubiquitous movement of the spirit as the enabling condition:

²³*STTP*, 133. For Corrington’s detailed elucidations of four orders of the self and the transition from a natural to an interpretive community, see his “Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self,” *Semiotic 1989*, ed. John Deely, Karen Haworth, and Terry Prewitt (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999), 339-45.

²⁴*STTP*, 139.

The spirit is thus the power that underlies the selving process, bringing the deposed self back around toward the lost object by showing how all interpretants are actually servants of the dark rhythms of *nature naturing*. In the return of the spirit that takes place in repositioning, the wrath of deposing gives way to the love that comes from the spirit-interpreter, a love that is itself rooted in the grace of the ontological difference.²⁵

Nature's Primal Self, Peirce's Firstness, and the Unconscious

Even though, for Peirce, to be a self is to become a series of interpretations that are derived from the community of interpreters, and even though his semiotic self is composed by the third cognitive process called "interpretation," hence avoiding the split into two types of knowledge - Plato's "knowledge about" (conceptual knowledge) and James' and Bergson's "knowledge by acquaintance" (perceptual knowledge) as suggested by Royce in his *The Problem of Christianity*,²⁶ Peirce's semiotic self is still written too largely on both the ontological and phenomenological canvas of nature; in other words, it avoids the presemiotic fissure within nature which humbles it. As a result, Peirce has refused to probe deeply into the ineffable Firstness (or Firstness of Firstness) where the unconscious of nature reveals the ontological divide of *nature naturing* and *nature natured*.

Compared to both James' dualistic self and Mead's exclusively social self (or even to Kant's "transcendental ego"), Peirce's triadic theory (the sign, object, and interpretant) of the self offers a better alternative. Peirce's semiotic or communal self dynamically situates itself in the community of interpreters and continuously evolves toward the *summum bonum* or concrete reasonableness. Unlike Descartes' static, abstract, and individualistically introspective self, Peirce's semiotic self is externally inferred, logically

²⁵NS, 57.

²⁶For a detailed exposition of Royce's articulation of this dyadic model of conception and perception, see Corrington's *The Community of Interpreters: On the Hermeneutics of Nature and the Bible in the American Philosophical Tradition*, 2nd ed., Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics 3 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995), 18-25.

social, and not immediately intuited. The self-awareness or experience of the semiotic self is essentially composed by the two unconscious and instinctual elements of percipium; namely precept (correlated to firstness and secondness) and perceptual judgment (correlated to thirdness). For Peirce, this kind of awareness is originated from a form of inference called “abduction” (hypothetical guessing or “hopeful suggestions”), which is the kernel of Peirce’s pragmatism. Pragmatism thus may be defined as the logic of abduction, which is ruled by “admissible hypotheses.”²⁷

Peirce’s semiotic self acknowledges its own semiotic identity as well as existence by way of “ignorance and error.” It is vitally important to stress that Peirce’s notion of ego, like Kant’s, was never temporally or logically granted a highest role over thought. “Thought here understood to be centered semiosis makes the finite and located ego possible. The privileging of thought/semiosis serves to put the ego in a precarious position...and serves to put pressure on any robust theory of self-identity, ‘...self-consciousness may easily be the result of inference.’”²⁸

For Peirce, since the universe is “perfused with signs,” selves relate to one another through signs which transmit interpretive meanings or interpretants. And while Hegel’s self acts through consciousness or self-consciousness, Peirce’s semiotic self, as a sign series, is mostly nurtured and shaped by the unconscious life (which plays an integral if abjected part in Peirce’s semiosis). Furthermore, as grounded in synechistic philosophy, specifically in the concept of the “law of mind,” Peirce’s self is theosemiotically real; he believed that his doctrine of synechism did not bear any “hindrances to spiritual influences.”²⁹

²⁷See *CP* 5.196.

²⁸Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics 1992*, ed. John Deely (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 91. As regards Peirce’s deconstructing of the Cartesian notions of a substantive self and introspective acts, Corrington writes elsewhere: “Both consciousness and finite ego are fictions and are to be replaced by intentional and external forms of semiosis. The self builds itself up through time and becomes the locus where the sign/object/interpretant triad unfolds most clearly” (*ICSP*, 113).

²⁹See *CP* 6.163; cf. Michael L. Raposa, *Peirce’s Philosophy of Religion*, 1989.

Peirce's semiotic self is given life by "skeletal sets" and the forces coming outwardly from the experience. Corrington is perceptive in recognizing that whereas Peirce's image of "glassy essence" remained somewhat passively detached, only watching the plentitude of world semiosis pass by, his image of the "bottomless lake"³⁰ conveyed more of an active role of the unconscious for Peirce. The "bottomless lake," that which lies beneath the stream of consciousness, provides the place where the "skeletal sets" direct, guide, and shape the self's semiotic contours. However, from the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, unconscious complexes may not resemble Peirce's "skeletal sets," for "[t]hey are more akin to intense grativational fields that pull new matter into their internal structure."³¹

Unlike ecstatic naturalism, which honors both the human unconscious and the unconscious of nature, the Peircean self evades the potencies of *nature naturing*; hence it does not experience transformed repositioning of meaning. Because of his inadequate theory of the unconscious, mainly due to his fear of Firstness, Peirce's primal category of Firstness, especially the Firstness of Firstness and his semiotic conception of the self were not fully developed. Further, because of his fear of the unconscious, Peirce's semiotic self is deprived of what Corrington calls "postsemiotic power" or the power of transcendence. Corrington is correct to say that Peirce's triadic semiotics remains limited to the innumerable domains of *nature natured*. His primal category of Firstness serves as an "iconic" sign, superficially pointing to the potencies of *nature naturing* or the underconscious of nature, which transcends the principle of sufficient reason. Peirce's Firstness suffers "shipwreck," for it cannot probe or pierce deeply into the inexhaustibility and infinity of nature. Corrington believes that, because of his abjection

³⁰"There are such vast numbers of ideas in consciousness of low degrees of vividness, that I think it may be true, - and at any rate is roughly true, as a necessary consequence of my experiments, - that our whole past experience is continually in our consciousness, though most of it sunk to a great depth of dimness. I think of consciousness as a bottomless lake, whose waters seem transparent, yet into which we can clearly see but a little way. But in this water there are countless objects at different depths; and certain influences will give certain kinds of those objects an upward impulse which may be intense enough and continue long enough to bring them into the upper visible layer. After the impulse ceases they commence to sink downwards" (CP 7.547).

³¹STTP, 53-54.

(desire, fear, and denial) of the depth-meaning of Firstness and iconicity, Peirce has severed semiotics from the pulsating movements of the unconscious of the self and nature.

Approached from his reconstructed psychoanalytical standpoint, Corrington has tried to show that because of Peirce's fear of Firstness, he was abjecting the Firstness of Firstness (the maternal unconscious). Peirce employed the dyadic interaction of Secondness and the interpretive triad of Thirdness to help him evade or resist the "threat" of Firstness. Because of the fear of the unconscious (Firstness), he wanted to connect the Secondness of Thirdness (his father) with Firstness of Thirdness (his imaginary father, e.g., William James) in order to move toward the realm of Thirdness where semiotic contents and significations would help him shun his fear of the Firstness of Firstness (the abjected material). He struggled to run from his abjected maternal (Firstness) and tried out imaginary fathers (Thirds or the Firstness of Thirdness), hoping that a linking Third (imaginary father) would somehow provide him a route back to the abjected unconscious. But ironically, as Corrington shows, the imaginary father figures like Charles William Eliot, Judge Francis C. Russell, and William James had become temporary asylums protecting Peirce's self from the abjected maternal.³²

If Peirce's Firstness is equated to the material maternal or *nature naturing*, which ejects sign-using selves, then by avoiding it Peirce's self is detached from the depth structures of both phenomenological and transcendental probing. By not entering into what Corrington calls "the fissure of nature's self-diremption" (the dialectical chasm between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*), the self becomes a narcissistic self that is "more at home within those orders of the world that mirrors its own desires than within an infinite nature that has no concern for its wishes and drives."³³

Peirce's resistance to probing deeply into the unconscious was largely due to his personal and psychological relationship with his father, even though prior to 1880 he had already developed the theory of the unconscious. The unhealthy paternal relation drove Peirce further into denying and abjecting his primal realm of Firstness (the unconscious)

³²“Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalysis Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 100.

³³*STTP*, 82.

and thus into the the powers of origin that kept haunting him (evidenced by his enduring melancholy). Corrington believes that “Peirce remained haunted throughout his life by a sense of melancholy loss, a loss felt on the fringes of all of his daring analyses of the basic structures of the world. His attempts to delineate the domain of firstness, both phenomenologically and cosmologically, are responses to the lost realm that his paternal affiliation drove him from.”³⁴ Under the domination of his father’s intellectual and psychological influence, Peirce’s true self was not given a chance to develop. As a result, the unconscious that configures Peirce’s semiotic self has become the abject; namely, “the denied and feared locus of a hidden and true self.”³⁵ So long as Peirce’s father’s overbearing control continued, the unconscious remained absent from the “semiotic playing field” (Corrington). And the more the unconscious recedes from the semiotic playing field, the closer Peirce’s self surrounds itself with Thirds (interpretants). Because of his pushing the semiotic self into *nature natured* filled with Thirds, Peirce failed to realize that the unconscious (*nature naturing*) gives rise to consciousness (*nature natured*), not the other way around.

Fleeing from the unconscious (the presemiotic) and finding shelter in the pansemiotic realm of the attained orders of nature (the semiotic), Peirce’s semiotic self became alienated by cutting itself off from the enabling conditions of the presemiotic Firstness that connects the self to world semiosis. Both Leibniz (regardless of his principle of the identity of indiscernibles) and Peirce failed to investigate deeply into what Corrington calls the “radical otherness” of the unconscious.³⁶ Corrington is correct

³⁴ICSP, 22.

³⁵Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile,” *Semiotics* 1992, 96. Corrington claims: “As Peirce felt the uncanny presence of the abjected maternal, he compensated by filling the world with signs and their portents. His father failed to give him any indication of the tragic cost of his pansemioticism and drove him further and further away from the very solution that would bring him back to his abjected and deeper self” (97).

³⁶“In other words, even though Leibniz had a good understanding of difference through his principle of the identity of indiscernibles, he did not let genuine difference be one that allowed for radical forms of diremption and discontinuity among the perspectival shinings of his monads. Difference boiled down to the mistakes in awareness caused by the confused perceptions of monads. Ironically, he moved to the edges of a view of the

to say that to avoid “the rages of the maternal unconscious” (Firstness of Firstness), Peirce developed the doctrine of panpsychism, which truncated his theory of the unconscious.

From the perspective of psychoanalysis, in addition to projection, unconscious complexes, transference and countertransference, and dream work, the two primal moods of melancholy and ecstasy, and the collective unconscious are what link the unconscious of the self to the underconscious of nature. Unlike nature’s primal self who experiences what Corrington calls “horizon-transforming basic moods”- melancholy (the pretemporal) and ecstasy (the posttemporal), Peirce’s semiotic self is deprived of both, mainly because of his fear of exploring and examining into the mysteriously ineffable realm of Firstness or *nature naturing*. Peirce could not accept the longing of a return to origins (the lost object).

The fitful transcendence of ecstasy will not be fully manifest so long as the self avoids “passing through the fiery gate of melancholy.”³⁷ Avoiding the whence of melancholy and rushing toward the whither of ecstasy, Peirce’s interpretive self is not “fully and richly stretched across the temporal orders”³⁸ or permeable to the enhanced flow of the pre- and posttemporal dimensions of time. It is necessary to quote at length Corrington’s elucidation of the primal moods of melancholy and ecstasy:

Naturalism becomes *ecstatic* when it probes into its own somber tone to find an even deeper momentum within nature and, in consequence, its own categorial array. World melancholy, which is far more stoic than a romantic *Weltschmerz*, is the necessary fore-structure for a participation in the ecstatic potencies that are emergent from the underconscious of nature, as mediated through the unconscious of the self...Melancholy and ecstasy are horizon-transforming basic moods that open the self to the basic fact *that* horizons exist and that they rest precariously on some

unconscious, but, like Peirce, failed to take the plunge into its radical otherness” (*STTP*, 160).

³⁷*STTP*, 40. The phrase “fitful transcendence” suggests that transcendence itself “is neither free-floating nor eternal. It emerges fitfully from the innumerable shifting conditions found on both sides of the ontological difference” (*NS*, 61).

³⁸*Ibid.*, 143.

kind of “lost object” while pointing toward an elusive “not yet.”
 ...Melancholy and ecstasy are more deeply revelative of worldhood, the sheer availability of horizons for the human process, precisely because they open out the pretemporal (melancholy and its lost object), the posttemporal (ecstasy and its hope), and the temporal (in the *dialectic* of melancholy and ecstasy). In primal melancholy the self is shriven of its self-encapsulation and opened to the task of selving. In ecstasy, this process is inverted so that a reweaving of the fabric of the self can transform melancholy into expectation...[T]he two primal moods color and condition how each horizon and its subaltern signs are encountered and rendered into structures of meaning.³⁹

The collective unconscious is the depth dimension of the unconscious that reaches down into the underconscious of nature, “into the presemiotic momenta that may or may not emerge into signs and sign systems.”⁴⁰ This is where Peirce’s semiotic concept of the self (and his semiotic cosmology) lacks the profound richness of phenomenological description and transcendental argument. Corrington claims that the failure to “situate” the self in the ontological difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* means that “the self remains cut off from its own enabling conditions and its depth-structures are removed from both phenomenological and transcendental probing.”⁴¹ Phenomenological and transcendental probing help to elucidate the metaphysical as well as psychoanalytic aspects of the intimate linkage between the underconscious of nature and the unconscious of the self. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, a phenomenological description is concerned with letting the chosen order of relevance emerge on its own terms in its own time, while a transcendental argument moves more quickly to posit a missing pre-ground for what phenomenology discloses, hoping that they can be brought closer together. However, as Corrington has pointed out, for example, when discussing the nature of the

³⁹*STTP*, 39.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 83. For Corrington: “The collective unconscious is the ever-mobile seed bed for the transliteration of nature’s potencies into specific symbols and innate release mechanisms (instincts) that permeate the self and provide it with its outer horizons and inner depths” (*ibid.*).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 82.

collective unconscious, phenomenological description has to give way to a judicious transcendental argument.

For Peirce, Firstness, as the birthing ground, can only spawn Seconds and signs outward into *nature natures* in a linear fashion, thus giving them a “one-way ticket ride,” as it were. There is no renewing ground for the spawned signs to experience semiotic transformation/transfiguration. Peirce failed to understand that, since Firstness is self-othering or heterogeneously oriented, it will continue to restlessly haunt the self and thus create a deep longing for the lost object, the material maternal within the self. The more Peirce’s self recedes from Firstness (Kristeva’s *chora*) and moves toward Thirdness, the more it experiences a sense of loss. The abjection (dialectically desired and feared) is what continues to disturb and haunt Peirce’s fragile self. Not only does the linear process of interpretants limit Peirce’s understanding of the category of Firstness, but it has also prevented him from seeing clearly and logically that Firstness, through the work of the spirit,⁴² can receive its foundlings back, the foundlings that were “thrown” into “the semiotic storms of conscious existence” (Corrington). For Corrington, deep within Firstness exists:

⁴²It should be reiterated that even though the spirit, unlike the sustaining infinite, is ordinarily located or an order within the innumerable orders of *nature natures*, it is of a different kind; that is, it is less spatial and possesses an elusive relation to time. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the spirit “occupies a space that is not as clearly bounded as most other spatial configurations within the provenance of finite human experience (to mention no other orders). The appropriate term for the locatedness of spirit is ‘betweenness’ where the stress is on the interstices that are found between and among more ‘solid’ orders of the world” (*STTP*, 164). What makes the spirit so ontologically unique is that, as the enabling condition, it moves both the lost object, or Firstness, and the semiotic self into the transfigured state (the healing Third) of the not yet, or the posttemporal. Without the spirit that works in and through the unconscious, the perennial fissure between *nature natures* and *nature natures* will never be ushered into the domain of semiotic signification. Corrington makes clear that the role of the spirit is indispensable, for although the unconscious serves as the connecting link between *nature natures* and *nature natures*, it actually “does not have the power to transform this link into a healing third in which the two domains actually become open and transparent to each other” (*NS*, 87). It is important to point out that Corrington’s concept of spirit is akin to Peirce’s “ground.” However, while Peirce suggests his concept of ground corresponds with Christian’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Corrington’s spirit is neither personified nor

a power of transformation, one might almost say of resurrection... that can repair the wounds created by secondness. The collective unconscious in the person, deeply linked by Peirce to the unconscious in nature is a healing presence that can support the domain of consciousness which must negotiate the cross currents of secondness and thirdness. The self-othering of firstness appears with particular clarity in the unconscious which serves as an encompassing and shaping reality that renews semiotic life.⁴³

Because of the work of the spirit, as the enabling condition, which moves “between” the pre-and post temporal, Peirce’s Firstness (the lost object of maternal) is not only not closed off in the past, but is enabled to be transfigured in the not yet. The enabling energy of the hovering spirit-interpreter moves the sign-using self and sign series into the healing power of the posttemporal’s not yet. The liberating power of the spirit-interpreter will deliver/deposition the self, as a finite and embodied product of nature (encompassed by the powers of origin), from the primal positioning from which it is derived and conditioned. For Corrington, the true self lives in the transfigured state of the not yet. Badham correctly notes: “Like Heidegger, Corrington finds redemptive power in the future-orientation of the eschatological present which is capable of deposing previous binding semiotic habits.”⁴⁴ It is important to point out that Peirce denies that his inferred self is solely conditioned by antecedent signs; that is, the “present self” is unintelligible. For a pragmaticist like Peirce, the self’s true identity can only be identified in the future or in the infinite long run. Because of his theory of cosmic evolution and Thirdness, the self must move into the “would be” (the not yet). Not only does the restlessness of Thirdness provide growth and chance for Peirce, but it is also essentially where Peirce’s semiotic self forms habits and engenders interpretants. Furthermore, for Peirce, future is where truth, generality, and possibility take place. Yet Peirce’s conscious

divinized, but it is a clearing that enables the self to find interpretive meaning in the world.

⁴³Corrington, “Peirce’s Ecstatic Naturalism: The Birth of the Divine in Nature,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 16 (1995): 178-79.

⁴⁴See his review of Corrington’s *Nature’s Self* in *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 1996, 360-365.

sign-using-self will never find its true identity in its “would be” so long as it “sanitizes” (Corrington) and mentalizes the unconscious, taking flight from the maternal unconscious (Firstness of Firstness) in the guise of panpsychism.⁴⁵ Peirce, according to Corrington, suffers what Carl Jung called “ego inflation”; namely, “profound denial of the need for the maternal unconscious while it is also a signal that deeper energies are already entering into consciousness, hence causing the inflation in the first place.”⁴⁶ Only with the liberating power of the third form of transcendence; namely, the posttemporal spirit-interpreter, can Peirce’s semiotic self be “open to the deeper correlations between the original position of the lost object, mediated now through depositioning of the unconscious, and consummated in the repositioning of codes and sign series.”⁴⁷

As already discussed, while Peirce was reticent on the subject of the unconscious, he was more concerned with the dyadic resistance/interaction of Secondness and the law-like habits of Thirdness. Though Peirce did have an understanding of the underconscious of nature, evidenced by his metaphysical concept of Firstness, this understanding was unfortunately eclipsed by his doctrine of panpsychism; that is, Peirce made the unconscious become almost conscious. For him, nature was anthropocentrically “mentalized.” And even though Peirce did advance the primal category of Firstness along with his theory of the unconscious, Corrington correctly points out that Peirce actually failed to capture the sheer otherness of the unconscious:

[Peirce’s] doctrine of panpsychism made the unconscious too conscious in the sense that mentality is a trait found throughout nature in a vast continuum admitting only of degrees of instantiation. Hence the qualitative abyss separating consciousness from the unconscious remained inaccessible to him. As a consequence he also failed to understand the intensity of the intersection points between his skeletal sets and conscious signs

⁴⁵“Panpsychism as a conceptual barricade against the maternal unconscious (firstness of firstness) cannot withstand the lure of the powers of origin” (Corrington, “Peirce’s Abjection of the Maternal,” *Semiotics* 1993, 592).

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷NS, 88.

series.⁴⁸

The fundamental error that Peirce committed was to allow the semiotic self to enter into the “Faustian bargain and to accept semiotic closure rather than endure the mystery of betweenness and the loss of Eden”;⁴⁹ in other words, once the self is deposed from the domain of Firstness by way of Secondness to Thirdness the whence will be forever disconnected. As already mentioned, fear of Firstness/the abjected maternal (the original position) pushed Peirce into this hyper-semiotic direction. Here Peirce’s semiotic self, spawned from Firstness, will benefit from Corrington’s semiotic ontology, which probes into the three momentums of positioning, deposing, and repositioning that configure the semiotic contours of the Peircean self. These three momentums will reveal the transformations of the depth structures of the self from the powers of origin or the no longer to the transfigured state in the not yet.

It is clear that Peirce’s failure to discern the qualitative separateness between consciousness and the unconscious is certainly attributed to his philosophical anthropology, particularly his preoccupation with developing and elaborating the doctrine of panpsychism, which is essentially anthropocentric and anthropomorphic in orientation. Because of his privileging of mentality (panpsychism), which is extended far into the realm of the unconscious, and because of the theory of synechism (akin to Hume’s idea of contiguity), which stresses developmental teleological features, and also because of the directionalities of the dynamic object as well as through the primal categories of Secondness and Thirdness, Peirce believed that he could “unveil” the mysteriously ineffable realm of *nature naturing* or the “utter sovereignty of nature” (Corrington). As a result, he did not quite underscore or honor the ontological divide between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*; the line separating the realms of consciousness and the unconscious became obscure.

It seems as if Peirce wanted his purposive and semiotic self to trespass the presemiotic fissure within nature, thus making the Peircean self play the dominant role in

⁴⁸*STTP*, 53.

⁴⁹*NS*, 44.

nature. Peirce's panpsychistic phrase "matter is effete mind" proved that there was a continuity or a bridge connecting consciousness and unconscious, *nature natured* and *nature naturing*, or self and world. And in order for the frail ego of his self to be protected, Peirce had to "sanitize" and "domesticate" (to use Corrington's phrases) the unconscious. To sanitize or domesticate the unconscious is to abject the Firstness of Firstness (the maternal unconscious). However, by positing that "the domain outside of the conscious semiotic self is at least of the same 'stuff' as the ego...[and if] it is of the same 'stuff' it cannot pose an ultimate threat to the illusory ego,"⁵⁰ Peirce's semiotic self suffers from not being able to probe deeply into the other side of *nature natured* so that it can discover or locate its own true hidden self. For Corrington, Peirce's "panpsychist move, found also in process perspectives, which sees all orders as to some degree mental, privileges the unique features of the human process and finds them manifest in less degrees throughout the innumerable orders of semiosis."⁵¹ Deeply grounded in the doctrine of panpsychism, the Peircean self, via Thirdness, receives its semiotic signification and purpose (entelechies) from a pansemiotically mentalized nature that encompasses both consciousness and the unconscious. It is clear that by applying the panpsychistic concept of "mind" to nature, Peirce believes that nature has now become either the center of self-consciousness or the *sum* of his semiotic triad: signs, objects, and interpretants. But nature cannot be quantified as sum, rather from the standpoint of ecstatic naturalism, it is at its heart a dynamic precursor of all forms of signification.

Unlike Peirce's synechism and his mathematical theory of infinitesimals, ecstatic naturalism asserts that there radically exists a kind of self-fissuring within and through the infinitesimals; thus there is an ontological break splitting the realms of *nature natured* from *nature naturing*. This only shows that because of Thirdness (meaning or signification), Peirce believed his semiotic self could somehow exterminate the bifurcation between *nature natured* and *nature naturing*.⁵² Therefore, Peirce's semiotic

⁵⁰Corrington, "Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile," *Semiotics* 1992, 98.

⁵¹NS, 1.

⁵²Corrington adeptly points out that to refute Cartesian mind/body dualisms, Peirce developed his conception of panpsychism; however, this doctrine has circumscribed the

self can only be transfigured so long as it recognizes and learns that, however ambiguous, nature is aseity; in other words, it exists presemiotically and preformally apart from the human process. Peirce's panpsychism and synechism both respectively miss its mark by attributing mental aspect and continuity to nature. Ecstatic naturalism clearly insists that nature is not only indifferent to the human process, but is also beyond good and evil. Nature does not have any providential or teleological contrivances; it metaphysically and inexhaustibly transcends scope, power, and meaning. And paradoxically, nature is nonlocated location.

Not only is there a self-fissuring of nature, but the self also experiences its own fissure; namely, between consciousness and the unconscious. Again, because of his doctrine of panpsychism - to domesticate the unconscious and semiotically mentalize nature, thus obscuring the unbridgeable boundary between *nature natures* and *nature naturing* - Peirce failed to realize that the self's identity is largely shaped and formed by the unconscious regardless of the self's disposition to privilege the attained orders of *nature natures*. Consciousness is delimited, finite, and perspectival. Consciousness "grants light while casting its own internal and external shadow...Any given perspective maintained or endured by consciousness has its exact compensatory corollary in the unconscious."⁵³ To overcome the "internal and external shadow," the sign-using self must heed the hidden power of the unconscious. Corrington stresses: "Without the developmental teleology of the unconscious, the self could not participate in the deeper aspects of transcendence."⁵⁴ If the self does not participate in transcendence, no human possibility will emerge, for transcendence is certainly, but not exclusively a human

vastness of nature by mentalizing it. Peirce is therefore ignorant of that fact that "[m]ind is as much as product of an indifferent nature as is matter. Mind is located within orders that are premental. To elevate mind to a generic category is to violate the basic insight that nature has no whatness. Innumerable 'whats' emerge from nature, and many more that we do not foresee will obviously continue to do so" (*ICSP*, 213). If nature has no "whatness," then Peirce has also erred in assuming that there were or are purposes within nature. Nature is void of any meta-purpose. Purposes are only in the innumerable orders of the world (*nature natures*). There is neither an ultimate "whence" nor "whither" in nature.

⁵³NS, 76.

⁵⁴Ibid.

possibility. Badham argues, however, that there is an idealism here: “Corrington’s privileging of the unconscious and nature naturing appears a rather platonic move from a focus upon the embodiment of nature natured to a speculative domain behind and beyond it by means of the unconscious.”⁵⁵

Influenced by Jung’s psychoanalytic interpretations of consciousness and the unconscious, Corrington’s nature’s primal self of ecstatic naturalism is profoundly aware of this fundamental divide. For him, there is a correlation between the self-identity of the self and the infinity of nature (the precategorical of *nature naturing*):

In a striking sense, the sign-using self is the self of nature. The ontological difference between the presemiotic potencies (*nature naturing*) and the attained orders of the world (*nature natured*) enters into the unconscious and gives it its unique form and dynamism and intensity. Yet the depth logic of the human unconscious simultaneously reverses this directionality and opens the self to the unconscious of nature. The mysteries of the self are in the end the mysteries of a self-fissuring nature.⁵⁶

In addition, through its encounter with the dialectical tension between finitude (human subjectivity is one natural/complex order of nature) and transcendence (as inexhaustible as the world), nature’s primal self is keenly cognizant of the ontological difference, especially of the presemiotic rhythms of *nature naturing*. It should be reiterated that even though transcendence is located (for it is neither extra-worldly nor supernatural), it is not necessarily spatial. Transcendence is not confined to the human process, but it is “fitful transcendence” that manifests itself whenever natural grace helps relocate the self to

⁵⁵Roger Badham, Review of Corrington’s *Nature’s Self*, in *Critical Review of Books in Religion 1996*, 363. Badham also insists that Corrington supercedes the spatial and temporal teleological understanding of Peircean entelechy (which Badham prefers as “immanent teleology”) “with a more mysterious ‘developmental teleology’, in which is manifest a longing within nature naturing to be known.” It should be noted that Corrington’s concept of developmental teleology (unlike that of Aristotle’s “built-in” entelechy) bears a unique form of teleology; that is, while built-in entelechy “will unfold according to encoded and antecedent principles, developmental teleological structures are deeply responsive to current shifts in surrounding conditions” (*NS*, 76).

⁵⁶*NS*, 6.

move toward transfigured life; transcendence may connote the human possibilities of rising above the semiotic density.

Religious Traits in Peirce's Panpsychism and Ecstatic Naturalism's Semiotic Cosmology

The religious quest (the religious mood of ecstasy) was Peirce's way to search for his true semiotic self. Again, fear of Firstness caused him to shy away from the religious mood of melancholy where he would have to face the haunting whence or lost object/origin of the pretemporal. As Corrington shows, to replace his fear of the unconscious and try to heal his narcissistic wound Peirce created a cosmologically evolutionary God who could provide him a transcendent/transfigured self by way of interpretive musement:

The connection between God and the unconscious should now be clear. As Peirce moved to replace the very father who deprived him of his own healthy narcissism, he created a God who speaks from the depths of the world and who can only become manifest in an incomplete way from out of the not-yet of a partially open future...Put in simple terms, the Peirce-to-be can be read on the face of the evolutionary God.⁵⁷

What both Peirce's pragmatism and Corrington's ecstatic naturalism share is the view that religious traits (God, divinities, or sacred folds) exist in nature; however, grounded in his doctrine of panpsychism, evolutionary cosmology, and objective realism, Peirce claimed that those religious traits can be manifest through human semiotic

⁵⁷Corrington, "Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile," *Semiotics* 1992, 99. Avoiding the categories of Firstness and Secondness and emphasizing Thirdness (the generals), Peirce, in his 1908 essay "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," argued for God's *reality*, not God's *existence* (which belongs to Secondness). Grounded in his panpsychism, nature (or universe) manifests directionality, mental growth, and developmental teleology. Because Peirce ran away from the unconscious and replaced it with his doctrine of panspsychism (both nature and the unconscious are mentalized), his semiotic self would never break free from semiotic codes and powers. Peirce's primal category of Firstness was not totally developed and thus his semiotic self was confined only to the realm of *nature natured*.

projections or specifically through the form of reasoning called “musement.” It is a kind of “pure play” which is akin to religious meditation.⁵⁸ For Peirce, since nature is itself a mental process, the semiotic self can employ the logic of abduction to explore and examine the depth structures of the three universes; namely, the realm of pure possibility (Firstness), brute actuality (Secondness), and general laws (Thirdness). Human semiotic projections suggest that signs manifest themselves in human experience through instinctive guesses or abductive conjectures (which are fallible and subject to critical inquiry), but the meaning is yet to be determined. Raposa explains: “[T]he human mind must guess at their meaning, a process facilitated by its own instinctive capabilities, and one that only eventuates in the crucible, the ‘test’ of lived experience, of actual practice.”⁵⁹ For Peirce, not only does nature *per se* manifest developmental teleology, but as an Absolute Mind it is also sacred because it embodies a divine purpose; in other words, “the universe is a vast representamen, a great symbol of God’s purpose working out its conclusions in living realities.”⁶⁰ Peirce’s evolutionary cosmology is teleologically and immanently rooted in his “theosemiotics” (Raposa).⁶¹ Even though Peirce never conceived of the universe or nature as a person, (because of his doctrine of panpsychism) he did argue for the manifestation of personal traits or features in nature, including God, who was the ultimate personality. The God of Peirce’s philosophical theology is the creator of the universe. And whether or not Peirce’s God emerged from a prepersonal ground, God was still for him anthropomorphically personal, for the universe was anthropomorphically conceived. It should also be mentioned that Peirce never made a clear distinction between God as prepersonal cosmic Firstness and a personal God. And

⁵⁸“I should say, ‘Enter your skiff of Musement, push off into the lake of thought, and leave the breath of heaven to swell your sail. With your eyes open, awake to what is about or within you, and open conversation with yourself; for such is all meditation’” (CP 6.461).

⁵⁹Raposa, *Peirce’s Philosophy of Religion*, 144.

⁶⁰CP 5.119.

⁶¹“The universe is God’s great poem, a living inferential metabody of symbols. Fragments of its meaning are accessible to the human intellect, most especially to a genuine community of inquirers devoted to discovering that meaning and governed of a valid scientific method” (Raposa, *Peirce’s Philosophy of Religion*, 144).

neither did he, as pointed out by Corrington, decided between the Judeo-Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and a neo-Platonic emanation of the world from the One.

While Peirce's God (the prepersonal cosmic Firstness) may or may not have created the world out of pure nothingness (*creatio ex nihilo*), ecstatic naturalism (leaning on the principle of parity) rejects the classical doctrine of a transcendent/infinite God who independently created the world *ex nihilo*. Unlike Peirce's Christian God, an ecstatic naturalist's God is a "smaller God."⁶² The divine is ordinally located. Both creation and God are orders in the world; that is, they are transcended by the Encompassing of nature. God and creation are ejects of *nature naturing*, which has neither possibilities nor actualities but is constituted by potencies. Unlike Peirce's method of interpretive musement, which entails the sacredness of nature, ecstatic naturalism contends that the sacred is an eject from *nature naturing*; sacred orders or sacred folds⁶³ are located within the orders of *nature natured*. These sacred folds are ontologically "surrounded" by what Corrington calls "the open infinite"; that is, this open field cannot be generated by sign-using selves and is free from human semiotic projections or configurations.

Fearful of the abysmal realm of Firstness or *nature naturing* (thus the open infinite) and embracing Thirdness (*nature natured*), the Peircean self, through the conception of

⁶²“God is either coemergent with the other orders of nature, or is a later emergent. To talk of a creator prior to creation or, more precisely, of a creator who *becomes* the creator in the very act of creation, is to posit by fiat some reality that is discontinuous with all other realities” (Corrington, “Empirical Theology and Its Divergence from Process Thought,” *Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives*, 169).

⁶³From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the sacred reveals in four modes: sacred folds, sacred intervals, providingness, and the unruly ground. The first mode is that of the sacred fold (or what Neville calls “special complexities”), which represents a dramatic increase or “the *how* of nature that generates unusual orders of great semiotic density and scope” that cannot be circumscribed by human projections. Sacred folds occur in everything (inorganic nature, histories, the self). There is no ultimate sacred fold. It is also necessary to define what a “fold” is. “A fold is any order that has unusual semiotic efficacy and that also participates in some direct way in both the unconscious and the underconscious of the world...The concept of ‘fold’ denotes the quality of a folding back over on itself again and again so that the sign vehicle becomes a series of indefinitely ramified orders with a deep numinous core that transform them under certain conditions, conditions that may never be fully understood” (*STTP*, 159, 161).

the “law of mind” and the pure play of interpretive musement, not only discovers God the creator of all three universes of experience (the realm of pure possibility, brute actuality, law or generality) but also comprehends the “whatness” via interpretants (Corrington’s “actual infinite”)⁶⁴ of the panpsychistic cosmos. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, Peirce’s God is confined to certain sacred folds, for God is the species existing within the genus of the sacred fold. The term “god” is an uncomfortable term, essentially because it suggests the principle of ontological priority; instead, the term “fold” should be used, because it implies the principle of ontological parity and that it has the “greater neutrality.” Corrington is correct to say that both Peirce and Emerson represent extreme versions of honorific naturalism and thus affirm ontological priorities.⁶⁵ For Peirce, since reality is psychical, to make any statement about reality is to represent it in anthropocentrically mental terms. By ascribing “effete mind” to reality Peirce implied that reality or the universe has its own purposes or *teloi*; and consequently, not only is matter effete mind, but human fulfillment is also the fundamental feature manifest in nature. It should be reiterated that the elemental nature of Peirce’s semiotic self is profoundly constructed by anthropocentric and anthropomorphic conceptions, or by what Deely has termed “anthroposemiosis.” By privileging mentality, both Peirce and process thought disregard the nonmental elements of nature. Peirce’s panpsychism (as well as Buchler’s humanism) is rejected by ecstatic naturalism because it has ignored the

⁶⁴This is the only form of infinity that both Peirce and ecstatic naturalism share. Besides the *actual infinite* (the sum of all actualized signs in the given worlds), ecstatic naturalism proposes other three forms: the *processive infinite* (the enabling condition for sign series), the *open infinite* (the principle of individuation surrounding signs), and the *sustaining infinite* (the sheer relevance to the innumerable orders of the world). Though each form of infinity possesses its own unique features, they interpenetrate each other. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism’s semiotic cosmology, these phenomena of infinity show what sign blooms grow into; they also reveal some of the ways, hows, and forms of scope of infinity manifest in nature. It is worth noting that “sign bloom,” unlike Peirce’s interpretant, is “a further process of self-othering in which the sign root can perpetuate itself...[It is] an invitation for forms of fertilization and reproduction that are fully entwined with a host of surrounding conditions.” For more details of four infinities and the ontology of signs, see *STTP*, 91-114.

⁶⁵Corrington believes Peirce develops a quasi-Darwinian cosmology of evolutionary love tinted with some evolutionary elements of Lamarck; that is, “nature itself moves toward an ideal consummation in the infinite long run” (*STTP*, 27).

mysterious realm of the underconscious of nature, mainly due to Peirce's suspicion of the inexplicable (evidenced by his overemphasis of the primal category of Thirdness).

Whereas Peirce's semiotic self, with its anthropocentric and anthropomorphic projections, seems certain to read into nature what is intended to the self, it "turns its back on the presemiotic fissure within nature and writes the self too large on the face of the world."⁶⁶ In contrast, nature's primal self of ecstatic naturalist is a foundling who remains fragmented and fissured by the ontological difference/wound between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, and this is what the term "nature's primal self" suggests.

The Axial Age's Reflective Consciousness and Nature

Jaspers' notions of "axial existence" or "axial time" (*Achsenzeit*) and *Existenz* confirm his anthropological philosophy, which is deeply seated in classical humanism. To show the central importance of the history of philosophy as well as the incisive significance of the genesis of civilization, Jaspers proposed the so-called "axial period" which extended to the six centuries from 800 B.C.E. to 200 B.C.E.⁶⁷ This axial period was constituted by the transition from *mythos* to *logos*, signifying the painful and transforming break from the mythical period. In this particular period, which took place in China, India, and Greece, the depth of selfhood and its spiritual impetus were transferred to reflective consciousness and rational structure of existence. For the first time individual autonomy and the identity and freedom of human beings became more consciously focused. The axial people not only became "particular individuals" (*besondere Individuen*), but also participated in "the universally valid truth" (*der allgemeingültigen Wahrheit*). From this came the shift from the unconscious, which was represented by the mythical period (ancient civilization) to the individual's reflective and

⁶⁶NS, 1.

⁶⁷*The Origin and Goal of History (Vor Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte)*, trans. Michael Bullock (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976). Jaspers lists the following figures as representatives of the axial period: Confucius, Laotzu, Buddha, Zarathustra, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Homer, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato, Archimedes, and others.

rational consciousness. And by stressing this breaking away from the mythical period Jaspers has not only widened the gap between the realms of the unconscious and consciousness historically, but also between *Existenz* and nature (*nature naturing*) in individual life. One can clearly detect Jaspers' anthropocentric self manifest in his characterization of the axial period, "the period that launched us on the road to our full humanity against the closure of the mythological and the local."⁶⁸ Jaspers sums up these notable points of the axial period as follows:

What is new about this age, in all three of these worlds [i.e., China, India, and the Occident], is that man becomes aware of Being as a whole, of himself and his limitations. He experiences the terrible nature of the world and his own impotence. He asks radical questions. Face to face with the void he strives for liberation and redemption. By consciously recognizing his limits he sets himself the highest goals. He experiences unconditionality in the depth of Selfhood and in the clarity of transcendence.⁶⁹

Jaspers declares:

The Axial Period becomes a ferment that draws humanity into the single context of world history. It becomes, for us, a yardstick with whose aid we measure the historical significance of the various people to mankind as a whole...Once the break-through of the Axial Period had taken place, once the spirit that grew up in it had been communicated, through ideas, works and constructs, to all who were capable of hearing and understanding, once its infinite possibilities had become perceptible, all the peoples that come after were historical by virtue of the intensity with which they laid hold of that break-through and the depth at which they felt themselves spoken to by it. The break-through was like an initiation of humanity.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Corrington, "Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, ed. Ray Langley (Amherst, NY.: Humanities Press, 2002), 8.

⁶⁹Quoted in Corrington, "Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 4.

⁷⁰OGH, 51,55.

By privileging the axial period's consciousness and by minimizing the role of the unconscious, which dominated the preaxial people and played a larger whole in their primordial connection with nature, Jaspers, like Peirce, expanded the self beyond nature. Emerging from the unconscious and immersing itself in rational and self-reflective consciousness, Jaspers' human selfhood (*Existenz*) liberated itself from the unconscious, thereby recognizing itself as a new individuality. It became conscious of Being as a whole and of itself. For Jaspers, to be *Existenz* is to be independent of any psychic activity or unconscious functioning. John Cobb is right to define "axial existence in terms of the movement of the seat of the soul to its reflective consciousness and its dominance over the unconscious."⁷¹

Even though both Jaspers and Jung belonged to the neo-Kantian tradition, they had such a different understanding about the unconscious. While Jung "decentralized" (Corrington) consciousness in order to deepen the powers of the unconscious, Jaspers narrowed the contrast between consciousness and the unconscious; in other words, he privileged consciousness over the unconscious. In Corrington's words: "Jaspers maintains that the movement of *Existenz* is not quickened or deepened by those depth psychological analyses which give priority to universal unconscious structures."⁷² And while Jung's self is profoundly shaped or configured by the archetypes or traits of the collective unconscious, Jaspers' *Existenz* transcends the domain of the unconscious.

Jaspers paid much attention to the concept of historicity *vis-à-vis* the unconscious and consciousness in the last chapter of his *The Origin and Goal of History*. And by articulating and stressing the axial period, hence emphasizing the anthropocentrism of *Existenz*, it becomes clear that Jaspers privileged consciousness, which is by definition finite, incomplete, and perspectival. [Coming out of the neo-Kantian tradition, Jaspers, who prized both reason and consciousness, was not willing to allow the unconscious to shape or transform *Existenz*'s historicity and freedom]. Though Jaspers admits that, "In

⁷¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., *The Structure of Christian Existence* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1990), 87.

⁷² "Hermeneutics and Psychopathology: Jaspers and Hillman," *Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 7 (1987): 70.

every conscious step of our lives, especially in every creative act of the spirit, we are aided by an unconscious within us,"⁷³ he still prefers consciousness to the unconscious:

The spirit of man is conscious. Consciousness is the medium without which there is for us neither knowledge nor experience, neither humanity nor relationship to transcendence. That which is not conscious is called unconscious. Unconscious is a negative concept, endlessly ambiguous in its implications...As the unconscious, its characteristics are purely negative, however...Consciousness is the real and true. Heightened consciousness, not the unconscious, is our goal...We overcome history by entering into the unconscious in order, rather, to attain heightened consciousness. The urge to unconsciousness, which takes hold of us humans at all times of adversity, is illusory.⁷⁴

While Jaspers likens consciousness to "the crest of a wave, a peak above a broad and deep subsoil,"⁷⁵ ecstatic naturalism maintains that consciousness "grants light while casting its own internal and external shadow...Any given perspective maintained or endured by consciousness has its exact compensatory corollary in the unconscious."⁷⁶ And whereas Jaspers heightens the function and widens the scope of consciousness and ascribes negative characteristics to the unconscious, ecstatic naturalism stresses the own forms of developmental teleology as found in the unconscious, and also how the unconscious furnishes scope and density to consciousness; hence there exists a correlation or interaction between the unconscious and consciousness. "Whatever the unconscious does 'internally' it also does in relation to consciousness. This is not to say that the unconscious is some kind of goal directed mind, but that it has a rhythm that always moves dialectically with and against consciousness."⁷⁷ It is now clear that while *Existenzen* of Jaspers' axial period shifted the "seat of existence" (to borrow the phrase

⁷³OGH, 274.

⁷⁴OGH, 274-5.

⁷⁵Ibid., 274.

⁷⁶Corrington, NS, 76.

⁷⁷Ibid., 9.

from John Cobb) to self-reflective and rational consciousness, the momentum of nature's primal self of ecstatic naturalism derives from the correlation between the unconscious and consciousness. Ecstatic naturalism holds that the self-identity of nature's primal self "is part of a developmental teleology and emerges from the dynamic transposition of unconscious with conscious contents...The unconscious has a momentum that parallels the conscious mind."⁷⁸

From the perspectives of semiotic ontology and depth psychology, the unconscious, as the principal medium, enables the sign-using self (primal nature's self) to enter into the self-fissuring of the ontological difference. Ecstatic naturalism insists that nature is at its heart in *nature naturing*, an unconscious momentum that engenders finitely fragmented centers of consciousness. While ecstatic naturalism, through the gateway of the unconscious, brings to the fore the abjected aspects of the material maternal, which is the momentum that births the self outward into the postmaternal orders of semiosis, Jaspers' periechontology allows no ground for the material maternal; namely, the melancholy for the lost object (*nature naturing*) which generates nature's primal selves.

To detach the self from nature is to sever the basic connection between the realm of *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world) and *nature naturing* (the preformal and presemiotic potencies), to cut off the powers of origin, the prepositional momentums of *nature naturing*, or the potencies that connect all semiotic selves, and to disconnect an inextricable link between the unconscious of nature and the unconscious of the human process. Only through the human unconscious can humans be made aware of the unconscious of nature.

With the emergence of self-reflective and rational consciousness, the axial humans possessed "the power to contest" with nature. For Jaspers, belonging to the preaxial age, as *Dasein*, human beings were embedded in the larger orders of nature; however, consciousness, which was the reality or actuality of the individual existence, allowed *Existenzen* to set themselves apart from *Dasein*. "Being a conscious subject signifies man's capacity for negating his complete kinship and complicity with Nature, his ability

⁷⁸NS, 7.

for detaching himself from the environment and for confronting it.”⁷⁹ For Jaspers, not only is “nature... alien to man,”⁸⁰ but it also “threatens to overpower man himself [and it] really does become the tyrant of humanity.”⁸¹ It is important to point out that communication is one of the underlying existential concepts that anchors and directs Jaspers’ philosophizing. And though Jaspers does not totally deny the role of nature as relating to *Existenz*, “[c]ommunication with and through nature...cannot be the primary form of communication...The muteness of nature is not existential silence.”⁸² According to Schrag, Jaspers wants *Existenz* to be taken, not a medium, but as a source through which meaning is disclosed.

Jaspers insists that the positive existence of *Existenz* can be as “unfragmented as nature,”⁸³ and the nature of existence is ungrounded (*grundlos*). To claim that the nature of existence is ungrounded is to suggest that there is no depth dimension of a self-transfiguring or transcending nature; in other words, there are neither prepurposive nor preformal potencies emerging from the realm of *nature naturing*. Employing the analogy

⁷⁹Sebastian Samay, *Reason Revisited: The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, 11. Samay argues that consciousness ruptures the supposed “perfect harmony and continuity” between human beings and nature. Corrington also notes: “Out of the darkness and mere blind repetition of dasein emerged some sense of consciousness as such, a universalizable and objective consciousness that could free dasein from the myths and projections that bound it to local soil. The dawn of consciousness as such quickly became reflexive so that self-consciousness could gather up and correlate dasein with general consciousness.” “Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History,” *History and Philosophy*, 6.

⁸⁰OGH, 272.

⁸¹Ibid., 98. Jaspers argues that the only way that humans can master nature is through modern technology. “The meaning of technology is freedom in relation to nature.’ Its purpose is to liberate man from his animal imprisonment in nature” (100). Also, here one can see Jaspers’ concept of consciousness-as-such (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*) become fitting. He holds that as mere consciousness of existence, the self becomes an undifferentiated part of the environment, but as consciousness-as-such *Existenz* achieves a clarity of reflection in which everything appears in the subject-object division. It will always be conscious of being an empirical existent whose existence is conditioned by and confined to temporal and spatial realms.

⁸²Oswald O. Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, 144.

⁸³“Als Positivität des Daseins kann es ungebrochen wie Natur sein,” *Von der Wahrheit*, 62.

of the skeletal-sets (akin to Jung's "feeling toned complexes"), the simile of the "bottomless lake," and the self-othering ground of Firstness, Peirce allows his semiotic self's reality to be directed, structured, and nurtured by the unconscious life (*nature naturing*). Borrowing Plato's concept of nongeometrical space called the *chora*, Kristeva introduces the abject maternal body (the "womb") or maternal receptacle as the presymbolic object pointing to dynamic and rhythmic dimension of the unconscious of nature. However, unlike Peirce and Kristeva, Jaspers has detached the *Existenzen* of the axial age from nature (or from the unconscious of nature), from the pretemporal and prespatial birthing ground where the spirit as the enabling condition/presemiotic momentum not only enhances and enriches the interpretive significations of human process, but also "helps" deposition the self from the powers or conditions of origin of the no longer to the transfigured state in the not yet. Peirce's Firstness of Firstness, Kristeva's *chora*, and Corrington's "ontological wound" (or the Prior of all priors), all connote the powers of origin (a prior positioning) from which nature's primal self is ejected.⁸⁴

The emergence of the axial people's self-consciousness and individualization has caused the separateness and discontinuity between human selfhood and nature as well as between consciousness and the unconscious. From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, human projections are products of unconscious complexes (partly rooted in *nature naturing*), and the unconscious is also found throughout the orders of nature. Freud, Lacan, Kristeva, Jung, and ecstatic naturalism all affirm that since the majority of human experience is conditioned by the unconscious, no psychic activity is totally conscious;⁸⁵ and that the selving process takes place within unconscious projection (or the abjected maternal unconscious). The human unconscious, ecstatic naturalism insists, is not only

⁸⁴In his paper titled "My Passage from Panentheism to Pantheism" (*American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, forthcoming, 2002), Corrington brings up the so-called "the elusive third" in response to Heidegger's use of the term *Seyn* for *Sein*. The elusive third, which is different from Peirce's Thirdness as concrete reasonableness, "supports the eruption of *nature natures* out of *nature naturing*" (17). For Corrington, ecstatic naturalism understands the "third" as the mysteriously ejective nongrounding ground (*Ab-grund*) of the difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natures*.

⁸⁵John Cobb states that since psychic activity depends on unconscious functioning, the term "conscious activity" is misleading. *The Structure of Christian Existence*, 30.

the gateway to the unconscious of nature but also to the potencies of *nature naturing*; and (akin to Peirce's infinitesimals) this is where nature's primal self transcendently receives its novelty and growth.

Unlike the mythical or preaxial/prehistorical people, Jaspers' axial figures were alien to mythic (archetypal) images or the unconscious, hence the "collective unconscious." As transpersonal, archetypal images transcend both personal consciousness as well as rational functioning.⁸⁶ For Jaspers, Reason (*Vernunft*) is the bond that unites all various modes of the Encompassing. Reason and *Existenz* are interdependent; in other words, through Reason *Existenz* becomes lucid, and only through *Existenz* does Reason have its content. Reason shatters limitations or restrictions (*Vernunft zerschlägt die Enge*) and removes fanaticism, revelation, and mysticism. Because of his use of "reason," Jaspers had no deep understanding for the mystical, which is essentially grounded in the unconscious. Jaspers considers both revelation and mysticism as forms of the quest for metaphysical truth (as opposed to philosophical thought), which must be supplanted by Reason. He privileges existential experience over both mysticism and revelation. Even though Jaspers recognizes that mythical thinking does not necessarily belong to the past, but "characterizes man in any epoch,"⁸⁷ he, in the name of philosophy, rejects mysticism in order to shield Being from being distorted and shipwrecked. And to protect Transcendence from losing its symbolic and encompassing character, Jaspers denies revelation (or historical supernaturalism). Corrington is right to note: "For Jaspers, revelation is a privatistic or local encounter with the divine that refuses to probe into its own symbolic encrustation and thereby transform all symbols into empty ciphers."⁸⁸

For Jaspers, the human selfhood of the axial period can be as "unfragmented" (*ungebrochen*) as nature; thus with his notion of the axial period and its emergence of

⁸⁶Corrington writes: "The dynamism of the collective unconscious is manifest in its continual ability to spawn and shape archetypal images that form the true identity of the self. Both instinct and ideation emerge from the archetypal sign systems that have their ultimate source in nature" ("Transcendence and the Loss of the Semiotic Self," *Semiotics* 1989, 343.)

⁸⁷Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry into the Possibility of Religion without Myth* (New York: Noonday Press, 1958), 15.

⁸⁸"Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 2.

reflective consciousness, he would not allow *Existenz* to be split by the ontological divide between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. “To be conscious is to carry an ontological wound that reaches right down into the heart of nature; namely, into the eternal fissure between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*.”⁸⁹ Without this metaphor of the “ontological wound,” there would be no social positioning as well as forms of consciousness. And as far as the human process is concerned, Corrington is convinced that this ontological wound is universal and it saturates all dimensions of the self.

Humans are ejects⁹⁰ of nature, they are products of *nature naturing*; and only in the world of *nature natured* do human beings as sign-using selves discover meaning and possibilities. The human process is not the starting point. Nature is humankind’s enabling ground and goal. The demarcation between consciousness and the unconscious reveals the eternal fissure between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. And the unconscious (the presemiotic rhythms of *nature naturing*) plays an important role in shaping the self-identity of human beings. By awakening the full possibilities of the self (in the guise of periechontology; namely, “How Being could be for us?”), by opening up the infinite ground of *Existenz*, and by enlarging the encompassing power of *logos* (the product of human language and thought) over *mythos*, and self-consciousness over the unconscious, Jaspers, unlike Peirce, semiotically shields *Existenz* and the human process from nonhuman significations or extra-human traits.⁹¹ As both are products of the encompassing and measureless nature, human selves, as human orders, share their

⁸⁹Corrington, *STTP*, 50.

⁹⁰From the perspective of ecstatic naturalism, the concept of “eject” connotes the forward-moving quality or product of the preformal and presemiotic potencies of *nature naturing* cast into *nature natured* (or worldhood), spawned from the “material maternal” (Kristeva), or “thrown” in the world (Heidegger).

⁹¹Prelinguistic and prehuman forms of semiosis do exist in Peirce’s semiotics: “The action of a sign generally takes place between two parties, the *utterer* and the *interpreter*. They need not be persons; for a chameleon [*sic*] and many kinds of insects and even plants make their livings by uttering signs, and lying signs, at that... However, every sign certainly conveys something of the general nature of thought, if not from a mind, yet from some repository of ideas, or significant forms, and if not to a person, yet to something capable of some how ‘catching on’...that is[,] of receiving not merely a physical, nor even merely a psychical dose of energy, but a significant meaning” [MS 318, pp. 00205-00206]. (Cited in Corrington’s *ICSP*, 163).

ontological and cosmological place with other nonhuman orders. Consequently, the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic concept of the self must not be neither eulogized nor privileged over nature.

While Peirce's semiotic self is constantly haunted by the melancholy of the unconscious (Firstness), Jaspers' *Existenz* experiences no abjected self/unconscious but existential significations in the shelter of Thirdness. Ecstatic naturalism contends:

[T]he self is nature's self is another way of affirming the sheer embeddedness of the self in a sovereign nature that seems to be indifferent to what appears to us to be its most semiotically dense product. Nature may or may not 'care' about its offspring, but it does provide the conditions for an intensification of centers of signification within the world.⁹²

Nature's Primal Self and *Existenz*

Jaspers followed Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in emphasizing the existential selfhood called *Existenz* (the highest level of authentic selfhood). Yet unlike Jaspers, Heidegger believes human subjectivity is the gateway to the understanding of Being. While Heidegger was only interested in the essential question "What is Being?" Jaspers was more concerned with the question "What is humankind?" Jaspers rejects Heidegger's ontology, mainly because of its alleged objectification of Being. Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" wants certainty, cogent knowledge, and universal validity; in other words, it wants to know "what is." Human existence in this world becomes authentically meaningful when Being is known, conceptualized, or well thought out. Jaspers' *periechontology*⁹³ moves beyond Heidegger's ontology, for Being in itself can

⁹²Corrington, *NS*, 12.

⁹³It is worth mentioning that Jaspers' doctrine of the Encompassing is indebted to classical German Idealism, notably that of Kant and Hegel. By employing the term "periechontology," Jaspers was more interested in exploring the "how" of the Encompassing, and not the "what" of Being. Periechontology can be the "Being in itself" that encompasses us (world and Transcendence) or the "Being that we are"; namely, empirical existence (*Dasein*), consciousness-as-such (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), spirit (*Geist*), and *Existenz*. Periechontology transcends both subjectivity and objectivity. Like

neither be objectified nor grasped by concepts or definitions. It is important to note that Jaspers' philosophy is a humanism *par excellence*; his periechontology implies the boundlessness of human existence - with its vast potentiality. Jaspers elevates human selfhood's full possibilities to the highest ontological status. Endowed with unbounded possibilities and historicity, *Existenz* will always remain free from objectifications or definitions (by psychology, sociology, science, or anthropology) and transcends all world exegesis. Like Transcendence, *Existenz* possesses an elusive power.

Jaspers' existential anthropology reveals Kant's ethics: a human person is not treated or looked upon as a means, but always as an end. Through freedom and historicity Jaspers' *Existenz* has the potential to move beyond the empirical world (*Dasein*). *Dasein*, approached differently from Heidegger's conceptual framework, belongs to the realm of objectivity. Jaspers' *Existenz* is itself the Encompassing; therefore it is not conditioned by any ontological dimensions. *Existenz* is as uniquely irreducible, mysterious, and incomprehensible as Transcendence. Corrington is right to remark that Jaspers' existential concept of "true self cannot be conditioned by finite horizontal values or signs and remains unconditioned in the face of Transcendence."⁹⁴ And so long as *Existenz* moves about within its historicity and freedom, the idea of completeness is unthinkable, for *Existenz* is always "on the way" (Nietzsche). According to Corrington, the reason Jaspers rejects Hegel's concept of a total knowledge of history is that "[a]ny theology or philosophy that wishes to leap outside of history to see it as a totality, with a beginning, middle, and end, is a form of thinly veiled totalitarianism that would foreclose the possibilities of endless communication that come to us from within the stream of history."⁹⁵

Plato's the Idea of the ideas, Jaspers' Encompassing is the Encompassing of all encompassing. It is not horizon, but beyond horizon; it encompasses everything that is within horizon(s).

⁹⁴See his "From World Exegesis to Transcendence, Jaspers' Critique of Nietzsche," in *Karl Jaspers: Philosopher among Philosophers (Philosoph unter Philosophen)*, 80.

⁹⁵Corrington, "Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 5. Jaspers wrote: "But for us there can never be a known Archimedean point outside history. We are always within history. In penetrating through to that which lies before, or athwart, or after all history, into the Encompassing of everything, into Being

It should be mentioned that Jaspers also criticized Heidegger for not having a proper understanding of Transcendence, and consequently his concept of *Existenz* was limited. While for Heidegger in Jaspers' view, *Dasein* is not necessarily related to transcendence, Jaspers argues that *Existenz* and Transcendence are existentially connected; essentially so because Transcendence is the primal source from which *Existenz* derives. Only in Transcendence can *Existenz* find hope and live in freedom. Akin to Kant's noumenal realm, Jaspers grounds the depth-dimension of life in Transcendence, which is neither objectively conceivable nor cognizable. Transcendence, therefore, can only be expressed through ciphers. Cipher (*Chiffer*) is "metaphysical objectivity" (*metaphysische Gegenständlichkeit*), a kind of language that makes the *Existenz*-Transcendence encounter possible; in other words, ciphers provide knowledge of Transcendence by contextualizing reality in such a way that Transcendence is enabled to reveal its presence.⁹⁶

For Jaspers, as unconditional, historicity, and freedom, *Existenz* is a distinct form or mode of the Encompassing. It has its own fundamental origin out of which it thinks and acts. *Existenz*, as self-being, not nature, becomes its primal source. Like ecstatic naturalism's metaphysical understanding of nature as ineffably transcending delimited scope, power, and meaning and as prevailing beyond all genera, Jaspers' *Existenz* is elevated to the highest metaphysical status; it cannot be defined or illuminated; in other words, it:

is orientated beyond time, beyond the empirical, and beyond the rational. It is the source out of which I could have become different from what I am or which could make me different from what I will be in the future. As possibility or potentiality I can neither be wholly identified nor wholly separated from my actuality...As *Existenz* I am especially freedom and decision projected toward the future. Time is

itself, we are seeking in our *Existenz* and in transcendence, what this Archimedean point would be if it were capable of assuming the configuration of objective knowledge" (*Karl Jaspers: Basic Philosophical Writings, Selections*, 392. (Quoted in Corrington's "Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 5).

⁹⁶Transcendence operates on two axes - a horizontal and a vertical, "at once defining the structure of self-actualization and marking out an encounter with an indeterminate range of the possible beyond all world horizons" (Calvin O. Schrag, *The Self after Modernity*, 117).

not as it is for empirical existence, a perpetual passing; it is a perpetual appearance and disappearance of *Existenz*. What disappears in every moment and yet is eternal is *Existenz*...*Existenz* knows no death, that it is in time, but is more than time.⁹⁷

From the perspectives of ecstatic naturalism, particularly its semiotic ontology, Jaspers' philosophy errs in privileging *Existenz* over nature. And from the principle of ontological priority, Jaspers' human selfhood is more "real" than nature. As an ejected foundling, nature's primal self is not the source but just a fragmented product of *nature naturing*. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, the self is the product of the ejecting material maternal (as the metaphor for *nature naturing*), which serves as the ground of the selving process. Through its preformal potencies, *nature naturing* is what Nancy Frankenberry rightly terms "the unsettled generator of signs"⁹⁸ that not only mysteriously births god and all natural complexes, but also sustains them.

There is no doubt that the Encompassing (embedded in the Greek concept of *periechon*) clearly appeared as the enabling condition in the axial period to provide *Existenzen* possibilities and freedom as ways to possible truth. Corrington observes that this Encompassing is not "as an intentional agent [but it is] the Encompassing as nurturing source that honors the foundlings that enter into history and its forward momenta."⁹⁹ He also insightfully points out that as a nurturing source the Encompassing is painted in passive terms; that is, it is "as the ultimate vista reached by *Existenz* through a profound use of *via negativa*...It is as if we only encounter the Encompassing through its back draft in which all signs, symbols, and ciphers empty themselves of any historical or particular content so that they do not stain the elusive presence/absence of Transcendence."¹⁰⁰ Quoting Jaspers' *Von der Wahrheit*, Corrington shows:

⁹⁷Schrag, *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence*, 124.

⁹⁸See her review of Corrington's book *Nature's Self* in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 (1998), 171-173.

⁹⁹"Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 9.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

Transcendence, the Encompassing of all Encompassing, is that which, as the absolutely Encompassing, implacably 'is', even as it is not seen it vanishes as it is thought, and hides behind any image or configuration.¹⁰¹

This anti-incarnational understanding of *Existenz*'s encounter with Transcendence clearly speaks of Jaspers' deprivileging of *nature natured*'s attained orders of the world as well as *nature naturing*'s presemiotic potencies. Transcendence "represents a form of abjection that finds the orders of creation to be unworthy of incarnational presence."¹⁰² It should also be noted that Jaspers' denial of embodiment to the Encompassing reveals his anti-Christian stance to the doctrine of the Incarnation; that is, contrary to John Scottus Eriugena, there exists no continuous flowing process between God and human creatures.

Jaspers' anti-incarnational presence is evidenced by his affirmation of nature as alien to humans or *Existenzen*, and the absence of his concept of the ground or the spirit (as the enabling condition whose grace empowers the self to develop and enhance its own selving process). To show the mysterious longing of *nature naturing* to be manifest, Corrington employs the image of incarnation, which functions like a developmental teleology.¹⁰³ The image of incarnation serves to deepen the intimately ontological connection between nature's primal self and the birthing ground of the material maternal. This incarnational presence is needed so that the lost object can move from the pre-temporal (the no longer) toward a reunification with its foundling (sign-using self) in the transfigured realm of the posttemporal or the not yet. The incarnation of the spirit makes

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Corrington, "Jaspers and the Axial Transfiguration of History," *History and Philosophy*, 10.

¹⁰³It is important to note that Corrington's ecstatic naturalist concept of developmental teleology is not necessarily spatial or temporal. Ecstatic naturalism's concept of "entelechy" does not connote a mechanical process in which a natural order moves from the nascent to complete stage in a linear or progressive fashion. Corrington elucidates his concept as follows: "The spawning power of the pretemporal hungers to find its body in the world of interpretants...The spirit interpreter incarnates meaning through its movement among the signs of the world. In each direction there is a hunger for deeper incarnational presence. Signs hunger for their lost object, while the lost object hungers to return to signs through the intervention of the spirit" (NS, 90).

this momentum of the pre- and posttemporal possible. Further, because of the incarnation of the spirit, nature's primal self can move in and out of the three modes of time: the temporal and the pre - and posttemporal. The spirit's incarnational presence enables the self to move from the dynamic and rhythmic dimension of the unconscious of nature (the *chora*), or the melancholy of Firstness, toward the ecstatic state of Thirdness.

Because Jaspers' nature is alien to *Existenzen* (and because it is also made silent in favor of human communication), *Existenz* is deprived of "the gifting of nature" (Corrington), or "providingness" (Buchler). Nature is the "engendering condition" or a perennial provision of traits or orders. Nature (not defined in terms of providential or teleological contrivances) "provides" possibilities, actualities, or semiotic significations for its natural complexes. Ecstatic naturalism affirms that nature provides *everything* (e.g., from an atom to a smile). Consequently, as an order of nature, the self cannot be ontologically separated from nature. As a finite and fragile product of the ineffable and encompassing of nature, nature's primal self is fissured by the ontological divide between *nature naturing* (the presemiotic potencies) and *nature natured* (the attained orders of the world). Nature's primal self indeed "rides on the back of a self-transfiguring nature and derives its own rhythms and momentums from the unlimited domains of the world...The self is ejected from the heart of nature, rides precariously on both sides of the ontological difference, and forges a cumulative and multipositional identity that represents but one aspect of nature's semiotic plenitude."¹⁰⁴ It should be mentioned again, as a metaphysical concept, nature is a precategory; it transcends all genera, and hence cannot function as a defining genus with a specific difference.¹⁰⁵

Unlike ecstatic naturalism, Jaspers' *Existenz*, as a foundling in *nature natured* (the Encompassing which we-are and the Encompassing which being-in-itself), is only

¹⁰⁴Corrington, *NS*, 6.

¹⁰⁵Nature defined as a nonlocated location or nonspatial "place" may resemble Jaspers' metaphorical concept of the "Encompassing" (*das Umgreifende*); however, Jaspers' Encompassing appears in two opposed perspectives or two modes of Being (*Seinsweise*): the Encompassing which Being-in-itself (*das Sein selbst*) that surrounds humans (world and Transcendence) and the Encompassing which we-are (*das wir selbst sind*); namely, empirical existence (*Dasein*), consciousness-as-such, spirit, and *Existenz*. Unlike nature, the Encompassing can be ruptured into "modes" when cogitated.

“nurtured” by the Encompassing, but it was not ontologically spawned, ejected, birthed, or “thrown” (Heidegger) by the propositional dynamics and rhythms of the unconscious of nature or what Corrington calls the “Prior of all priors” (borrowing from Plotinus) or the “Great Mother” (the *Ab-grund*). As a result, Jaspers’ *Existenz* does not experience a melancholy longing for the lost object - the material maternal (the *chora* as ejecting self-othering ground). For ecstatic naturalism, the self (as the generated) will not become semiotically whole or sufficient without the generative power of the material maternal (*nature naturing*), for *nature natured* lacks the depth fecundity of semiosis; in other words, without recognizing that it has been ejected from *nature naturing*, nature’s primal self will be deprived of its individuation. With individuation and autonomy, nature’s primal self is eternally fissured by the ontological difference.

Nature’s primal self of ecstatic naturalism is “nurtured” by the “grace” of the spirit, which not only presemiotically and semiotically sustains the self, but also participates in the perennial tension between *nature natured*’s innumerable attained orders (complexes of the world) and *nature naturing*’s preformal potencies of nature. While Jaspers emphasizes *human* communication as the *ground*, thus privileging both glottocentrism (human language/speech) and anthropocentrism, ecstatic naturalism sees the spirit performing the “betweenness” relation.¹⁰⁶ The spirit/ground, as the precondition for the offering of meaning, makes communication possible (without privileging anthropocentrism) by operating in the innumerable “betweens” among signs in world semiosis:

The spirit thus lives in the innumerable ‘betweens’ that punctuate natural semiosis and which provide the mobile spaces within which signs can obtain efficacy and relevance for sign-using organisms. Without a self-othering ground, which moves fitfully through the open places of signification, the world of interpretants would have

¹⁰⁶Ecstatic naturalism’s concept of “Betweenness” is different from Peirce’s Thirdness. The betweenness relation resembles pure or sheer Secondness. Unlike Peirce’s causal interaction of Secondness, ecstatic naturalism’s “sheer Secondness” puts emphasis on “how the between acts to hold open all actual dyads while not itself being part of a dyad. Sheer secondness is not strictly dyadic” (*EN*, 135).

no possible relation to the hidden (yet dynamic) realms of objects.¹⁰⁷

Contrary to both Jaspers' understanding of the Encompassing as the ground and Peirce's semiotic conception of the ground, Corrington insists that the ground itself always presemiotically remains outside of the triad of signification - sign, object, and interpretant. Like the spirit, the ground, as the enabling condition, provides infinite possibilities for interpretants to unfold. And like the spirit, the ground is neither a sign nor an interpretant. As previously mentioned, by reconstructing Peirce's concept of the ground Corrington develops the ground into many forms, such as the open infinite as individuating ground, the prospective infinite as luring ground, the *chora* as ejecting self-othering ground, and the spirit as mediating ground by way of developmental Thirdness.

¹⁰⁷Corrington, "Nature's God and the Return of the Material Maternal," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 10 (1993): 122.

CONCLUSION

Ecstatic naturalism is indeed a breakthrough movement that combines the fields of semiotics, theology, depth psychology, and philosophy as grounded in a new metaphysics of nature. Deeply-seated in a semiotic cosmology and psychosemiosis, ecstatic naturalism radically and profoundly probes into the mystery of nature's perennial self-fissuring of *nature natures* and *nature naturing*. Ecstatic naturalism provides not only a viable alternative to Peirce's semiotic conception of the self and Jaspers' existential concept of *Existenz*, but also to traditional analytic and phenomenological forms of philosophy as well as supernaturalistic theology.

Peirce's semiotic construction of the self and Jaspers' elucidation of *Existenz* of course cannot be minimized or overlooked, for they both have widened our understanding of the scope and prospects of the self; however, at the same time, the role of nature as it ontologically relates to the self is deprivileged; hence the self is anthropocentrically and anthropomorphically privileged. While both Peirce and Jaspers failed to develop an adequate concept of nature's primal self, ecstatic naturalism recognizes the self-transcending powers of nature, especially *nature naturing*.

Nature's primal self is but a fragmented product or human order within the ineffable vastness of nature; it is constructed out of sign series and belongs to world semiosis. And because it was spawned by the presemiotic and preformal momentum of *nature naturing*, nature's primal self, unlike Peirce's semiotic self and Jaspers' *Existenz*, cannot write itself so large on the canvas of nature. It will forever be fissured by the ontological difference of *nature natures* and *nature naturing*, for "[a]t the heart of the self is a cleft, a wound that emerges with the first dawn of consciousness and remains with the self until its

death.”¹

The hidden origin of the anthropocentric self theorized by both Peirce and Jaspers, like nature’s primal self of ecstatic naturalism, is directly and infinitely sustained in the “primal ground,” called *nature naturing*, where it is not conditioned or circumscribed by metaphysical or existential anthropology nor by textuality. Nature is indeed the self’s enabling ground and goal.

As already mentioned, ecstatic naturalism, as a mode of thought and method, provides a more encompassing and judicious framework compared to those of Peirce’s semiotic construction of the self and Jaspers’ existential concept of *Existenz*. However, as regards ecstatic naturalism’s concept of God, there are still some lingering ambiguities. Because of his pantheism, the rejection of patriarchal monotheisms, and especially, the so-called principle of ontological parity, Corrington’s philosophical theology has become problematic for many classical theists, this writer included. The principle of ontological parity does not allow the “all-determining God” (Pannenberg) to be creator of nature. If God is ordinally located or is encompassed by *nature naturing*, or if nature is the genus (or pre-genus) of which God is the species, then ecstatic naturalism’s theism becomes superfluous. Or one just might as well “worship *nature naturing*” (to echo Neville’s remark). If God, as the indeterminate Being, is the source of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, then God cannot be both a product of *nature naturing* and the ground of *nature natured*. Consequently, the principle of ontological priority will be privileged over the principle of ontological parity. As far as this particular issue is concerned, one can use the same question that Corrington has posed in his Peirce book: “Is this to say that we have some kind of privileged perspective, a form of *besser verstehen* (better understanding) in which we can claim to know more about an author’s framework than the author could?”²

¹Corrington, *NS*, 1.

²*ICSP*, 216.

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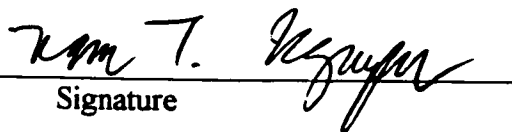
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