

MY PASSAGE FROM PANENTHEISM TO PANTHEISM

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There is a difference between being on a philosophical passage across uncharted waters, and being on a pathway through known hills and woodlands. In the latter case it is easy to see natural and conventional sign posts that indicate the whence and whither of the journey, while in the former case there is always the uncanny awareness of a hidden dialectic at play; namely, between a deliberate embarkation on a goal directed sea voyage, and the uncanny sense of being driven by some taciturn force across waters whose surface and depth contours have failed to reveal themselves. In philosophical query there may come moments in which a certain subtle kind of clarity begins to emerge as to the hidden whence and whither of such a lonely journey, even if these moments of understanding soon fade back into the mists and fogs of the enveloping sea.

Having arrived at such a moment, I feel the need to exhibit some of its contours before the mists return to shroud what has emerged as a sign of the passage I have taken from the ordinal panentheism shaped in my writings in the late 1980s and early 1990s toward a pantheistic ecstatic naturalism that is now coming more fully into its own in this new century.¹ The earlier works struggled toward a post-monotheistic understanding of the one nature and its innumerable orders, yet my theological articulations remained too closely related to the forms of twentieth-century panentheism coming out of process thought to truly reflect the depth-categories of *nature naturing* and *nature natured* that have continued to serve as a leitmotif throughout my thinking. Further, my hope was that a rethinking of the categorical

¹ The books are: *The Community of Interpreters* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987, new edition with new Preface 1995), *Nature and Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), *Ecstatic Naturalism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), *Nature's Self*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), *Nature's Religion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and *Wilhelm Reich: Psychoanalyst and Radical Naturalist* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2002). A few of my articles will be referenced in the essay.

legacies of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne with the aid of the ordinal metaphysics of Justus Buchler² would free philosophical theology from any taint of atomism and a doctrine of internal relations, not to mention the seemingly anti-naturalist perspective of panpsychism.³ I now realize that I was only partially right. My use of the powerful method of ordinal phenomenology⁴ was occasionally misdirected by some implicit and unthought transcendental arguments derived from liberal Christianity. For my continual thinking, this creative tension between phenomenological descriptions and transcendental strategies remains inevitable and goads further query toward that elusive place where transcendental arguments will no longer be needed.

Clearly there is something soothing and mythological about process metaphysics, this last gasp of liberal Protestant theology. This mythos is hidden behind a cosmology of optimism and unending growth into complexity and wholeness. The more austere perspective of ordinal metaphysics seemed at the time to be the right antidote to the optimistic cosmology of actual occasions, with its contrary insistence on sheer complexity (all the way down), ordinal location, anti-eschatology, and pan-naturalism. Yet it too fails to probe deeply

²Justus Buchler's most important foundational work is, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, second expanded ed., eds. Kathleen Wallace, Armen Marsoobian, and Robert S. Corrington (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

³See my articles, "Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 26 (4) (December 1987): 393-408, and "Ordinality and the Divine Natures," in *Nature's Perspectives*, eds. Armen Marsoobian, Kathleen Wallace, and Robert S. Corrington (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 347-366.

⁴The method of phenomenology becomes *ordinal* when the transcendental perspective is overcome by ordinal naturalism in which the focus shifts to the self-in-process as it rotates its perspectives in and among relevant orders of the world as they are encountered. The spatial and temporal features of phenomena (orders of relevance) are no longer privileged over, for example, social, economic, historical, religious or other traits, traits that are also self-showing in the phenomenon as it is rotated through its pertinent ordinal locations. Edmund Husserl's concept of the epoché, which brackets out existence claims, is rendered unnecessary by the deeper sense of ontological parity. The concept of the *Wesensschau* is replaced with the concept of ordinal rotation as it acknowledges traits and their subaltern traits. Concerning this shift from transcendental (and even hermeneutical) phenomenology to ordinal phenomenology, see *Pragmatism Considers Phenomenology*, eds. Robert S. Corrington, Carl Hausman, and Thomas M. Seebohm (Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1987), pp. 1-35.

enough into the implications of the ontological difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, a distinction that does operate in a highly muted way in the underside of ordinal metaphysics.

My naturalist critics have argued that I sell naturalism to the religionists because I affirm the view that nature has room for an ontologically thick spirit (or spirits), while my theological critics have argued that I am only a halfway process thinker because my antiquated naturalism holds me back from a full articulation of panpsychism (panexperientialism) and of the unique traits of the divine. Are both sets of critics curiously right but for very wrong reasons? Clearly, they have not grasped the entirety of ordinal panentheism (a strange post-monotheistic monotheism), and their readings are textually limited, even truncated, while falling into well-worn grooves of interpretation. However, the possibility of an internal conceptual problem in my perspective, as raised by my critics, emerged more starkly for me through my dialogue with Robert Neville in the mid-1990s. In his review of my 1992 book *Nature and Spirit*, he asserts that my commitment to exploring the distinction between *nature naturing* and *nature natured* does not logically entail that any "middling gods" (or divine dimensions) are needed to connect the two dimensions of the one nature together. I have now come to see that he is correct, especially because his critique comes from a sophisticated reading of my work, and that my carefully drawn four-fold dimensionality of the divine, while, perhaps evocative in certain respects, may be conceptually cumbersome, un-phenomenological, and even in tension with the basal insights of my perspective.

In retrospect, I now see that this four-fold view of the divine natures was an important way station on the passage to a more fully self-aware ecstatic naturalism. It made it possible to envelop and locate theism with its list of anthropomorphic (and patriarchal) traits within a more generic perspective that envisioned the potencies of the unitarian and universalist spirit as occurring *within* an ordinal nature. At the same time, it brought out some of the tensions among the various activities that we demand from the divine and struggled to coordinate them within a dialectical unfolding that was fully open to these tensions. Further, the four-fold articulation of the divine made it possible to correlate finite and infinite traits in a way that had not been developed before, a way that may still have much intrinsic merit as a pointer and goad. Finally, the ordinal reconfiguration broke the link

between atomism and panpsychism that has been the bane of foundational query into nature.

But what exactly is this (earlier) view that most of my interlocutors fail to understand, or so I continue to think, and what within it can be transliterated into a more capacious perspective that will honor the deepest impulses of this ongoing probe into the heart of nature? More precisely, how do perhaps compulsive, yet hidden, transcendental arguments veer into and deflect the much slower process of ordinal phenomenology? Are there forceful traces of a tribal Christian perspective, no matter now liberal, which operate to blunt the generic momenta of phenomenological insight into *all* of nature? Should the word “God” be gently purged from fundamental query into the ontological abyss between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*? And if so, as I now believe it must, can we still honor the primary phenomenological intuitions of the then nascent perspective of ecstatic naturalism and its probes into the ordinal traits of the sacred?

NATURE AND SPIRIT: THE FIRST EMBARKATION

A writer is frequently asked if she or he has a favored book, even if its perspective is in need of amelioration. When asked this question, I answer that *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* remains the text that brings back the strongest memories of both composition and of the many struggles that had to be undergone before it could be written. It is the text of self-discovery on the way toward an ecstatic naturalism—a metaphysical commitment that is perhaps too boldly and prematurely proclaimed by the book’s sub-title. It was written in several places, under very different personal and professional circumstances, and in ongoing dialectic with a number of pertinent traditions. My way of engaging in philosophical query is through a series of dialogues with living or deceased interlocutors.

In my own truncated self-history I can list six figures with whom I co-thought the perspective leading to the writing of *Nature and Spirit*: Martin Heidegger, Charles Sanders Peirce, Justus Buchler, Karl Jaspers, Paul Tillich, and Charles Hartshorne. Among these six I had the honor of knowing and working with Buchler and Hartshorne, neither of whom was especially fond of the other’s categorial scheme. To be even more compressed I can say that Heidegger taught me the absolute bindingness of the craft of unrelenting thinking in and through

the receding ground (*Ab-grund*). From Peirce I learned of the power of semiotics when grounded in an expansive metaphysics. From Buchler I learned the liberating power of thinking generically. As a thinker he was capacious, generous, and almost totally free from tribalism of any kind. From Jaspers I learned how to enter into the movement of different dimensions of the self and thereby to sense the Encompassing shining through them. Through Tillich I was able to remain within liberal Christianity somewhat longer than was perhaps wise, but I also learned how to use the symbols of a tradition in the richest possible ways. Finally, from Hartshorne I learned the strengths and profound limitations of optimism and of process metaphysics. His friendliness to Peirce gave us an initial point of connection through which we could discuss aspects of nature and the divine.

Yet all of these thinkers seemed to be fleeing from something I instinctively sensed at the heart of our encounters with *the* nature that we also *are*; namely the confrontation with the diremption of *nature* *naturing* as it both spawns and recedes from *nature* *natured*. Even Tillich used his regnant concept of the ground and abyss of being as a means for covering over an even deeper prospect into the darksome passages of the heart of nature. That he came closer to embracing this awareness than any of my other interlocutors puts him in an honorific category, although his categorical delineations are more prosaic and standard than those developed by Buchler. The question returns: was my thinking in *Nature and Spirit* able to face into the heart of nature while also unfolding a compelling metaphysics?

Here the term “metaphysics” shall denote the enterprise of thinking generically about anything whatsoever insofar as such thinking seeks to exhibit recurrent and fundamental traits of nature and ‘its’ orders. On this definition, one can no more overcome metaphysics than one can overcome nature. Each metaphysical perspective, whether it takes ownership of itself as metaphysics or not, says something about the way, how, and whats of nature, in however successful or blundering a fashion. To call one’s own framework “anti-metaphysical” is merely to narcissistically parade a weak and wounded/wounding pseudo-metaphysics in front of those who would, in contrast, dare to make more bold and encompassing conceptual moves. This culturally expensive farce has now been played out fully and it no longer should concern or stifle the craft of genuine thinking.

The primary concern in *Nature and Spirit* is to develop a generic perspective that affirms that there is no supernatural realm, while also acknowledging that there are places within nature where something like the divine operates. The perspective of naturalism has too often limited itself to some kind of materialism, as if the word "matter" has more than a polemical value to begin with. Surely, we are told, one cannot be against good old trustworthy matter with its stable and knowable cluster of traits. But why privilege matter, whatever 'it' turns out to be? True naturalism does not seek or designate any primary trait as being fundamental in all respects for the orders of and as nature, whether that alleged universal trait is seen as spirit, matter, monads, actual occasions, energy, actuality, potentiality, possibility, sense-data, form, or simple stuff. In fact, it is not even the task of *philosophy* to designate generic traits in this sense, but to do so in the very difference sense of providing categorial clearings onto how the various kinds of "whats" obtain or fail to obtain. Determining the nature of the more specific whats falls to the subaltern disciplines, each of which will name its field-specific "whatnesses" in its own ways. Hence, the task of *Nature and Spirit* is seen to be that of providing access to the openings within/as nature that let innumerable traits emerge on roughly their own terms. The point of tension comes when the divine dimensions are held to be among these natural traits.

In the fourth and final chapter of *Nature and Spirit* the four divine dimensions are articulated as they operate in 'themselves' (an impossible prescinding from relationality) and as they correlate with each other and with nature (remembering that they must also be fully 'part' of the one nature and never in a mere with relationship to 'it'). The first two dimensions of god are understood to be natural complexes with limited scope and efficacy within the innumerable orders of *nature natured* ("creation" for the Christian). The first dimension is manifest to the human process as epiphanies of power that enhance, and sometimes assault, the self in its trajectory toward some kind of culmination of experience. These epiphanies emerge from conditions of origin in nature that are fragmentary and elusive, thereby denying anything like an extra-natural teleological ordering or any ultimate governing epiphany-of-all-epiphanies. They come and go by their own hidden logic, are subject to entropy, and ride on the currents of the human unconscious, whether personal or collective.

The second divine dimension, like the first, has no grand teleological structure, but comes from the opposite domain to that of origins; namely, from fragmented realistic utopian expectations that hold open a creative not-yet for struggling selves and their communities. There is a conflict between these first two dimensions:

While the first dimension emerges out of a fragmented origin, the second appears from the fragmented powers of expectation. In this second dimension, God is still to be understood as a natural complex, and thus retains its plurality and fragmented quality. The goals of the divine life are fragmented because they must become efficacious against the backdrop of an inert and often hostile world. Finite purposes, as components within developmental teleology, work within and against powers that would like to see all purposes flattened into antecedent habits. God struggles against personal and social inertia by providing goads toward creative transformation.⁵

Against all of my intents and purposes, this language of a struggling god who must confront its own warring tendencies, imports a traditional Job-like personified pseudo-deity into the heart of nature. If nothing else, an unrelenting naturalism is strongly opposed to any form of anthropomorphic thinking that would write human traits too largely onto the face of the one nature. What could have been seen here as a tension between spirit-infused and unconsciously projected human traits, became solidified into a more finite but fulsome counter-model to the process notion of the much larger consequent nature of god. My phenomenological intuitions into the dialectic between the pull of origins and the pull of expectations was deflected into categorial posits of a divine puller and a divine pulled. The act of substituting a smaller, often pain ridden, consequent nature of god for the more tender and infinitely capacious process version failed to let the phenomenological self-showing of traits proceed along its own way and at its own pace. The process mythos had not yet been overcome, in spite of my rhetorical claims to the contrary.

⁵Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, 172-173.

To be truer to ordinal phenomenology it would have been necessary to enter into the bindingness of what shows itself here while also refusing to name these curious facets of nature in advance. This is especially so insofar as they are condescended in the human process and its pertinent orders of relevance. Further, such a continual rotation of relational and 'internal' traits would have utterly avoided any honorific language that would give these traits some special status within the innumerable traits of nature *and* the subaltern human orders. To call the extra-human, but never extra-natural, pull of certain strongly relevant traits by the name "god," is to intrude a transcendental argument just when more strenuous phenomenological effort is demanded. There is a certain conceptual laziness in the transcendental argument, which posits a necessary, universal, and hidden condition to account for what is encountered, at this juncture, in finite experience.

For a tightly bound Neo-Kantian, the more formal and well-dressed cousin of the postmodern *boulevardier*, such transcendental arguments are necessary and even welcomed. There is a strong logical link between the limitations built into finitude and the requirements, given these limitations, to use a variety of transcendental arguments to escape, however precariously, from these limitations. Both Ernst Cassirer and the young Heidegger (who dedicated himself to the destructuring of Neo-Kantianism) fell prey to the presupposition that finitude was the 'natural' condition of the self, although Cassirer envisioned an opening into the infinite through mathematical physics and the right use of the symbols of objective spirit. On this side of the Atlantic, naturalists like John Dewey, Frederick Woodbridge, John Herman Randall, Jr., George Santayana, and Buchler all affirmed our littleness in the face of a nature that could be partially transfigured to human ends, yet always had the final word.⁶

But what if the twentieth-century obsession with human finitude was deeply flawed in ways that must now be probed by a healthy naturalism, an ecstatic and pantheistic naturalism more attuned to the various modalities of the infinite? If the unthought

⁶One of the least successful expressions of American naturalism can be seen in, *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944). Buchler told me that he considered this anthology to represent a "dogmatic and narrow" view of true naturalism. This quote comes from, "A Conversation between Justus Buchler and Robert S. Corrington, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 8 (4) (1989): pg. 261.

presuppositions concerning human finitude are opened out and shown to be un-phenomenological, then the corollary use of half-blind transcendental strategies is also put into profound question. With a different understanding of the self-in-process, might there not emerge a very different sense of the human passages through finite shells into something non-finite? More formally asked: is ordinal phenomenology itself ready to give way to another dimensionality within its own momentum, a dimension that was first opened out by G.W.F. Hegel in 1806 but without the full grasp of ordinality? Perhaps. And it is this “perhaps” that has become one of the well-lit buoys of my recent thinking. And yet, what of the other two divine dimensions as articulated in *Nature and Spirit*?

Here the prospects are somewhat brighter. If the first two divine dimensions are finite and subject to the surrounding conditions of *nature natures*, then the third and fourth dimensions obtain in a more infinite way, precisely because they are tightly linked to the self-othering potencies of *nature naturing*, which cannot be finite in any ways available to us. The third divine dimension is understood to be sheerly relevant to the innumerable orders of the world, that is, in this dimension god does not alter the traits of any order in any way other than to preserve all orders against absolute nonbeing. This sustaining relation, however, has nothing whatsoever to do with the androcentric and anthropocentric dogma of *creatio ex nihilo* because creation, in its innumerable guises, is always a trait within nature rather than a trait that could be located outside of nature. In general, it makes no sense to think of any trait as being outside of nature as it would have no relevance of any kind to any order of nature. Starkly put—there are no non-natural traits or orders. A god who creates out of nothingness is no god at all, but merely functions as a linguistic artifice to render and secure certain personal and social power structures in an asymmetrical dependency relation.

In its third dimension, the divine is co-extensive with all orders (even if they can never be summed) of *nature natures*. Yet the divine is never co-extensive with the ‘greater’ infinity of *nature naturing*, which can also be rendered by my recent language as the “underconscious” of nature.⁷ Hence, in its third dimension, god is infinite in one respect, the respect in which it always has as much scope

⁷Corrington, *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*, 18. The term “underconscious” is taken from Coleridge.

as the innumerable orders of nature, while in another respect god is of a lesser infinite than the underconscious of nature which ejected it *into* its sustaining relation. God cannot sustain *nature naturing* yet it can and does sustain the orders of *nature natured*. And here again we see the crunch point first articulated by Neville. Why does *nature naturing* 'need' a divine dimension in order to, by proxy, sustain the innumerable orders of the world? In spite of its infinite scope vis-à-vis the world, is not this dimension of the divine equivalent to Neville's "middling god" that is artificially posited to solve some alleged problems within the generic portrayal of nature—much like the role of Whitehead's eternal entities and the initial aim of god to establish concrescive relevance? In retrospect, this now must be seen to be the case. A trait sensed on the edges of the human process, namely that of being held firm against nonbeing, was again projected onto a divine aspect that was itself only a linguistic contrivance.

The fourth divine dimension, also finite and infinite but in different respects, was shaped out of my dialogue with Hartshorne. In accepting his surpassability thesis, which asserts that god is that than which nothing greater can be thought but is also self-surpassable, I asked the question: unsurpassable in the face of what? Where does this endless and progressive self-surpassing occur? My answer was that it could only occur in the face of the encompassing, a metaphorical substitute for the more technical terminology of *nature naturing*. I was lead to this conceptual move by yet another hidden transcendental argument that was of the form: self-surpassability must itself have a sufficient reason and that sufficient reason must, following the process line of thinking, be a lure that god itself responds to. Otherwise, why would god 'want' to be even more than "that than which nothing greater can be thought?" Surely, god must be incomplete in some sense.

Therefore it followed that only the encompassing was of greater scope than even the god at the boundaries all thought.⁸ In the letter just

⁸ But perhaps my reconstruction of process thought was not as radical as I had thought. In a considerate and well thought out letter to me concerning his reading of my *Nature and Spirit*, Hartshorne wrote, "I write about his [Jaspers] encompassing and why I think mind or spirit is both encompassing and encompassed, and mere mindless matter is a mere fiction, or a mere word for some very low but pervasive forms of mind, sub-animal and sub-cellular. . . . Your basic stance overlaps a good deal with mine, as you are aware. . . . Plato's theology means much more to me than it did even to Whitehead. He allowed A. E. Taylor, too close to traditional Christianity, to mislead him, and did

quoted in footnote eight, Hartshorne was prophetic in pointing to my less than acknowledged relationship with Plato, which has now flowered into a strong affirmation of Plato through the highly illuminating prospect of Neo-Platonism. As I now realize, I was underway toward the inner light unveiled by Plotinus, which is at the heart of *nature naturing*.

The correlations among the four divine dimensions are worked out in terms of the dialectic between finitude and the infinite, as well as under the purview of the concepts of relevance and identity:

The divine is fragmented and incomplete in its first two natures, while living as the sustaining ground for the world's complexes in its third dimension. In the fourth dimension, God experiences its own travail in the face of that which is forever beyond its scope. While God can interact with complexes within the world, even though many of them remain recalcitrant to the divine infusion, God cannot become strongly relevant to the encompassing. The relationship between God and the encompassing is asymmetrical in that the encompassing is strongly relevant to God, while God cannot be strongly relevant to the encompassing. That is, God experiences a transformation of its identity and integrity when standing before the encompassing, while the encompassing, by definition, is beyond the reach of any counter influence. Does the encompassing acknowledge God and the divine travail? For good or ill, this question cannot be answered, at least from the standpoint of the human process. When confronting the encompassing the

not accept Plato's view that the divine psyche, like all psyches, is *embodied* mind and has self-activity or freedom. Whitehead did agree about the freedom. Apparently you're closer to Plato than you know. The cosmos is the divine body. However for Plato the divine psyche encompasses the divine body, and your or my psyche encompasses our body. This is an analogy, which means a difference in principle and a likeness in principle. . . . I say [contra Buchler] that if complex has a good meaning then so does simple. This is the principle of Contrast. Everything is complex and everything is simple. There are many kinds and degrees of complexity" (October 30, 1992).

ordinal perspective must acknowledge an ultimate mystery that can only be partially understood.⁹

Contextually, these are valid and compelling arguments, yet they seem to be the result of somewhat hasty and un-phenomenological thinking on the self-giveness of the sacred. While I had opened out a serious unthought 'flaw' at the heart of Hartshorne's perspective, I had failed to understand my own need to shape a quaternity of divine natures that would have a co-implicating circularity combined with some sense of cosmic and human progress. I had allowed the species of history (read in an evolutionary eschatology) to overwhelm the genus (actually, pre-genus) of nature. This mistake compelled me into a decade of sustained rethinking that has now come out on the other side. Intriguingly, as we shall see, the weight of the last assertion from my quoted text has been partially lifted in my passage from panentheism to pantheism.

PSYCHOANALYSIS, SEMIOSIS, AND THE HIGHLANDS INSTITUTE: A SEA CHANGE

Thus, by the mid-1990s I was more adrift in my passage toward *nature naturing* than I realized. On board with me were middling gods, anthropomorphic projections, and rather vociferous transcendental arguments. In addition, I had Neville's critique, now embodied in a genuine interlocutor, to assimilate and integrate. We were able to sit at the Captain's table to probe into the tensions between our perspectives, especially concerning the issue of cosmic optimism versus an emerging pantheistic sadness, now, thankfully, more ecstatic in attunement. Yet the cumulative effects of living in close confinement among these fellow passengers, with their highly ambiguous messages, would not be felt until after I had reworked the foundations of semiotics (at least a portion of it) and European depth-psychology. On the external front, a novel experience for me, my work with The Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought, gave me a place to listen to and talk with fellow spirits who had embarked on a similar trajectory through philosophy and religious thinking (sometimes, even theology). Our underlying commitment to some kind of naturalism (how varyingly defined!) made it possible for me to encounter prospects different from my own, but prospects and

⁹Corrington, *Nature and Spirit*, 187-188.

perspectives that were to some extent congenial to my lingering panentheism and my nascent pantheism.

If nature is all that there is, can we even use the word “nature” in a philosophical perspective in which the concept of the “non-nature” makes absolutely no sense? This dilemma faced Heidegger in the late 1930s as he struggled with his own mother tongue to find a way past the lingering substantive connotations of *Sein* as it contrasts with things-in-being (*Seinden*). The tension between these two dimensions of the ontological difference, as also entailing our-being-grasped by nonbeing (*das Nichts*), almost always collapsed the first primal dimension of the shining forth of sheer being *into* the orders within which the shining appears while also receding in a more darksome way. Heidegger asked: how is it possible to keep the ontological difference, as difference, open while also allowing for the uncanny presence/absence of nonbeing? Entwined within this question was a second: what might enable the ontological difference itself? In his unrelenting and always unfinished quest to answer the first question Heidegger invoked an older term for *Sein*, namely, *Seyn* (which has its 17th century English parallel in the term *beyng*). Combining etymology with this slight iconic shift, Heidegger hoped to jar thought from its habitual pathways of encountering and thinking the ontological difference between being and things-in-being.

By adding the concept/pre-concept of *Seyn* to those of *Sein* and *Seinden*, Heidegger was able to relocate the ‘middle’ concept/pre-concept of *Sein* in terms of what he called the first (or Primal) beginning of historical thought in the Greek world in which being was rendered as: beings-as-a-totality, that is, as a unity under a first genus. But is Heidegger’s proposal/disposal equivalent, for an ecstatic naturalism which rethinks the being-problematic from a deeper pre-giving ‘realm’ of potencies, to its growing sense that a triad obtains, constituted by: *nature naturing* (improperly equated with *Sein*), *nature natured* (the ‘domain’ of orders), and yet something else on the fringes of ordinal phenomenology? Is this “something else” related to Heidegger’s second question pertaining to the elusive third (not in Peirce’s sense of “thirdness” as concrete reasonableness) that supports the eruption of *nature natured* out of *nature naturing*?

Heidegger’s second embedded question appears in the triad in a displaced way as ecstatic naturalism shows its *own* evolving momentum in contrast to the being-problematic. For ecstatic naturalism, the

question of the third, held to be the mysterious ejective nongrounding ground (*Ab-grund*) of the difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*, becomes: what prevails as the Prior (to use a term from Plotinus) to the potencies (presumably plural yet preordinal) and their 'subsequent' manifestation in and as the innumerable orders of the world? Note that the question is no longer that pertaining to what connects the two dimensions of nature, qua middling gods, but moves toward something that may obviate that so-called need. First, some categorial clarification is in order.

The concept of the "world" is a rich one in the history of phenomenology. It denotes that which is always more than the sum of all realized and possible meaning horizons of the human process. Further, it represents that which is always more than the subaltern worlds explored by the various sciences. In this expanded notion the world subsequent to the Big Bang is merely one world among others, not only among other such potential or actualized Baby Universes, but also among any kind of world whatsoever. Metaphysics should not confine its delineations to the world of astrophysics, but must understand that the universe of astronomy, for example, is a subaltern world, no matter how expansive are its spatial-temporal traits. The generic concept of "worldhood" is the pre-genus for any world that is or could be denoted or hinted at in the inexhaustible 'realms' of *nature natured*. Hence, worldhood (as equivalent to "world") is the ultimate enabling condition for any world or order whatsoever, but it is never a world.

The concept of the "potencies" is obviously more elusive to articulate. Negatively I have said that the underconscious of nature is the dimension of nature in which the potencies somehow obtain, but that they are also preordinal (that is, they are not yet orders of traits), prespatial, and pretemporal. However, like the phenomenon (or pre-phenomenon) of worldhood, the potencies are enabling conditions for whatever is manifest in and as a world. They are ejective of actuality and possibility, noting that there is an abyss of difference between a possibility, which is always intra-worldly and tied to a specific trajectory of actualities, and a potency, which has no worldly location except very indirectly through special traces (engrams).

The parallels between the concepts of "worldhood" and "potency" are also important to exhibit. First, neither aspect of nature can be counted or summed, that is, both are infinite, but in different

respects. Secondly, these twin features of nature are indefinitely explorable, but again, in different respects. This second parallel has become clearer to me as the wisdom of pantheism has opened up some clearings onto the potencies via a reconfiguration of the concepts of the infinite. Finally, there is a parallel between the ways in which worldhood and the potencies obtain insofar as 'they' both are gathered up into a dialectic of unfolding and enfolding—a reigning dialectic to be explored in the last section of this essay.

There is thus a sense in which the underconscious dimension of the potencies is prior (but not temporally so, as it is pretemporal) to the innumerable worlds and their subaltern orders that constitute *nature natured*. This is a unique kind of priority and does not involve the principle of sufficient reason, which would affirm that for every consequent there is a sufficient rational and causal antecedent. The concept of sufficient reason flounders and splits open at this abyss between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*. But it is not enough to talk of the shipwreck of the principle of sufficient reason. Light must be shed on why this seemingly so unsinkable vessel has broken apart at the fissuring and gifting of the naturalized ontological difference.

The question turns inward yet again. Is this shipwreck of sufficient reason necessitated by the surface drama of the seas or by an undercurrent that may be even deeper down than the sea/seed-bed of nature, namely, than its own underconscious dimension? Here is where ecstatic naturalism must appeal to the aid of a reconfigured concept of the infinite, as embodied in its own restructured semiotics, to find some means of access to that which may indeed be prior to the (now second) prior of *nature naturing*. What is the infinite, and how many modes does it have? And in what respects must these modes be semiotic, that is, available in and through signs?

Peirce only got it partly right. His triadic semiotics, with all of its power and sophistication, remains limited to the innumerable domains of *nature natured* and, via indirection through his concept of "firstness," to the surface manifestations of *nature naturing*. He can be seen as the Isaac Newton of semiotics—right as far as he goes within his somewhat limited conditions of signification, but wrong about the more fundamental *how* of nature in its inexhaustibility and infinity. Further, Peirce lived in abjection (desire, fear, and denial) of the depth-meaning of firstness and iconicity, thereby cutting semiotics off from the rhythms of the underconscious of the self and nature, not to mention

the Prior of all priors which ecstatic pantheism seeks.¹⁰ The contemporary slavish devotion to Peirce has seriously blunted and even exhausted the movement of semiotics toward its own fore-structures and powers. Where do we go to find our post-Newtonian semiosis?

For me, the answer came at about the same time that I was writing my book on Peirce in which I came to realize just where Peirce had stopped short in his metaphysics and semiotics. My first indication that something was amiss occurred when I realized that Peirce had only the most foreshortened understanding of the enabling conditions for semiosis, and that his concept of the ground relation was little more than a hint, and a bad one at that, of what makes any forms of signification possible beyond the ontological triad of sign, object, and interpretant. I knew that he had grasped what I came to call the "actual infinite" of interpretants, but that he had no sense of other forms of infinity that weave themselves among signs and body them forth in different ways. This deepening sense of Peirce's failure led me, among a number of other motives, to write my fourth book, *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*, which was envisioned as the first work in trilogy that was indeed completed with *Nature's Self*, and *Nature's Religion*. In *Ecstatic Naturalism* I delineated four forms of the infinite (and carried them forward in a new way in *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*).¹¹

Briefly put, the four forms of infinity are: (1) the *actual infinite*, as the 'sum' of all realized signs in all of the worlds that obtain at any given time, (2) the *processive infinite*, as the enabling condition for sign series as they obtain within given worlds, (3) the *open infinite*, which obtains as the principle of individuation surrounding any *given* sign, and (4) the *sustaining infinite*, which obtains as the sheer prevalence of all forms of actual and potential signification at any possible or actual

¹⁰ On the issue of Peirce's failure here, see my "Peirce's Abjected Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Profile," *Semiotics 1992*, ed. John Deely (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 91-103, and "Nature's God and the Return of the Material Maternal," *American Journal of Semiotics*, 10, Nos. 1-2 (1993): 115-132.

¹¹ My original title for *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* was actually *Signs of the World*, but the editors at Indiana changed it in such a way as to cover over its place in the trilogy. In the same way, my original title for *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* was *Principia Semiotica* but Cambridge, perhaps wary of the obvious historical precedents in Newton, Moore, and Whitehead, wanted something less grandiose and more likely to hit a variety of databases. It is my hope that any later editions will go back to my original titles.

time. I give a detailed phenomenological description of the way of these four dimensions of the infinite in an analysis of the phenomenon of Stonehenge in the subchapter entitled, "Petroglyphs" in *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy*, toward which I steer the interested reader. My contention is that Peirce only understood the first form of the infinite, had a limited vision of the third form (via his ground relation), but because of a privileging of the principle of plenitude over that of emptiness, simply had no grasp of the processive and sustaining forms of the infinite. Peirce did have a strong sense of betweenness (a concept I unfold in Chapter Three of *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*), but still tied it too closely to developmental thirdness to show how it also entails emptiness at its heart.

The four modes of the infinite, and surely there are innumerable others yet to be delineated, all point to some of the ways, hows, and forms of scope of the infinity manifest in nature. As these modalities dawned on me, it also became clearer that a new understanding of phenomenological method must be developed that better co-responds to the ways in which the phenomena of infinity appear in their respective forms of presence/absence. Without abandoning ordinal phenomenology, it was clear that I needed to readjust my understanding of the limits and potential goals of phenomenological query into nature. And it is here that the Hegel of 1806 reminded me of the ur-history of the phenomenological movement.

In its twentieth-century variants, phenomenology clung to the presupposition of finitude, thereby ironically imposing an imperial notion onto the phenomenological process of rendering regnant traits available to human probing and assimilation. This imperialism is manifest in the commitment to the idea that noetic acts of either consciousness or the *Dasein* are the necessary, and even sufficient, condition for the entrance of meaning into the world. Yet such a prejudgment (*Vorurteil*) failed to grasp the fact that phenomena of the infinite may actually probe into and stretch the parameters of the self that is engaged in phenomenology. As Hegel showed, albeit from a Christocentric perspective that is no longer binding on us, each unfolding of the infinite takes place only in and through a widening and deepening of the attending shape of self-consciousness. This co-implicating dialectic has no built-in terminus other than the level of awareness of the self at the end of its trajectory through temporality (and, I would now add, at the end of a given incarnation). If one

assumes that the infinite in its modes obtains, then it follows that the very act of attending to and being enveloped by its ways and manifestations renders us less and less finite as we proceed on the pathway of ordinal phenomenology. To mark this insight I now speak of an *infinetizing* ordinal phenomenology. It is “infinetizing” in its *how* precisely because the phenomenological act is grasped and shaped by the unrelenting unfolding of the modalities of the infinite to which it is bound. Put differently, the finite self is slowly infinitized, but only insofar as it can pierce through its pathological psychic armoring—and this is where semiotics and psychoanalysis converge in the domain of psychosemiosis to show just how the infinitizing processes are thwarted and/or accelerated.

The discipline of psychosemiosis completes the semiotic analysis of signification by moving toward those internal conditions of the sign-user that enter into and shape all phenomenological probing into traits of greater semiotic scope and density. The scope of a trait is measured by its sphere of inclusiveness of relevant traits (and their subalterns), while the density of a trait is measured by the degree to which it maximizes the equation of power X meaning. As the density of a trait increases, so does its relevance to the archetypes:

The conjunction of power and meaning is intensified in the archetypes, which represent a kind of specificity for the spirit. It is as if the spirit, as the ultimate source for the conjunction of power and meaning, uses the archetypes to clothe itself in particular centers of enhanced power and meaning. To use slightly different language, archetypes live as mobile concrescences of the spirit.¹²

Now the second term of the pairing of “nature” and “spirit” emerges. It is in the phenomenological encounter with the spirit (later, post-2000, I only speak of spirits in the plural) that the depth-connection of semiosis, naturalism, and psychoanalysis emerges. At no point have I argued that the spirits are extra-natural, or that they have some kind of personal identity with a unique kind of sacred history. Rather, the spirits that emerge in nature are points of energy and concentration that have fully natural gradients that enliven our encounter with signs. The

¹²Corrington, *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World*, 191-192.

obvious problem is: how do we know which aspect of a spiritual presence is a human-all-too-human projection and which is an emergent that has its own laws and forms of prevalence? The struggle to answer this question moves ecstatic naturalism into psychosemiotics, which always belongs to metaphysics as one of its spheres of query.

Prior to being rendered transparent by the infinite *an sich*, all phenomenological acts involve interpretants as their neomatic correlate, that is, signs that are interpreted out of prior configurations of the 'original' sign/object relationship. Sign series are actually series of interpretants (i.e., signs already modified/interpreted) as there can be no such thing as a first or final sign, only signs in co-implicating series and *in medias res*. In rare and fragile cases, power and meaning are configured in such a way that a spiritual presence is manifest within a sign series, often gathering that series around its own sphere of momentum. The sign-using self is seized in this encounter and must negotiate the underground terrain where projections meet numinous orders of relevance.

After many years of thinking on this encounter I have arrived at the conclusion that phenomenology can go no further into its infinitizing mode until it finds a way of dealing with the concrescences of the spirits that are, by definition, infused with finite projections. Hence there is a dialectic between the movement of infinitizing and the counter-movement (which is actually the same movement) to disentangle (de-cathect) projections from their neomatic correlates. For Hegel the counter-movement works through determinate negation in which the essentializing dynamics of an attained shape of self-consciousness is spun around into its opposite energetic field so that a one-sided perspective is balanced prior to a deeper re-gathering on a higher level. Yet this form of negativity (the heart beat of his dialectic) often lacks the intimacy of a more destabilizing encounter with projective fields and their uncanny logic. Projections are much harder to isolate and understand, that is, render conscious, than Hegel realized in his admittedly glorious form of *pansophia* and *das absolute Wissen*. But they are not, dare I hope, beyond the powers of infinitizing ordinal phenomenology.

The most important species of the genus projection is the transference, the wild-child within the projection family. All projections are, by definition, unconscious. This applies to any of the species and their members. The wild-child transference moves with a

sharp, direct, and frightening power into a noema (intentional object) in order to clothe it with archetypal colors and textures. The object becomes what the transference says it is. While a given projection may or may not be activated by an archetype, the transference always is. Hence the transference is, by our prior delineations, an agent of the spirits. Put differently: there is no spiritual presence without the transference, and there can be neither spiritual presence nor the transference without an archetype. The three moments belong together in the same. Phenomenology is gathered up into this three-in-one and honors the complex inter-weave of the outward going finite transference, its now infinitized object, and the numinous archetype.

What then is to be done to untangle the pathological forms of this triad? Psychosemiotics, as the semiotically reconfigured form of depth-psychology, works its own uncanny logic into, with, and against the overweening transferences that make the pertinent order of relevance far more “real” than it otherwise is *an sich*. For the transference, its object is always placed into the vertical structure of ontological priority in which its privileged object-choice must have more reality than any of its pale competitors. The principle of ontological priority, a product of projection and the transference, renders nature into spheres of differing degrees of reality. Philosophy, if it accomplishes nothing else, must work over and over again to undermine any form of ontological priority that would render any part of nature more or less real than another. The ‘outer’ movement of returning all prioritizing schemas to the truer naturalist form of ontological parity, runs parallel to the ‘inner’ movement of finding and dissolving the transferences that infuse specific orders with un-earned numinosity.

In phenomenological practice this two-track strategy involves: (1) finding and deflating those noetic acts, unconscious though they be, that carry with them some form of ontological privileging, (2) disentangling a sign series from the excess field of pseudo-numinosity that surrounds it, (3) pushing the sign-using self back onto its own desire structures to show it how the transference has distorted its phenomenal field, and (4) gently but insistently showing how the commitment to ontological parity (the insight that everything is real in just the way that it is real) frees the self from finite and armored shells that are condescendences of ontological priority. Each armored shell is a muscular, emotional, and conceptual “as if” structure that closes off

vast dimensions of the world and in turn does not allow the sign-using self to become open to the rhythms of *nature natures*, not to mention the undercurrents of *nature naturing*. The conjunction of psychoanalysis and metaphysics, through psychosemiotics, produces, through the infinitizing process, which it serves, a seamless whole in which armoring is dissolved and gathered up into the gifting of nature.

Naturalism, which asserts that nature is all there is, psychosemiotics, which traces all humanly used signs to their unconscious projective fields, and a naturalized pneumatology, all point toward a rejection of the halfway measure of pantheism. Naturalism does not require the “in and above” relationship between a divine being and nature. Psychosemiotics does not require anything other than nature signifying in order to talk about the sign-using self. Naturalized pneumatology does not require any extra-natural agency to define the ways and hows of the spirits. There is thus no need for a god, four-fold or otherwise, in and yet somehow beyond nature.

PANTHEISM—*HEN KAI PAN*

Nature has neither beginning nor ending, no center nor circumference. It has no location and cannot be understood from outside of itself. And yet there remains a tremulous sensation at the edges of our infinitizing phenomenology. We somehow know that there is something else, perhaps fully natural, perhaps not, or perhaps natural in a very strange and overturning way. This unique sensation fills us with a subtle blissful disquiet. It is blissful because we have entered into the momentum that can grant us an exhilarating freedom from our finite boundaries, yet it is disquieting because at the same time it produces the vertigo of groundlessness—the experience of the shock of the *Ab-grund*.

We have circled back again to the primary question: what makes the difference between *nature naturing* and *nature natures* possible (what is Prior to the prior of *nature naturing*)? Or, does there even need to be such a “making possible,” as if the ontological difference still demanded something more from thought by way of explanation? Shouldn’t pantheism, unlike its highly talkative grandniece pantheism, be less verbose, less inclined to tout its own provenance and legitimation? And, on the other side, haven’t almost all thinkers of any stature rejected pantheism especially when they have

been accused of maintaining it? Even that canny pantheist Hegel (would he believe me?) tells us that pantheism is not properly philosophical (*Wissenschaftliche*):

Organization and system remain entirely alien to pantheism. Where it appears in the form of presentation it is a tumultuous life, a bacchanalian intuition, for instead of allowing the single shapes of the universe to emerge in order, it is perpetually plunging them back into the universal, veering into the sublime and monstrous. Still this intuition is a natural point of departure for every healthy breast [*Brust*]. Especially in youth, through a life which ensouls us and all about us, we feel kinship and sympathy for the whole of nature, and we therefore have a sensation of the World-Soul, of the unity of spirit and nature, of the immateriality of nature.¹³

Certainly, this wizened forty-seven year old Hegel, looking back on his own early twenties at the *Stift* warns us; we desire anything other than a tumultuous life (*taumelndes Leben*) with its unending and nauseating revels of diffusion and chaos (*ein bacchanalisches Anschauen*). Only the full system of scientific philosophy, itself made possible by phenomenology, can bring us into the sphere of infinitizing knowing! Yet is Hegel being true to his own thought-world here? Is there an irreconcilable tension between systematic thinking and the notion that nature is all that there is? Hardly. The issue is not whether or not we have chaotic intuitions (with their wicked taint of immediacy), but with whether or not philosophy lives in service to both intuition and categorial description within the one nature that is. The ancient wisdom of *der Pantheismus* represents the earliest and yet latest high watermark of speculative philosophy, even if its cooler demeanor, contra Hegel, is so easy to mistake for empty identity and sheer indifference.

Let's have one last moment in which we honor the invisible church of the Adepts of Wisdom. Arthur Schopenhauer, also a closet pantheist, helps us on this current leg of our sea voyage by reiterating how unnecessary it is to even *equate* god with nature, as if this

¹³G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, trans. H.J. Petry, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978), 2: 9.

advances thought, "Against pantheism I have mainly the objection that it states nothing. To call the world God is not to explain it, but only to enrich the language with a superfluous synonym for the word world. It comes to the same thing whether we say 'the world is God' or 'the world is the world.'"¹⁴ The latter clause is the only one that a genuine (ecstatic?) pantheist needs to make, even if it takes the form of a tautology. But, contra Ludwig Wittgenstein, some tautologies are more informative than others, that is, the important ones serve as more than mere placeholders of thought around which synthetic a posteriori assertions cluster. To say "the world is the world" is also to say that worldhood is the unfolding granting of any and all worlds, requiring no other world or being (order of relevance) beyond it. In the dimension of *nature natured*, world and worlds is all that there is.

Nature naturing, the lost material maternal of my naturalism, now points us inward one last time. This pretemporal, prespatial, presemiotic, and preordinal, lost object (from the human perspective) is tinged with melancholy and denial. Its transfiguration into bliss and joy (Julia Kristeva's *jouissance*) is always posited away from itself back into the "no longer" and forward into the "not yet." The selving process, carefully traced in several books, is gathered up into this dialectic:

How, then, do we move from finite frustrations to the kind of primal melancholy that puts the *entire* world into question? The answer is simple: we do not move at all, but *are* moved by the spirit that gives us melancholy as one of its most treasured gifts. The transition from finite disappointments to the infinite power of melancholy is not the product of *nature natured* or any of its orders. It is a gift of the spirit that moves to free us from our absolute dependence on the world, so that we can begin to fathom the abyss of *nature naturing*.¹⁵

Melancholy pulls us into the great "no longer," the hidden whence of our being, while ecstasy pulls us into the spirit (and is pulled by the spirit) into the not yet. But why must I continue to speak of a hidden

¹⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2: 99.

¹⁵ Corrington, *Nature's Self*, p. 160.

whence and a deferred *whither*? Why indeed if infinitizing phenomenology promises to bring us into the great *now* of the infinite and its modes? Why indeed?

The great lost object of *Nature's Self*, the material maternal, serves as yet another metaphor for *nature naturing*. However, unlike the metaphor of the encompassing, my image of the lost object contains traces of the abjected and distorted maternal, as was noted by Nancy Frankenberry at the time. The ejecting and rejecting material maternal ground of the selving process is a haunting presence/absence dimly luminous as the *vagina dentate*—a devouring castrating force that operates in patriarchal consciousness, no matter how allegedly emancipated. Was my eschatology of the *not yet* an unconscious response to the fear of the vagina with teeth, always threatening to dismember the prodigal son who wove his hero myth into the present world of ecstasies?

I have come to see that this is so, precisely through the process of psychosemiosis, which is unrelenting in bringing the thinker back to the motivational economy of her or his language and its displacements. The human-all-too-human armoring of castration anxiety blind-sided the phenomenological query into the unfolding momenta of the depths of nature. The great maternal had shown only one of its many faces. Another and deeper more capacious face had yet to show itself before the metaphors and the categorial delineations of ecstatic pantheism could become free from some of the stronger antecedent abjected and finite material. Only a transfiguring experience, on the edges of all semiosis, could make this transition possible. By way of a necessarily proximate culmination of this thought work, I will say something about this experience and delineate in a very tentative fashion how it has facilitated the infinitizing process of coming into awareness of the unfolding/enfolding dialectic of nature.

My encounter with the other face of the material maternal, the great chthonic ground of worldhood, took place in the ancient Meenakshi Temple devoted to Lord Shiva in Madurai, India in January 2001. In meditation a warm white light suddenly seized me from my heart chakra. Out of this light a presence appeared that did not speak in words, but somehow managed to convey images and something akin to ideas. The center of this cluster of unfoldings was the unambiguous presence of the Great Mother who is eternally present within, underneath, and throughout nature. The masking of this presence

through projection and wayward transferences was instantly dissolved by this pretemporal ‘voice,’ which showed that there never was a lost object, and that the “no longer” and the “not yet” were real in a different sense than I had thought (for even *Maya* is real in the way that it is real—an implication of ontological parity). Further, I realized that the chthonic ground of Shiva/Shakti was only a devouring mother on the surface or edges of experience, never at the center or infinitizing periphery. Like so many others, I had been found by the *nunc stans* in which the tri-dimensionality of temporality is gathered up into the eternal now. This epiphany resolved the issue of finding the passage through to the gifting that is prior to the potencies of *nature naturing*. The potencies, so carefully evoked by Friedrich Schelling, were themselves in service to something prior to all energized moments of self-othering—beneath heterogeneity lay homogeneity.

Subsequent to this experience, certainly prepared by decades of study of South Asian thought, I have been even more slowly listening to the rhythms of the unfolding of the Great Mother and the enfoldings that are emergent from this Prior of all priors. Note again that this Prior is not prior in the sense of establishing and grounding all consequents through the principle of sufficient reason. The grounding of the Great Mother is a groundless giving of hovering, but fully real, grounds, all of which echo forth the *Ab-grund*, which is the Great Mother.

But are we not in the same position as before, only one step back? Isn't this talk of an alleged “Great Mother” merely the result of a Vedantic, rather than Liberal Christian, transcendental argument, carefully scripted by the ambiance of the Meenakshi Temple? Perhaps. But I suspect that this “perhaps” is different in kind from all others.

Perhaps I should substitute a starker term for this gifting of the *Ab-grund*. Were I to do so I would speak of the Great Unfolding that is never enfolded or folding. Does this help us along the passage through and with infinitizing phenomenology, from the potencies of *nature naturing* to the enfolded orders of *nature natured* and back again to the *hen kai pan*, the great one and all? Perhaps it is best to remain in these still waters a moment longer before proceeding elsewhere, for thought is too quick to move on before its horizon has become clear again.