DECONSTRUCTION,
DIALECTICS
AND A SENSE OF RELATEDNESS

by

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ABSTRACT

The text deconstructs notions of ideal community which, while affirming immediate proximate human relations, effectively disaffirms and thus devalues those mediated over distance and time. It argues against such social ontologies as the basis of what should constitute ideal consociality.

In place of the idealized notions of community critiqued, the work elaborates an ontological ethics of responsibility as a basis for conceptualizing ethical relations.

The text grounds its ethic in what is proffered to be humankind's ontological relatedness to the *other*, regardless of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that other. Moreover, the text sets forth the importance of humankind developing a sense of this ontological relatedness. The work discusses this *sense-of-relatedness* from three perspectives. First, it elaborates a philosophic naturalism to establish in humankind an ontological basis for ethical relations. Second, it claims that humankind *is* in the world, existentially, who and what it understands itself to be with respect to the depth with which it apprehends a sense of its ontological relatedness to all that there is. Third, it argues that this sense-of-relatedness may be understood as a religious sensibility.

KEY TERMS: Anthropology; Community; Deconstruction; Dialectics; Ethics; God; Naturalism; Ontology; Philosophy; Social Ecology

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Radical social theorists often appeal to idealized notions of community which privilege face-to-face, unmediated social relations. They argue that development of such an "ideal" community can provide the basis for an ethical society. These communitarian social theorists see in these notions of community the requisite alternative to the oppression and exploitation which characterize western culture's capitalist patriarchal society.

This work takes issue with these notions of community and their claim to be the basis for developing an ethical society. The architects of such concepts of community tend to overlook the relevance of, if not exclude altogether, mediated nonface-to-face relations. I will in this work deconstruct such notions of "true" community. My critique will emphasize the extent to which these conceptualizations diminish the significance of nonface-to-face, distant relations mediated through space and time. I will argue that notions of community which affirm immediate proximate human relations, while effectively disaffirming those mediated through distance and temporality, cannot provide the basis of what should constitute ideal consociality. Furthermore, I will argue that these notions of community are, in and of themselves, quite inadequate to establish the basis for an ethical society. I contend that if we are ever to develop an ethical society composed of *communities*, we will need first to establish in humanity, itself, an intrinsic, fundamental justification for acting ethically towards others. To this end I put forth in this work a dialectical ontology which centers ethics in the development of consciousness in the cosmos and consequent response-

ability in nature. Through this dialectic I develop an ethics of responsibility which, by the very nature of the human ontology conceptualized, rejects as inadequate the notions of community deconstructed in this text. Moreover, I ground this human ethics, in what I propose to be humanity's ontological relatedness to the *other*, regardless of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that other.

Appeals to the notion of *community* often do not explicitly articulate the precise meaning of this concept of human relations. Even more rarely do those who invoke this terminology inquire into what it presupposes or implies, conceptually, or what it means concretely to institute a society that embodies "community." The work which follows deconstructs the meaning and implications of this idealized notion of an ethical culture. Yet, consistent with deconstructive criticism, it prescribes no alternative view of community. Rather, the work maintains that no view of community, irrespective of its conceptualization, will, in and of itself, be adequate to effect an ethical society. The work puts forth the premise that humankind will achieve neither the community it seeks, nor the ethical society it believes derives from it, without prior consideration of what the author believes are two preemptive criteria for ethical human relations. First, there must be established in humanity a fundamental and concrete basis for engaging in ethical relations. Second, humankind (individually as humans and collectively as society) must develop a sense of that basis for ethical relations.

The paper criticizes the aforementioned conceptualizations of community on both philosophical and ethical grounds. It argues that this idealized social ontology participates in what Derrida and Adorno call the metaphysics of presence--the logic of identity. The text contends that the metaphysics against which these writers argue denigrates the integrity of, and respect for, difference, diversity and distance in society.

A notion of community which privileges face-to-face social relations, in disregard of others whose faces are not proximately present, falsely presumes that subjects can understand one another as they understand themselves. This presupposition denies the integrity of diversity and heterogeneity in the context of intersubjective relations. Moreover, the yearning for such community relies on the same desire for social oneness and identity in society that undergirds ethnic chauvinism, political sectarianism, and racism.

Insofar as the notion of an ethical society entails promoting a model of face-to-face relations (to the exclusion of nonface-to-face relations) as a social ideal, it devalues temporal and spatial distance. A society that conceptualizes proximal, unmediated face-to-face relations as the ideal of social consociation is falsely conceived as "ideal" in several ways. First, it fails to recognize that, absent a fundamental and concrete basis in humankind for establishing ethical relations, alienation and diremption occur not only in mediated, distant social relations but can and do exist in immediate face-to-face relationships. Second, it fails to address ethics with respect to the social and political relations between those proximately relating face-to-face communities which are not, of necessity, proximate or face-to-face with all others.

The text completes its deconstruction of the idealized notions of community discussed by demonstrating that such conceptualizations totalize and detemporalize its conception of social life. This vestige of modernity sets up a dichotomy which poorly conceives the dialectic between "authentic" and "inauthentic" social relations. Such notions detemporalize their understanding of social change by positing the "authentic" society as the categorical and unequivocal negation of existing society. These idealized notions of community thus provide no understanding of the move from *what is* in the world to *what should (and perhaps) could be.* The text claims that the transition from here to there is rooted in a dialectical, developmental understanding of the contradictions and potentialities latent in existing society.

In place of the idealized notions of community critiqued, the work elaborates an eductive dialectic to develop an ontological ethics of responsibility to and with the *other* as a basis for conceptualizing ethical relations in society. The dialectical thinking employed aims to articulate the inherent logic of an entity's or phenomenon's development--the point from whence it came, its current status, and where by its immanent developmental logic it should proceed.

The text situates its ground for ethics in what the author calls a sense of ontological relatedness. The work discusses this *sense-of-relatedness* from three perspectives. First, it elaborates a philosophic naturalism to establish in humankind an ontological basis for ethical relations. Second, it claims that humankind *is* in the world, existentially, who and what it understands itself

to be with respect to the depth with which it apprehends a sense of its ontological relatedness to all that there is. Third, it argues that this sense-of-relatedness may be understood as a religious sensibility.

The work utilizes dialectical reasoning to assert that humanity is developmentally related to all that there is in the cosmos. It argues that the development of human consciousness in the cosmos implies the emergence in nature of a 'response-ability' to be self-determining (and thus free) with respect to its own natural and social evolution. The text contends that because this ability to respond in nature is manifest in *human* nature, *nature rendered self-conscious* has an ontological responsibility to the other. The work explains how our response-ability means humans have a fundamental responsibility to be in the world in ways that foster (rather than impede) natural and social evolution. It is a responsibility to actualize the latent, but no less real, potentialities in nature for self-realization and thus freedom (self-determination).

If nature rendered self-conscious is to actualize the potentialities for what should (and could) be in the world, the work argues that it must strive to effect natural and social well-being with respect to all others in its human and nonhuman relations. To this end, a depth apprehension of reality with respect to who and what *human* nature understands itself to be (individually as humans and collectively as society) must be brought to self- and social-consciousness, respectively. The naturalistic argument is completed by demonstrating the dialectical relationship between humankind's self-conscious ability to respond and its relatedness-based responsibility to

engage in ethical relations. The work contends that a sense of ontological relatedness to all others must become in nature rendered self-conscious an appreciation for, and existential embodiment of, human nature's responsibility to all others. Moreover, it asserts that this responsibility exists irrespective of the context of that relatedness, whether as human-to-human, human-to-nonhuman, face-to-face, or nonface-to-face.

After establishing a philosophical basis for ethical relations in humanity, as well as the need for humankind to become consciously aware of and embody a sense-of-relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos, the text turns its attention to the religious dimension of the author's argument. In this regard the work of the nineteenth century philosopher of religion, Friedrich Schleiermacher, is pivotal. In what is a phenomenological consideration of the nature of the self, Schleiermacher advances the thought that the self is an immediate connectedness to that which is more than the self but not heteronymous to the self. The work suggests that such a conceptualization of the self-in-relation may be interpreted as an articulation of a sense of ontological relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos, including that which is experienced as more than but not separate from the self, which Schleiermacher called--God.

The text completes the final argument in the thesis by moving beyond Schleiermacher's conceptualization of the self-in-relation. The idea is advanced that the developmental notion of humankind's natural ontological relatedness to and with all that there is in the cosmos, is an ethical ground for conceptualizing not only human and nonhuman nature, but Schleiermacher's

God, as intrinsically a part of who and what we are. If such a conceptualization is valid, the text concludes, then two things may be inferred. First, irrespective of how we conceptualize the notion of community, (human) nature rendered self-conscious will actualize its potentialities for self-realization and freedom only to the extent that it more deeply apprehends a sense of its ontological relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos--including that which is more than the self, but not separate from the self. Second, this sense-of-relatedness which binds us ethically to each other and the world can be understood as a religious sensibility.

Chapter 1: Deconstructing the Logic of Identity

Western conceptualization of thought, as expressed both in philosophical and other theoretical writing, as well as frequently in everyday speech, exhibits what Jacques Derrida calls a "metaphysics of presence," a "logic of identity."[1] Derrida understands this conceptualization to be a metaphysics in that it consists in a desire to think things together as a unity, to formulate a representation of a whole, a totality.[2] This metaphysics seeks the unity of the thinking subject with the object thought, such that conceptually grasping the object would be a grasping of the real.[3] The desiderata for unity seeks to think everything that *is* as a whole. It endeavors to describe even existential ontologies within society, such as social and political relations, as a totality, a whole, a system.[4] Furthermore, such totalization need not be circumscribed within the context of synchronic conceptualization. A teleological conceptualization of a process likewise exhibits the logic of identity, inasmuch as the end conceptually organizes the process into a unity.[5]

The desire to bring things into unity, notes Derrida, generates a logic of hierarchical opposition. The move to define an identity, a closed totality, always depends on excluding some elements; it separates that which is construed to be *in* (the pure) from that which is construed to be *out* (the impure).[6] Both Derrida and Adorno contend that to bring particular things under a universal essence, for example, depends on determining some attribute of particulars as accidental, lying outside the essence (the pure).[7] Any definition or category creates an inside-outside dichotomy; and the logic

of identity seeks to maintain those borders firmly established.[8] The metaphysics of presence has in the history of Western thought generated a significant number of mutually exclusive, dichotomous oppositions; moreover, these dyads (subject-object, mind-body, culture-nature, male-female, etc.) have provided the foundation for entire philosophies.[9] In this metaphysical tradition the first of these terms is elevated and thus valued over the second; it designates that which it understands to be rational, irrational, over, under, above, below, superior, inferior.[10] Western metaphysical thinking makes distinctions and formulates representations by relying on such dichotomies. In this regard one side designates that which is valued--the pure, authentic, good. While the other delineates that which is devalued--the impure, inauthentic, bad.[11]

The logic of identity attempts to understand the subject, the individual, as a self-identical unity.[12] Modern philosophy, beginning with Descartes, is particularly preoccupied with the unity of consciousness and its immediate presence to itself.[13] The tradition of transcendental philosophy from Descartes through Kant to Husserl conceives the subject as both a unity and an origin. Furthermore, it conceives it as the self-same starting point of thought and meaning, whose signification is never beyond its grasp.[14]

There are two types of criticisms in which Derrida, Adorno, Julia Kristeva, and others engage with respect to the metaphysics of presence.[15] These critics contend that any effort by a logic of identity to bring things into unity is doomed from its inception. The claim to totality asserted by this metaphysics is incoherent; as was mentioned previously in this work, the

process of totalizing, itself, expels various aspects of the entities seeking identity.[16] Some of the experienced particulars are expelled to an unaccounted-for, "accidental" realm. Derrida calls this region of exclusion the "supplement;" Adorno terms it the "addendum."[17] The effort to generate totality, as the logic of hierarchical opposition demonstrates, creates not unity, but dichotomy: inside and outside. The identity or essence sought receives its meaning and purity only through its relation with its outside.[18] Derrida's method of deconstruction, consists of illustrating how, with respect to a category or concept, what it may claim to exclude is actually implicated in it by virtue of what it claims not to be. Dialectical reasoning, of course, makes a similar claim. The method of deconstruction, or what Adorno calls *negative dialectic*, however, rejects the Hegelian method of dialectic.[19] For Hegelian dialectic is itself modernity's epitome of a totalizing impulse; its logic brings the oppositions generated by metaphysical thought into ultimate unity within a totality.[20]

A second criticism of the metaphysics of presence is that it represses or denies difference.[21] The latter expression has come to carry much meaning in the philosophical work of post-structuralists like Derrida. In the context in which Derrida and other post-structuralists use it, difference means the irreducible particularity of entities.[22] This nonreductive nature of entities makes it impossible to reduce them to commonness or bring them into unity without remainder. Such particularity derives from the contextuality of existence; hence, the being of a thing and what is said about it is a function of its contextual relation to other things.[23]

Adorno in particular contrasts the logic of identity with entities in their particularity, which for him also means their materiality.[24] Idealism, which Adorno believes exhibits the logic of identity, withdraws from such particularity and constructs unreal essences.[25]

Derrida defines difference primarily in terms of the functioning of language. In this regard he expresses difference with respect to the irreducible spatiotemporality of language.[26] The sign signifies, has meaning, by its place in the chain of signs, by differing from other signs. Any moment of signification also defers; it holds in abeyance, any completion of its meaning.[27] Any utterance has a multiplicity of meanings and directions of interpretation and development in which it can be taken.[28] For Derrida, the metaphysics of presence seeks to detemporalize and despatialize this signifying process. It thereby invents the illusion of pure present meaning which eliminates the referential relation.[29] This conceptualization of pure present meaning is idealism: conceiving the being and truth of things as lying outside time and mutability.[30]

Feminist theorist Julia Kristeva also deals with this issue of difference; however, she employs the term *heterogeneity*, rather than Derrida's linguistic construction, *differance*.[31] Like Derrida and Adorno, Kristeva contends that the logic of identity represses; it represses heterogeneity. She too draws attention to language and the process of signification, especially with respect to the speaking subject. Moreover, and going beyond Derrida and Adorno's linguistic emphasis, Kristeva associates heterogeneity with the body as well as language.[32]

The subject is never a unity, but always in process, for Kristeva. It is always producing meaning through the play between the literal and figurative, representational and musical aspects that any speech simultaneously carries.[33]

I concur with writers like Anthony Giddens and Fred Dallmayr.[34] The deconstructive critique of the metaphysics of presence engaged in by Derrida, Adorno, Kristeva and others has important implications with respect to the philosophical underpinnings of our economic, political, and social relations. Moreover, the claim by these writers that we must attend to the irreducibility of difference in society has important implications for social-political theory and practice.[35]

I contend that the idealized notion of *community* discussed in this text exhibits the desire for unity that writers such as Giddens, Dallmayr and others find in the metaphysics of presence. Community usually appears as one side of a dichotomy in which individualism is the opposing pole. Yet, as with any such opposition, each side is determined by its relation to the other.[36] I argue herein that the idealized notion of community presented in this work exhibits a totalizing impulse and denies difference or heterogeneity in three primary ways. First, it denies the difference within and between subjects. Second, in privileging face-to-face unmediated relations (to the veritable exclusion of nonface-to-face mediated relations) as a social ideal, it devalues temporal and spatial distancing within society. Third, in radically opposing as "inauthentic" the nonface-to-face social relations of alienated

society with the ostensibly "authentic" face-to-face social relations of community, it detemporalizes the process of social change. It creates a static before and after structure with no conceptualization of a way to get from *here* to *there*, from the irrational *what is* of existing society to what could and perhaps should be in a rational society.

To this end of achieving what could and perhaps should be in society, I argue for the need to establish within the context of humankind (as nature rendered self-conscious) a philosophical underpinning for ethical human-to-human (social) and human-to-nonhuman (ecological) relations in the world. In this regard I proffer an understanding of ethics that is both naturalistic and dialectical, centered in the development of consciousness in nature and response-ability in the cosmos. The naturalistic dialectic described articulates a basis for an ethics of human responsibility to and with the *other*, grounded in a sense of ontological relatedness to the other, irrespective of whether that other is human or face-to-face.

Chapter 2: A Dichotomy: Community/Individualism

Critics of Western liberalism frequently invoke a conception of community which projects an alternative to the individualism and abstract formalism they attribute to liberal thought.[37] The alternative social ontology which they put forth rejects the notion that persons are separate, self-contained, whole discreet entities. Moreover, it repudiates the liberal premise that these allegedly autonomous entities each have the same formal rights--the right to exclude and keep others out, separate.[38] The critics of liberalism find, in their idea of community, a social ontology which sees the attributes of a person as contemporaneous with the society in which he or she lives.

For such writers, the notion of the ideal ethical society evokes the absence of the self-interested competitiveness of modern capitalist society.[39] In this idealized notion of community, critics of Western liberalism find an alternative to the abstract, formal methodology of modern liberalism. Existing in community with others, they suggest, entails more than merely respecting their rights; rather it involves attending to and sharing in the particularity of their needs, interests, and desires.[40]

In his critique of liberal social justice theorist, John Rawls, communitarian Michael Sandel argues that liberalism's emphasis on the primacy of justice presupposes a self as an antecedent unity; moreover, he contends that such a 'liberal' self exists prior to its desires and goals, whole unto itself, separated and bounded.[41] The Rawlian perspective, Sandel argues, is unreal and incoherent as a conceptualization of the self. It is better replaced, he contends, by a constitutive conception of self as the product of an identity it shares with others.[42]

> And insofar as our constitutive self-understandings comprehend a wider subject than the individual alone, whether a family or a tribe or a city or class or nation or people, to this extent they define a community in the constitutive sense. And what marks such a community is not merely a spirit of benevolence, or the prevalence of communitarian values, or even certain 'shared final ends' alone, but a common vocabulary of discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings within which the opacity of persons is reduced if never finally dissolved. Insofar as justice depends for its preeminence on the separateness and boundedness of persons in the cognitive sense, its priority would diminish as that opacity faded and those community values deepened.[43]

In contemporary political discourse, for the most part, the notion of the idealized community arises in this manner as a response to the individualism perceived as the prevailing theoretical position. It arises as well as a result of the alienation and fragmentation perceived as the prevailing concrete condition of society.[44] Community so understood appears as one-half of an oppositional dichotomy: individualism-community, separated self-shared self.[45] In this opposition each term comes to be defined by its negative relation to the other, thus existing in a logical dependency. I suggest, however, that this dichotomous opposition is integral to modern political and social theory; it is not, I contend, an alternative to it.

The dichotomy, individualism-community, receives one of its expressions in bourgeois culture via the socially constructed opposition between masculinity and femininity. Western culture identifies masculinity with the values associated with individualism: self-sufficiency, competition, separation, the formal equality of rights.[46] The culture identifies femininity,

on the other hand, with the values associated with community: affective relations of care, mutual aid, and cooperation.[47] Psychologist Carol Gilligan has in the past decade posed this opposition between masculine and feminine in terms of the opposition between two orientations on moral reasoning.[48] The "ethic of rights" that Gilligan takes to be typical of masculine thought emphasizes the separation of selves and the sense of fair play necessary to mediate the competition among such separated selves. The "ethic of care," on the other hand, which she takes to be typical of feminine thinking, emphasizes relatedness among persons; it is an ethic of sympathy and affective attention to particular needs, rather than formal measuring of each according to universal rules.[49] Gilligan's ethic of care thus articulates one-half of a socially constructed dichotomy. It expresses the relationality of the idealized notion of community as opposed to the atomistic formalism of liberal individualism.

The opposition between individualism and community, then, is homologous with and often implies the oppositional dichotomies masculine-feminine, public-private, calculative-affective, instrumental-aesthetic. Moreover, these dualities are typically present in modern social and political thought.[50] This binary thinking has always valued the first term in these oppositions more highly than the second.[51] In addition it has provided them with a dominant institutional expression in society.[52] For that reason asserting the value of community over individualism, the feminine over the masculine, the aesthetic over the instrumental, the relational over the

competitive, does have some critical force with respect to the dominant ideology and its attendant social relations. The oppositions themselves, however, arise from and belong to bourgeois culture. For this reason merely reversing their valuation does not constitute a genuine alternative to capitalist patriarchal society.[53]

Like most oppositional dichotomies, individualism and community have a common logic underlying their polarity. As Derrida and others have demonstrated, this shared denominator makes it possible for them to define each other negatively. Each entails a denial of difference as well as a desire to bring multiplicity and heterogeneity into unity, although in opposing ways. Liberal individualism denies difference by positing the self as an autonomous, self-sufficient unity, not defined by or in need of anything or anyone other than itself.[54] Its formalistic ethic of rights denies difference by leveling all such separated individuals under a common measure of rights.[55] The idealized notion of community, on the other hand, denies difference by positing fusion rather than separation as the social ideal.[56] Community advocates conceive the social subject as a relation of unity composed by identification and symmetry among individuals within a totality. As Sandel puts it, the opacity of persons tends to dissolve as ends, vocabulary, and practices become identical.[57] This orientation represents an impulse to visualize persons in unity with each other in a shared whole, a totality.

As is the case with many dichotomies, in this one the possibilities for

social ontology and social relations appear to be exhausted in the two categories juxtaposed. For many writers, the rejection of individualism logically entails asserting community, and conversely any rejection of community means that one necessarily embraces liberal individualism. This tendency to default to one or the other position can be seen in the literature of the last couple of decades which deals with social and political theory. The debate which ensued between social theorist Jean Bethke Elshtain and socialist writer Barbara Ehrenreich with respect to individualism and community is instructive.[58] In their discussion about this debate, Sara Evans and Harry Boyte claim that Ehrenreich promotes individualism because she rejects the appeal to community that Elshtain makes.[59] The plausibility of the idea that there could be other constructions of social organization is not even conceptualized. For Evans and Boyte, all possibilities have been reduced by binary thought to the mutually exclusive dichotomous opposition between individualism and community.

For many radical social theorists, however, the thorough-going opposition of individualism and community has begun to deteriorate.[60] Contrary to reactionary appeals to community which consistently assert the subordination of individual aims and values to the collective, many radical theorists assert otherwise. They contend that community itself consists in the respect for and fulfillment of individual aims and capacities. The modern distinction between individualism and community thus gives way to a dialectic in which each becomes a necessary condition for the other.

Chapter 3: Difference Devalued: Subjects

In her interpretation of Marx's ontology, social theorist Carol Gould formulates a conception of community that is dialectical. In it she treats community as the transcended synthesis of both sociality and individuality.[61] This ideal society of the future is realized as the third stage of a process of social evolution. The first stage is a communal society in which the individual is subjected to the collective, and the second is the individualist society of capitalist alienation. Gould comments:

> The separate subjects who are related to each other only as objects, namely, as beings for another, now recognize themselves. Therefore they recognize each other as subjects, and the unity between subjects and objects is reestablished in this recognition. The subjects are then related to each other not as alien external others, but as aspects of a common species subject. The relations are therefore internal, since they are the interrelations within this common or communal subject which is now no longer made up of discrete individuals in external relations, but rather of individuals who are unified in their common subjectivity....The subjects are therefore mutually interdependent and the relations between them are internal because each subject is what it is--a subject--through its relation to the other, namely, through being recognized as a subject by the other. These individuals therefore form a communal but differentiated subject that expresses itself in and through each individual. The whole or unity that is reconstituted in these internal relations among the individuals is thus mediated or differentiated by their individuality, but unified by their commonality.[62]

According to Derrida, dialectical logic like Gould's represses difference. Yet it does so not by bringing multiplicity under a simple universal; rather it puts closure on the process of exteriorization.[63] This closure emerges in the concept of a whole or totality within which opposites (differences) are reconciled and balanced.[64]

Like many other expressions of this ideal of community, Gould's conception of community functions through a totalizing desire to reconcile the differences of subjects.

The communitarian ideal participates in the metaphysics of presence because it conceives that subjects no longer need be exterior to one another.[65] They need no longer outrun one another in directions they do not mutually understand and affirm. Moreover, the ideal extends this mutuality to its conception of the ethical society as a telos, an end to the conflict and violence of human interaction. Community, in this instance, is conceived as a totality in two ways. It has no ontological exterior, since it realizes the unity of general will and individual subjectivity. Furthermore, it has no historical exterior, for there is no further stage to traverse.[66]

While she does not specifically speak of her notion of social ideal as community, social theorist Seyla Benhabib expresses a similar ideal in the context of standpoint theory.[67] In this conceptualization people relate to one another through reciprocal recognition of subjectivities as a particular standpoint of moral autonomy. Benhabib contends that liberalism holds a conceptualization of moral autonomy which she refers to as the "standpoint of the generalized other." Abstracting from the difference, desires and feeling among persons, the standpoint of the generalized other regards all as sharing a common set of formal rights and duties. In contradistinction to the latter notion, Benhabib puts forth a concept called the "standpoint of the

concrete other." This conceptualization views each person in his or her concrete individuality.[68]

> In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from what continues our commonality and seek to understand the other as he/she understands himself/herself. We seek to comprehend the needs of the other, their motivations, what they search for and what they desire. Our relations to the other is governed by the norm of *complementary reciprocity*: each is entitled to expect and assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents and capacities. Our differences in this case complement rather than exclude one another.[69]

Benhabib's notion of the standpoint of the concrete other expresses community as the mutual and reciprocal understanding of persons, relating internally, as Gould puts it, rather than externally. Many other writers express a similar ideal of relating to other persons internally, understanding them from their point of view.[70] In a quotation by Michael Sandel cited previously, Sandel poses the elimination of the opacity of other persons as the ideal for community.[71] Isaac Balbus represents the aim of radical politics and the establishment of community as the overcoming of the "otherness" of other in reciprocal recognition.[72] Roberto Unger articulates the ideal of community as the political alternative to personal love.[73] In community persons relate to one another as concrete individuals who recognize themselves in each other because they have shared purposes. The conflict between the demands of individuality and the demands of sociability disappears in mutual sympathy.[74] Dorothy Allison proposes an ideal of

community that is characterized by a "shared feeling of belonging and merging," with an "ecstatic sense of oneness."[75]

The formulations of consociality delineated above seek to understand community as a unification of particular persons through the sharing of subjectivities. With respect to these conceptions of community persons cease to be opaque, other and not understood; rather, they become fused, mutually sympathetic and allegedly understanding of one another as they understand themselves. Yet such an ideal of shared subjectivity, or the transparency of subjects to one another, denies difference in the sense of disregard for the basic asymmetry of subjects. As Hegel first brought into sharp relief and Sartre's analysis deepened, persons necessarily transcend each other because subjectivity is negativity.[76] The regard of the other upon me is always objectifying. Other persons never see the world from my perspective; thus, I am always faced with an experience of myself I do not have in witnessing the other's objective grasp of my words, deeds and person.

This mutual intersubjective transcendence, of course, makes sharing between people possible--a fact that Sartre notices less than Hegel.[77] The sharing, however, is never complete mutual understanding and reciprocity. Moreover, sharing is fragile. The other person may at the next moment understand my words differently from the way I meant them or carry my actions to consequences I do not intend. The same difference that makes sharing between us possible also makes misunderstanding, rejection,

withdrawal, and conflict always possible conditions of social being.

The notion that each person can understand the other as he or she understands himself or herself, or that we can know one another as subjects with respect to each other's concrete needs and desires, begins with certain presuppositions. First one must presuppose that a subject can know himself or herself; second, we must presume an ability to express that knowledge accurately and unambiguously to others. Such a concept of self-knowledge retains the Cartesian understanding of subjectivity basic to the modern metaphysics of presence.[78] The idea of the self as a unified subject of desire and need, and an origin of assertion and action, has been persuasively called into question by contemporary philosophers.[79] To explicate my understanding of this I will rely on the work of theorist Julia Kristeva.[80]

Without elaborating the linguistic detail in which she couches her notion of the subject-in-process, I will summarize briefly the general idea of her argument. Kristeva relies on a psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious to assert that subjectivity is heterogeneous and decentered.[81] Consciousness, meaning, and intention are only possible because the subject-in-process slips and surpasses its intentions and meanings. Any utterance, for example, not only has a literal meaning, but is laden with ambiguities. The latter are embodied in gesture, tone of voice, and rhythm which contribute to the heterogeneity of its meaning without being intended.[82] The same is true with respect to actions and interactions with other persons. What I say and

do always has a multiplicity of meanings, ambiguities and plays, and these are not always coherent.[83]

Since the subject is not a unity, it cannot be present to itself and know itself.[84] We cannot always know what we mean, need, want or desire since these aspects of our subjectivity do not arise from some ego as origin. Often we express desire in gesture or tone of voice, without meaning to do so. Consciousness, speech, expressiveness are possible only if the subject always surpasses itself, and is thus necessarily unable to comprehend itself. Subjects all have multiple desires that do not cohere; they attach layers of meanings to objects without always being aware of each layer or their connections. Consequently, an individual subject is a play of differences--of signifiers--that cannot be comprehended.[85]

If the subject is heterogeneous process, unable to be present to itself, then it logically follows that subjects cannot be themselves transparent; they cannot be wholly present to one another. If each subject, therefore, escapes its own comprehension and for that reason cannot fully express to another its needs and desires, then necessarily each subject also escapes sympathetic comprehension by others. One cannot understand another as that other understands himself or herself, because he or she does not completely understand himself or herself. Indeed, because other people's expression to me may outrun their own awareness or intention, I may understand certain aspects of them more fully than they.

Gould appeals to the ideal of "shared subjectivity" as an alternative

to the commodification of persons she finds characteristic of capitalist domination. Her conceptualization suggests that only if persons understood one another "internally," as she puts it, would such domination be eliminated.[86] With regard to her position, one should be clear. This thesis does not deny that current social relations in Western society are replete with domination and exploitation. Yet conceiving the elimination of these conditions in terms of an impossible ideal of shared subjectivity, as Gould does, can tend to deflect attention from more concrete analysis of, and action with respect to, the conditions of their elimination.

Chapter 4: Difference Devalued: Distance

Many political theorists who put forward an ideal of community specify small-group, face-to-face relations as essential to the realization of that ideal. Peter Manicas expresses a version of the ideal of community that includes this face-to-face specification:

> Consider an association in which persons are in face-to-face contact, but where the relations of persons are not mediated by "authorities," sanctified rules, reified bureaucracies or commodities. Each is prepared to absorb the attitudes, reasoning and ideas of others and each is in a position to do so. Their relations, thus, are open, immediate and reciprocal. Further, the total conditions of their social lives are to be conjointly determined with each having an equal voice and equal power. When these conditions are satisfied and when as a result, the consequences and fruits of their associated and independent activities are perceived and consciously become an object of individual desire and effort, then there is a democratic community.[87]

Roberto Unger argues that community requires face-to-face interaction among members within a plurality of contexts. To understand other people and to be understood by them in our concrete individuality, we must not only work together but play together, take care of children together, grieve together, and so on.[88] Christian Bay envisions the ethical society as founded upon small face-to-face communities of direct democracy and multi-faceted interaction.[89] Michael Taylor specifies that in a community, relations among members must be direct and many-sided. Like Manicas, he asserts that relations are direct only when they are unmediated by representatives, leaders, bureaucrats, state institutions, or codes.[90] While Gould does not

specify face-to-face relations as necessary, some of her language suggests that community can only be realized in such face-to-face relations. In the institutionalization of democratic socialisms, she says, "social combination now becomes the *immediate* subjective relations of mutuality among individuals. The relations again become *personal* relations as in the precapitalist stage, but no longer relations of domination and no longer mediated, as in the second stage, by external objects." [91]

There are several problems with the privileging of face-to-face relations by such theorists of community. This is especially so when it is done without consideration for, if not the veritable exclusion of, those nonface-to-face others in the world distanced from us by space and time. Privileging social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) relations that are proximate to us, without considering these same types of relations that are more distant from us in space and time, is presumptuous in several ways. First, it presumes an illusory ideal of unmediated social relations; second, it wrongly identifies mediation with alienation. Moreover, privileging face-to-face relations to the detriment of nonface-to-face relations denies difference in the sense of time and space distancing. It implies a model of the ethical society as consisting only of proximately related, decentralized small units, which is both unrealistic and not necessarily desirable politically. The privileging of face-to-face, proximate relations avoids the sociopolitical question of the relations among the

decentralized communities consequent in this model.

The advocates of community previously cited give primacy to face-to-face presence because they claim that only under those conditions can social relations be immediate. In couching their expressions in terms of social relations that are *immediate*, I understand them to mean several things. First they are direct, personal relations, in which each understands the other in her or his individuality. This is an extension of the ideal of mutual understanding critiqued in Chapter 3. Second immediacy here also means relations of co-presence in which persons experience a simultaneity of speaking and hearing; moreover, they are in relatively the same space. In other words they have the possibility to move close enough to be in physical contact with one another.[92]

This ideal of the immediate presence of subjects to one another, however, is a metaphysical illusion. Even a face-to-face relation between two people is mediated by voice and gesture, spacing and temporality. As soon as a third person enters the interaction, the possibility arises of the relation between the first two being mediated through the third, and so on. The mediation of relations among persons by speech and actions of still other persons is a fundamental condition of sociality. The richness, creativity, diversity, and potential of a society expand with growth in the scope and means of its media, linking persons across time and distance. The greater the time and distance, however, the greater the number of persons who stand between other persons.

The normative privileging of face-to-face relations in the ideal of community seeks to suppress difference in the sense of the time and space distancing of social processes, which material media facilitate and enlarge. Such an ideal dematerializes its conception of interaction and institutions. For all social interaction takes place over time and across space. Social desire consists in the urge to carry meaning, agency, and the effects of agency beyond the moment and beyond the place. As laboring subjects we separate the moment of production from the moment of consumption. Even societies confined to a limited territory with few institutions and a small population devise means for their members to communicate with one another over distances. They devise means of maintaining their social relationships even though they are not geographically face-to-face. Societies occupy wider and wider territorial fields and increasingly differentiate their activity in space, time, and function. It is a movement that accelerates and takes on qualitatively specific form in modern industrial societies.[93]

I submit that there are no conceptual grounds for considering face-to-face relations as more pure, authentic social relations than relations mediated across time and distance. For both face-to-face and nonface-to-face relations are mediated relations. In both there is as much the possibility of separation and violence as there is communication and consensus. Theorists of community are inclined to privilege face-to-face relations, it seems, because they wrongly identify mediation with alienation. I should at this

juncture clarify what I mean by alienation. The context in which I am using it here is Marxian.

An extended concept of alienation has gained wide currency in twentieth-century philosophy and social theory. Under converging influences from existentialism, the Frankfurt School, humanism and psychoanalysis, the term "alienation" has been used in numerous diagnoses of the maladies of something called "the modern world." Various alleged symptoms of "modernity"--the dichotomies of scientism and irrationalism, atheism and religiosity, individuality and community, intellect and feeling, masculine and feminine etc.--have been encompassed within theories of alienation.

Yet, alienation is not supposed to be a catastrophe striking humanity from outside; it is essentially a perverted, malign, and self-destructive expression of human creativity itself. Alienation has come to mean that people are subject to oppression which is--though they may not recognize it--at least partially of their own making.

The concept of alienation achieved popularity in the context of dialectical materialism--the philosophical interpretation of Marxism. In Marx's early writings, especially the *1844 Manuscripts*, alienation was discussed as an explicit social phenomenon, empirically verifiable. He used the term to refer to the ways in which the human powers of perception, orientation, and creation necessarily become stunted and crippled by the very nature of the industrial organization and by the capitalist economic system. Marx felt that

human beings suffer from alienation to the extent that they do not realize the full potential of their being.

With respect to my use of the term, alienation, it is *Marxian* in the sense that I believe humans do suffer alienation to the extent that we do not realize the full potential of what we could and perhaps should be. It is not, however, *Marxist* in that I advocate neither the teleological culmination of dialectical materialism generally, nor its determinist view specifically, that alienation as a necessary concomitant of capitalism can only be resolved through the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Alienation is a situation in which persons do not have control over their actions, the conditions of their action or the consequences of their action, due to the intervention of other agents.[94] Social mediation is a condition for the possibility of alienation in this sense; media make possible the intervention of agents between the conditions of a subject's action and the action or between a subject's action and its consequences. Thus media make domination and exploitation possible. In modern society the primary structures creating alienation and domination are bureaucracy and commodification of all aspects of human activity, including and especially labor. Both bureaucracy and commodification of social relations depend on complex structures of mediation among a large number of persons.

That mediation is a necessary condition of alienation, however, does not entail the reverse implication: That only by eliminating structures of

mediation do we eliminate alienation. If temporal and spatial distancing are basic to social processes, and if persons always mediate between other persons to generate social networks, then a society of immediacy is impossible. While mediation may be a necessary condition for alienation, it is not sufficient. Alienation is that specific process of mediation in which the actions of some serve the ends of others without reciprocation and without being explicit, and this requires coercion and domination.

Chapter 5: Beyond Dichotomies

By positing a society of immediate face-to-face relations as ideal, community theorists generate a dichotomy between the "authentic" society of the future and the "inauthentic" society we live in. Moreover, they tend to characterize the latter by alienation, bureaucratization, and degradation.[95] Such a dichotomization between the inauthentic society of today and the authentic society in which *community* prevails, however, detemporalizes our understanding of social change. On this understanding, social change and revolution consist in the complete negation of this existing society and the establishment of the truly ethical society. In her scheme of social evolution, Gould conceives of "the society of the future" as the negated sublation of capitalist society. This orientation understands history not as a developmental temporal process, but as divided into two static structures: the before of alienated society and the after of community.[96]

The projection of the ideal of community as the radical, wholly other of existing society denies difference in the sense of the contradictions and ambiguities of social life. We should neither dichotomize the pure and the impure into two separate stages of history, nor treat two kinds of social relations (authentic; inauthentic) as though society could move from one to another without transition. A liberating politics for change should conceive the social process developmentally, as one of evolution. We would in such a process move as a multiplicity of actions and structures which cohere and contradict, as we attempt to transition from the irrational *what is*

of existing society to the rational what could and perhaps should be in the world. The polarization between the impure, inauthentic society of today and the pure, authentic society we seek to institute detemporalizes the process of change. It does so because it fails to articulate how we move from one to the other. If institutional change is possible at all, it must begin by intervening in the contradictions and tensions of existing society. Moreover, no telos of any final ethical society exists. Rather, society understood as a moving and contradictory process implies that change for the better is always possible and always necessary.

The requirement that genuine community embody face-to-face relations without a concomitant consideration for nonface-to-face relations, when taken as a model of the ethical society, carries a specific vision of social organization. Since the ideal of community demands that relations between members be direct and Janus-faced, the ideal society is composed of small locales, populated by a small enough number of persons so that each can be personally acquainted with all others. For most writers, this implies that the ideal social organization is decentralized, with small-scale industry and local markets. Each community aims for economic self-sufficiency, and each democratically makes its own decisions about how to organize its working and playing life.

Again, I wish to be clear regarding the above. I question neither the desirability nor the preferability of small face-to-face, democratically

operated, decentralized communities, oriented toward economic self-sufficiency, and political autonomy. I do not question the merit of such notions of community in which individuals have personal acquaintance with one another and interact in a plurality of contexts. The intimacy of living with a few others in the same household has unique dimensions that are humanly valuable; thus, existing with others in communities of mutual friendship and cooperation has specific characteristics of warmth and sharing that are to be valued. Furthermore, there is little question that capitalist patriarchal society discourages and destroys such communities of mutual cooperation, just as it squeezes and fragments families. But recognizing the specific value of face-to-face relations is quite a different matter from proposing them (in contradistinction to nonface-to-face relations) as the organizing principle of a whole society.

Such a model of the ethical society which privileges face-to-face over nonface-to-face relations devalues the latter by diminishing the value of relations mediated through distance and time. This implied devaluation of nonface-to-face relations creates a problem which arises from the model of face-to-face community taken as a political goal. The model of the ethical society as usually articulated leaves completely unaddressed the question of how such face-to-face communities are to relate politically and socially to other face-to-face communities. This is a significant problem given the sense of diminished value with which the "ideal community" views all those

other face-to-face communities with whom they are *not* in direct, face-to-face relation.

Frequently, the ideal projects a level of self-sufficiency and decentralization which suggests that proponents envision few relations among the decentralized communities except those of friendly visits. But surely it is unrealistic to assume that such decentralized communities need not engage in relations of exchange involving resources, goods, and culture. Even if one accepts the notion that a radical restructuring of society in the direction of a just and humane society entails people living in small democratically organized units of work and neighborhood, this does not address the important political question: How will the relations among these communities be organized so as to foster justice and preclude domination between communities? And this is an especially significant problem in face-to-face models of community, given the sense of diminished value with which such communities hold those *others* with whom they are not in face-to-face relation. When we raise this political question the philosophical and pragmatic importance of mediation reemerges. The political must be conceived as involving social relations between friends, acquaintances, *and* strangers who do not understand one another in a subjective and immediate sense, and who relate necessarily across time and distance.

Chapter 6. Naturalism: Its Nonreductive *Nature*

The first five chapters of this work have engaged in a Derridean deconstruction of an idealized notion of the ethical society often articulated by communitarian social and political theorists. This view of the ideal community privileges face-to-face relations without due consideration of the value of nonface-to-face relations. Moreover, it assumes that the *face* implied in these relations is not only to be privileged proximately, but is necessarily human. I develop in this and in succeeding chapters a philosophical basis in humankind for an ontological ethics of responsibility *to* the other, irrespective of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that *other*. I situate this ethics in what I refer to as an ontological relatedness to and with all that there is in nature or the cosmos. I claim that humankind is in the world, existentially, who and what it understands itself to be, ontologically, with respect to the depth with which it apprehends a sense of its ontological relatedness to all that there is. Furthermore, I discuss this *sense-of-relatedness* from two perspectives. First, I elaborate a philosophic naturalism to establish in humanity a basis for this sense. Second, I argue that this sense-of-relatedness may be construed as a religious sensibility.

Naturalism, as a philosophic discourse, has multiple roots. It is in many ways an expression of characteristics that for centuries have certainly played a central role in American culture. Consider the influence of philosophic materialism, natural science, humanism, and "free thinking" in the period of

the American Enlightenment and the Revolution.[97] Yet naturalism also has roots in the history of Western philosophy as early as the classical Greeks, especially Aristotle. The Greeks were interested in what makes something what it is, in what causes events to happen as they do and objects to be as they are.[98] Plato gave one possible answer. The causes of things are ideal Forms, or universals, which in Plato's view exist independently of any events or objects and reside in their own "realm."[99] Aristotle agreed with Plato that there are ideal Forms that serve as causes of particulars, but he disagreed with Plato about their independence. Universals, Aristotle thought, do not exist independently of particulars, or, to put it another way, there is no "realm" of Forms outside or independent of nature.[100] Aristotle further contributed to a naturalist perspective by arguing, unlike Plato, that Forms are not the only causes of things. In order to understand what causes an event or object one must also look to its relations with other natural events and objects. Specifically one must look to the material of which it is constituted and to what Aristotle called the efficient cause, the mediate or immediate agent of change.[101] In Aristotle, not only were Forms brought into nature, but natural processes were accorded much greater significance.

At the opening of the modern period, that is, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the most influential source for twentieth-century naturalism was Baruch Spinoza.[102] His importance derives primarily from his rejection of Descartes' rigid distinction between material and mental

substance, and from his alternative view that there is in fact only one substance, which he interchangeably called "nature" or "God."[103] This position expresses two distinctive traits of philosophic naturalism. First, by referring to substance as God or nature, Spinoza rejected the distinction between nature and anything outside of nature, between the natural and the supernatural. Whatever exists is no more or less an aspect of nature than anything else. Or in Spinoza's own technical vocabulary, "substance has infinite attributes."[104] Second, in treating matter and mind as natural, as attributes of substance, Spinoza asserted the continuity of the mental and the physical; he claimed that both are available to the methods we have for inquiry into nature.[105]

Finally, naturalism, and a good deal of the rest of twentieth-century culture, has its roots in the work of Charles Darwin.[106] Darwin's theory had two general relevant implications. First, it undercut the view which had prevailed from antiquity into the middle of the nineteenth century; behind the changes in nature there had to be something fixed and finished, essences which themselves did not change.[107] Second, and no less important, Darwin demonstrated by example that reliable knowledge of changing, developing nature is possible without recourse to eternal forms, without anything fixed and final.[108] Aristotle had brought Plato's Forms down to earth; Darwin eliminated them altogether.

From this brief account of its background in Western philosophy, in

American thought and culture, and in Darwin, we can begin to see some of the defining characteristics of naturalism. Among its distinguishing traits is its central philosophic category, or concept, of "nature." Naturalism holds that to one degree or another nature is objective. This means that it has characteristics the content of which is not solely determined by our opinions of them, by our perspectives on them, or by our knowledge of them.[109] We have also already made the point that nature, following Spinoza, consists of whatever there is. Nothing, in other words, is "outside" nature; there is no supernatural realm, which is to say that literally nothing is nonnatural.[110] One of the implications, most significant for understanding human life and activity, of the view that there is nothing "outside" or "other than" nature is that naturalism does not endorse the traditional dichotomy between nature and human being. Human life, including its purposes, aims, meaning, value, and ideals, is wholly natural.[111] The ramifications of this position are immense; it is so because it means that the meaning and value of our lives, and the ethical ideals on which we choose to act, have their source in nature and what is natural, not in the supernatural. As I will demonstrate in this work, it becomes an important project for naturalists like myself to ask how meaning and ideals might arise from human life, rather than descending from some external source of authority outside of, and heteronymous to, humanity.

Naturalism generally, then, holds that whatever might be with respect to

reality is entirely an aspect of nature. Beyond this, however, there has been and remains considerable debate within the discourse of naturalism as to how nature might be understood, or about what nature is. On this question there have been three great traditions in the history of Western philosophy. The first, and traditionally the most influential, has been the view that nature is secondary to an independent supernatural realm of absolute truth and reality. This is the position first given detailed articulation by Plato, and it is the perspective that permeates mainstream European and American monotheistic theology.[112] The second tradition within naturalism is that nature is wholly material in the sense that whatever might exist is reducible to or explainable in terms of matter and material processes. This view was found among the ancient Greek materialists (Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, etc.) and reappeared in Thomas Hobbes and again during the Enlightenment. It has had its proponents in the twentieth century, primarily in the English-speaking world.[113] Naturalism's third traditional conception is that nature includes more than simply matter in motion, and whatever such nonmaterial aspects of nature are, they are neither reducible to matter nor explainable in material terms alone. This is the tradition that stems from Spinoza and in some respects from Aristotle.[114]

The first, Platonic, approach to nature is actually not naturalistic at all; while the second and third are, at least in the sense that it is possible for them to refuse to acknowledge anything beyond nature itself. On these

grounds, naturalism could be said to include traditional, reductive materialism. Twentieth-century naturalism, however, has tended not to take this approach; it has for the most part fallen into the third category. Even here, though, two major strains of thought emerge. One is a form of materialism holding that while nature consists of material and nonmaterial phenomena, matter is the more fundamental in the sense that anything nonmaterial emerges from the material. This view is represented in the work of Roy Wood Sellars and to an extent by John Dewey, Ernest Nagel, and Sidney Hook.[115] The other strain of thought might be called an epistemological pluralism holding that there is more to be found in nature than simply matter; yet it refuses to acknowledge any ultimate or fundamental primacy to any aspect of nature. This view is the more direct descendent of Aristotle, Spinoza, Randall, Buchler, and is to an extent the position embraced by the author of this work.[116]

With respect to its conceptualization of nature, then, naturalism distinguishes itself in two crucial respects. The first, as we have already emphasized, is the rejection of anything other than nature. The other is that in both its "reformed" materialist (using Sellar's terminology) and its pluralist forms, naturalism pursues a conception of nature that avoids reductionism and rejects one of the traditional components of mechanical materialism: strict determinism. Naturalism, whether materialist or pluralist, are likely to regard nature as malleable; while natural processes are in some

respects determined, they are in other respects open. Nature can be described by both law and chance.

Naturalism, therefore, need not be reductive if reductivism means equivalence of any given property to a natural property.[117] Some physicalists have explained how the physical, hence natural, properties of things might determine their other properties without being equivalent to them.[118] This nonreductive determination, also called supervenience or a variety of it, is thus congenial with a high degree of holism and historicity.[119] A nonreductive naturalism can, therefore, combine a monism of entities--the natural ones of which everything is composed--with a pluralism of irreducible or *emergent* properties. Not everything is nothing but a natural thing; nor need naturalism be a totalizing philosophy that accords unconditional primacy to the natural *face* of existence. Indeed, naturalism from this perspective can regard the universe as having religious and moral dimensions that can enjoy an important kind of primacy. So far from exhibiting "reptilian indifference" to human beings and their fate, the universe can be an enchanted place of belonging. This latter understanding of naturalism will be the view I take in articulating dialectical naturalism as an ontological basis for grounding ethics in humankind.

Chapter 7. Dialectical Naturalism: An Ethical Ontology

What do we mean when we speak of nature? How shall we understand humankind in the context of nature? How should culture interact with nature? In the midst of social and ecological dysfunction, responding to these questions is of enormous import. These interrogatives are not esoteric philosophical queries born of metaphysical speculation. The denotations and ethical constructs with which we respond to these queries may ultimately decide whether humankind, individually as humans and collectively as society, will foster or truncate natural and social evolution.

Upon initial inquiry, everyone seemingly understands what we mean when we speak of nature. It is, one might say, the biological and physical environment which surrounds us. Yet stating what is nature becomes more cumbersome when we include the human species as part of that which we construe as *nature*. Can we say that human society with its assortment of cultures and technology--including its various and often conflicting social ideologies and institutions--any less part of nature than that which we refer to as nonhuman nature? Moreover, if human beings are an integral component of nature, are they merely one organic entity among many others; or are they sui generis in ways that place fundamental obligations on them with respect to the balance of nature? Do these responsibilities so attach to humankind that no other aspect of nature (that we know of) may be held accountable for their assumption?

Humankind, however, must become clear not only about "what we mean

by nature." We must develop clarity about who and what we understand ourselves to be (ontologically) with respect to nature; only then can we begin to determine in what ways (existentially), human beings are to be situated within nature and the relations with nature which ought to ensue. Unless we address this inquiry rationally--or at least more fully discuss it in the midst of public discourse--we will lack meaningful direction, ethically, in treating the social and ecological difficulties that plague us. Unless we become clear in our minds as to what we understand nature to be, ontologically, and how humankind (individually as humans and collectively as society) should relate within it and why, we will continue in our present cognitive muddle. Thought, word and deed will cohere neither into clarity of vision nor provide a rational basis for ethical relations which foster rather than impede natural and social evolution.

This chapter develops a philosophical anthropology as a basis for grounding ethics in human ontology. The philosophical anthropology developed is both naturalistic and dialectical. It is naturalistic in that it construes (as did Spinoza) all that there is to be natural; it holds forth no conceptualization of that which is "other than" natural or supernatural. It is dialectical in that along with the hypothetico-deductive argumentation of analytical thought, so characteristic of Western consciousness, eductive reasoning is also employed. The chapter begins the discussion of the philosophical naturalism set forth by first explaining the eductive thought

process so basic to its logic. The text then discusses from whence it came, how it has been employed historically and finally, how it is utilized in the context of dialectical naturalism.[120]

There is a considerable body of literature dating back to classical Greece which provides the basis of an organic form of reason and a developmental interpretation of reality.[121] With few notable exceptions, however, the Platonic dualism of permanence (i.e. identity) and change reverberated in one way or another throughout Western philosophy until the nineteenth century. It was at this juncture that Hegel's logical works largely resolved the paradox; he showed systematically that identity actually expresses itself through change. He articulated this development, to use Hegel's own words, as an elaboration of "unity in difference."[122] The sweeping metanarrative in Hegel's effort has no equal in the history of Western philosophy.[123] Like Aristotle before him, Hegel had an "emergent" interpretation of causality, of how the implicit becomes explicit through the unfolding of its latent form and possibilities.[124]

On an enormous scale, the scope of which encompassed several extensive volumes, Hegel recorded what he viewed to be the essential categories by which reason elaborates reality; moreover, he educed them derivatively in an intelligible continuum that grades into a richly differentiated and increasingly comprehensive whole.

The deductive reasoning of analytical thought, one might suggest,

consists of inferential "if-then" steps, with regard for logical consistency. This reasoning arrives at clearly stated propositions concerning what our sensory experience calls facts. Eduction, on the other hand, fully manifests and articulates the latent possibilities of phenomena. Eductive thought may be understood, therefore, as a phased process in which "if" is not a fixed hypothetical premise but rather a *potentiality*. "Steps" are not mere inferences to be deduced but phases of development. Furthermore, "consistency," is not the laws of logic based on principles of identity, contradiction, and the "excluded middle;" rather it is the immanent process we may more properly call self-development. Finally, "then" is the full actualization of potentiality in its rich, self-incorporative phases of development, differentiation, maturation, and wholeness. The "mature" and "whole," never so complete that they cease to be a potentiality for still further development, represent the eductive rationale for the ontological position advanced in this thesis with respect to dialectical naturalism.[125]

One may construe eductive thinking, therefore, to be a developmental thought process directed toward an exploration of a potentiality's latent and implicit possibilities for being. This dialectical form of reasoning aims to understand the inherent logic of an entity's or phenomenon's development. It attempts to discern the point from which it began, where it is at present, and where by its immanent developmental logic it should (and perhaps could) proceed. Eduction thus attempts to render the latent possibilities

of a phenomenon fully manifest and articulated. Dialectical premises, however, are not random hypotheses; rather they are potentialities that stem from a distinct continuum, with a past, present, and latent future of their own. From these potentialities is educed or brought forth a graded differentiation toward wholeness--without dissolving the richly articulated phases that make up the whole into a vague, diffuse and unarticulated "oneness."

The eductive process with respect to dialectical naturalism focuses on the transitions of a developing phenomenon which emerge from its potentiality to become fully developed and, thus, self-actualized. These transitions, in turn, arise through a process of "contradiction" between a thing as it is (*reality* in the context of the Hegelian *Realitat*), and a thing as it potentially should become (*actuality* in the context of the Hegelian *Wirklichkeit*).[126]

The dialectical naturalism put forth in this thesis asserts that with the advent of a developmental transition of an entity or phenomenon, each new potentiality in a development cumulatively contains its previous phases, albeit transformed. For even as a new development--if and when it is fully actualized--an entity or phenomenon contains the potentiality to become a new actuality. The emergence of organic life out of inorganic nature is such a transition. Life not only emerges from the inorganic, it contains the inorganic within itself; yet, it is clearly more than the inorganic. Together, inorganic and organic nature constitute what one might call in the context

of dialectical naturalism, *nonhuman nature*.[127] The emergence of humankind and society out of nonhuman nature, in turn, is another such developmental transition. Thus, human society contains within itself the natural evolution of its own biological heritage. Yet society goes beyond biological (natural) evolution as such to manifest in what one may call social (cultural) evolution. This human social evolution, which this thesis terms *human nature*, expresses the natural continuity within nature of the development between natural and social evolution.[128]

The cycle of human growth and development is, itself, an appropriate analogy of this eductive developmental process; it incorporates into itself a previous development out of which it arises. Thus the human adult does not simply replace the child he or she once was. Rather, the child is absorbed into and develops beyond the actualized potentiality of embryo, fetus, infancy and adolescence; moreover, barring accidents or genetic dysfunction, it is hopefully actualized further into a fuller, more differentiated adult being. Human development follows an eductive logic that is cumulative; it contains not only the child's biological (genetic) course of growth, but his or her social (epigenetic) development as well.[129]

In examining the process of development, dialectical naturalism is especially interested in *form* and the manner in which organization occurs in inorganic and organic nature.[130] Through its myriad forms of organization,

tensions or "contradictions" emerge in nature. In dialectical naturalism the tensions within nature are a dynamic process that impels self-development. Yet the dialectic of this naturalism is unlike other dialectical approaches which have regarded contradictions as abstractly logical (Hegel) or as determinately materialistic (Marx). Dialectical naturalism conceives contradiction as distinctly natural.[131] The developmental potential in nature for actualizing what could (and perhaps) should be with respect to a phenomenon or entity is grounded neither in mind nor matter, exclusively. Rather, development in nature is eductive; it is open to the possibilities for bringing forth and thus actualizing what could and perhaps should be in nature.

There is in an organic entity a tension between what that entity could potentially be when it is fully actualized (*Wirklichkeit*), and what it is at any given moment before that development is fulfilled (*Realitat*). That which an entity is constituted to become or "should be" (its *actuality*) is implicit as a latent potential within that which it "is" (its *reality*)--the immediate explicit existence at a given moment in its development.[132]

> A thing or phenomenon in dialectical causality remains unsettled, unstable, in tension--much as a fetus ripening toward birth "strains" to be born because of the way it is constituted--until it develops itself into what it "should be" in all its wholeness or fullness. It cannot remain in endless tension or "contradiction" with what it is organized to become without becoming warped or undoing itself. It must ripen into the fullness of its being.[133]

The internal instability of contradiction impels a being or phenomenon toward self-development, whatever it should become, by virtue of the way its potentialities are constituted. Human development is instructive in this regard. Given the potentiality of a child to become an adult, there is a tension that exists between infancy, childhood, adolescence, and youth, until the child's capacities are fully actualized and manifest as a mature being. Certainly its development may be arrested or distorted during any one of these transitional phases. If a developmental distortion of what could and perhaps should be occurs we may say that what eventuates is less than a fully actualized--or in a sense (depending upon the type of dysfunction) a less than rational--perhaps even--"irrational"--human being.[134] Impelled by a dialectical logic (a process that includes its mechanico-chemical aspects, to be sure, in genes, chromosomes and the creation of proteins from nucleic acids), development proceeds. Yet the antecedent is preserved as actualization of potentiality occurs within the various stages of human development. These cumulative transitions of form from inorganic to organic ensembles produce an eductive continuity which contains the natural history of [a child's] development.[135]

Dialectical naturalism, therefore, makes no attempt to efface dualisms like that of mind and body by attempting to conflate the former into the latter.[136] Western culture, especially since Descartes, has conceived of such dichotomies as mind and body as radically separate from one another.

This rending, however, cannot be reconciled by simple reduction of one into the other.[137] A human body without mind can hardly be understood to be conscious. Yet the mind-body distinction has some basis in human ontology in the context of the notion of *emergent properties*.[138] There are philosophers who contend that mind does emerge out of body as something distinct, even as it is part of and remains embedded in the body.[139] Indeed, mind is a socially conditioned but organic differentiation of the body's own development as the evidence of natural evolution reveals.[140] Dialectical naturalism moves beyond the mind-body debate. It does not reject the distinction between the two (reducing mind to body); rather it articulates the eductive development through which human consciousness (as nature rendered self-conscious) has evolved. The relationship between mind and body--their distinctness, as well as mind's dependence on and its origins in the inorganic and organic transitions of nonhuman nature alike--is a *graded* phenomenon. It is not one in which mind and body are rigidly separated into heteronymous dichotomies or collapsed into one another through simple reduction.

We should not, however, in our discussion about dialectical naturalism's developmental logic confuse it with some sort of theory of reduction in which chemistry reduces or collapses into biology.[141] Indeed, development in inorganic nonhuman nature has not been of precisely the same kind that we find in organic human and nonhuman nature. We are able to explain

many biological facts by means of chemistry. Yet the converse does not hold; we cannot explain the principles of chemistry by virtue of biology alone. The history of inorganic nature is a development of reactivity and interactivity; increasingly complex forms arise spontaneously from the interrelated effectivity which comprises the milieu of subatomic physics.[142]

The history of human and nonhuman organic nature is, however, one of active development. Irrespective of how nascent the development, even the simplest unicellular organic forms are actively involved in maintaining their self-identity. They labor to prevent their dissolution into the inorganic environment surrounding them. Furthermore, this occurs even as these forms absorb from that immediately contiguous environment the inorganic and organic substances needed for their self-maintenance. In the evolutionary history of life-forms, nascent self-identity developed into more complex subjectivity and form. Moreover, even greater self-intentionality emerged as these life-forms maintained themselves, modified their environment, and rendered that environment more habitable. It is this elaboration of self-identity that distinguishes organic from inorganic development.[143] Yet despite this increasing subjectivity and intentionality of organic entities, an evolutionary *continuity* remains between the inorganic and organic aspects of human and nonhuman nature. At rudimentary levels of the intentionality of complex organic entities, we discern increasingly complex organizations of organic and inorganic compounds.[144]

There is wisdom in the claim of eighteenth century Enlightenment thinkers like Denis Diderot. The differences, Diderot asserts, between the inorganic and organic worlds--and between the various organic entities--lie in what he calls "the organization of matter."[145]

Eductive, developmental reasoning such as that employed by Diderot had its origins in the *logos* concept of the Presocratic Greeks.[146] Having survived in various forms through the millennia, it blossomed in the nineteenth century German Enlightenment and was elaborated most fully in its time by F.W.G. Hegel. In Hegel dialectical thought conceives of basic, seemingly contradictory logical categories--like "being" and "nonbeing"--as leading paradoxically to the category of "becoming."[147] It was this latter category that, in the history of Western thought, dialectical logic takes as its seminal point of departure; it begins to differentiate *becoming* in the context of what it truly is--*development.* Becoming, with its wealth of logically educed categories in Hegel's logical works, is literally the cumulative history of pure thought.[148] Dialectical reasoning in Hegel describes processes of cumulative change in which the logically prior is partly annulled, incorporated, and transcended by its synthesis as a new category.

Hegel referred to the potentiality of a logical category as that which is implicit, or "in itself" (*an sich)*; he referred to the more developed, articulate category emerging from it as the explicit, or "for itself" (*fur sich).*

Hegel designated the rational fulfillment of a potentiality as its actualization, or "in and for itself" (*an und fur sich*).[149] Owing to its incompleteness or "contradictory" nature in the elaboration of the "whole," the implicit strives, in a sense, to fulfill itself by its own developmental logic. In similar fashion living forms in nature "strive" to grow and develop through the tension which exists between what they are at any given moment and what they should be in their maturity. The process by which the implicit potentiality becomes actualized explicitly is rendered in Hegelian terminology by the difficult-to-translate German word *Aufhebung*, sometimes expressed as "transcendence" or "sublation." In the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, the new category or phase of a development "contradicts" or "negates" the previous one, even as it ultimately incorporates it in a more complete condition.[150] It should be emphasized that contradiction in dialectical reason does not refer to a contradiction between two arbitrarily chosen statements which have no developmental relationship to each other. Rather, dialectical contradiction involves the fulfillment (entelechy) of a potentiality that negates the previous state, absorbs it, and goes beyond it. It is not the juxtaposition of ideas or facts that patently have no connection with each other.

In its Hegelian form, dialectics operates essentially within the realm of thought. Furthermore, Hegel's system invokes a speculative metaphysics in the context of an inexplicable cosmic spirit that culminates in a mystical and

infinite Absolute.[151] Marx's historical dialectic of materialism, in turn, especially as developed by Frederick Engels, reveals a bias toward the relatively mechanistic science of the nineteenth century. We may recall that this materialistic science dealt more with Newtonian matter and motion than with any graded notion of inorganic or organic development of human and nonhuman nature.[152] In contrast to either of these conceptualizations of dialectic, dialectical naturalism is completely informed by the developmental relatedness in nature in both its social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) contexts. Inorganic and organic development of the cosmos remains eductive but strictly naturalistic, without recourse to the Absolute Idealism of Hegel's Spirit (*Geist*) or the materialist narrows of Engel's mechanical kinetics.

To dismiss dialectical reason because of the failings of Hegel's idealism and Engels's materialism, however, would be to lose sight of the coherence that dialectical reason can furnish and its applicability to social and ecological phenomena. This is particularly relevant in the context of an understanding of the cosmos rooted in evolutionary development. Despite Hegel's own prejudices against organic evolution, what stands out amidst the metaphysical and often theological archaisms in his work is his overall eduction of logical categories as the subjective anatomy of a developmental understanding of reality. What is needed is to liberate this type of reason from both the quasi-mystical and narrowly scientistic worldviews that in the

past have made it remote from the living world. We must separate it from Hegel's empyrean, basically antinaturalistic dialectical idealism and the stodgy, often scientistic dialectical materialism of orthodox Marxism. Shorn of both its idealism and its materialism, dialectical reason may be rendered naturalistic and conceived as a naturalistic form of thought.

Dialectical naturalism, therefore, sees development as immanent in the cosmos or nature itself. Nonhuman nature alone, in all its wholeness, richness, self-creativity, and grandeur requires no "supernatural" to explain its being or processes. Unlike Hegelian dialectics, with its recourse to *Geist*, dialectical naturalism does not posit the presence of a spiritual principle in the cosmos; rather it sets forth nature's own self-evolving attributes to explain the existence of life and the inorganic and organic development from whence it came. Nor does dialectical naturalism postulate any metaphysical "Absolute," as Hegelian dialectics does, in which development is completely fulfilled, teleologically, eventuating in the "end of history."[153] Rather, in dialectical naturalism nature or the cosmos remains open-ended with respect to its development and continually self-formative. It remains fluid, spontaneous, organic and free from the predeterminations present in the dialectical tradition which informs it. As a result, there is in dialectical naturalism an important sense in which being (including human being) consists largely of its own natural history; while mind or consciousness (as is true with all phenomena in a naturalistic dialectics) is understood as rooted both in nature and in history.[154]

As a way of reasoning about reality, dialectical naturalism is organic enough to give a more liberatory meaning to seemingly vague words like *relatedness* and *wholeness* without compromising intellectuality. It can answer the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter: What do we mean by nature? How should we interact with it? How should our culture relate with nature? Equally important, dialectical naturalism adds an evolutionary perspective to the thinking process with respect to these questions. And this premise is valid despite Hegel's rejection of natural evolution and Engels's recourse to the mechanistic evolutionary materialism of a century ago. Dialectical naturalism discerns evolutionary phenomena fluidly; yet it does not divest natural evolution of rational interpretation. A dialectic that has been given a naturalistic core, and a truly eductive and, therefore, developmental understanding of reality provides the basis not only for an ontological ethics but of an ethical ontology of human being.

Thus, the logic of dialectical naturalism suggests that natural history is the history of the emergence in nature or the cosmos of subjectivity, consciousness, and self-conscious mind. With respect to the logic of this history, dialectical naturalism argues the following premise. Irrespective of who or what we understand ourselves to be, ontologically, or how we live-out that understanding through our way of being in the world, existentially, we are *intra-related*, developmentally, to all that there is in nature or the cosmos.[155] This logic, as I have herein suggested, attempts to grasp the

cosmos or nature as a developmental phenomenon, within and between its inorganic, organic and social realms.[156] Organic phenomena undergo change, but more importantly, they undergo development and differentiation. They form and re-form their explicit reality of *what is* (Realitat), while actively maintaining their identity until, barring disruption, they actualize their potentialities for *what could (and perhaps) should possibly be* (Wirklichkeit). Since the cosmos, in the context of its evolution is eductively developmental, dialectical naturalism approaches nature as a whole from a developmentally intra-related perspective.[157] Its various realms--inorganic, organic and social--remain distinct from each other; yet they grade into one another.

The logic of dialectical naturalism, however, goes further than the intra-related and graded development of inorganic, organic and social evolution. This logic further asserts that this developmental being-in-relatedness, as an ontological conceptual framework, implies otherness and, therefore, *inter*relatedness in the cosmos. Intentionality of consciousness, Brentano observed, is consciousness of something.[158] In this regard Husserl's notion of intentionality is instructive.[159] A conscious subject, he contends, is not something that first exists and then relates to things in the world. Rather a subject is a being which, inasmuch as it exists in the cosmos, is always already in the presence of an 'other', irrespective of the human or nonhuman nature of that other.[160]

Moreover, being intra-relatedly *of* as well as *in* the cosmos is one of

effectivity: affecting and being affected by nature in both its human and nonhuman form. This ability of nature to affect and be affected by itself extends further the significance of the notion of interrelatedness within nature or the cosmos. Complex interactions occur both within and between human and nonhuman nature. This interrelated effectivity within nature may be conceptualized by briefly considering several theoretical constructs of what some have called the "new physics."[161]

The conceptual framework of the new physics (quantum theory, special relativity, etc.) supported by impressive volumes of experimental data, indicates that an observer cannot observe without affecting what he or she perceives. Observer and observed it seems are interrelated to and with each other in a real and fundamental sense. The exact nature of this interrelation is as yet not completely clear. There is, however, a growing body of evidence to suggest that the modern distinction between the "in here" and the "out there" is perhaps an illusion.

Access to the cosmos (physical world) is through human experience. The common denominator of all experience is the "self" that does the experiencing. In other words, what we as humans perceive is not necessarily external reality in and of itself but our *interaction* (effectivity) with it. This view of our experience and thus capacity to affect and be affected by the world around us is the fundamental assumption underlying the scientific concept of *complementarity*.[162]

At the turn of the century physicist Niels Bohr first developed the concept of complementarity to explain the paradoxical wave-particle duality of light. Wave-like as well as particle-like characteristics, he noted, are mutually exclusive, complementary aspects of light. Although the presence of one aspect always excludes the other, *both* are necessary to understand the properties and behavior of electromagnetic radiation (light). Wave- and particle-like behaviors are properties of our effectivity with it. Moreover, consideration of the properties that we usually ascribe to light, particularly in the context of our interaction with it, may by logical extension essentially deprive light of an independent existence apart from our effectivity of and with it.[163] Without humankind or by implication anything else to interact with light, theoretically, may not "exist." Conversely, by extending the logic further, without light or by implication anything else to interact with, we may not "exist." As Bohr so cogently remarked, "...an independent reality in the ordinary physical sense can be ascribed neither to the phenomena nor to the agencies of observation."[164]

By "agencies of observation," Bohr may have been referring to instruments, not people, perhaps. Yet philosophically, the notion of complementarity leads to the inference that the world consists not necessarily of independent things or objects, but of the effectivity of the cosmos--manifesting nature's being-in-relatedness. The philosophical implications of complementarity become even more pronounced with the realization that the

phenomenon of wave-particle duality is a characteristic not only of light by itself, but by implication of all that there is in nature in both its human and nonhuman form.[165]

A second way in which the new physics conceptualizes the thorough-going interrelatedness of nature or the cosmos is via the principle of uncertainty, first articulated in 1916 by Werner Heisenberg. The premise Heisenberg set forth states that we cannot with any degree of accuracy simultaneously measure both the position and the momentum of any subatomic entity in the universe.[166] This principle reveals that as we delve deeper into the subatomic milieu of nature, we reach a certain point at which one part or another of our picture of nature becomes blurred; moreover, there appears to be no way to clarify one aspect of our perception without blurring another part of what we perceive. This is the salient point of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. At the subatomic level of nature, one cannot experience (observe) something without affecting it. There is no such thing as the independent, unrelated observer who can stand on the sidelines objectively observing nature (human or nonhuman) run its course without affecting or being affected by it. Thus, a fundamental *inter*-relatedness exists not only between human and nonhuman nature, but within human and nonhuman nature, respectively. The modern discourse reflecting the Cartesian distinction between the inside and the outside--the objective and the subjective--appears to have dissipated.[167]

Bohr's concept of complementarity and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle together with Husserl's notion of intentionality of consciousness and the developmental basis of natural evolution discussed earlier, address an underlying fundamental relationality in nature between relatedness and consciousness. The emergence in nature of subjectivity and consciousness is an integral if recent part of the history of nature. The intentionality of this consciousness, as discussed previously, is consciousness of something--consciousness of some human or nonhuman other. The Bohr and Heisenberg concepts suggest that, even at the subatomic level of existence, this *something* of which we are conscious may be understood as complex effectivity with or of that 'other,' irrespective of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that other.

In my effort thus far to develop an ontological basis for grounding ethics in human responsibility, I have set forth the following premise. Irrespective of who or what we understand ourselves to be, ontologically, or how we live-out that understanding through our way of being in the world, existentially, we are intra-related, developmentally, to all that there is in the cosmos or nature. Moreover, I have suggested how this developmental intra-relatedness implies otherness in the cosmos. A subject is a being which, inasmuch as it exists in the cosmos, is always already in the presence of some 'other.' Finally, I have argued that being of and in the cosmos is one of affecting and being affected by nature in both its human and

nonhuman form. This capacity of nature to affect and be affected by itself gives rise to the notion of inter-relatedness in nature in the context of complex interactions. Given this social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) relationality of nature it seems appropriate at this juncture to suggest a correlation with ethics. Fostering the dignity and integrity of nature, in both its human and nonhuman form, appears to be predicated upon human nature's *response* in its social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) interactions.

One may in the context of dialectical naturalism draw specific inferences with respect to these social-ecological engagements, and hence, to nature's ability to inter-relate with its own diverse, intra-related differentia and thus affect and be affected by itself. First, the development of human consciousness in the cosmos implies the emergence in nature of self-consciousness. This nature rendered self-conscious means nature now has the ability to consciously affect its own natural and social evolution. A 'response-ability' of such magnitude bespeaks a freedom in nature to be self-determining concerning the path of its own natural and social evolution. It suggests as well a nature which is potentially self-realizing with respect to the possibilities for actualizing what could and perhaps should be in the world. Second, this response-ability in nature resides in *human* nature specifically; thus, it is humankind's self-conscious capacity to respond that obligates it (individually as humans and collectively as society) to

differentiate which responses serve the thrust of natural and social evolution and its tendency toward subjectivity, self-determination, and hence freedom, and which serve to impede it. Third, an intra- and inter-related nature rendered self-conscious has an ability to respond that constitutes nothing less than a responsibility to and with all others that is *ontological*--irrespective of whether that other is human or nonhuman, face-to-face or not. With human nature, therefore, rests the fundamental responsibility to be in the world in ways that foster (rather than impede) actualization of the latent, but no less real, existing potentialities for freedom and self-realization in nature.

If we accept as valid the logic used in deriving the above inferences, several conclusions with respect to nature or the cosmos are ineluctable. Conceiving the cosmos as being constituted by ontological relatedness means that the development of human consciousness implies the emergence in nature of a conscious "response-ability" to be self-determining, self-realizing, and thus potentially free to consciously determine the path of its own natural and social evolution. Moreover, because this response-ability in nature is manifest in human nature, this nature rendered self-conscious has an ontological and thus fundamental responsibility to and with all that there is. Human nature has, we may contend, an ontological obligation to be in the world in ways which foster rather than impede actualization of the latent, but no less real, potentialities for what could and perhaps should be in the

world. Furthermore, if nature rendered self-conscious is to actualize the latent potentialities within itself for what could and perhaps should be in the world, existentially, its aim should be one of bringing to fruition natural and social self-realization concerning all others irrespective of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of its relations to or with those others. *Human* nature, in its being in the world, must endeavor to assume its ontologically-based responsibility to affirm and effect the dignity of *all* humankind in the context of a respect for, and the integrity of, nonhuman nature.

Yet this should--this *ought*--remains unactualized although real in its potentiality in contemporary society. Thus the question arises. Why, in our social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) relations, are we frequently so disaffirming of each other and the world with whom and in which, respectively, we have our very being?

Dialectical naturalism contends that to actualize the potentialities in nature and thereby fulfill the ontological responsibility of nature rendered self-conscious, *human* nature must bring to consciousness two critical understandings of itself. First, how we are in the world toward each other and the world around us is a function of who and what we understand ourselves to be. We must come to realize that we *are* in the world, existentially, who and what we understand ourselves to be with respect to the depth with which we apprehend a sense of our own ontological

relatedness to all that there is in nature or the cosmos. Second, this depth apprehension of reality with respect to who and what human nature understands itself to be, individually as humans and collectively as society, must be brought not only to self-consciousness, but to social-consciousnes, as well. This sense of ontological relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos must become in us (as nature rendered self-conscious) individually and collectively, a self-conscious appreciation for, and existential embodiment of, human nature's relatedness-based responsibility to and with all others. Moreover, the ontological basis of our relatedness to and with all 'others' means that our responsibility exists as part of who and what we are. Finally, our responsibility exists irrespective of the context of our relatedness to that 'other'--whether as human-to-human, human-to-nonhuman, face-to-face, or nonface-to-face.

Thus far this work has deconstructed notions of an ethical society which privilege face-to-face, proximate and unmediated relationships. But it has done so only to the extent that they exclude or diminish the significance of nonface-to-face relations mediated by space and time as the basis of what should constitute ideal consociality. Moreover, it has argued for the need to establish, philosophically, a fundamental and concrete basis in humankind for ethical relations in society, rather than attempt to effect an ethic or idealized notion of community in the absence of such grounding. To this end this paper has put forth dialectical naturalism as an ontological basis for

ethical relations in society, centering the latter in the development of self-consciousness and, hence, conscious response-ability in nature. Through this dialectic the work has attempted to develop the basis for an ethic of human responsibility, grounded in a sense of ontological relatedness to all others, regardless of the nature (human-to-human) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that other.

This text has made no attempt to establish what the "ideal ethical society" is. As noted early on in this work, exclusive of the caveats delineated in Chapters 2-6, there is much in the conceptualized notions of the "ideal community" with which the author agrees. What this text has sought to achieve is twofold. First, it has tried to articulate a reason why humanity should embrace any sense of ethics whatsoever with respect to each other (human nature) and the world in which we live (nonhuman nature). Second, the work has endeavored to provide a basis for grounding any sense of ethics within nature itself. It has attempted to ground it, in particular, within that aspect of nature rendered self-conscious--human nature. In the succeeding and final chapter this thesis will seek to document how the ontological relatedness previously discussed herein is not only a fundamental basis for human ethics but how our sense of that relatedness may be understood as a religious sensibility.

Chapter 8: Schleiermacher's God

The preceding chapter set forth, philosophically, the need to become consciously aware of and embody our human sense-of-relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos. The present chapter will argue that this sense-of-relatedness may be conceptualized as a religious sensibility. In this regard the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher is pivotal.[168] The chapter will contend that Schleiermacher's conceptualization of the self-in-relation may be interpreted as an articulation of one's sense of ontological relatedness to all that there is in the cosmos, including that which is experienced as more than but not separate from the self, which Schleiermacher called, *God*.

In what is a phenomenological consideration of the nature of the self, Schleiermacher advanced the thesis that the self exists in an immediate connectedness to that which is more than the self. What intrigues me about Schleiermacher's conceptualization is the absence of any heteronomy in the human relation to that which is more or more complex than the self which Schleiermacher expressed as God.

Schleiermacher wrote and taught in Berlin with the thought of Kant in vogue. He embraced the Kantian caveat against speaking of 'knowledge' of God.[169] As has been well noted, Kant's critiques of reason altered the course of subsequent Christian theology.[170] With respect to the tradition within Protestantism which affirmed the Kantian argument, it would no longer be possible to reason from knowledge of the world to the existence of God.[171] Schleiermacher attempted to circumvent the prohibition by grounding

religion in an immediate awareness of God.[172] In developing his thought, Schleiermacher drew upon three primary influences. First there was the Platonism which had been instilled in him early in his life. There was also a certain fondness for Spinoza (whose thought spoke of the oneness of God and Nature). Finally there was the German Romanticism of his day in which social milieu he lived his life.[173] "You lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world," said Schleiermacher in his *Speeches* of 1799.[174] Religion, for Schleiermacher, was to be conceived as "a life in the infinite nature of the Whole, in the One and in the All, in God, a having and possessing all things in God, and God in all;...a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it in God."[175] To be religious is to relate the particular to the whole, while the universal is immediately apparent in the particular.[176]

The early work of Schleiermacher, especially his *Speeches*, was intended to be evocative. The aim through the use of language and imagery was to bring awareness to a certain sensibility in those who read it. It was, of course, directed to his German Romanticist acquaintances among whom he was the only declared cleric and Christian. Schleiermacher maintained that these "cultured despisers" of religion were in fact through their Romanticism intimately related in their thought to a religious consciousness. Schleiermacher's approach was Socratic with respect to its objective. He wished to bring others to a certain self-appreciation, to allow them to

articulate what they in some way already half *sensed.*[177] At the time the idea of religion had become mere affirmation of dogma--an assent to propositions which Schleiermacher regarded as no longer tenable. Schleiermacher grounded religion in human awareness--a radical thought. Yet this intellectual sojourn could not likely have occurred against a background other than that of German Romanticism. Romanticist interest in the subjectivity of human being and belief in the relatedness of the individual to the whole provided the intellectual context for this era's turn toward the subject and the latter's relatedness to all that there is.[178]

In 1821/22 Schleiermacher elaborated *The Christian Faith*, systematically grounding theology anew. Faithful to the epistemological considerations of his era, he commences the effort from a consideration of the faculties (or basic capacities) of the human being. In his *Speeches* Schleiermacher had already denied that religion belongs to the sphere of knowledge.[179] Furthermore, he is scathing in response to Kant's assertion that religion is to be understood as a kind of appendage to morality.[180] However Schleiermacher contends that we have a third faculty. We have, he says, a fundamental capacity for being in the world (analogous to Kant's aesthetic sphere); it is one of feeling or awareness which for him consists in an openness or receptivity towards the whole. It is to this sphere, Schleiermacher proposes, that religion rightly belongs.[181]

The opening comments of *The Christian Faith*, therefore, essentially

consist in a phenomenological description of what it is to be a self. In relation to all that there is in the world, Schleiermacher begins, we are conscious of a certain dependence and of a certain freedom.[182] Schleiermacher comments in regard to the human relation to parents and country; yet he continues there is equally as well the relation to the planets above: we both affect and are affected by the gravitational pull between us.[183] Schleiermacher contends that our distinct sense of freedom along with our distinct feeling of dependence, together constitute the dialectical relationship with the world which must always be for humankind. To this realm in which humankind is Schleiermacher appends the name--antithesis.[184]

Yet quite apart from our relation with the world, we have, so Schleiermacher maintains, a sense of being simply dependent. It is this sense, he says, which we should understand by God.[185] The claim here is that we experience ourselves as immediately derived; in this consciousness of ourselves we are aware that there is more than what we are. Furthermore, we have an immediate relatedness to that which is more than what we are. Schleiermacher articulates his sense of this in several ways. He speaks of our sense of "Whenceness," of *Woher*.[186] If we sense ourselves as Being (as *Sein*), it is also the case that we sense ourselves as having-in-some-way-come-to-be, as *Irgendwiegewordensein*.[187]As I have already suggested, such a sensibility is not foreign to his era. German Romanticism conceived

of human being as fundamentally related to that which is more than the self.

We must be clear, however. Schleiermacher is not putting forward any sort of argument for the existence of God as though, given the nature of human self-consciousness, God were some kind of noumenal (or mental) "object" whose existence one could deduce.[188] The entire manner in which he goes about his argument, asserting that religion does not belong to the sphere of knowledge, speaks otherwise. Schleiermacher is well aware (having read Kant) that we could have no knowledge of such an "object." Rather we may say, speaking figuratively, that Schleiermacher's God is much "closer" to us than any such "object" could be. Our consciousness of God is present to us along with our experience of ourselves.

Schleiermacher contends that *the awareness, itself, is what we mean by God.*[189] The issue is not whether this awareness *implies* God; we are not required, epistemologically, to get from the awareness itself to (a) God. Schleiermacher subscribes to no subjective argument which ostensibly leads one to believe in the existence of God. Even less does he subscribe to any notion of such a God as in some way set over against the self. Yet neither would Schleiermacher assert that God merely *is* within the self. Instead, in experiencing ourselves, we *sense* ourselves as immediately connected to that which is more than ourselves. It is the latter view which Schleiermacher means to connote with the expression, God.[190]

Hence, Schleiermacher conceptualizes no separation with respect to human being and its relatedness to God. The human self does not understand God as some object to be relegated to 'otherness.' Rather, Schleiermacher developed a notion of God faithful to both Kantian epistemology and the moral imperative of human free will. Any conceptualization of God in which there existed by necessity a separation with humanity was unacceptable for Schleiermacher. There can be, for Schleiermacher, no intimation that God is both other than what humankind is itself (i.e. set over against us) and yet the ground for our human relationship of absolute dependence.

There existed for Schleiermacher, therefore, a two-fold task. He must distinguish how we are in relation to God from the relationship in which we are engaged with the world. He tells us that these relations may be differentiated qualitatively.[191] In the context of our relationship to the world there is a reciprocity; we exist within the realm of the antithesis. God, however, is not an object with whom we interact. Rather, Schleiermacher might say, God is the presupposition of human being in the world. Heteronomy, therefore, can in no sense determine our human relationship to God. We have both freedom and autonomy, therefore, in our relation to the world. It is qualified only by the realization that we always exist in a reciprocal relation with all within the realm of the antithesis. The thrust of

Schleiermacher's position is that God can in no way be viewed as other than ourselves; God cannot qualify our relation to the world. God may be, perhaps, more than what human beings are individually, but humans exist in direct relatedness to God.

> As regards the identification of absolute dependence with "relation to God" in our proposition: this is to be understood in the sense that the Whence of our receptive and active existence, as implied in this self-consciousness, is to be designated by the word "God," and that this is for us the really original signification of that word. In this connexion we have first of all to remind ourselves that, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, this Whence is not the world, in the sense of the totality of temporal existence, and still less is it any single part of the world. [192]

Again, Schleiermacher is categorical in his denial of God as in some sense an object for us. God is not a "given." This is what differentiates the relation to God from the human relation to all that there is within the realm of the antithesis. Schleiermacher's comments are cogent in this regard. "On the other hand, any possibility of God being in any way given is entirely excluded, because anything that is outwardly given must be given as an object exposed to our counter-influence, however slight this may be."[193]

A crucial question to consider at this juncture is whether Schleiermacher supposes that the *awareness of some Whence* is a priori and thus prior to any expression of it. It is also critical to inquire whether this supposition is

requisite to his argument. There are those today, especially in the milieu of poststructuralist thought, who hold that there can be no experience (divine or otherwise) which is immediate and thus unmediated by language or concepts. In this regard Derrida has noted perceptively that there is nothing outside "the trace."[194]

In responding to this query one should note that Schleiermacher does not suggest that *that* more complex awareness which is a God-consciousness exists independently of the relationship to the world. Rather such a God-consciousness is different in kind. Schleiermacher may not maintain that consciousness of God is independent of our human relationship with the world. To do so would make God-consciousness unassailable and thus untenable for Schleiermacher. Such a position would fall victim to those who contend that there can be nothing beyond the trace of language and the experience of our perceptions.[195] Schleiermacher, however, is clear on this point. Consciousness of God manifests itself solely within the context of our sensibly determined human self-consciousness. In *The Christian Faith* Schleiermacher makes clear his understanding. "For it is as a person determined for this moment in a particular manner within the realm of the antithesis that [the person] is conscious of his absolute dependence."[196]

We see, therefore, that Schleiermacher's view precludes any conceptualization of a monadic self as though there can be a self in and of itself. A human self is not itself separate from God. Christian theologian

and interpreter of Schleiermacher, Richard R. Niebuhr, comments in this regard. "The fundamental thing that Schleiermacher has to say is [that]...religion is an intrinsic element in the self-consciousness of the fully developed man."[197] Schleiermacher understands the self to in some way open out on to that which is more than the self, but not separate from the self. The self is, in fact,truly itself only when it leads beyond itself. With this said, it logically follows that the self in Schleiermacher's construct does not fall prey to Derrida's critique of "full presence."[198] Schleiermacher explains that in our experiences we have a sense of our being (as *Sein*); yet we also experience our having come to be (*Irgendwiegewordensein*). We sense ourselves, he says, as having posited ourselves, but equally as not having posited ourselves.

If we are, however, in immediate relation to that which is more than we are, it is equally true that our self is determinate, and therefore free in relation to the world. We experience our being (*Sein*), the sense of having in some way posited ourselves. Again with Schleiermacher, the human relationship to and with God will under no circumstances ever qualify the human relatedness to and with the world. God is not some other towards whom our relatedness is defined by separation; God is not some object which can ever limit our freedom in relation to the world. Schleiermacher experiences his relation to the world as free in the context of what must always be a reciprocal relation. Schleiermacher, therefore, experiences the

self both as having experienced limits within the world and thus as having a center to one's being, but also as having been posited and thus in-relation with respect to one's being. It is this sense of the self as both being centered and yet being in-relation that has much in common with dialectical naturalism's sense of ontological relatedness in the context of human nature.

Dialectical naturalism's conceptualization of the self-in-relation following on the thought of Schleiermacher suggests that we may wish to speak of an immediate presence to another through what those with a religious sensibility might call prayer or deep meditation; moreover, we may indeed wish to conceive of God as that through which we may be present to another in such a way. In doing so the distinction between the nature of our human relation to God and our relation to some other begins to dissipate. Herein lies the basis for beginning to understand dialectical naturalism's sense of ontological relatedness as a religious sensibility.

The way in which this thesis is suggesting that we reconceptualize our understanding of self (and God) leads ineluctably to an emphasis on human responsibility. The issue becomes one of how humans may be in touch with their deepest selves (i.e. with that which is God in them) so that they may come to deeply apprehend a sense of their own ontological relatedness to that which is more or more complex than the self but not separate from it.

The classical conception of God credits humans with autonomy and responsibility only at the expense of divorcing God and "the good" from

human nature. By contrast, the way in which this paper is conceiving of God suggests that God, as that which is more or more complex than the self but not separate from the self engages the process of persons coming to themselves. As has been mentioned previously in this work, Kant's sense of intrinsic order is helpful in this reconceptualization of God as that which is more or more complex than but not separate from the self. Kant, it should be remembered, believes that human beings should understand their ethical responsibility to exist within a wider framework such that right acting is validated.

Schleiermacher's God, therefore, far from being a kind of object or other which is removed from the world, is closer to us than any such "object" could be. By returning to our selves through self-reflexive thought humans can begin to understand that our being-in-this-world opens out on to that which is more or more complex than we are. But given the context of the period in which he wrote, Schleiermacher understandably did not pursue the logic of his exceptional insight--that religious sensibilities are intrinsic to nature. Moreover, he did not see that this is particularly true with respect to that part of nature which has been rendered self-conscious--*human* nature.

Extending the logic of Schleiermacher's position , dialectical naturalism suggests that in being ourselves most completely we humans experience in the world that which Schleiermacher called God. By implication this realization carries with it the need to overcome the dichotomies fundamental

to the major theological tradition of Western civilization: God's power is at the exclusion of our own; God's goodness thrusts humanity into fallenness. Dialectical naturalism conceives of God as the actualization of the potentialities in the cosmos (with respect to what could and perhaps should be in human and nonhuman nature), if also more or more complex than what we humans are individually and perhaps collectively. Given such a conceptualization of self and God, there remains no longer a basis for construing reality hierarchically. Moreover, we can move beyond heteronymous relationships within our social (human-to-human) and ecological (human-to-nonhuman) relations. We can dismantle hierarchical conceptions of reality which includes what Mary Daly and other post-Christian theorists suggest is the patriarchal God of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition.[199] We need tolerate no further the fragmentation of human nature. We need no longer project a God in apposition to who and what we ourselves are and remain psychologically separated from a sense of our own human ontology.

Thus the conceptualization of that religious sensibility of being ontologically related to that which is more or more complex than but not separate from ourselves, to which we append the name "God," is integrally and intimately tied to human ethics. Irrespective of the conception of God that one may develop, it must henceforth be in accord epistemologically with what we know, scientifically, about the nature of the universe, and ethically with what is morally tenable. Toward this end dialectical

naturalism endeavors to develop a basis for beginning to talk about such an epistemology and ethics through its conceptualizations of self, other and God. Moreover, it develops a rational basis for grounding ethics in human nature. It articulates a rational conceptualization for understanding humankind to have an ontological responsibility commensurate with its response-ability as nature rendered self-conscious and, thus, self-determining with respect to its own natural and social evolution. Dialectical naturalism contends that to accomplish this humanity must come to deeply apprehend its *human* nature; we must begin to develop a sense of our ontological relatedness to all that there is. We must come to appreciate that individually as humans and collectively as society we are in the world, existentially, who and what we understand ourselves to be with respect to the depth with which we apprehend a sense of our own ontological relatedness to all that there is, including that which is more or more complex than we are, but not heteronymous to us.

If we are ever to create an ethical society, face-to-face, decentralized notions of community will almost certainly play a role in their development. But this will not likely be accomplished unless the ideas from which these notions are drawn can themselves be shown to have congruency with and grounding in an epistemology, ethics, as well as conceptualizations of self and God such as that elaborated by dialectical naturalism. The author sees little alternative to developing a notion of ethics which conceptualizes the

natural history of the self as including the other (without, of course, consuming or being subsumed by that other) irrespective of the nature (human or nonhuman) or proximity (face-to-face or nonface-to-face) of that other. Dialectical naturalism provides an ontological basis for just such an ethics: developing as it does an understanding of the self as centered-in-relation as well as the need to embrace and embody a sense of this relatedness to all that there is which includes that which is more or more complex than the self but not separate from the self, whose power in prayer or meditation we draw on and many name--God.

End Notes

[1]Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 12-87.

[2]Ibid., 18.

[3]Ibid., 12-87.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Christopher Norris, *Derrida*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987) 71.

[6]Ibid., 35.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 34.

[10]Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 215.

[11]Norris, *Derrida*, 111.

[12]Ibid., 23.

[13]Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 138.

[14]Norris, *Derrida*, 226.

[15]With respect to the three authors mentioned, I rely primarily on Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1973); Julia Kristeva, *Polylogue* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977). These writers have a similar critique of Western metaphysics. Several writers have noted similarities between Adorno and Derrida in this regard. See Fred Dallmayr, *Twilight of Subjectivity: Contributions to a Post-Structuralist Theory of Politics* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 107-114, 127-136; Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 73-81.

[16]Norris, *Derrida*, 66-67.

[17]Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Part Two, 134-210.

[18]Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 12-87.

[19]Derrida's reading of the Hegelian dialectic, especially Hegel's idea of the *Aufhebung*, brings out the extent to which this is an arbitrary movement (one reading among many) though one that is expressly sanctioned by all the resources of Hegelian dialectic. "Since no logic governs, henceforth, the meaning of interpretation, because logic is an interpretation, Hegel's own interpretation can be reinterpreted--against him." Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[20]Norris, *Derrida*, 70.

[21]For the structuralist, Saussure, writing is conceived as a perversion of the natural order of language, an influence that operates from outside to corrupt the pure spontaneity of self-present speech. Saussure speaks of the "tyranny" of writing; the way that, "by imposing itself on the masses, spelling influences and modifies language...[leading to]...wrong pronunciations...[and such mistakes] are truly pathological"; quoted in *Of Grammatology*, 41. Derrida's point in *Of Grammatology* is that Saussure's logic commits him to a more far-reaching and radical notion of "difference" than he expressly wants to maintain. For Derrida, the logic of difference is a non-self-identical logic which eludes the normative constraints which govern reason; See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 35-41.

[22]Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 41.

[23]Irene E. Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Differance* (Bloomington, MN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 239.

[24]Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 78.

[25]Ibid., 63-64.

[26]Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 37.

[27]Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 9.

[28]Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 38-39.

[29]J. Claude Evans, *Strategies of Deconstruction: Derrida and the Myth of the Voice* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 39-40.

[30]Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 28.

[31]Julia Kristeva, *Polylogue* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977), 55-136, 263-286.

[32]Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, trans. Thomas Gora, et.al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 159-163.

[33]Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 189.

[34]Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), 28-40; Dallmayr, *Twilight of Subjectivity*, 107-114, 127-136.

[35]Parallels between Kristeva and Adorno in this regard are found in Cornell and Thurschwell, "Feminism, Negativity and Intersubjectivity," *Praxis International*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1986, 484-504.

[36]Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 12-87.

[37]R.P. Wolff, *The Poverty of Liberalism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1978), Chapter 5.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 291; See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 560-561.

[42]Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, 17.

[43]Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 172-173.

[44]Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, 203.

[45]Iris M. Young, "Impartiality and the Civic Public: Some Implications of Feminist Critics of Modern Political Theory," *Praxis International*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1986, 381-401.

[46]Karren Warren, "A Feminist Philosophical Perspective," in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed. C.J. Adams (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1994), 125-129.

[47]Ibid., 121-124.

[48]Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-4.

[49]Ibid., 21-22, 62-63.

[50]Brooke N. Moore and Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 3rd ed., (Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1996), 394.

[51]Brooke N. Moore and Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 4th ed., (Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1999), 452.

[52]Warren, "A Feminist Philosophical Perspective," 121-124.

[53]Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1973).

[54]Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, 11.

[55]Ibid., 9.

[56]Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 170-173.

[57]Sandel, in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, levels a powerful critique against contemporary liberalism by arguing that this theory of justice presupposes a self as separated from and prior to the actions it undertakes as its unified origin. Sandel gives several arguments showing the incoherence of such a conception of the unified self prior to the context of action.

[58]Harry C. Boyte and Sara M. Evans, "Strategies in Search of America: Cultural Radicalism, Populism and Democratic Culture," *Socialist Review* (May-Aug 1984), 73-100.

[59]Ibid.

[60]For a discussion on the possibilities with respect to a vision of how a society may organize itself in the context of mutual aid and cooperation, see Murray Bookchin's *Remaking Society*, especially pages 179-185 on his concept of libertarian municipalism; Murray Bookchin, *Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990).

[61]Carol Gould, *Marx's Social Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1978), 7-9.

[62]Ibid., 9.

[63]Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 73-81.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Derrida's previously cited works, *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Differance* are instructive in regard to the concept of "exteriorization."

[66]Ibid.

[67]Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and Concrete Other: Toward a Feminist Critique of Substitutionalist Universalism," *Praxis International*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1986, 402-424.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Seyla Benhabib, "Communicative Ethics and Moral Autonomy," presented at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Div., Dec. 1982.

[70]In this regard the work of Michael Sandel, Isaac Balbus, Roberto M Unger and Dorothy Allison are representive.

[71]Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 172-173.

[72]Isaac Balbus, *Marxism and Domination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[73]Roberto M. Unger, *Knowledge and Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1975) 220-222.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Dorothy Allison, "Weaving the Web of Community," in *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly*, vol. 4, 1978, 79.

[76]"That first reflection out of immediacy is the subject's process of distinction of itself from its substance." Quote from G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1949), 804.

[77]Levinas argues that Sartre fails to understand the self and 'other' as distinct insofar as he sought an understanding of the 'other' based on a primordial experience of the self. Thus in Sartre, "the phenomenon of the 'other' was still considered, as in all Western ontology, to be a modality of unity and fusion that is a reduction of the 'other' to categories of the same." Quote from Richard Kearney, ed., *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 58.

[78]Beginning with Descartes modern philosophy is particularly preoccupied with the unity of consciousness and its immediate presence to itself.

[79]See the works of Michael Sandel previously mentioned.

[80]For a sampling of Kristeva's works translated into English see Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[81]Julia Kristeva, "The System and the Speaking Subject," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 25-33.

[82]Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader*, 13.

[83]Originally printed in Paris as Kristeva, "Le sujet en proces," *Polylogue* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977), 55-106; texts with this content also may be found in Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, trans. T. Gora, A. Jardine, L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 97, 99-100, 124-125, 135-136, 161, 179, 190, 237-243, 249.

[84]Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 6; also see Andrea Nye, *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man* (New York: Routledge Publishing Co., 1988), 188.

[85]Derrida addresses the issue of the 'play of signifiers' and their significance in the second interview in his work, *Positions*; see Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[86]Carol Gould, "Private Rights and Public Virtues: Women, the Family and Democracy," in *Beyond Domination*, ed. Carol C. Gould (New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984) 3-18; see also Gould's work previously mentioned in this thesis, *Marx's Social Ontology*.

[87]Peter Manicas, *The Death of the State* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1974), 247.

[88]Robert M. Unger, *Knowledge and Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 220-222.

[89]Christian Bay, *Strategies of Political Emancipation* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981), Chapters 5 and 6.

[90]Michael Taylor, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 27-28.

[91]Gould, *Marx's Social Ontology*, 26.

[92]French poststructuralists consider the illusion of this ideal of immediate presence of subjects to one another in community. Derrida, in particular, considers this in his comments about the structuralist Levi-Strauss and the French social theorist, Rousseau; see Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 101-140.

[93]Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, 198-233.

[94]For a useful account of alienation, see Richard Schmitt, *Alienation and Class* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1983), especially Chapter 5. In this text Schmitt takes community to stand as the negation of a society of alienation. Yet unlike some of the writers cited in this chapter, he does not take face-to-face relations as a necessary condition of community. To the degree that he makes a pure/impure distinction and exhibits the desire for unity I have critiqued in this thesis, however, the criticism articulated here applies to Schmitt's appeal to the ideal of community.

[95]See the works of manicas, Unger, Bay, and Taylor as representive of this orientation.

[96]See Carol Gould, *Marx's Social Ontology*.

[97]For a discussion of free thought in the context of the American Enlightenment see Marshall G. Brown and Gordon Stein, *Freethought in the United States: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978); Adrienne Koch, *The American Enlightenment: The Shaping of the American Experiment and a Free Society* (New York: G. Braziller Press, 1965).

[98]Henry Alpern, *The March of Philosophy* (New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1968) 3-7.

[99]Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1979), 135-146.

[100]A.E. Taylor, *Aristotle* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955) 44-49.

[101]John Herman Randall, Jr., *Aristotle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 123-125.

[102]For an interesting discussion of Spinoza's naturalism see Alan Donagan, *Spinoza* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 13-35.

[103]E.M. Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 41-50.

[104]Donagan, *Spinoza*, 83.

[105]Thomas Carson Mark, *Spinoza's Theory of Truth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 12-17.

[106]Peter J. Bowler, *Charles Darwin: The Man and His Influence* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1990) 147.

[107]Ibid., 8; Bowler's work is an excellent critique of deBeer's biography of Darwin. In it Bowler argues that deBeer's greatest fault was that his biography of Darwin "took for granted the orthodox view of the scientist as someone who gains his inspiration solely from the factual studies in which he is engaged."

[108]Ibid., 75-87.

[109]Yvonne S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1985), 81-83. (This work provides an interesting discussion regarding "objective" and "perceived" reality.)

[110]Sidney Hook, "Naturalism and Democracy," in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 45; also in this same text see Herbert W. Schneider's essay, "The Unnatural," 121-132.

[111]John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Nature of Naturalism," in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit,* ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 373.

[112]W. Preston Warren, *Roy Wood Sellars* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 93-106.

[113]John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Nature of Naturalism," 361-363.

[114]See the work of Roy Wood Sellars, John Dewey, Ernest Nagel, Sidney Hook, John Herman Randall, Jr. and Justus Buchler.

[115]See Roy Wood Sellars, *Evolutionary Naturalism* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 1922); Roy Wood Sellars, Principles, *Perspectives and the Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Pageant Press, 1970); John Dewey, Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel, "Are Naturalists Materialists?" in *The Later Works of John Dewey, Vol. 15: 1942-1948* ed. J.A. Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989).

[116]See John Herman Randall, Jr., "Empirical Pluralism and Unifications of Nature," in *Nature and Historical Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); Justus Buchler, "Probing the Idea of Nature," in *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, 2nd ed., ed. K. Wallace, A. Marsoobian and R. Carrington (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 260-281.

[117]C. Judson Henrick, "A Biological Survey of Integrative Levels," in *Philosophy For the Future: the Quest of Modern Materialism*, ed. Roy Wood Sellars, V.J. McGill, Marvin Farber (New York: MacMillan Company, 1949), 224-225.

[118]See John F. Post, *The Faces of Existence: An Essay in Nonreductive Metaphysics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987); see also Post's *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House Publications, 1991).

[119]See David Papineau, *Philosophic Naturalism* (London: Blackwell Publications, 1993).

[120]This chapter is much indebted to the work of social ecologist, Murray Bookchin. He was the first individual to employ the expression "dialectical naturalism" and begin to develop ideas regarding its implications for social and ecological relations.

[121]The thought of Heraclitus and Aristotle are instructive in regard to a developmental understanding of the nature of reality. The scholar of Presocratic Greece, G.S. Kirk, has noted: "Heraclitus saw the unity of the world in its structure and behavior..." Change was a function of opposites which were actually "one and the same," being connected in a "joining that stretches in both directions..." With respect to Heraclitus, see the work of G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd rev. ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1983); "Change can be viewed" according to Aristotle, "as movement from potentiality to actuality." Quote from Moore and Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 49.

[122]Howard P. Kainz, *G.W.F. Hegel: The Philosophical System* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 7.

[123]Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[124]In Chapters Two and Three of Book One of the *Physics*, Aristotle attempts to refute the Parmenidean arguments against the possibility of change. In the third book of the *Physics*, Aristotle defines change as "the actualizing of a potentiality as such."

[125]Murray Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 2nd rev. ed., (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1996), 122-123.

[126]Ibid., 23, 144 (note 21).

[127]Bookchin would refer to nonhuman nature as "first nature;" See Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 29.

[128]Bookchin would refer to human nature as part of "second nature" by which he essentially means human society rather than humankind. See Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 119.

[129]See the work of Nobel Laureate (Biochemistry), Christian De Duve regarding the interaction of the genome and epigenetic influence; Christian De Duve, *Vital Dust: Life as a Cosmic Imperative* (New York: Basic Books-Perseus, 1995), 239-247.

[130]Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 60.

[131]Ibid., 19.

[132]Hegel clarifies the approach of dialectical naturalism in his description of how the implicit as undifferentiated form is latent with possibility for becoming more differentiated with respect to its true potential. Hegel writes: "The plant, for example, does not lose itself in mere indefinite change. From the germ much is produced when at first nothing was to be seen, but the whole of what is brought forth, if not developed, is yet hidden and ideally contained within itself." One should note that in this reference to Hegel, what may be "brought forth" is not necessarily developed. The seed may become a source of food for another life form rather than develop into what it is potentially constituted to become (i.e. a tree or flower). Hegel continues: "The principle of this projection into existence is that the germ cannot remain merely implicit but is impelled towards development, since it presents the contradiction of being only implicit." See G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol.1*, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (New York: Humanities Press, 1955) 22.

[133]Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 19.

[134]Ibid., 21.

[135]Recent theories about DNA formation suggest how genetic guidance and evolutionary development might have emerged to form an interface between the inorganic and organic; See Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life? Mind and Matter* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1956).

[136]Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 74.

[137]Ibid., 75.

[138]As noted previously in this text, non-reductive determination, also called 'supervenience' or a variety of it, can combine a monism of entities (i.e. the natural entities of which everything is) with a pluralism of irreducible or emergent properties; Emergent properties are properties that

a complex system as, but which its component parts, taken individually, do not have. Individual atoms do not have color, for example. However, a large number of atoms bonded together to form a surface may have color as an emergent property. The bonding of the atoms into a surface is not itself color, but this complex organization allows a new type of property, color, to exist. Emergent properties are dependent upon the complex organization of these parts. They could not exist without the organized parts, but they are not identical with the organized parts. They are something more, just as color, as we ordinarily understand it, is something more than the light-reflecting characteristics of a surface. Many philosophers accept the reality of both scientific entities and emergent properties. According to their view, all of the properties and behaviors of living things cannot be fully explained only in terms of physics and chemistry. The most widely accepted emergent properties are those that make up conscious life. See notes 118 and 119 in this text for references to a discussion of this phenomenon.

[139]Murray Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1991), 235-273.

[140]Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 81.

[141]Bookchin writes: "...there is a logic in the development of phenomenon, a general directiveness that accounts for the fact that the inorganic did become organic, as a result of its implicit capacity for organicity." See Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 28.

[142]Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom*, 355-357.

[143]Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (New York: Delta Publishing, 1966), 82, 90.

[144]Contemporary discoveries with respect to the development of nucleoproteins (DNA) modeled on the replication of crystals suggest how direction from the genome as well as evolution itself may have emerged to form an interface between the inorganic and organic; See *Schrodinger, What is Life? Mind and Matter.*

[145]See Jean Stewart and Jonathan Kemp's translation of Diderot's works; Jean Stewart and Jonathan Kemp, *Diderot:Interpreter of Nature - Selected Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1936).

[146]Heraclitus viewed all change as determined by a cosmic principle of order which he called the *Logos*, a Greek word for "word." He held that each thing contains its opposite just as, for example, we are simultaneously young and old, and coming into and going out of existence. Through the

logos, he thought, there is a harmonious union of opposites; See Bruder and Moore, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 28.

[147]Hegel's Logic is an effort to characterize the concepts which are essential to understanding anything. Since in Hegel one has a unity of subject and object, Hegel's Logic is also an account of the dialectical structure of reality itself: Being, nonbeing, becoming; See H. Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1976); A Kojeve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969); C. Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[148]For Hegel we must see logic and the categories of thought in the historical process. His *Phenomenology* "is a sort of biography of the growth of mind..." See Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1985), 228.

[149]G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[150]For Hegel, the term "dialectic" carries much the same meaning that it has in Plato. For Hegel it implies a logical process that proceeds from thesis to antithesis to synthesis--the latter encompassing the truth of both thesis and its negation while mediating their reconciliation. But Hegel regards the dialectic as more than a methodology for getting at truth; it is the structure of reality itself; See Fred Dallmayr, *G.W.F. Hegel: Modernity and Politics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1993), 24.

[151]Quoting from A.V. Miller's translation of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* previously cited, "This conclusion stems from the fact that the Absolute alone is true, or the truth alone is absolute."

[152]See G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); J. Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); R.C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1978).

[153]John N. Findlay, "Hegel's Use of Teleology," in *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy*, ed. Warren E. Steinkraus (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), 92-107.

[154]Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, 87.

[155]"Human mind is a product of evolution..." See Christian De Duve, *Vital Dust*, 247.

[156]Ibid., xvi.

[157]Quoting from De Duve's *Vital Dust*, page 1: "...all living organisms are constructed of the same materials, function according to the same principles, and indeed are actually related. All are descendants of a single ancestral form of life. This fact is now established thanks to the comparative sequencing of proteins and nucleic acids..."

[158]See Antos C. Rancurello, *A Study of Franz Brentano* (New York: Academic Press, 1968).

[159]See Thomas De Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, trans. Theodore Plantinga (Boston, MA: Nijhoff, 1978).

[160]See Simon Critchley's, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, previously mentioned in this text; also see Robert Manning, *Interpreting Otherwise Than Heidegger: Emmanuel Levinas's Ethics as First Philosophy* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1993).

[161]See Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* (Doubleday Dell Publishing, 1979).

[162]See Niels Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934); Niels Bohr, Atomic *Theory and Human Knowledge* (New York: John Wiley, 1958).

[163]Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, 93.

[164]Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*, 53.

[165]Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, 95.

[166]See Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 50-58; see also Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Doubleday Dell, 1990), 54-56.

[167]Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, 114.

[168]F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, 3rd German edition 1821, trans. J. Oman (New York: Harper and Row, 1958); F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. trans. H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1928), reprinted New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

[169]S. Morris Engel, *The Study of Philosophy* (San Diego, Ca: Collegiate Press, 1996), 239-259.

[170]See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

[171]Bruder and Moore, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 412-415.

[172]For a clear discussion regarding Schleiermacher's development of his conceptualization of an "immediate awareness of God," see F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, trans. James O. Duke and Francis Fiorenza (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1981).

[173]F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, 3rd German edition 1821, trans. J. Oman (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), xi.

[174]Ibid., 43.

[175]Ibid., 36.

[176]In his earlier works (like *On Religion*) Schleiermacher is cautious with the expression, God, with its anthropomorphic connotations.

[177]Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 45-46.

[178]James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1971), 96-97.

[179]Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 45-46.

[180]"Piety cannot be an instinct craving for a mass of metaphysical and ethical crumbs." See Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 31.

[181]Ibid., 49-50.

[182]Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 14-16.

[183]Ibid., 15.

[184]Ibid., 18-20.

[185]Ibid., 16-17.

[186]Ibid.

[187]Ibid., 24-25.

[188]Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 18.

[189]Ibid., 16.

[190]Ibid., 17.

[191]Ibid., 26.

[192]Ibid., 16.

[193]Ibid., 18.

[194]For a representative collection of Derrida's writings see Peggy Kamuf, ed. *A Derrida Reader, Between the Blind* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

[195]This group would include Derrida and other poststructuralists who contend there is nothing beyond the intimation of linguistics and our sensory experience.

[196]Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 21.

[197]R. Richard Niebuhr, Introduction, Harper and Row ed. of *The Christian Faith*, xii.

[198]Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 279, 280.

[199]Mary Daly invented the term (as she writes it) postchristian; See her work *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1973), 180-193.

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