

Mind's Travail

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to map out the perspective of ecstatic naturalism and its corollary theology of deep pantheism. Ecstatic naturalism begins and ends with the fissuring between nature naturing (nature perennially creating itself out of itself alone) and nature natured (the innumerable orders of the world). Nature naturing and its pulsating potencies could also be named: *der Wille* (Schopenhauer), firstness (Peirce), the transcendental psychoid (Jung), and creativity (Whitehead). Deep Pantheism rejects theism, with a fully transcendent deity, and pantheism, with its deity both in and beyond nature. The “deep” in my form of pantheism refers to the otherness of the unfathomable depths of the unconscious of nature. The theism entailed is that of gods and goddesses, finitely located, that are archetypal images. The symbol of the Great Mother is a premier locus for grounding and enveloping the human psyche. The travail of mind involves the fitful and precarious transitions between finite and embedded mind within nature natured and the emergence of an awareness of the depths of the human, cultural, collective, and natural modes of the unconscious via nature naturing.

Keywords

Ecstatic Naturalism, Deep Pantheism, Mind

1. Introduction

The human mind oscillates between its Darwinian adaptations and its infusions of cosmic consciousness, which permeate our finite interactions with an overwhelming force. This complex intrusion of cosmic mind (universal and transfigured self) continually reshapes the entropy filled and plurally located naturally embedded mind. Finite located mind interacts through perspectives (meaning horizons) to shape a gestalt of meaning to reduce the intense semiotic noise of sheer being-in-the-world. Sorting out genuine signal from ubiquitous noise is the task of hermeneutics (cf. Corrington, 1987/1993).

The travail of the mind lies in its unending struggle to create and assimilate evolving finite meanings within the innumerable orders of the world (*nature natured*), while allowing the potencies of the unconscious of nature (*nature naturing*) to actualize themselves within the constraints of finitude. The unconscious of nature, which underlies all other modes of the unconscious (personal, cultural, and archetypal) is the whence of cosmic mind, that is, cosmic consciousness comes from the unruly depths of nature naturing (*natura naturans*) and moves from the point of origin in the depths to spread into a fragmentary universal consciousness. Thus, nature's unconscious (*nature naturing*) is the locus of cosmic consciousness and is the seed bed for cosmic awakening (cf. Corrington, 2013; Lawrence, 2018).

What is the Kantian-style schema that lives in the oscillation point between our finite meaning shells and the bursts of cosmic awareness springing from the depths of self-othering nature? What is the link between the darkening unruly depths and the lucidity of cultural plenitude that groans toward the universal self? The schema proposed by my ecstatic naturalism is a deep revision of Kant's universalizing schemata. Following Peirce, the stress is on pragmatic and evolving a priori categories that are compelled to shape these categories into a fluid architecture (architectonic). These universal ideas and experiences are subject to the twin forces of adaptation and bursts of cosmic consciousness. The latter is an identity relation between the finite self and its cosmic forms of meaning. Philosophy uses fluid architecture to straddle between the zone, the zone where finitude and an emerging light-filled infinite radically locate the self. This process is what ecstatic naturalism calls the "selving process." But fluid architectonics makes selving possible by using categories to weave together the Darwinian embedded self with its universalizing depths (cf. Corrington, 1993).

2. Fluid Architectonic

When is a categorial array fluid? How does fluidity clarify itself through an emergent architectonic? Is the structuring of a categorial array developmental or is it antecedent to its instances? Is the way of fluidity anarchic or is it an adaptive unfolding that is shaped by what it is not?

What, exactly, is a categorial array? It is the shaping of a generic perspective that, in its fluid form, goes beyond a genus, species, and specific difference formula. Is a categorial array purely self-referential or is it permeable to the rhythms of orders emergent from the depths of nature? And, if the latter, can such an array, or meta-view, move to overcome its maladaptations? How vulnerable is architectonic to mental psychopathology? Do we need a new concept of the mental that grasps the ubiquity of anti-factual deviations and delusions? And, if so, can a more generic psychoanalysis point the way? (cf. Corrington, 2017)

The craft of thought is all too often oblivious to the role of projection and narcissistic inflation in its attempts to render a coherent portrayal of the shapes

of the world. Further, all categorial frameworks are inclined to the entropic decay of meanings and conjectures. An instantiated meaning has a finite life span in its trajectory through time, yet some of its meaning structures can have an enriched after-life in emergent contexts. The twin momenta of psychopathology (projection and narcissism), along with entropic decay, work tirelessly to challenge the generic aspirations of any categorial array. But is this the last word?

Anti-entropic energies, obtained by theft, for example, eating and metabolizing other life-forms, can provide power and potency to the struggling architectonic as it spreads out into increasing traits of nature and world. There is an entelechy, a combination of self-subsisting power with the drive toward excellence, as the fulfillment of the personal and social selves tied to the rising of self-organization that can pour more energy into an emergent shape of awareness (cf. Sachs, 1999). In the human process, a reigning entelechy can regather the torn pieces of an entropy shriven fabric and weave a new pattern that holds out against decay and randomness. This resurgence of potency, and the power of meaning within it, comes from sources outside of the categorial array itself, (cf. Dunn, 2018).

In any given order of the world there are an indefinite number of traits to be explored, assimilated, and manipulated as an order embeds itself in the other uncountable orders of the world. A non-fluid architectonic will be too ready to encapsulate itself, misled by the picture of some organic order of orders that has a “place” for whatever is subaltern. But instead of a place of all places, static and serene, it makes more sense to see endless placings whose ultimate whence and whither are just beyond categorial reach. Nevertheless, an origin and a goal are relentlessly projected onto a so-called whole that forever recedes. But this is an ersatz infinite.

However, the world continues to allow manifestations of the orders that *are* available to ongoing human scrutiny. All probes and renderings are part of the unending ramifications of a fecund nature. A misplaced aesthetic longing wishes to round up all whences and whithers into a manifest singularity. This is the imperialism of non-fluid architecture that posits a “must be” that can allegedly stabilize the fitfulness of the human process. Rather, all stabilities are part of temporal flows that constantly admit entropy of meaning into their contour, this foreclosing any pure unhiddenness of cosmic antecedent or consequent.

Goals are finite and manifest different ratios of fragility and surging power. Teloï emerge with awesome regularity in the human process but are frequently cut down before full deployment. Human existence displays a withering or brute truncating of our hoped-for culminations. Less frequently, goals can achieve satisfaction and fulfill human aspirations. Developmental goals have more success than static ones because they are ready to adjust to shifting conditions and hence will survive longer. This tendency is strengthened when social instrumentalities converge to shore up emergent goals.

One striking implication of fluidity is that human meaning horizons are permeable, both internally and around their edges, to a softening of those rigidities

that are tied to the narcissism of “solid” and unchanging meanings. The imperial self-thrusts and parries all the while in a failed attempt to force its projections onto collective meaning. Resistance to such parries can be bold or reticent, but they will be there whenever Napoleonic ambition crosses over to violence between and among horizons of value and meaning. Part of the task of philosophy is to root out and dampen the all-to-human tendencies toward the violent obliteration of alternative meanings and their attendant sign systems.

The aggressive positing of an origin and a goal is always tribal and serves a local interest that is wary of alternatives. In the debate between polytheism and monotheism, it is not so much about an ontological disclosure as it is a pulsation of the imperial psyche seeking either multiple intensities or one omnivorous one. A “pure” monotheism is an impossibility, psychically and ontologically. Was Feuerbach right when he argued that all deities are a projection of a species being that seeks to magnify a “would be” for the human process? Yes. But such projections never find *the* species being, because such a gestalt is in the not yet. Rather, these projections only instantiate tribally toned quasi-species, (cf. [Corrington, 2000](#)).

A fundamental source for fluidity is in the multiple irruptions coming into the attending consciousness from the depth liquidity of the unconscious in its various modes, from personal, cultural, and objective, unconscious *psychic* dimensions to the unconscious of *nature*. Each dimension of the unconscious has its own logic and existential import, yet there are always commensurate traits that link the dimensions together. Thus, the personal unconscious contains complexes that open out to larger archetypes in the cultural unconscious—an unconscious that is tribal and can function to deaden personal entelechies or crack open novel prospects. The cultural unconscious, tied to elusive conditions of origin in language and geography, contains subjective symbolic forms that wish to be objective.

3. Psyche and Spirits

But what of the so-called “objective psyche,” often called the “collective unconscious?” Is this anti-tribal, and if so, in what respects? Here there is a continuum moving from thick tribal projections to the thinness of logical structures. Kant’s formalism, corrected by Hegel and Schopenhauer, not to mention Peirce, attempts to erect transcendental logical and judicial categories onto the rhythms of nature. These are of medium thinness and can illuminate much of what the human process is and does. For Jaspers, these structures are attempts to “find” the encompassing through what he calls “consciousness as such,” or generic Kantian consciousness (cf. [Jaspers, 1955](#) and [Nguyen, 2015](#)). But are generic logical and judicial categories exhaustive of our alleged species being? Hardly.

What is shaping the drive toward the generic? It is the unfolding spirits that move in the between spaces that connect and empower the various dimensions of the unconscious. Rather than an omnivorous Hegelian Spirit/Mind with its

“necessary” telos, there are plural locations of spirit operating out of the between. Betweenness operates through the psyche and has ontological import for the momenta of nature. For example, there is a space of betweenness in the transition from a personal complex in the unconscious and its elucidation by its commensurate archetype. A personal mother complex can transit to the archetype of the Great Mother that amplifies the potency of the personal order, (cf. Oh, 2021). Betweenness can be seen as a vibrating fluidity that both connects orders and infuses orders with renewed efficacy.

Are these spirits “real” in comparison to embodied selves? First, the concept of the “real” has been one of the most destructive in the history of thought and personal interaction. Inevitably one designates the “really real” with personal and tribal projections. Thus, you see: my race is more real than yours, or less harmful, wood is more real than Formica. Both assertions rely on a priority schema that equates the “more real” with “more value.” This can be a lethal equation. Rather, one can say that values are cultural projections that cheat by attempting to line up with a hierarchy of realities.

Spirits are neither more nor less real than anything else, but real in different respects. Opposed to ontological *priorities* (hierarchies) is the position of ontological *parity*, for which every order is real in the respects that it is real. Tinkerbelle is no less real than the Atlantic Ocean, only differently real. What some philosophers call an “ideal object” is no less real than good old space/time particulars, that are too often privileged. To move from ersatz priority schema to a sense of ontological parity requires a spiritual act of ongoing mindfulness.

It is the presence of a spirit, or, in community, a spirit-interpreter, that dissolves priority schemes by allowing each order to be just the reality that it is. Husserl’s tactic of “bracketing” is but a pale shadow of the spiritual gift of ontological parity.

How, ontologically, does one approach such an elusive concept as that of a spirit? There is an analogy from amateur astronomy. In a home telescope it is possible to see the Andromeda Galaxy (M31), but if you try to stare at it directly, it has no contour, whereas if you look at it from the side of your eye, it comes into view. The quest to “see” a spirit can only be done via an indirect look, not a straight on intentional gaze.

Are spirits orders of nature, and, if so, do they have traits directly analogous to so-called embodied traits. Here the concept of embodiment needs to be expanded. So-called physical embodiment, much eulogized, is but one kind. There are dimensions of embodiment that are not rooted in space/time orders. The spirits are ontologically unique in that their modes of embodiment are more like energies vibrating in the between. Another way to put this is to say that the spirits, as indefinite in number, have a different kind of relata to relationship ratio. The relata (“thing” in itself) are more attenuated, while the relations between and among spirits and humanly occupied orders, are strong, yet are not reducible to simple causality (cf. Corrington, 1992).

4. Allowing Causality (Beyond Aristotle)

Perhaps we need to add another type of causality beyond *material*, *efficient*, *formal*, and *final*. When talking about spirits in the between there is a minimum of materiality, efficient cause is muted, formal cause is in the vibrating gestalts of meaning, while final causality splinters into finite loci with various developmental goals. Such innumerable goals are developmental in the sense that they are self-corrective over the short and long run. What could a fifth type of causality be called? I propose to call it *allowing* causality. This new type of causality is distinct in kind in that it is an enabling condition for *what* is allowed; namely, emergent meaning structures that make connections possible. Allowing causality, unlike the others, provides an allowing that holds-forth orders in relation. A given spirit allows connected orders fuller instantiating power. A new potency emerges that is the foundation for the other types of causality.

Such allowing is the ultimate enabling condition for any order to emerge into its excellence. A finite spirit can enable the emergence of a new meaning horizon by clearing away ersatz infinities that foreclose query and inventive wonder. The spirits, never assuming a rigid architectonic, are fluid interventions against the forces of projection and narcissism. Spirits work against hermeneutic closure and dogmatism by liquifying the closed shells of meaning that would ossify the inner heart of the human process. In another dimension spirits keep architectonic structures fluid and growing against the encroaching power of entropy. If all anti-entropic forces function by theft, it follows that such ever renewing thefts can have a propulsive force that vibrates with the not yet.

The concept of the “not yet” does not guarantee grooved ascent into a pre-established goal. It refers to a vibrating clearing in which potencies can have free play. The not yet is profoundly fluid, yet open to architectonic growth, that is, to the generic spread of the categorial array. All architectonic systems have an inner drive toward more scope and efficacy. However, psychic inflation can derail the process and bloated claims can be made about whatever is in whatever way it is. Again, conceptual psychopathology lurks around the corners ready to expand beyond the contours of a self-giving nature.

Psychic inflation pushes beyond legitimate self-corrective architectures. Products of psychic inflation and narcissism are non-fluid and drive to encircle the plenitude of the orders of the world with an iron ring. The spirits, hovering in the between, work against hermeneutic and semiotic closure by facilitating the transformation of meanings into epiphanies of power. When a complex becomes saturated with the numinous, fluidity enters the interstices where nascent potencies can become actual and efficacious.

The image of “thickness” has been used to denote the transition from the thickness of tribal content to the thinness of logical and judicial categories. But there is another kind of density that transcends tribal thickness and universalizing logic. This third type of density is the re-saturation of both thick and thin densities via a pulsating availability that makes any kind of density possible. Let’s

call it the *undulating* density. If *thick* density is found in the emergent powers of culture and the human process, and if *thin* density pertains to logical and juridical laws, then *undulating* density provides the clearing within which cultural symbolic forms and their correlated logical/juridical forms can become relevant to each other.

Undulating density waxes and wanes throughout the human process, opening out prospects and a series of “could be” meaning horizons. To undulate is to gently loosen the edges of horizontal fields that threaten to crust over and become static and inert. In this sense, the undulations of the spirits are wedded to the spirit of ontological parity by ensuring that any structure, whether dense-pack or thin, is empowered to have its full “reality” in the scheme of things. The spirits struggle to make parity possible for our finite minds.

An open question: does cosmic mind enshrine parity in all orders? If the answer is “yes,” then it is possible that finite spirits can hover in the between by gathering finite awareness of specific “realities” with and to a global sense of the equal reality of *any* order, whether discriminated by us or not. That is to say that the pervasive sense of parity is both a reality of the psyche and the way of the innumerable orders of the world, as well as the equal reality of the modes of the unconscious. Each unconscious dimension (personal, cultural, objective, and natural) is real in its own way. Part of the problem lies in the human tendency to abject the autonomous powers of the unconscious out of an ambivalent combination of fear and desire. A given spirit plies between and among the four dimensions of the unconscious rendering each of them part of the selving (individuation) process. Socrates had a strong sense of this when wrestling with his *daimon*.

The question emerges: are the spirits simply human projections or are they ontologically embedded in the rhythms of nature and the pulsations of nature’s depths? Clearly, much of what we attribute to the spirits is a product of human longing arching out into the place of betweenness to establish an all-too-human contour—a magnified self. Yet there is a commensurate sense in which the spirits are extra human modalities that challenge and tame human projections. My spirit is both the result of projections *and* an ongoing corrective to my projections. The relationship between them has its own dialectic nature. Does this dialectic work exclusively through determinate negation in Hegel’s sense? Yes and no. Determinate negation, in which an expanding meaning horizon negates the antecedent position, is one mode of interaction. Rather, growth requires an ongoing zigzag between negations and transfigurations. For Hegel, you cannot separate negation from sublation. There are so many aspects to negation that a strictly determinate form is only one of these modes. Some negations are fragmentary and subject to environing conditions wherein each negation unfolds with and against partial corrections, but never in a linear pseudo-progressive way, (cf. Corrington, 2017).

If for Kant the history of architectonic systems is the history of failures leading to the collapse of metaphysics, and if for Hegel each architecture is part of a

progressive unfolding toward Absolute Knowing, then for the current perspective metaphysics is both inevitable and self-corrective and the locus of many *teloi* which can have a cumulatively enriching contour. Methods that try to prescind from metaphysics merely betray their own lack of self-awareness of the architectonic elements that pervade all methodologies.

Kant wanted to thin out all previous metaphysical systems and render them mute, while Hegel often thickened his shapes of self-consciousness. Our alternative on metaphysics, and the vast cluster of symbolic forms, is that thickness comes and goes, largely dependent on Darwinian conditions of actualization in mobile adaptability. Schopenhauer's different take corrects the anti-metaphysical bias of Kant and the bloated thickness of Hegel's "progressive" shapes. For Schopenhauer, metaphysics is required to make the epistemology work and to allow for the epiphanies of the objective dimensions of the Will. The metaphysics of the Will (*der Wille*) illuminates the churning depths of nature's unconscious, while phenomenal appearances are shaped by the structures of space, time, and causality. Central in linking phenomena to the noumenal Will are the archetypes (Platonic Forms) that ply the between spaces and bind phenomenal orders to the underground churning and chaotic Will (cf. Lawrence, 2021).

5. Potency of Architectures

Can you think without a categorial architecture? Peirce argued that even a "simple" act of perception is governed by the dialectic of the given (percept) and the perceptual (categorial) judgment. Both are required. You cannot "see" yellow without a full categorial scheme of color, which involves contrast, tonality, and saturation density. Hegel was fully aware of this structure, starting with simple sense-certainty and moving through perception to understanding. With perception we activate categorial schema, while with understanding we arrive at a horizontal field of marked meanings. Philosophical puritans tend to downplay the rising arch of categorial encompassment to stay secure in immediacy. This is a delusion at best.

Immediacy will always be somewhat elusive as the learned *and* inborn forms of pattern recognition shape and groove the so-called immediate moment. While an act of prescinding can struggle to separate the percept from the unconscious perceptual judgment, this effort can only untangle so much. What the perceptual judgments do, as emergent from instinct and socialization, is to stabilize a hermeneutic perspective, while honoring the semiotic events that enshrine meaning-in-time. If, however, one privileges perceptual judgments, it is likely to fall into a corrosive relativism that fails to recognize the pressures of the muted given. Orders of relevance insist and resist simultaneously.

Signs and symbols emerge from transactions between the host psyche and established communal semiosis. Signs refer to other signs, orders, and meanings that make communication possible. Symbols activate the unconscious and involve a transference to the numinous. As a *sign*, a falling leaf denotes a time of year, but when the sign deepens into a *symbol* the self enters such mythological

themes as the Tree of Life, and the awareness of how seasons shape the contour of the self-in-process. Signs do not function alone in pristine purity, rather, they are always part of vast sign series that cannot be condensed into a bound totality, (cf. Corrington, 1994).

The expression of an architectonic operates through signs and symbols. There is neither a first sign nor a final sign, any more than there is a symbol of all symbols. Human nature tends to grasp one symbol as the paradigmatic one, e.g., the body of Christ, Buddha nature, the Tao, the Covenant, or some life force (*shakti* or *Qi*). The consequent inability to understand alternative symbols is the source of much religious and cultural violence and stands as a challenge to all utopian longings. Whatever “would be” is envisioned will conflict with other symbolic powers and potencies. Utopias and dystopias are too tribal to welcome the full richness of the symbolic orders. Further, on the level of referring signs conflict emerges because the referent is often elusive.

Imagine the possibility that symbols can become fluid and non-imperial. If two symbols of ultimacy are not logically contradictory, then they can both enter a more capacious horizon of meaning. If signs and symbols are the most obvious expression of an architectonic, especially as publicly rendered, then their Napoleonic ambitions can be muted by the dimension of fluidity. What does a fluid symbol look like? Consider the Tree of Life (*Yggdrasil* in Norse mythology). As a symbol, the Tree of Life connotes interconnection, secure depths in the roots, expression of cosmic power, and stability. Pushing beyond the tree we see a connection to the symbol of life, which operates whether there is a specific tree or not. A further fluid expansion can be seen when the epiphany shifts to the power of ongoing creation. Neither the expression of *life* nor that of ongoing *creation* are logically incompatible with the originating Tree of Life symbology. Rather, they are but two possible fluid enrichments of the symbol of the magical tree.

Looking at a magisterial oak tree can activate the unconscious transference where the attending psyche is grasped by a numinous depth-connection to the symbolic potency of that oak tree, as an expression of the Tree of Life. Fluidity is hard to maintain as the transference relation is so intense and ongoing. If a goal of therapy is to coax out a transference to the analyst wherein the patient recenters their existence around this external source, then the final goal of therapy is to dissolve the transference so that full autonomy can emerge. Once the primal transference is dissolved, the self-gains fuller access to the other types of transference that don't have to be tied to only one object.

Each encounter with a sacred fold (an epiphany of power) is made possible by a transference relation that lives in the between, participating in both self-structure and object. Here I posit two kinds of transference. First is the *consuming* kind that locks out any other possible transference object and finds its paradigmatic expression in the analyst/analysand relationship, often brooking a countertransference. Second is the *transitional* transference that lights up, and is lit up by, a plurality of epiphanies. While the first type of transference forms a

closed shell, hardly open to self-critique, the second type is permeable to the prospects of several shifting transferences. *Transitional* transferences are lower in intensity than *consuming* forms. This is also a difference between non-fluid and fluid transferences. The latter type, wedded to the principle of ontological parity, generates the fluid architectures that stabilize and enrich culture (cf. Corrington, 1997).

The aesthetic spheres function to overcome the rigidity and imperialism of a consuming transference. Art, whether beautiful or sublime, presents the least violent forms of transference and affiliation. While it is harder to reconcile religious transferences, aesthetic transferences can affirm more than one epiphany of power. While religious claims often contradict each other, aesthetic potencies reinforce each other, thereby eliciting an evolving series of epiphanies. Differently intense foci can come and go in sequence or stand together in the present. One can be deeply affected by: the music of Mahler, folk dance, paintings by Rothko, Chinese mountain paintings, Persian and South Asian miniatures, the best of popular culture, sculptures, live theater, great films, certain texts, or striking orders of nature. If consuming transferences operate through ontological priority (my epiphany is totalizing and superior), transitional transferences allow each epiphany to be as fully “real” as any other, (cf. Corrington, 2016).

The human process struggles to navigate among an indefinite number of epiphanies of power and this travail can be all-too-easily resolved by finding rest in *one* overarching numinous point. But this deadens the realms of art where imperial epiphanies are put to rout. The goal of an authentic life is to open out and share as many numinous experiences as communal life can assimilate. In a fluid community of *interpreters*, symbols can emerge into a public space that welcomes the advance into the not yet, whereas in more static *natural* communities symbols are shaped along tribal lines and resist the creative powers of negation that pare away ersatz totalizations.

The gateway toward authenticity comes directly through the dialectic between the modes of the unconscious and the attending consciousness. By delineating the similarities and differences among the four modes of the unconscious it is possible to exhibit key aspects of both subjective and objective forms and their underlying archetypes (cf., Neville, 2015). In this unending dialectic, Darwinian finite mind is transfigured by the inversions caused by cosmic mind. The result is that adaptation within nature is also shaped by the perennial infusions of nature naturing, the locus of cosmic mind and the seed bed for its emergence into space, time, and causality.

6. Conclusion

Philosophical naturalism takes several forms, with the ecstatic form gathering up elements of each. The first form can be called “descriptive” naturalism, where the focus is on the barest description of the orders of the world without mentioning nature naturing in any prominent way. We see this brilliantly expressed

by Dewey and Santayana. This form does not always entail materialistic reductionism. The second form is almost opposite and stresses the power of spirit within the orders of the world. I call this form “honorific naturalism” where some elements of the unconscious of nature are in play with an emphasis on nature naturing. We find this above all in Emerson. The third form is “process naturalism,” where the focus is on infinitesimal units of becoming under the aegis of a soft teleology. Here one thinks of Whitehead and Hatrshorne, and differently of Neville.

The “ecstatic” form of naturalism gathers aspects of the three other forms of naturalism and transfigures them under its new paradigm and perspective. Taken from the descriptive form is the notion that nature is all that there is and that we are bound to honor all manifestations of nature natured as equally real (as put forward by William James). Taken from the honorific form is the notion that spirits, now finitized, emerge within the spaces of betweenness within nature natured, a premier one being the spirit-interpreter within some human communities. Much less is taken from process naturalism as its claims are more akin to science fiction with its obsession with becoming and relations over being and relata. It produces a metaphysics that imposes all-too-human categories on nature, while downplaying the churning otherness of the unconscious of nature. In ecstatic naturalism the stress is on the shifting dialectic between the potencies of nature naturing and the evolving orders of nature natured. A further stress is on the priority of the aesthetic dimension over the religious forms, often mired in tribal violence. But the religious dimension of thought and experience can be transfigured when the focus is on the aesthetic aspects of sacred folds where an order of nature folds on itself over and over to enhance its semiotic density. We encounter such a sacred fold when it ignites our unconscious transference where deep emotion is generated by the potencies of that fold. The sacred fold is experienced in the transition from beauty, with its harmonies and contrasts, to the sublime, which shatters the boundaries of beauty while honoring beauty’s inner power. For a deep pantheist, the sacred fold reaches down into nature naturing and is our link to the unconscious of nature. The exploration of the human modes of the unconscious (personal, cultural, and collective) is grasped and shaken by the infinite depths of the unconscious of nature. This is exactly where mind’s travail is undertaken.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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