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The Experience of Ringing

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Buried deep within the Heidegger of the 1950s lies a strange and powerful metaphor. This metaphor has enough scope and power to ground a whole philosophy. In fact, in Heidegger's case it has done so. Yet it has remained unexamined by his readers and commentators. The metaphor of which I speak is that of the ring.

The following ontological investigation consists of a sustained query into the thought/experience of ringing. Since this query is ontological, it will involve world and thing, persons and the Unbespoken. As such, our study has the title, *World Ring*.

While this study is mainly influenced by the thinking of Heidegger, several other thinkers and traditions will be evident. Of special importance are Emerson, the early Wittgenstein, early Buddhism, the later Royce, Buchler, Rilke, and Hegel. On a plane "above" the ontological will be seen the influence of the sage of Zurich, C.G. Jung. Yet it is fair to say that the focal center for the following query is to be found deep within the later Heidegger.

The essay is divided into four parts. The movement is that of "through . . . to." In each division a classical branch of metaphysics is articulated in such a way that it is forced to give way to something else. What this "something else" is can best be expressed by the words "radiance" and "waying." Thus we can see the movement of World Ring as the movement from metaphysics to radiance and waying. This movement will be seen to be from one type of ringing to another more fitting type. This more fitting type of ringing has been envisioned by the later Heidegger. It will announce itself only as the thought work is brought to completion and repose.

The four parts of this essay bear the following titles:

- I. Through Ontology to Thinging
- II. Through Rational Psychology to Radiant Emptiness
- III. Through Cosmology to Worlding
- IV. Through Theology to the Unbespoken

The source for these four divisions of classical metaphysics is to be found in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Heidegger's study of this work points out the distinction between *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*. Special metaphysics consists of regional

analyses of what is and concerns itself with things, persons, world, and the highest being. Our thought experiment will thus work in turn with each of the branches of metaphysics. Through this process each branch will devolve into a more poetic vision of what is. Hopefully such a transformation of our way of seeing/being will work a cure within the community of persons.

Before beginning our study we should listen to the Saying of Heidegger that animates and guides our Way. These words are to be found in his essay of 1950 entitled *The Thing*.

The round dance is the ring that joins while it plays as mirroring. Appropriating, it lightens the four into the radiance of their simple oneness. Radiantly, the ring joins the four, everywhere open to the riddle of their presence. The gathering presence of the mirror-play of the world, joining in this way, is the ringing. In the ringing of the mirror-playing ring the four nestle into their unifying presence in which each one retains its own nature. So nestling, they join together, worlding, the world. . . . Out of the ringing mirror-play the thinging of the thing takes place.¹

In this Saying we notice clearly the task of the following essay. The "four" which we seek are: thing, person, world (rather than sky), and the Unspoken (rather than the Divine). This Saying obligates us to find and articulate the ringing process that unites the four into simple oneness. By doing so we will move through metaphysics to the quiet and still presence of radiance and waying.

I Through Ontology to Thinging

a) Ontology talks of things. It does so by a detailed analysis of the structure of the thing. This thing-structure contains a cluster of predicates which are usually termed universals. Universals are those pervasive traits which go into the definition of a thing. On some accounts the thing *is* its cluster of traits. In other accounts the thing is seen as that which is somehow left over when all of the traits are removed. In both analyses the thing is understood within a highly elaborate conceptual frame. This conceptual frame rests upon a certain conception of naming. To name is to apply a predicate to a subject. The predicate of a subject is the nominal or real universal that is "owned" by the thing under study. Without such naming the thing could not be at all.

The thing is ringed-in by the conceptual frame of ontology. This frame comes to hold sway over the manifest emergence of the thing for consciousness. The thing is ringed-around by the web of categories that ontology has at its disposal. It is placed, or, rather dis-placed, by this tightly bound schema. It is locked into place. This locking is ringing as closure. The thing is be-ringed so as to collapse as thinging into the mere permanence of the object. Names lock.

This locking is the closure of thinging. Thinging dies away to make way for static endurance. Ontology is ever busy enforcing this

closure. Within this closure the thing no longer vibrates with radiance. It is dark, dense, and "taciturn." It turns away and withholds itself. The ontological schema slowly corrodes the mirror-glint of the thing's active presence.

Things are ringed-in. This means that they become darkened cogs within a mechanized structure. These cogs are locked into conceptual place. Ringing becomes the mechanized wheel within a wheel of a static engine. All things become reduced to moments within the eternally returning mechanism of ontology. One historical form of this machine is Aristotle's genus/species schema. This ontological machine locks all things into a prior structure. It closes true ringing in order to enforce its sway. It represents the flight of radiance and waying. It imposes the schema of classes. Each thing is a mere moment of a universal class. It "belongs" to a class. But this belonging is achieved by conceptual conquest. The thing is "owned" by its class. It can be replaced by any other identical member of the class. It is non-unique and serves as an instance or exemplar. As an instance of a universal class the thing need not *be* at all. Once it is placed into its class it can close in upon itself and no longer concern us. With this ontological placing it dies. Yet its death is a hidden and silent death. Ontology murders thinging in its relentless conceptual conquest of things.

The conceptual rings of ontology grasp tightly. This means that they close the thing upon itself. These dark, dense rings turn the thing away from self-unfolding. This assault discourages the thing from coming to flower as the shrine of radiant waying.

b) We must go *through* ontology to find this shrine. The trip through ontology requires that we come to see what ontology fails to achieve. Yet it is not as if we turn our back on ontology. Rather, we must come to understand it from a point "below" itself. By doing so we can help free ontology from itself and help the thing to emerge in a way befitting its hidden nature. When we do this we will fulfill Nietzsche's imperative which states, "You should make friends again with the nearest things."

In order to be-friend our nearest things we must let them speak. This means that we must provide the still arena within which they can have their saying. How this arena comes to flower will be shown in the second division of this essay. For now we will concentrate upon the emergence of genuine thinging.

The movement from the thing of ontology to the thinging thing is a slow and painful process. It is slow in that ontology only releases things after a protracted struggle. It is painful in that we, the ontologists, must learn the guilt of the oppressor. We have long forced the dark rings of our relentless yet hidden schemas upon things. Only when we have atoned for our violence will things begin to emerge and speak to us.

Let us then make a few attempts at creative listening. In these steps we may prepare the way through which our nearest things can return. In starting down this way it is wise to listen to the speaking of

one who has gone beyond us. The following saying comes from Wallace Stevens.

Anecdote of the Jar

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
I made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.²

The simple gray jar sits quietly upon a wild hill. It neither shouts nor obtrudes. It simply abides. It is placed there by the restless hand of man. So much is obvious. Yet we sense that this is not all. Soon we hear from the poet that the jar takes dominion. What can this strange notion mean?

The little jar takes dominion over the whole hill and all that lives and grows on the hill. Yet this dominion is not a conquest. It is much too gentle for that. Its dominion is actually a form of neighboring. This quiet neighboring is the still-dance of belonging. The wilderness is slowly brought into a belonging with the jar. It comes to find order and repose through the jar's ringing presence. This ringing is a round dance. The jar and the hill are both mandalas. Together they nestle each other into belonging. The ringing of this simple thing is the process of belonging. This belonging is not the empty belonging of a thing in its own class but the full and rich belonging of neighbors.

The gray jar brings the "slovenly wilderness" into a quiet repose. It does this by its thinging. This still thinging is a mode of ringing. This ringing is itself twofold. In one of its modes it is the radiant mirror-play of belonging. But here we come back to the notions of radiance and waying. As a radiant thing the jar mirrors other things on the hill and lightens them into belonging. As a waying thing the jar nestles with other things on the hill and neighbors them into belonging. Here we see the homecoming of the thing. This is expressed as follows:

the ring clasps ever more *lightly* as
the companions neighbor each other in the growing noon
...for herein lies the healing power as of old
that each to its measure will rise
and in this measure purify its neighbor³

The thing things. This now means that it rings-out over the hill and gathers others things into its region. It holds even the wild things into a still abiding. Like the singing Orpheus the thinging thing grants repose. It stills the willful striving of the wilderness. As the center of this stilling it is the port or harbor which provides shelter. This shelter is the arch of peace granted by ringing. Beneath this arch of peace all things find their proper place. This place is not that of Cartesian space with its tridimensional grid system. Rather it is the place of homecoming. With this homecoming things are freed from the iron grip of ontology and allowed to emerge into true thinging.

This slow and painful emergence from the grip of ontology is polymorphous. Things start speaking to us in many ways. Only when we have gone beyond the drive for homogeneity can we learn of the manifold emergence of thinging things. We will speak in turn of four ways in which thinging things may emerge. The unity behind the differences is the experience of "arising." Hence we will listen in what follows to the ways in which arising is brought to pass. Before we finish we will discover that in things which makes them needful of our care.

c) Arising is usually defined as the standing up or springing forth of a thing or event. This definition hints at the ways in which things move into their proper thinging. Each thing arises by springing forth from the world-matrix. As such it is ventured forth by the worlding-workshop. But of this later. What concerns us now is the movement of arising itself. To this we now turn.

The first insight that we reach (one which is as old as thought itself) is that the world consists of two major kingdoms. The first, and larger, is that of self-arising things. The traditional name for this kingdom is "Nature." The second kingdom is that of those things that are brought to arising by persons. Persons themselves occupy an empty middle kingdom as we shall see.

The region of the self-arising is itself divided into two realms. The first is that of the *mute* self-arising. This kingdom has traditionally been called the inorganic realm. These things are mute in that they are unable to vibrate with the speech of emergence. They do not wax and wane with the sap of life. Instead they remain ringed around themselves. They can not initiate the ringing process by their outward expansion. The rock merely abides as self-constant. In its self-constancy it does not actively neighbor with other things. Its leap into full ringing takes place with the glance of the person who sets it vibrating with flashing/nestling power. Until that glance sets it aglow it remains mute.

The second realm of self arising things is that of the *expanding* self-arising. This kingdom has traditionally been called the organic realm. These things are expanding in that they take command over themselves and gather up their previous moments into a fuller more expanded moment. They bloom and spread, wax and wane. Each such expanding thing gathers itself around its still point of symmetry.

Symmetry is the proportionate togetherness of parts to whole. This quiet yet powerful symmetry arches over the self-arising thing to insure its articulate entelechy. This symmetrical self-arising is a ringing together of moments. These moments, as seen by Hegel, are both temporal and spatial. They gather together in such a way as to make possible both self-constancy and outward expansion.

The second major kingdom of things is that of the brought-to-arising. As in the other kingdom this too is divided into two realms. The first realm is that of the brought to non-self-arising. The second realm is that of the brought to self-arising. These two realms constitute that realm of world that has been fashioned by persons.

The brought to non-self-arising things are the things of technology. These things together constitute a ubiquitous sphere which we shall call the techno-sphere. Within this sphere things are forced into an arising that is not be-fitting their nature. Hence their arising is a *non-self-arising*. They are fashioned within the sway of a means-ends structure. They are brought to arising only to disappear again into the mode of usability. As such they too remain mute in their own way. They are ringed-in by the hand of *technē*. As such they fall under the sway of ontology which holds technology in its grip. We can now say that ontology uses technology to *close* the things of the techno-sphere. Persons force these fashioned things into the mute slavery of the tool. Once again we see the notion/experience of the cog within the machine of onto-technology. The ringing of these things is a dark and closed ringing. They are brought to arising only to perish. In perishing they die away only to mutely serve the ontological engine.

Yet within this ubiquitous sphere lies the possibility of another kind of thinging. This possibility is realized in those things that are gently brought to a self-arising. This arising is a self-arising in that it is guided beforehand by a prior listening. This listening allows the thing to announce its ownmost nature to the fashioner. Through this quiet announcement the builder learns of the proper mode of making. Within *this* mode of making the thing is coaxed into showing its proper way. This way is the way of full ringing. This ringing arches over and through the thinging thing. It frees the facets of the thing to mirror each other in an opening-lightening way. And it frees the facets of the thing to nestle each other in a neighboring way. With this ringing we see how the gray jar on the hill can exert its gentle pull upon the wilderness. Its ringing is a belonging. It belongs to itself in an open and active way (as the mirror/nestle dance of ringing) and it belongs to other things around it. By so belonging with other things it frees them for their proper ringing. This realm is the less lonesome realm. It is less lonesome in that nothing stands alone. It is here that things come home.

Yet this homecoming of things is not achieved without help. The hand and glance of persons enables things to return home. They are brought home by a caring and solicitous builder. Things are needful. They need the hand of persons in order to rise to their proper ringing.

Yet something else abides in things that makes them needful. This

"something else" is the "not" hidden deep within their core. This "not," as the no-thing, is not the void of atomic physics or the threat of death. Rather, it is the still presence of emptiness which remains to any *ventured* thing. Things vibrate with the nullity of themselves. This means that they are precarious. They hang over the abyss of the finite. As be-thinged they are ventured forth into the balance. They hang on this precarious balance between the formless deep on the one hand and the closure of *technē* on the other. Only the nurturing hand and glance of persons keeps them on the balance. We sense the nothing within each thing and help to keep the venture alive and hale. We shepherd things.

Yet this relationship is not in one direction only. Things help to shepherd us. By remaining faithful to the venture they grant us courage to face the nothing. This nothing lies deep within ourselves as well. Yet this nothing is not the dark and cold sweep of the void but the still radiance of the open. This open is our home. To this we now turn.

II Through Rational Psychology to Radiant Emptiness

It is best to start our journey into the self by returning to the metaphor that has guided our way. Once again we listen to the saying of a poet. The following comes from Emerson.

The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a *ring* imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outward to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this generation of circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force or truth of the individual soul.⁴

We shall trace this evolution of ringing through three stages. At the boundary of each stage will emerge a new way of being which will prepare us for the emergence of the next stage. This journey constitutes the homecoming of the person.

The three stages on our way are as follows: mute self identity, emergent self identity, and radiant non identity. With the last stage we will have arrived at the "open arena" of which Heidegger speaks.

a) The first stage is that of mute self identity. This is the place of everydayness. Here we first find ourselves. And it is from this stage that we must embark.

The mute self is the self that is caught in the web of a false identity. This is the self that emerges from the all powerful social matrix. Its self grasp, limited though it is, devolves from the hidden categorial intrusions of historical space. The self is little more than what it is forced to be by the reigning rational psychology. This cultural psychology hands over an image of the self which is then blindly endured. Thus the self can see itself as, for example, ego, spirit, subjectivity, stream of consciousness, will, need, or thinking substance.

The mute self comes to identify itself with its historical image. The identity bond is locked into place. This locking is a closed ringing.

The mute self is ringed-around by the historical psychology. These categorial rings are dark, dense, and closed.

Yet this ringing involves an even deeper isolation. Not only is the mute self caught in the grip of rational psychology but it is further ensnared in solipsism. Solipsism means that the mute self can see little more than its own modifications. The world is closed. Only the self remains. Solipsism and world-closure are the same. The world is reduced to the arena of self-enhancement. For the self as subjectivity, for example, the world becomes the backdrop for mute projections. For the self as need, for example, the world becomes the arena of mute fulfillment. Thus the mute self is doubly caught. It is caught in the web of rational psychology, with its implicit categories, and in the dark web of solipsism. In both cases the identity bond is hostile to difference. Only with the emergence of identity *with* difference can the self evolve.

The metaphor that bespeaks the mute self is that of a small iron ring that binds and girds the self upon itself. This ring never expands for the mute self. Its grip is the grip of death. Yet within this grip a certain tension starts to build. This tension is the longing for free expansion that is felt at the core of the mute self. The drive for self overcoming is never stilled. Yet a powerful turning is necessary for this tension to become creative and curative. What then is this turning that emerges from mute self identity?

The turn which frees the mute self from itself is the reflexive turn. In Hegel's terms this is the turn from consciousness to self consciousness. The reflexive turn can be seen as the in-flashing of consciousness. This in-flashing is the lightning like flash that breaks open the self to itself. It has the force of a revelation. However this revelation is not yet that of the Unbespoken but of the self's disclosure to itself. The self opens up a *gap* between its historical image and its true emptiness. This gap is the difference. This difference can be seen as the psychological difference. It is the difference between the I and the Me.

The Me now becomes the image handed to the self by rational psychology. The self, as I, now sees the image as being distinct. The I is not the Me. With this realization, achieved by the in-flashing of consciousness, the mute self passes over the emergent self.

b) With the emergence of the emergent self we arrive at the second stage of the evolution of the self. The emergent self lives within the sway of the psychological difference (the difference between the I and the Me). With this stage we witness the free movement of ringing. The metaphor appropriate to this stage is that spoken by Emerson. We see many rings emerge. These rings collide and intersect with each other in a thousand ways. But before we can see this ringing fully we must deepen our grasp of the emergent self.

That which is broken open by the in-flashing of consciousness is the imagination. However, this imagination is not one faculty among others but stands, as Kant saw through a glass darkly, as the foundation of the self. It is the protean power of creation and synthesis. It is

the activity of transformation. Hence the imagination can be seen as the fecund seed bed of all *self* transformation. Through the free play of the imagination, made possible by the reflexive turn, the self can bring the Me into full view. This new vista sees the Me as that which is over against the I. The I is now the imagination. Hence the Me is no longer be-thinged by rational psychology but becomes a project of the imagination (qua I). This is made possible by the gap qua difference. Since the Me is now *not* the I it can be illuminated by the free power of the imagination. It evolves from being constitutive of the mute self to being a project (and as such a mask) of the emergent self.

At this stage of its evolution the self now realizes that the Me, or self image, can be developed as an aesthetic project. In a very real sense the I can play with the Me as that which is other. Hence the I can see "itself" as any number of images. The emergent self is constantly engaged in the opus of transformation. Here we see the notion, spoken of by Campbell, of a Hero with a thousand faces. The Me qua self image becomes the mask of the self qua I. These masks can multiply indefinitely. Here we enter the realm of creative mythology where images of the self can wax and grow strong.

Within this realm many self images can emerge. However the I no longer *identifies* with its images. Because the identity bond has been loosened the self has more scope for free development. The images fashioned by the imagination take on an aesthetic power that was unavailable to the mute self. This aesthetic refashioning makes possible many selves within the emergent self. With the emergence of the polymorphous self the ringing process can expand. With each new self image a new set of rings can be-ring the I. With this expanded ringing the I can come to experience other possibilities of self understanding. This expansion enables the I to pass over to other selves and their images. With this passing over empathy is made possible. And finally, from empathy emerges belonging. This belonging is the belonging of ringing.

The attitude, or way of being, that pervades this stage of self evolution is that of irony. Irony emerges with the psychological difference. Irony is the cool yet loving distance preserved by the gap. Irony nurtures the gap and preserves the gap as gap. Hence irony and the difference shepherd each other into perduring. Irony holds the many Mes into place as products of the imagination. It keeps them alive and expanding. The irony of the emergent self is the irony that lies deep within Eros. Hence irony, as the hidden side of Eros, holds the self images in its gentle grasp. It is the cool wedge that holds the difference open. It prevents the Me from collapsing into the abyss of the ever protean I.

Yet irony is filled with play. It is ever moving to transform the self images. Thus we must speak here of ironic play. Ironic play is the ever moving and distancing power of self expansion. It keeps the self images ~~for~~ ^{from} concreting and dying.

Ironic play keeps the emergent self safe from the lingering draft of the mute self. It keeps this pull at bay. Hence ironic play preserves the emergent self. Yet in its silent action of preservation it hides

another possibility. This possibility is that of openness. To this we now turn.

c) The emergent self, as playfully ironic, begins to realize that the I which produces the many Mes begins to fall away. This realization comes about when irony turns back upon itself to examine its "source." This source is actually the abyss mentioned above. The abyss of the non-substantial imagination begins to open. Irony, in turning upon itself, shatters the illusions that a *player* is present. The ringing dance of self unfolding is a dance without a dancer. The I was empty all along. When the emergent self grasps that its I is no-thing it jumps silently and quickly into the arena of radiant emptyness. This open arena is not an I but the place, or There, of radiance and waying.

The arena of openness is the pure draft of the Open. This arena is the ring of rings. This ring of rings is the encompassing. Yet this encompassing ring is not a locked-in horizon. Rather, it is the ever unseen and constant availability of ringing. It provides the silent and nurturing possibility of endless expansion. It permits ringing to arch-out without limit. It is not Providence but *Providingness* (Buchler). With the leap from emergent self to openness radiant emptyness is achieved.

Within this unseen but prevalent ring of rings all ringing finds its proper place. The self now becomes the open arena through which radiance and waying can exert their sway. This flashing/nestling sway places the empty self within the worlding world. The self now becomes radiant emptyness. With its final Kenosis the self disappears and leaves only the world as the remainder. This is expressed by Wittgenstein:

Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its *implications* are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there *remains* the reality co-ordinated with it.⁵

With this final stage of self unfolding we arrive at emptyness. The self is a "point without extension." Yet this emptyness is not that of a cold void. It is radiant emptyness. This means that the emptyness glows with the still presence of what is. The self, as radiant emptyness, is the open arena *through which* the worlding workshop can emerge. Both the "I" and the many "Mes" have been exhaled. The worlding workshop lurks "beneath" the self to coax-out this exhalation. At this point in our long journey we have arrived at what Heidegger calls "Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery..."⁶ This releasement toward things enables things to emerge (arise) as thinging things. Openness to the mystery enables radiance and waying (as the twin names for *das Sein* in our mother tongue) to emerge into the open arena of the non-self.

But with the Kenosis of the self we arrive at its remainder, namely, world. To this we now must turn.

III Through Cosmology to Worlding

We start with this assertion: The metaphysical world is not the worlding world. Therefore we must move *through* metaphysics in order to arrive at the experience of worlding.

Cosmology has traditionally concerned itself with at least the following four themes, namely, 1) the origin of the world, 2) the structure of the world, 3) the nature of becoming, and 4) the basic unit of the world. By pushing through these four concerns cosmology has sought to articulate the world within a full blown conceptual frame. This is, of course, proper. But in doing so it has forced worlding into oblivion. Our task is to recover worlding from cosmology. This will require stopping at three waystations of thought. Our names for these stages are: constitutive cosmology, cosmology of ironic play, and worlding.

a) The first stage on our journey is that of constitutive cosmology. This is the place where we normally find ourselves. It involves the philosophic (the scientific will not concern us) quest for those first principles which will fully explain the four major concerns of cosmology. This cosmology is constitutive in that it identifies its categories with the world. That is to say, what the schema posits is what *is*. Historical space is full of conceptual options as to the nature of the world. Some of these options devolve into theology and others do not. In either case what is sought is a small number of consistent first principles. These first principles are seen to be those which constitute the world itself. This faith in their constitutive status is often made possible by a prior faith in panlogism. Panlogism asserts that the ideas of both human and divine reason are strictly isomorphic with world structure. Often the faith in panlogism compels cosmologists to assert a highest being who is responsible for creating primal isomorphism. Here we see concretely just how theology can enter into cosmology.

Cosmology can become constitutive if it retains faith in panlogism. Yet this faith in the power of reason to unveil both itself and the world is linked, in an as yet hidden way, with the first stage of the evolution of the person. As stated above, mute self identity involves the belief that the Me-image *is* the self. This involves a *binding* identity, a tightly bound ring, between self and image. We are now in a position to see that the mute self can only engage in constitutive cosmology. This is because the same type of identity bond is characteristic to both cases. Just as the self *is* its Me-image, so too is the world what *my* categories assert. In both cases the map becomes the terrain. Indeed, its map character has as yet not been sensed. Constitutive cosmology and mute self identity belong together. They are the same but in two modes.

But this is not the whole story. Cosmology also claims to be able to see the world as a closed totality. This closed totality be-rings every thing and event within itself. Nothing remains hidden, or so cosmology asserts. Thus it seems to constitute cosmology as if its categories have fully ringed-in world structure. For cosmology there

is only one world and nothing besides. Even the highest being is somehow fitted under the arch of the sweeping categories. Hence the world is conquered in thought and there is no remainder or surprise. One is not overwhelmed by something previously hidden. There only remains the relentless sweep of the web of notions which scan the world in order to lock it into place. This locking is the same tight, dark, and dense ringing that holds the mute self in place. Indeed, the self is seen through the same web of notions that be-ring the world. Yet ironically it is the self itself which traps both itself and world.

Constitutive cosmology, whatever the categories at its disposal, rings-in the world. Its dual arrogance involves its panlogism and its claim that the world is seen as a fully dis-closed totality. Within the twin illusion it spins its binding web. This web closes worlding. Yet this is not the whole picture. Within the heart of constitutive cosmology lies a certain restlessness. This restlessness is the same as that which we found in the heart of the mute self. And its expression takes the same form as that of the mute self. Indeed, the leap from the mute self to the emergent self flowers at the same time as the leap from constitutive cosmology to the cosmology of ironic play. They, by necessity, co-implicate each other.

This leap is that of the in-flashing of consciousness. This in-flashing loosens the identity bond between the categories of cosmology and the world. As the mute self becomes the emergent self and sees its Me as somehow over against itself, so too the categories of cosmology are seen as over against the world. The map (image) now becomes distinct from the terrain (self). In a limited sense the world is set free. This freedom will not become total until the emergence of worlding. However, its emancipation has begun. With this emancipation the categories of cosmology are forced back upon themselves. This brings them a certain humility. The insight now flowers that the world is somehow larger, in the several senses of "larger," than the concepts of the cosmologist. With this insight cosmology frees itself as well. This freedom is that of ironic play.

b) The cosmology of ironic play can be understood as the "as-if" cosmology. Thus we can say, for example, that it is as-if the world is substance or as-if it has a final goal. The world itself becomes more and more distinct from the self. Soon we begin to concentrate upon the maps themselves. These maps lie deep within language. Cosmology now becomes the ironic play of "mapping." Maps proliferate along with images of the self. The two flower together.

Mapping is filled with irony. Irony insists upon the finitude of all maps. It punctures all arrogance. Only the free-play of mapping remains. This projective mapping becomes topology. Yet this topology never becomes constitutive or static. Play infects each map, thus coaxing it to leap into another. We are left with a finite yet unbounded series of cosmological maps. The emergent self is the mapping self. Mapping pushes through both the conceptual frames and the self images. Indeed, both person and world are be-mapped

together. This mapping is endless and open. However, it is not yet the Open itself.

An early poem of Emerson shows us how this *ringing* of mapping takes place. It is from the magnificent essay, *Nature*.

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.⁷

We are primarily concerned with the first two lines. In these lines we see the movement of belonging. Each ring must so ring so as to gather other rings to itself. This chain of finite rings is a subtle chain. The word "subtle" here suggests that these rings are open, light, and fluid. As fluid and light they are not like the dark and closed rings of constitutive cosmology. They do not ring-in the world, but coax more and more of it into emerging. However, it is not the world itself that emerges but a series of *interpretations* of it. Thus the elucidation of ringing, that is, the un-covering of its movement, is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics serves the cosmology of ironic play by making manifest to it what its movements have deposited. These deposits enter historical space as aesthetic projections. These aesthetic projections (world maps) are brought-to-a-stand by hermeneutics, which preserves them for the community of interpretation (Royce). The emergent self is that self responsible for the protean play of world maps. These are cast forth into the light of the community by the *imagination*. The greater the power and beauty of the world map the more prevalence it may have in the community of interpretation.

The fluid categories of the cosmology of ironic play arch over both the world and the self. They serve to gather conceptually the various moments or modes of both. This playful gathering serves to bring and insure repose. Cosmology grants repose. This means that it allows the world to abide in conceptual constancy. However, this conceptual constancy is not that of constitutive cosmology. Rather, it is a constancy filled with the still tension of play. This tension is still in that it never over-arches its bounds. This stillness is tense in that it never falls into stagnation. The repose granted by cosmology is play infected repose. As such it is ever alert to the dark threat of ossification. Its alertness preserves the multiple world maps from falling back into constitutive "truths." The maps remain maps.

Cosmology grants repose.

Repose enables human dwelling to flower as true belonging. This belonging is the active neighboring which is a shrine for radiance and waying. With cosmology, as generic level ironic play, the world is stilled. Cosmos has been wrestled from chaos. This ordered cosmos is never a static picture but the whole series of world maps produced by the imagination. Each map can grant repose. Even the movement

from one map to another remains filled with repose. World is stilled by the protean play of imagination.

Yet here again ironic play contains another possibility deep within itself. As noted above irony is the hidden side of Eros. Irony is the free play of Eros. It is filled with both longing and care. The longing buried within irony is a longing for radiance and waying. The care buried within irony is the care for the emergence of radiance and waying. Irony turns back upon itself to root out its "source." This still yet strife-filled source is radiant waying.

c) With irony's self discovery we arrive at the threshold of worlding. Worlding is the arena within which radiance and waying flash out to persons. The worlding world is not the world of cosmology. When worlding flowers cosmology stands aside. However cosmology does not stand aside in order to disappear. It stands aside in order to free the arena of Openness to emerge. Cosmology now finds its proper place. It comes to rest "above" the worlding workshop.

The arena of Openness emerges. This means that worlding has the "space" for its flowering. The arena is no longer ringed-in by the categorial schemas of cosmology. The open arena is now the space of "providingness" mentioned above. It allows worlding to take place. Ringing is allowed its full scope.

Yet the open arena is not an encompassing ring of rings. It is the lit-up place for ringing. It keeps ringing open and eternal. The mode of ringing that we now seek is that of worlding. We have now arrived at the place where we can watch it emerge. The world is the totality of worlding. This means that we no longer see world as the totality of what is but as the arena of all worlding.

The worlding world is the worlding workshop. The workshop is the place where that which is dis-membered can be re-membered. To re-member is both to re-collect and to rejoin. The workshop of worlding gathers together what had been split asunder. The world was split asunder by the emergent self with its many maps. Now worlding flowers to rejoin the isolated part-worlds. Worlding heals and binds.

The chorus of neighboring enshrines the worlding of the world. World worlding enshrines things thinging. Things thinging enshrines world worlding. World and thing coax each other into ringing. This ringing is the full ringing of radiance and waying. Ringing is belonging.

The world is the strife and Eros-filled ringing workshop. This worlding workshop is the shining-forth of spheres of worlding (regions or modes of the world). Thus we can no longer speak of *the* world but of the worlding of world-modes. There is no longer any sense of the world as a closed totality. Rather, world worlds. This worlding is the arena within which radiance flashes out. This worlding is the arena within which waying nestles.

The worlding world flashes/nestles through the open arena of the radiantly empty "self." The self is the empty arena within which

worlding emerges. This empty self enables worlding to flower. The leap from the emergent self to the radiantly empty self is the same as the leap from the cosmology of ironic play to worlding. Both flower together. As the self achieves Kenosis, worlding flowers. They greet each other in the still embrace of Eros. This is the final arena of ringing.

Worlding gathers thinging *under* its healing arch. Worlding gathers the world-modes *under* its healing arch. Worlding gathers the radiantly empty self *under* its healing arch.

Thinging gathers worlding *around* itself. Thinging gathers the world-modes *around* itself. Thinging gathers the radiantly empty self *to* itself.

The radiantly empty "self" *greet*s thinging and worlding.

The worlding world is the still staying and gathering which rings out and over itself. This ringing is a flashing and a nestling. Yet this flashing and nestling is the flashing of radiance and the nestling of waying. Radiance and waying carry each and all into an abiding. This abiding is filled with ringing. The ringing of radiance is the mirror-play of belonging. The ringing of waying is the nestling-play of belonging. Radiance and waying together *enable* worlding and thinging. The worlding world points back to its *source*. This source is radiance and waying. Yet radiance and waying are only possible within the arena of Openness. What is the source of the Open? To this we now must turn.

IV Through Theology to the Unbespoken

Theology concerns itself with the highest being. As such it still speaks of god as a thing. Hence theology is also ontology. Onto-theology thus seeks *a* being to ground all other beings. It attempts to find this being through the sweep of theological categories. When it "finds" its god it enshrines it (Him) above all other beings. This places the holy. Yet this placing is actually a dis-placing. With this displacing the Unbespoken is closed. With *this* closure we witness the tragedy of the closure of worlding, thinging, and radiant emptiness. The task of poetic thinking is to slowly negate this closure.

The movement from theology to the Unbespoken involves three stages. They are as follows: god, mythology, the Unbespoken. As before, these stages will co-respond to the three stages of the person. When we reach our final stage our task will be complete. Beyond that boundary only radiant silence reigns.

a) The first stage on our journey is that of the god of *theology*. This god is usually seen as being the highest being. This means that it is that being which stands uppermost within an ontological hierarchy. Thus a priority system is established. This is the long familiar, but little thought, chain of being. This chain of being has not collapsed, even though it seems as if it fled with the waning of the Middle Ages. It abides at the foundation of all theology. God is placed above that which is. All theology is in the service of this placing, whether it be revealed, natural, or biblical.

This god above the world is the god of the mute self. It is constitutive. It rests as eternal presence. It is unchanging and ubiquitous. For theology this god is responsible for the origin and the structure of persons and world. As the originator it is also the protector and goal of the world and persons. It is the mute self writ large on the face of the deep. It has traits and exerts itself within the movement of history. Even in pantheism god remains in some sense distinct and generic. It is one and eternal. It is as unchanging as the mute self that projects it onto the void. It is not discovered but disgorged from the hidden recesses of the mute self.

Whether this god be Allah, Yahweh, or the god of Love, it remains framed within an ontological hierarchy. This god is ringed-in by the categorial schema of onto-theology. It is placed above all else by an act of conceptual violence. This act of placing lodges god in a domain as mute as it is cold.

Yet a turn lies hidden within this god. Once again we see irony emerge to open up the gap between the god and the person projecting it onto the face of the deep. With the flowering of irony, god is seen as that which is projected by the mute self. As the mute self leaps into the emergent self, the god of theology falls away. This falling away is actually a splintering. With ironic distance the self can grasp that the god of onto-theology is little more than its own hidden side writ large. With this realization the god of theology falls into many gods. This splintering process is the same as that which happens to the self image of the mute self. It too falls into many Me-images with the flowering of the emergent self. The god becomes many gods. With this understanding we have reversed the usual view of the evolution of religious consciousness. What we have in fact done is to cancel an inadequate understanding. For the god of theology to become many gods is for the divine to splinter into many epiphanies. This places the divine in numerous abodes. These abodes are closer to hand than that of the onto-theological god.

b) the numerous abodes of the divine are enshrined in *mythology*. Mythology gathers these abodes and preserves them in historical space. It represents the overt projection of the emergent self. Its self images are writ large onto the fabric of history. Yet this projection is one willed with the wisdom of ironic play. The emergent self is well aware that these epiphanies are its own doing. However this is not seen as a negative event. For it is through these projections that the emergent self can re-read itself. The myth world is the cipher world. These concrete ciphers are a script that can be read. The reading of this script is the religious life at this stage of development.

The agent of the religious life in this middle stage of development is the artist. For it is the artist who, filled with ironic play (Mann), can build and read the creative mythology of his or her epoch. This process is not mute but fully reflexive and self conscious.

The "infinite" is thus brought to an abiding in the world by the reflexive activities of the religious artist (this is the stage that Campbell calls "Creative Mythology"). God becomes splintered into numerous shapes and textures. Each abode of god serves to enrich

the meaning and scope of the other abodes. No abode takes precedence over all others. With this multiplication of the abodes of the gods we arrive at the point of parity. Parity means that no abode is more real than another. All exist as equally real within historical space. The splintering of the "infinite" is its homecoming within time. This splintering enables the emergent self to expand outwardly into larger regions of ringing. The gods of mythology, as read in their cipher script, ring together to create a rich and full cosmos. This ringing of the splintered divine enables it to arch out over historical space and exert a possible cure.

The cipher world of mythology is the world of concrete epiphanies. These numerous epiphanies are enshrined in the abodes of the gods. Soon it is realized that it is the epiphanies themselves that are sought. The gods of mythology are the "places" where radiance and waying are brought to stand. The gods glow with the power of *claritas*. They are the un-hidden ones. They move with the power of the Way. They are the gathering ones. They gather the community together around a still point of radiance. They serve to order the abodes of mortals. As such they are in the service of radiance and waying. They are "used" by both radiance and waying in order to insure their historical emergence.

With the full emergence of the many gods of mythology, fashioned by the ironic play of the artist, radiance and waying arch-out over the community. With this flashing/nestling power they hold radiance and waying into an abiding. The gods stay the radiant way.

Yet once again we see a movement within the unfolding of the holy. Irony deepens its grasp upon itself by turning back to its "source." Initially irony merely turned towards its products, namely, the many Me-images and the gods of mythology. It held these in playful openness. Yet with the deepening of its self grasp irony shatters both its products and itself. This shattering creates: thinging, worlding, and radiant emptiness. We are now ready to take the *final* leap.

c) With the final leap we arrive at the experience of radiance and waying in its purity. That which has been sought all along has been this full encounter with the light and the way. With the Kenosis of the self both theology and mythology have stepped aside. By stepping aside they have allowed radiance and waying to emerge in their purity. This pure emergence is an emergence through the empty self. The radiantly empty self is that "place" where radiance flashes-in and waying nestles-through. The empty abode has at last been found. Yet we are still apart from the goal. The goal that is sought is that which is the source of radiance and waying.

Radiance and waying are made possible by the arena of Openness. To "make possible" has been understood, since Kant, as "to be the ground or source." Hence the arena of Openness is the source of radiance and waying. This arena is the "place" within which radiance can flash and waying can nestle. The arena of Openness is the ultimate "horizon" of the ringing-forth of the radiant way. Without

this arena we would have only the eternal night of closure. Closure is overcome by the place of Openness. The open arena Opens. It clears the way. This clearing is the final enabling. The arena of Openness is a holding-open. It is not a static clearing that abides through time. Rather, it is the ever active clearing-away of that which closes. It fights silently against the closure of thing and world, persons and the holy. The arena of Openness strives to enable ringing to flower. It lets ring.

The letting ring of the arena of Openness is the gift of the Unspoken. That which enables the Open to clear remains hidden. The arena of Openness is itself grounded. Yet its ground forever eludes us. It keeps out of sight. Yet we sense its active presence. It is the gentle power which enables openness to clear the radiant way. The arena of Openness itself needs this gentle yet hidden power in order to let ringing emerge. The Unspoken grants ringing. It grants ringing by letting it emerge through the arena of Openness, an arena which "it" keeps open. Without the constant presence of the Unspoken the arena of Openness would close. Its openness is granted to it by the Unspoken. Radiance and waying have their "source" in the Unspoken. How this is enshrined remains veiled in mystery.

The Unspoken speaks to us through radiance and waying. It keeps the Open opening. By keeping the Open opening it enables the ringing of radiance and the ringing of waying to flower. It gives. We thank. Here words turn back. Only radiant silence rings.

NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *Poetry Language Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p 180.
2. Wallace Stevens, *Selected Poems* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p 46.
3. Unpublished poem by the author.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), ed. by Stephen Whicher, p 169.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1961), p 117.
6. Martin Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p 55.
7. Emerson, p 21.