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BRIEFER BOOK REVIEWS

Justus Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics and the Eclipse of Foundationalism

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IN AN AGE in which metaphysical query seems increasingly sterile it behooves us to search anew for a categorial framework which will enable us to articulate and exhibit the main contours of any given order. Such a scheme should combine generic power with interpretive precision. Further, it should allow the complexes of the world to become articulated in a way befitting their nature. It can only do so, however, by avoiding the fallacies of a foundationalism which would stipulate or propose a categorial ground or first principle for nature in its radical complexity. One such scheme which satisfies the above criteria is that of ordinal metaphysics. Developed by Justus Buchler and expressed in his 1966 work, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*,[1] the ordinal framework attempts to provide an adequate approach to the traits of what is. It does so by unfolding a novel categorial scheme which radically alters not only our basic list of categories but our very way of envisioning metaphysics. In the rethinking of the nature of metaphysics Buchler provides a framework which puts all forms of foundationalism into question.

<div align="center">I</div>

By way of entering into the ordinal framework we must pass through several way-stations of thought. Each of these way-stations presents and preserves a way of understanding metaphysical query which only reinforces closure. Today they represent exhausted modes of reflection. In passing beyond them we enter the region of renewal.

Perhaps the oldest and most pervasive conception of metaphysics is what I shall call the "generic-stipulative" in which every effort is made to name and isolate the one fundamental trait of what is. Such a form of metaphysical query is more concerned with generic identity than with isolating discriminanda. The various complexes of the natural order are reduced to a substrate which they are held to embody with more or less obviousness. Such generic traits are held to exhaust the 'whatness' of the world. The following claims have been among those put forward by the generic-stipulative frameworks: whatever is, in whatever way, is substance; whatever is, in whatever way,

[1]Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966). This work is the fourth in a series of five. While each work is self-contained it also serves to reinforce the evolving categorial structure. The other works in the series are: *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* (New York: Dover, 2nd revised edition, 1979), *Nature and Judgment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), *The Concept of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), and *The Main of Light* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). For both a complete bibliography and a definitive study of the entirety of Buchler's thought cf., *Ordinal Naturalism: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Justus Buchler*, by Beth J. Singer (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983).

is a monad; whatever is, in whatever way, is Will-to-Power; whatever is, in whatever way, is pure experience; whatever is, in whatever way, is an actual occasion or an eternal entity; whatever is, in whatever way, is a logical simple; and whatever is, in whatever way, is Spirit. In each case, one trait or quality is held to encompass and define the various orders of nature. "Really" to understand the world is to reduce it or subordinate it to the trait which serves as the foundation and ordering principle for the others. Anything derivative, whether causally or via dependence or composition, is held to be less fundamental and in turn less "real." Hence the generic-stipulative framework carries with it a belief in ontological priority, namely, the belief that some trait is more real or more fundamental in all respects than all others. Metaphysical query consists in the reduction of the derivative complex to the fundamental substrate from which it has emerged. Metaphysical explanation entails going backward, as it were, to the primitive trait which is held to support and sustain the reducible complexes of nature.

Contrasted to the generic-stipulative framework is a second—the "transcendental-critical"—which attempts to find the horizon of intelligibility within which thought and/or language can function to render complexes real. As embodied by Kant and the later Wittgenstein such a framework takes on the more modest task of sketching the limits of rational reflection and speech. Within those limits the complexes of nature can become articulated and rendered available for further manipulation and inquiry. For Kant, such a limit is determined by the transcendental structures of the Understanding and they are joined to sense intuition through the temporally active Schematism. Such a framework provides the horizon for our knowledge of things and events within the *phenomenal* order. For the later Wittgenstein, the transcendental-critical framework (language that he would have rejected) is exhibited in the regional ontologies deposited by language in its everyday speaking. Outside of these regions of intelligibility (language games), no knowledge is possible. For both thinkers, metaphysics is that enterprise which radically limits the categorial power of thought and language. For Kant, a primitive foundation for both knowledge and an ontology of nature is to be found in the finite human experience which is ordered by the finite table of judgments.[2] Outside of this foundation in immediate experience we cannot hope to have genuine knowledge. Hence reason in its self-humiliation leaves us with binding antinomies on the frontier of knowledge. For Wittgenstein, we find our primitive foundations in the forms of life which are enshrined in the speaking of ordinary discourse. Anything lying outside of such discourse constitutes an illegitimate extension of language. The transcendental-critical framework thus has its own form of foundationalism. Rather than searching for one primitive trait from which the others are derived, it finds one *region* within which systematic query is held to be binding and assured of certainty.

A third and more aggressive conception of metaphysics is to be found in such thinkers as Peirce and Dewey, for whom metaphysics is concerned with conceptual reconstruction. Instead of searching for one primitive trait or for clearly marked transcendental boundaries, such a framework wishes to generate and suggest novel delineations and distinctions. This framework, which we shall call "metaphysics as reconstruction," stresses the creative role of a conceptual array in exhibiting connections and

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[2]The realization that Kant was concerned with the fundamental ontology of the Self and of Nature, in addition to his epistemological concerns, can be traced to Heidegger's re-appropriation of Kant in, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).

pervasive qualities within the orders of nature. Whether, with Peirce, we talk of first-ness, secondness, and thirdness, or, with Dewey, we speak of organism and environment, the precarious and the stable, we are using novel distinctions to show relations and qualities previously overlooked or hidden. By recasting a small list of categories, a novel angle of vision often enables metaphysical query to enhance systematic understanding. The reconstructive framework thus has a power unavailable to the first two forms of metaphysical query. This power is manifest in its ability to reinforce and accelerate inquiry in all its branches.

Yet even in this third form of systematic reflection certain forms of foundationalism can be found. Peirce, for example, still relies on his three fundamental categories to encompass the ways in which phenomena come to appearance within phenomenological understanding. Dewey's instrumentalist understanding of objects rejects an antecedent form of the thing-in-itself only to reintroduce it as the "fact" which emerges at the termination of selective inquiry. In the case of both thinkers a muted form of givenness remains as the sought for foundation of knowledge and warrantability.

Of more recent vintage is the view of metaphysics which has been titled, "Deconstruction." Whether we speak from a radicalized understanding of the later Heidegger or from the perspective of a Derrida, this fourth view sets profound limits to metaphysical query. Metaphysics, in such a veiw, can be reduced to the realm of nonsense where signs or categories have no true referent and where all language enshrines and imposes substance as presence. Language, whether in its reference function or in its larger categorial role, is seen to generate an unending series of baseless claims as to the nature of what is. For Derrida, language in its writing of itself leaves behind traces whose referent is clouded in mist. The metaphysical tradition is seen as the onto-theological positing of substance. The cure for such a substance-laden history-of-Being is to put all categories, even the pre-category of Being, under erasure. Metaphysics thus spins away into the oblivion of empty semiotic play. All foundations are swept away in the drive toward the endless free-play of non-referential signs. The Deconstructive understanding of metaphysics appears to enter the ranks of the anti-foundationalists. But at what price? The erasure of reference and semiotic density carries with it the erasure of world and self. Ironically, in its radical drive to be free from foundations, Deconstruction 'frees' us from the very possibility of having and enduring a world. In its radical quest for openness it brings a night of eternal oblivion.

II

We must look elsewhere for a proper way out of the foundationalist framework which insists on isolating some primitive trait or region to encompass the plural emergence of the complexes of nature. This new form of metaphysical query must avoid the pitfalls of foundationalism without falling prey to the absurd denial of categorial construction as manifest in Deconstruction. This new conception, which we shall term "General Ordinal Articulation," is concerned with finding a conceptual clearing through which nature's complexes can appear in ways appropriate to their makeup. It is a categorial *clearing* in that it refuses to legislate in advance as to the nature or trait constitution of that which will appear within its framework. Ordinal metaphysics no longer asks after the 'whatness' of the world but lets plural trait structures emerge in their own modes of givenness.

Of initial, and fundamental, importance is the rejection of the claim that metaphysics

can find and articulate some order of orders from which all subaltern orders can be derived. Nature itself has no overall contour or 'shape' which would serve as the topological horizon for the things or events 'within' nature. There can exist no place of places or horizon of horizons. Concerning nature, Buchler states:

> Nature is not an order of orders in the sense analogous to an outer circle admitting an infinite number of possible concentric circles. Nor is nature a hierarchy of orders all congruous with each other by virtue of their hierarchical location.[3]

Rather, nature or world is constituted by numerous orders each of which is located in other orders and locates other orders within itself. Whatever boundary can be found for nature at a given time is a shifting boundary of infinite complexity. There can be no foundation or Archimedean point outside of the intersecting orders which would give us access to the overall contour of things.

World is thus constituted by orders which locate and are located. Each order is itself of unlimited complexity in terms of its mobile trait constitution and in terms of its cross-ordinal locations. Yet the notion of ordinality does not entail that of orderliness. There are orders which are disorderly. While the notion of orderliness has a certain aesthetic compulsion, it cannot function in a metaphysics of natural complexes. *An order is a grouping of traits that are relevant to each other in one or more respects.*

By rejecting the notion that a complex must be reducible to a simple or cluster of simples, the ordinal framework avoids the foundationalist claim that analysis will get us closer to the 'real' nature of things. Each order, whether orderly or not, is constituted by subaltern orders and it is impossible in principle to ever find a rock-bottom foundation which will produce and explain the 'derived' complexity of the order itself.

In this larger view of metaphysical query, orders are allowed to show both their own traits and their cross-ordinal locations. No attempt is made to generate a spurious topology of *the* order of orders which would locate and govern all subaltern orders. Each order is seen in its complex multiple prevalence. Buchler thus presents what might be called an "ontological constitutionism" in which complexes are rendered into trait structures as these structures constitute both the complex itself and its ordinal locations. Each complex is infinitely analyzable because of its various locations.

From the general notion of ordinality and from the co-dependent notion of complexity, Buchler derives the notion of the "natural complex." For Buchler, the term "natural complex" refers to whatever is, in whatever way.

> Relations, structures, processes, societies, human individuals, human products, physical bodies, words and bodies of discourse, ideas, qualities, contradictions, meanings, possibilities, myths, laws, duties, feelings, illusions, reasonings, dreams—all are natural complexes. All of these terms bespeak discriminations of some kind, and whatever is discriminated in any respect or in any degree is a natural complex (for short, 'complex').[4]

The notion of the natural complex functions as the key term for what is in the ordinal framework. Yet an important distinction should be made at this point. The notion of the natural complex *functions* in a very different way from the foundational notions in the generic-stipulative conception of metaphysics. In the generic-stipulative framework

[3]*Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 100.
[4]*Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 1.

every effort is made to reduce the complexes of nature to one specific trait designation. Thus, for example, Whitehead can insist that every 'thing' or event be subordinated to actual occasions or eternal entities. Whether the reality under investigation be a law, an imperative, a possibility, a myth, a spatio-temporal particular, or a meaning, it must somehow be perfectly translatable into either a nexus of actual occasions or an eternal entity. Thus systematic query, as envisioned by Whitehead, has a posited goal in finding the primitive and non-derivative 'what' which lies below the surface of the vast complexity of the orders of nature. The notion of the natural complex, in contradistinction, does not designate any basic 'what' for the objects of metaphysical inquiry. Rather, such a notion provides the broadest and fairest categorial clearing through which "what is" can come to appearance.

<center>III</center>

The notion of the natural complex reinforces the ordinal commitment to both context and complexity. Buchler steers a careful course between simple atomism and a naive belief in strict internal relation. In particular, he is critical of Whitehead's belief that, "In a sense, every entity pervades the whole world . . ."[5] where Whitehead is describing the prehensive spread of the actual occasion in its brief process of concresence. Buchler insists, instead, that real discontinuity and real irrelevance can exist between and among natural complexes and orders. Relationality does, of course, prevail but it is not co-extensive with the sum total of all natural complexes. A given complex must relate to other complexes and orders but it cannot relate to all complexes and orders. Hence strict internal relation is rejected.

At the other extreme is the logical atomism of the early Wittgenstein which stands as an extreme example of the foundationalist longing for rock-bottom simples which form the 'really real' of the world. Among the terse statements of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* we find the following:

> Objects are simple. (2.02)[6]
> Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite. (2.021)
> In a manner of speaking, objects are colorless. (2.0232) and
> Objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one and the same. (2.027)

These traitless objects are held to be the fundamental and unchanging furniture of the world. A state-of-affairs is produced by objects which " . . . fit one another like the links of a chain" (2.03). Both objects and states-of-affairs are independent of each other and exhibit no internal relations. Any relation which obtains is the bare external relation of the truth-functional calculus which presents and preserves hierarchical continuity. Ontologically, Wittgenstein's objects are unrelated and stand outside any meaningful ordinal location. Bucher would insist that such an imagined object could not function as a trait or constitutent in a complex and thus would not be (prevail) at all.

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⁵Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 33. For Buchler's specific criticisms of Whitehead, especially the implied commitment to ontological priority, cf., "On a Strain of Arbitrariness in Whitehead's System," *Journal of Philosophy*, 66 (Oct. 2, 1969), 589-601.

⁶The following quotes come from, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by D. F. Pears & B. F. McGuiness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

A further deepening of the implied criticism of foundationalism can be seen in the commitment to ramified query. In the tradition of both Peirce and Dewey, Buchler rejects any ontological formulation which would close off either scientific inquiry or general assimilation and manipulation of nature. Logical atomism makes query a form of analysis in which the complex is allegedly reduced to the simple. Query thus has a goal and a possible termination in the simples which stand behind the initial data of systematic analysis. The doctrine of internal relations makes query impossible in principle by insisting that analysis extend itself in the direction of absolute knowing in which all of reality is fully self-transparent in one blinding moment of vision. Atomism sets its metaphysical sights too low, while the doctrine of internal relations sets them too high. In rejecting atomism and its restrictions on query, Buchler states: "The metaphysics of natural complexes denies the discriminability of anything without ramification and constitution—of anything unrelated and not located in an order, of anything free of traits affecting and affected by other traits."[7] Hence, to be discriminated in any way is to be available for further ramification and probing. Query, in its various modes and forms, is itself an argument against the metaphysical foundationalist who would insist that every human probing issue in a determinate and finished product.

The doctrine of (or commitment to) ontological priority serves to undermine query while reinforcing the claims of foundationalism. Priority commitments isolate one trait or 'what' as being more real or fundamental than other traits or qualities. Whitehead, for example, insists that actual occasions, as the ultimate ontological simples, are more real than their prehensions and the societies which they create. An actual occasion can have negative and positive prehensions of its environment while a nexus cannot. All complex realities derive their categorial articulation from the definition of the actual occasion and cannot hope to have the same 'fullness' or 'reality.' On the other side is the deadening of ramified query through the specification in advance as to the trait possibilities to be found in the objects under study. Contrasted to the priority framework is what Buchler calls "ontological parity" which insists that whatever is is real and that no complex is more real than another. Hence, a person depicted in a work of fiction, a possibility, a space/time particular, a genus, and a thought now past are all real. Yet their reality itself derives from their ordinal locations. One reality is not more or less real than another but real in a different respect. This re-framing of parity radically recasts the so-called 'problem' of possible worlds. What is not often noticed is that the commitment to parity reinforces the claims of query in its manifold nature. Buchler states:

> The principle of parity obliges us to receive and accept all discriminanda. The principle of ontological priority, on the other hand, makes all ascertainable differences suspect, and instead of interpreting their relative character and ordinal location, always stands ready to efface them.[8]

Ontological parity stands as a systematic protection against any form of foundationalism which would seek to bind query to a limited conception of its role and power.

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[7] *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 20.
[8] *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 33.

IV

The differences between given complexes emerge more fully when a complex's various ordinal locations are exhibited by methodic reflection. Since there can be no primary location or order, the complex changes its trait constitution with each ordinal location. Hence a given natural complex will have a diverse trait constitution. Because of this complexity Buchler is forced to lay bare some problems with our understanding of identity. That is, if a complex is plurally located, how can we continue to talk of the identity of the complex across time, i.e., that which makes a complex *that* complex and not another? The answer to this question requires the introduction of several novel delineations.

A natural complex is, by definition, an order of traits. This order of traits constitutes the mobile 'whatness' of that complex. The trait constitution of the complex in a *given* ordinal location is termed its "integrity." A natural complex will have an integrity (trait constitution) for each of its ordinal locations. The totality of these integrities is termed the "gross integrity" or "contour." For Buchler, it is impossible to grasp the full contour of any natural complex because of the unlimited number of actual and possible ordinal locations available to any natural complex. We can, however, grasp the *tendency* of the contour and gain a rough picture of its evolving outline. Systematic query, in its effort to articulate a natural complex, rotates a complex through its known ordinal locations so that traces of the contour can show themselves.

Identity can now be defined in the ordinal scheme. The identity of a natural complex is the continuing relation between its contour and any of its integrities. The gross integrity (contour) sets the limits within which identity can be defined in a given case. The integrity may alter in one ordinal location without affecting the identity of the complex as a whole. Hence, for example, an individual can change political parties without altering the identity which is assumed across numerous ordinal locations. In framing identity in this way the ordinal scheme goes beyond the foundationalist paradigm of the static spatio-temporal particular with its constant trait constitution.

A further distinction reinforces the ordinal critique of internal relations and in turn puts greater pressure on the foundationalist drive for a complete grasp of the terms of these relations. In addition to a complex's integrity (either for each ordinal location or for the contour) there is its "scope." The scope of a complex can be defined as its "comprehensiveness and pervasiveness." This refers to the general 'spread' of a complex, its inclusiveness of traits and subaltern complexes. Every natural complex has scope no matter how minimal. Buchler states: "Every complex is inclusive, regardless of the way in which it is inclusive. Stated in the manner that has here been formalized, every complex has scope, no matter what the degree of its pervasiveness or the mode of its comprehensiveness."[9]

Any natural complex will thus have both an integrity and scope. By envisioning the complex in this dual manner the ordinal framework can shed light on the wrongheadedness of the doctrine of internal relations. Complexes can relate to each other in a variety of ways. They can, of course, fail to be related in any meaningful ordinal location. For related complexes a plurality of modes of relation appear. Within such a plurality of modes two general poles emerge. If one complex affects, or in any way, alters the *integrity* of another, it is said to be "strongly relevant" to that other. If one

[9]*Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 39.

complex affects, or in any way alters the *scope* of another, it is said to be "weakly relevant" to that other. Thus, for example, if you paint a white house red, that red (as a natural complex) can be seen to be strongly relevant to the house in its ordinal location as an object of visual perception. The red paint affects the integrity of the complex of the house. If, citing a different example, you were to check out a book from a large library you would not be affecting the integrity of the library qua library. You would, of course, be affecting the scope of that library in that the complex would have less spatio-temporal inclusiveness than before. Hence your act would be only weakly relevant to the library. This distinction between weak and strong relevance opens up the true plurality of ways in which relations may obtain across numerous ordinal locations. Relationality need not be founded upon a naive belief in strict one-to-one internal reciprocity.

<div align="center">V</div>

One final delineation central to the ordinal framework puts further pressure on those hierarchical views which would isolate a realm or quality of pure Being as primary in all respects. It is a distinction of great import for the general framework and has no precise parallel in either ordinary langauge or in the history of philosophy. For Buchler, "Being" cannot be a category in ordinal metaphysics because of its lack of generic inclusiveness when dealing with complexes like possibilities which cannot be said to "exist" in the so-called ordinary sense. Further, the conception/experience of Being functions to reinforce the implication that there are levels or degrees of Being and that systematic query is bound to those realities which have a greater 'share' in Being. Often, a type or class of being, or complex, is held to be more truly representative of the nature of Being than other types or classes. A favorite candidate within foundational schemes is the 'solid' spatio-temporal particular with its stable trait-cluster. In so far as a complex approximates such a space/time particular it becomes real or more real. Complexes such as laws, possibilities, wishes, goals, etc., cannot have a full share in Being because they lack a proper foundation in spatio-temporal extension. In the ordinal scheme such diverse complexes receive their proper categorial articulation.

To avoid the implications of either a hierarchical view, which posits degrees of Being, or a foundational view, which insists on uniform translation into the categorial primitive, Buchler uses the category "prevalence" where prevalence refers to the fact that every natural complex obtains and has some primacy *vis à vis* other complexes. No complex is more or less of a prevalence than another, even though it may have greater or lesser scope. Buchler states:

> To say that every complex obtains underscores the idea that anything identified, whether as framed or as found, has an inviolability merely as such. But beyond this, in saying (more strongly) that every complex prevails we are implying that it is ineluctable; that it has a sphere of primacy and domination; that it is restrictive and exclusive of other complexes.[10]

A complex prevails by being located in an order (having an ordinal location) and having a specific integrity. Yet a complex may prevail without *existing* in the normative sense of the term. Possibilities, for example, may prevail and have an ordinal location

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[10]*Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 53.

without 'participating' in Being. In so far as a complex prevails it retains just the traits that it has in its given ordinal locations.

In contrast to prevalence Buchler introduces the term "alescence," which refers to the admission of new or novel traits into a complex. Alescence is not equivalent to becoming or change as we can have a-temporal deviations in a complex's trait constitution. In so far as a complex admits new traits into its integrity it is alescent. A flaw in an emerald, a cloud in an otherwise blue sky, a shrill tone in an otherwise harmonious piece of music, an erratic moment of behavior, all are alescences in the trait constitution of their respective complexes. Temporal change is only one form of trait deviation and should not become a paradigm for all trait deviation. Again, Buchler puts pressure on any framework which would isolate one mode or manifestation of world as foundational or normative for all others.

By way of completing and radicalizing the ordinal critique of foundationalism we return to a theme sounded above. As noted, the ordinal framework rejects the notion that we can find an order of orders or a general contour of nature and world. Instead, Buchler insists that nature consists of orders in constant ordinal intersection. Nature itself is not the sum totality of all natural complexes but is the *Providingness* of complexes. In a later clarification of his system Buchler reminds us of Spinoza's distinction between *Natura Naturata* (Nature natured) and *Natura Naturans* (Nature naturing). The ordinal framework re-appropriates this distinction in a way which promises to put the maximum amount of pressure on lingering forms of foundationalism.

Distinguishing between ordinal*ity* and order*s*, Buchler states: "Nature as ordinality is natura naturans; it is the providing, the engendering condition. Nature as 'orders' is natural naturata; it is the provided, the ordinal manifestation, the World's complexes."[11] Nature in its mode of providing is not to be understood as either teleological or evolutionary unfolding. Nor is it to be understood as Providence where Providence refers to the extra-natural ordering of complexes. Rather, it is to be seen as the constant and open-ended availability of complexes.

We have been speaking in some detail of the provided, of nature as manifest in and as the world's complexes. We are now ready to experience that Providingness which puts all forms of foundationalism into eclipse.

VI

The most persistent and most historically binding manifestation of foundationalism is the quest for that ground of grounds which stands as the origin of nature and world. In the traditions of ontology and theology such a ground stands as the highest genus or being which is itself explained through the sufficient reasons of systematic query. What is not often sensed is that *this* foundation is the source for all of the lesser foundations which keep appearing within metaphysics and epistemology. Notions such as the given, the thing-in-itself, the primary, the pre-suppositionless, and the ground of Being derive their categorial meaning, however weak, from the alleged exhibition of the highest genus or being. In order to cut foundationalism at its root, it is imperative that philosophy let go of its quest for the Ground of nature and world. By showing us the

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[11]Justus Buchler, "Probing the Idea of Nature," *Process Studies*, 3 (Fall 1978), 157-168. In this essay Buchler distinguishes between the use of the term "Nature" and the use of the world "World." Nature as a philosophic concept refers to our sense of "characterization and traithood," while World refers to innumerable natural complexes (prevailing without a knowable collective integrity). For a detailed treatment of the concept of World cf., Justus Buchler, "On the Concept of 'The World,' " *Review of Metaphysics*, 31 (June 1978), 555-579.

true nature of ordinality, of Providingness, Buchler is bringing us into the region where such a letting go can take place.

Nature in its primal naturing is not a highest genus and is not to be enframed as the encompassing order of orders from which subaltern orders are derived. Rather, in its ordinality it is the never exhausted 'source' for those manifestations which constitute world. Buchler's careful analysis of orders and nature manifest is itself possible only because of the deeper sense of ordinality. The non-legislative clearing provided by his ordinal framework has as its source the non-foundational presence of nature in its naturing. Only when philosophy has experienced *this* presence in all of its bindingness will it become free from the foundationalism which has been both its light and its darkness.