



What looks like a digression is in fact the actual proper movement on the way by which the neighborhood is determined. And that is nearness.

~Martin Heidegger "The Nature of Language"

1. Method & Metatheory

Conflict and struggle come to dominate existence when apparently incompatible and inflexible purposes and symbol systems are thrown into contact and competition with each other. In situations of being-at-odds, there is reason to value understandings of self, other, and situation which promise to increase appreciation of the complexities of presence and foster awareness of the potential depth of the logics of difference, thereby conditioning impulses to violent exclusion and coercion. One way of favoring the development of a disposition toward appreciating or at least admitting the possibility of logics of difference calls for attention to the fundamental understandings and experiences that inform cultures and communities as ways of being in the world.

This formal study of two ontic fundamentals, religion and ideology, commences with an empowering observation of an aspect of change. We begin with the category of change because at whatever depth, the study of change is the study of existence. In this case we observe that cultures and communities come into being and inexorably develop upon the ecstatic initiatives of human beings, beings who exist as historical facts in the mode of Being-there (Dasein). The founding and renovating initiatives that are presented in history to history, which all cultures formally have in common, are properly called "ecstatic" because it is only by stepping outside their own historical-factual what-is that human beings (necessarily) participate in the creation of what-is-to-be. Of special interest for this study are the ecstasies that eventuate in socio-cultural creativity; *mutatis mutandis*, such ecstasies anticipate the irreducible differences which challenge understanding.

The essentially ecstatic creative initiatives that proximally guide human beings in the construction of their cultures and communities can be seen as uniting pasts and futures in venturing projections of presence into absence. It is both formally and really possible that productive ecstatic initiatives occur according to what we might call "natural laws,"¹ but the precise specifications of these laws (if there are such laws) are not at issue here, only the formal precondition of all such cosmological orderings is; this formal precondition should hold essentially that Dasein's constituting initiatives always come into being when situations somehow call for them.² Though this study attempts to deal with what cultural initia-