



Infant Theory

I want to rephrase the problem of social order as the problem of the symbolic relation between part and whole. It is then an inquiry that is already solved by the “infant theorist.” This is so because we are bodies whose communicative competence is doubly articulated in a field of psycho-physical and linguistic expression. As Vico showed in *New Science* (1744), the human body constitutes the very figure of synecdoche (*pars pro toto*) that enables us to articulate a single model of wholeness and integration operative at each level of individual, social, and cosmic life (O’Neill, 1982b). While claiming that this first communicative body religiously funds all human institutions, I recognize that it is also subject to a history of discursive reformulation by the natural and social sciences in the context of the secondary institutions and economy in which they in turn function (O’Neill, 1985).

My approach to the issues surrounding the corporeal practice of synecdoche derives from the insights of Freud, as read by Lacan (1977: 1–17) and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological revision of Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage (O’Neill, 1986a), or as I might put it now, *the stage of synecdochic crisis*. I am starting here because I assume that the question of our primary participation in the world orients all later inquiry into the nature of our patterning and participation in the structures of meaning that reproduce the sense, value, and intelligibility of our relationships and institutions (O’Neill, 1989). Consequently, my analysis begins with the relationship between the mother and the infant body as an institution (*matrix*) that articulates the part/whole relationships of the body and speech. The speaking body, whose first figure of speech is generated by the body’s own synecdochism, is therefore the first human body (Paul, 1977). And this I consider the proper ground of Freud’s theory of infant sexuality. However, I make this argument by revising the apparently similar claim by Lacan, whose conception of our first body as a body-in-pieces (*corps morcélé*) I consider an inadequate ground of our essentially synecdochical world.

The empirical basis in child studies for the theory of the mirror phase is not in question. Lacan's empirical sources have been multiplied in Anglo-American infant research. Nevertheless, we may consider the mirror theory as a fundamental mythology of Lacanianism inasmuch as it responds to the original question of human division, i.e., not only the question of sexual difference but also of our internal "splitting," and ultimately of mankind's separation from the divinity, that is, from love. In the Biblical story, these events are described as a single story of the loss of paradise and the pains of earthly existence. In the *Symposium*, the story is told in terms of our loss of androgyny, of a third force which might amplify our heterosexuality if ever the two could be rejoined in fourfold love.

Prior to the mirror stage, experience is shaped by the conjuncture of the infant's biological immaturity and an archaic image of the fragmented body (*corps morcélé*). "Before" incorporation with the mother body, the infant has already identified with its fantasies of bodily fragmentation and mutilation, attached to the mouth, eye, ear, anus, genitals. Thus body, language, and sexuality are overlaid in the primary pleasure points of the infant body, which then furnishes reference points (*points de capiton*) for the secondary pleasure focused in the specular body which can be further overlaid with the cultural myths that sustain the narcissistic self's attachment to an adult identity whose infant origins it forgets. The speaking subject is unaware of its source of desire, whose objects are split off from transparent meaning. Its objects of desire precede the specular image and are introjected somewhere between the internal and external world, between ego and subject. The fusion with the mother body at the mirror stage is therefore never complete, since it is undermined by a flow of fragmentary images. In any case, the image of integrity remains outside in an other that offers us the lure of identity, so to speak—or "our" perpetual alienation.

Narcissistic passion is exhibited in the desire for interaction with others who will confirm the value of the self which does not know that it seeks recognition nor the object of its desire. The other functions as a screen for the projection of narcissistic identity which remains unfulfilled in the play of the other and of language. Thus the "I" never quite understands itself in language and culture because it is underwritten by the narcissistic "me" which is in turn ruled by a specular logic of external and alienated recognition through

1. the gaze (*le regard*)
2. scripture (*l'écriture*)

The gaze or voice in the premirror stage returns in dreams from which the I-subject captures only its slides and elisions. Yet to some extent it thereby objectifies its "me" and can restructure it, i.e., "where there was me there shall I place myself." The function of the superego is conceived by Lacan as a structural mecha-

nism through which the identificatory “me” is repressed as an ego ideal in favour of the social “I”. The Lacanian superego is a metaphor for individuation, i.e., for the “me” reflected in others. In other words, in the shift from maternal to paternal identification, the “me” takes on a cultural body whose mark is the double circumcision of language and heterosexuality that launches the infant into the system of exchange and difference we call society.

How synecdoche (*pars pro toto, totum pro partibus*) functions as a specifically phenomenological method has been nicely formulated by Medina (1985) in criticism of the Heideggerian and Lacanian usage of part-whole methodology. Thus synecdoche may be reformulated in terms of the following rules of interpretation:

1. Human consciousness constitutes itself in whole and parts.
2. Existential totalization and division must always be seen in the history and context of the social interaction of human individuals.
3. Human interaction is communicative rather than existential but is framed by the existential boundaries of love (*Eros*) and strife (*Thanatos*).
4. The intelligibility of unconscious objects and unfinished subjects derives from part/whole syntheses that are temporarily and contextually revisable (redeemable) so that all totalizing syntheses are deprived of causality in the last (or first) instance.

Lacan treats the infant’s grasp of its total body form in the mirror image as an event that is entirely premature and as the prefiguration, so to speak, of an alienated destination. The mirror image constitutes a prospective/retrospective complex of identity and separation that prefigures all later separations, from weaning to castration. The ego is constituted in imagery of mastery and servitude where the love of others is always an intrusion upon the madness of the self project. The infant body is forever separated from the image of wholeness that it pursues in itself, in the mother body, in language, and in politics. Like Lacan himself, the child is condemned to life in ex-communication:

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from the insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmentary body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of an armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Immenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego’s verification. (Lacan, 1977: 4)

According to Lacan, the acquisition of intersubjectivity is achieved only at the level of language, or in the symbolic order. This stage is reached on the basis of two prior moments: (i) the *mirror phase* and (ii) through the relationships experienced as the *castration complex*. The first stage of “I” constitution occurs in the infant’s confrontation with its mirror image, or with the experience of a whole-body image that is both present and absent. In its wholeness, however, the body image projects for the infant an ideal of integrity that its own bodily experience of taste, smell, and motor relations has still to achieve. To this imaginary wholeness the infant adopts a narcissistic attitude, caught up in the split between self-presence and self-absence:

The jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at his *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as a subject. (Lacan, 1977: 7)

Although such a world view is inimical to Merleau-Ponty’s convictions, he nevertheless pays considerable attention to Lacan’s early lectures on the mirror-stage. However, I believe that Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of embodiment and intersubjectivity is incompatible with and, in fact, offers a corrective to Lacan’s concept of the fragmented body, forever alienated from its image of wholeness (O’Neill, 1970). In short, the visual moment at the mirror stage cannot produce effective self-recognition prior to the anonymously intersubjective constitution of the self in relation to others with whom it is kindred. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962: 215) all individuality and every specific sociality presupposes an *anonymous intersubjectivity* that is the ground of our figural relations with things and persons in-and-as-our-world. This lived-world is ours through the lived-body and it rests on a perceptual faith that is prior to conceptual articulation. It is our primordial presence to a human milieu that inaugurates all other specific relations, such as synecdoche, metaphor, and metonymy, that expresses our being-in-the-world. This lived-world is prior to the known-world and is coevally populated with others who as kindred bodies share the same lived-world as I do. This is our perceptual faith and not at all a contingent achievement of reasoned and rhetorical argument. The articulation of the infant’s body likewise presupposes this funding of anonymous intersubjectivity overlooked by Lacan, who construes the infant’s history as a continuous fall from intersubjectivity, forever yearning for a future incorporation as fantastic as its first loss.

Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of infant development is rather different from Lacan's alienated perspective. Before a mirror, the infant believes both that s/he is in the mirror and that s/he sees herself therein from where s/he stands. Thus s/he has not yet constructed a mirror-image distinct from herself; s/he dwells in an *interworld* in which s/he has not yet articulated either her own ego-logical perspective nor yet a sociological orientation towards the other in her propriety. Yet it is only from this ground of anonymous intersubjectivity—not-yet ego, not-yet alter—that s/he can experience the generics of a bodily and personal self in a world similarly incorporated. At the same time, this primordial intersubjectivity grounds all later perception, desire, identity, and alterity in the faith that the individual can be valorized for "herself" by an other who in turn shares a similar expectation of mutual recognition. This is not to deny that the later history of the infant body is shaped by separation from the mother body and its displacement within the family body (see chapter 4). Thus the specular image and the "grammar" of the pronominal system represent two complementary behavioral modalities of the self-seen-in-other relations (O'Neill, 1982). The specular and linguistic body work together to raise the visual body into a socio-psychological space in which the infant can develop her psychic and social life on the way to childhood. The mirror image, then, not only prefigures the child's jubilation at her narcissistic self but also her entry into the duties of life among others who exercise upon her the constraints of kinship, family, and society (Wagner, 1986). The mirror-stage, as Merleau-Ponty interprets it, adds a dimension of integration to the body schema so that the infant can "regress" but never entirely separate herself from her own kind:

The infant discovers a whole dimension of experience in the mirror image. He can contemplate himself and observe himself. The infant makes himself a visible self—a super ego that ceases to be identical with his desires. The infant is pulled out of his immediate reality. His attention is confiscated by the *me* whose first symbol he discovers in the mirror image: the de-realizing function of the mirror. This game already accomplishes, before social integration, the transformation of the 'I'. It produces an alienation of the immediate me to the benefit of the specular me. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 302)

I wish to argue that the human body is the point of articulation for all thought and language precisely because the infant body is not an alienated fragment of being whose destiny is to be haunted by an imaginary wholeness. If Lacan were right, then we are born into a synecdochical crisis of psychic division and social separation which love can never heal and which the law can hardly contain. We would be exiled from the potentially ideal speech community because our very language is

fractured and can only repeat our split being (O'Neill, 1983b). Even the language of psychoanalysis could not repair our divided being, despite its efforts to expropriate the history and dialectic of recognition espoused in Christianity and Marxism. I propose, therefore, to reconsider Freud's discovery of the theory of infant sexuality in order to show how Lacan's conception of the fragmented body ignores the originary semiotics generated across the mother-infant body (the *matrix*). The latter constitutes a communicative surface—or *flesh*—upon which the figures of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche are inscribed as operations that shift the infant body into language and meaning and thereby underwrite its acquisition of psychic life in which it is attuned to the society of others of its kind. In short, I am arguing, against Lacan's vision of alienation and fragmentation, that Freud's theory of sexuality consists in the discovery of the body that becomes ill when its destiny for society is foreclosed. I consider, then, that Freud discovered the dynamics of the *synecdochical body*—the body destined to see itself as part of a whole which in turn it sees in its parts. This is the civilizable body—the body of health and illness are therefore modalities of this corporeal synecdoche.

The problem of the search for meaning in the embodied inquiry that is aroused in the *matrix* (the mother/infant body) obliges us to reconsider Freud's theory of the vicissitudes of the instincts (Freud, 1915) to determine the deviation (*clinamen*) through which the *biological body*, so to speak, opens to the *psychical body*. Here we may be guided by Paul Ricoeur's observations:

Freud is in line with those thinkers for whom man is desire before being speech; man is speech because the first semantics of desire is distortion and he never completely overcomes this initial distortion. If this is so, then Freud's doctrine would be animated from beginning to end by a conflict between the "mythology of desire" and the "science of the physical apparatus"—a "science" in which he always, but in vain, tried to contain the "mythology," and which, ever since the "Project," was exceeded by its own contents. (Ricoeur, 1970: 313)

I am going to argue that there is an "originary surface," which I shall call the *flesh*, where the primitive language of the body is transcribed into the first language of the mind. Moreover, we want to stress that the circuit between the biological and the psychical body intertwines with the circuit between the mother and infant body. Thus the first language or "mother tongue" (*la langue maternelle*) arises in the overlap of the *flesh* and the *matrix*. Even in his "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895), Freud seems to have been aware that the "physical apparatus" could not be closed off in what Paul Ricoeur calls "an energetic without hermeneutics." I think the real psycho-analytic discovery is that of the "surface" of *flesh* upon which the symbolic

processes (*semiotics*) are inscribed and where, so to speak, our hermeneutical life has its proper origin. It is here, too, that Freud's theory of sexuality and its clinical evidence are to be located, so that finally there is a radically hermeneutical turn in psychoanalysis away from the early theories of neurophysiology. In Ricoeur's words:

Psychoanalysis never confronts one with bare forces, but always with forces in search of meaning. This link between force and meaning makes instinct a psychical reality, or, more exactly, the limit concept at the frontier between the organic and the psychical. The link between hermeneutics and economics may be stretched as far as possible—and the theory of affects marks the extreme of that distension in the Freudian meta-psychology; still the link cannot be broken, for otherwise the economics would cease to belong to psychoanalysis. (Ricoeur, 1970: 151)

In his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905) and various summary reformulations, Freud argues that whereas hunger is the model of *desire*—or, as we should say, of the *flesh*—it is sexuality that is the model of every desire. To argue this, as Jean Laplanche (1976) shows, Freud had literally to prop up (*étayer, an-lebnen*) his theory of sexuality against the theory of life. In other words, Freud leaned upon biology to underwrite psychoanalysis. Here Freud's metapsychology repeats at its own level a disciplinary *anaclisis* which is motivated by his attempt to analyze the fundamental mother-infant dependency. To find in the beginning of life the origins of sexuality as life's own *clinamen* or deviation, Freud leans psychoanalysis upon the biology of the sexual drives—with a difference that results in the theory of the generalized sexuality of the infant:

The first organ to emerge as an erotogenic zone and to make libidinal demands on the mind is, from the birth onwards, the mouth. To begin with, all psychical activity is concentrated on providing satisfaction for the needs of that zone. Primarily, of course, this satisfaction serves the purpose of self-preservation by means of nourishment; but physiology should not be confused with psychology. The baby's obstinate persistence in sucking gives evidence at an early age of a need for satisfaction which, though it originates from and is instigated by the taking of nourishment, nevertheless strives to obtain pleasure independently of nourishment and for that reason may and should be termed sexual. (Freud, 1949: 10–11)

As I see it, we can accept the theory of sexual *clinamen*, provided we see that is the *body of flesh* whose identity is "organized" as the site and sequence of erotogenous

zones, mouth, tongue, anus, urethra, genitals, according to Freud's libidinal theory. It is the flesh which is already communicative from the embryo's first signs of uterine life (Hooker, 1943). The articulation or figuration of the flesh is the receptacle (*chora*) of all inscription, trace, and textuality (Kristeva, 1980a: 133-134). The flesh is the receptacle of lived presence and absence as well as of lived temporality of its own mobility or desire. In this sense, the flesh is not a passive tablet of experience, of dreams, or of pleasure and pain. Rather, the flesh prefigures every figuration, trace, and gesture, through a continuous difference which is the mark or sign of life itself. This token of life is presymbolic. That is to say, it is the very ground of the possibility of symbolism, of the distinction between presence and absence, whole and part, figure and ground. The flesh is the originary *difference*, the in-between of presence and absence, part and whole, satisfaction and desire. It continues to be this difference from the first sign of life until the last sign of death, and in all of its rhythms of desire, lack, abjection, incorporation, and satisfaction, the flesh repeats or represents itself as its own icon. The flesh is the proper transcript of its own vicissitudes, of its instincts, pleasure, desire, sexuality, love, pain, and suffering. It is this transcript that every living being records for itself and which it must continuously decipher in reading its own experience, instincts, dreams, likes and dislikes. The daily transcriptions of the flesh provide us with the soul's reading.

I am adopting Freud's suggestion that the *psychical ego* be regarded as both the surface of the *bodily ego* and its projection in order to stress the continuity of the body organ and the psychical apparatus of the ego. The psychoanalytic conception of the ego is otherwise reduced to a species of faulty psychology abstracted from the essential Freudian discovery of the precipitation of part objects in the constitution of the whole subject. In other words, the primary processes remain open on the body to the level of consciousness as its "other scene." Thus it can be argued that the basic *clinamen* in the instincts toward the drives, hence from death to life, occurs in two phases:

1. *metaphorization of the aim*, which shifts intake of milk in response to hunger (*saugen*) to the fantasmic incorporation of the mother breast in pleasure sucking (*lutschen*);
2. *metonymization of the object*, which substitutes milk for what is next to it, namely, the breast, so that the infant rediscovers not the lost object but its metonym. (Laplanche, 1976: 137).

In "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895), Freud considered that it is in this second phase that perception and judgment are differentiated, to be taken later in language. At the breast, the infant is already engaged in separating the wishful cathexis of memory and a perceptual cathexis similar to it, while learning to deal

with a constant perceptual component, on the one hand, and a variable perceptual component on the other, i.e., between *thing* and *predicate*. Freud again takes up this process at the stage of the feeding infant:

Let us suppose, for instance, that the mnemonic image wished for (by a child) is the image of the mother's breast and a front view of its nipple, and that the first perception is a side view of the same object, without the nipple. In the child's memory there is an experience, made by chance in the course of sucking, that with a particular head-movement the front image turns into the side image. This side image which is not seen leads to the (image of the) head-movement; an experiment shows that this counter-part must be carried out; and the perception of the front view is achieved.

There is not much judgement about this yet; but it is an example of the possibility of arriving, by a reproduction of cathexes, at an action which is already one of the accidental offshoots of the specific action. (Freud, 1905a/1957: 328–329)

Equally interesting are Freud's observations in the "Project" regarding the first phase of the metaphorization of sucking into sensual sucking that constitutes the *intercorporeal basis of cognition*. Here the mother's body is the first object of theoretical interest, the first source of satisfaction. Thus the infant has to learn within the overlap (matrix) of her mother's body and her own body to recognize movements arising from the mother body as a constant structure of thing, and sensations or motor image arising from within her own body. Due to the helplessness of the early infant body, her ability to fulfill specific actions in the external world requires the mother's mediation. This is called for in the infant's cry, which as an internal discharge requires the secondary function of *communication*. This allows the mother to begin the work of imputing moral motives to the infant as the basis for her later socialization (Tischler, 1957). There, too, Freud locates the origin of speech:

Speech innervation is originally a path of discharge . . . operating like a safety valve, for regulating oscillations . . . it is a portion of the path to *internal change*, which represents the only discharge till the *specific action* has been found. . . . This path acquires a secondary function from the fact that it draws the attention of the helpful person (usually the wished for object itself) to the child's longing and distressful state; and thereafter it serves for *communication* and is thus drawn into the specific action. (Freud, 1905a/1957: 366)

At this stage, also, the early processes of cognition and communication link up in the perception of (a) objects that make the infant cry, and (b) crying that characterizes an object. Thus cognition involves a linking up of unconscious memories and objects of perceptual attention, including some which arouse a sound image, and later objects that will be associated with intentional sounds. “Not much is now needed,” says Freud, “in order to invent speech.” Indeed, there is considerable evidence to show that the infant oral stage affects the formation of the so-called soft consonants and vowels (L, M, I) with effects of sweetness and plentitude associated with sucking (Fonagy, 1970, 1971).

The infant flesh is destined from the beginning to embody the very inquiry that constitutes a living being. The exploration of its own internal and external boundaries and testing of all experience/information that enters/exits its orifices and skin surfaces entirely absorbs the infant in its own carnal knowledge. The *flesh*, then, is neither a biological nor a psychical ground from the start. It becomes both in the mother-infant feeding relation, as the instinct to survive which is then diverted into a “pleasure sucking” (Halveson, 1938) whose object is neither milk nor the breast but its own autoeroticism:

Thus the first object of the oral component of the sexual instinct is the mother’s breast which satisfies the infant’s need for nutrition. In the act of sucking for its own sake the erotic component, also gratified in sucking for nutrition, makes itself independent, gives up the object in an external person, and replaces it by a part of the child’s own person. The oral impulse become auto-erotic, as the anal and other erotogenic impulses are from the beginning. Further development has, to put it as concisely as possible, two aims: first, to renounce auto-eroticism, to give up again the object found in the child’s own body in exchange again for an external one; and secondly, to combine the various objects of the separate impulses and replace them by one single one. This naturally can only be done if the single object is again itself complete, with a body like that of the subject; nor can it be accomplished without some part of the auto-erotic impulse excitations being abandoned as useless. (Freud, 1960: 338)

From its earliest days, the infant body entertains the possibility of becoming the partial body, or the “body bit” (*corps morcelé*), of its mother or of its (incipient) self. “Partial objects include breast, penis, and numerous other elements related to bodily life (excrement, child, etc.), all of which have in common the fundamental characteristic of being, in fact or in fantasy, *detached* or *detachable*” (Laplanche, 1976: 13). To some extent, this is given in the infant’s somatic experience of her body with organs whose drives are represented in her mental life as though they had a

source outside/inside herself which she has as yet to integrate in a whole-body image. Thus the hunger drive attaches the sucking infant to the mother's breast for her milk. But soon the infant internalizes her need for milk by diverting it towards the very pleasure of sucking, thereby psychosexualizing a biological drive or instinct, and replacing the partial mother body with her own partial mother body with its own partial body (tongue, thumb). "We call this action "pleasure sucking" [German: *lutschen*, signifying the enjoyment of sucking for its own sake—as with a rubber "comforter"]; and as when it does this the infant again falls asleep with a blissful expression we see that the action of sucking is sufficient in itself to give it satisfaction" (Freud, 1960b: 322).

In the shift from *saugen* to *lutschen* the infant experiences, well before Lacan's mirror-stage, essentially the same internal precipitation of the forms of the other by shifting from the mother-breast to his own tongue and thumb. Freud himself speaks of the derivation of the ego from the body's sensations arising from its exploration of its cutaneous surface, that is from the flesh as an inside/outside source of sensations that are the basis for the differentiation of perception and judgment in respect of the (un)pleasure principle and the reality principle:

Freud thus indicates clearly two meshing observations of the ego from the "surface": on the one hand, the ego is the surface of the physical apparatus, a specialized organ continuous with it; on the other hand, it is the projection or metaphor of the body's surface, a metaphor in which the various perceptual systems have a role to play. (Laplanche, 1976: 82)

Furthermore, the significance of this surface of flesh between the body and the ego is that the pre-libidinal ego is *not* from the very start in conflict with the primary process of sexuality, though this conflict may be "organized" at higher or later levels of ego development. Rather, the infant's perception of the mother body is wholly absorbed with her expressive face, smile, and voice, which is, of course, a total body response communicated in the way she holds and handles the infant body and its expressive responses. Here, again, there is a surface of exchange in the communicative flesh recognized immediately in the mother/infant body. The infant's stage of autoeroticism, then, does not precede his attachment to the mother-breast. Rather, it represents the rediscovery of this lost object in his own body, from which he will have again to be detached in favour of a whole body whose image is for-himself-and-for-others. The mirror phase and the castration and oedipus complexes are the circuits of the domestic body (O'Neill, 1985). If the circuit of pleasure could be closed at the biological level, then the infant would never acquire symbolic behavior. Without the maternal mediation of the infant's bodily

needs, and the radical contingency of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the symbolization of desire would never arise, and the infant would never acquire speech. Freudian desire always speaks to the other before itself. Its demands are, so to speak, upon recognition and are rhetorical rather than physical. The semantics of desire, then, are necessarily domestic, for good and evil. Here, again, the consequences are clearly expressed in Ricoeur's comment:

The intersubjective structure of desires is the profound truth of the Freudian libido theory; even in the period of the "Project" and Chapter 7 of the *Traumdeutung*, Freud never described instincts outside of an intersubjective context; if desire were not located within an inter-human situation, there would be no such things as repression, censorship, or wish-fulfilment through fantasies; that the other and others are primarily bearers of prohibitions is simply another way of saying that desire encounters another desire—an opposed desire. The whole dialectic of roles within the second topography expresses the internalization of a relation of opposition, constitutive of human desire; the fundamental meaning of the Oedipus complex is that human desire is a history, that this history involves refusal and hurt, that desire becomes inflicted upon it by an opposing desire. (Ricoeur, 1970: 387)

I have analyzed an infant history with the purpose of showing that all later histories of alienation presuppose a first history of integration. Without such a ground, or synecdoche, we are condemned to a history without any intelligible origin or end. Our minds could then embrace only a metaphysics of absence from which our bodies would sicken. Some might say this is the price of human independence and it is redeemed in its great artistic, philosophical, and scientific assertions. I do not mean to deny the history and metaphysics of alienation as part of the human adventure since I think it is inseparable from Western consciousness and its social institutions (O'Neill, 1996a). There can be no doubt that we have weaned ourselves from divine and maternal dependence. Our science of childhood is an obvious testament to the history of individualism (O'Neill, 1995). By the same token, our history is riddled with problems of separation, division, and alienation. We then turn to that other history of ours in which we are whole, bonded, and together (see chapters 2 and 3). In short, we then insist upon that great *synecdoche* in which the world and its parts are one, each in the other, before the living whole separated into mortal parts and we began to live and make our contracts between Eros and Thanatos, giving way to one another.