Confluent Confessions:
The Flowing Together of Deconstruction and/as Religious Confession

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Abstract

Deconstruction is often accused of critiquing determinacy as such, and hence supporting a certain "indeterminate" structure that has been called nihilistic and onanistic. This thesis places deconstruction's critique of the determinate religious confessions in the context of deconstruction's larger view of religion, highlighting By paying attention to the connections that deconstruction posits between religious confessions, psychoanalysis, and theories of intersubjectivity, this thesis argues that deconstruction's critique of the determinate religious confessions is a critique of a particular (if ubiquitous) way that these confessions have been determined, and not a critique of determinacy as such. In fact, this paper claims that deconstruction's critique of the determinate religious confessions is itself motivated by a certain "religiosity," and therefore can be seen as an example of a deconstructive religious confession.

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say; and the Jameses – Jamie Smith, who turned me on to philosophy and brought it to life for me, and Jim Olthuis, mentor and friend, who shepherded what I learned past my brain and into my soul and nurtured me as I discovered who I really am.

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Contents

Introduction: "(What) Do I Not Love When I Confess to Loving my God?"

> For, of course, it would have been madness itself to have proposed to
> treat religion *itself*, in general or in its essence; rather the troubled question,
> the common concern is: 'What is going on today with it, with what is designated
> thus? What is going on there? What is happening and so badly? What is happening
> under this old name? What in the world is suddenly emerging or re-emerging
> under this appellation?' Of course, this form of question cannot be separated from
> the more fundamental one (on the essence, the concept and the history of religion
> *itself*, and of what is called 'religion'). But its approach, first of all, should have
> been, according to me, more direct, global, massive and immediate.[1]

Jacques Derrida's critique of religious confessions[2] is well known. In line with his

attempts to expose the undecidability inherent in every apparently closed system or structure, and

thus expose the inevitable openings within every system, Derrida claims that the determinacy of

the specific religious confessions undermines their messianic structure. By this he means that the

specific content of what he refers to as the "concrete" or "determinate messianisms," e.g.

Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc., betrays the structure of the promise inherent in "messianicity."

The structure of the promise calls forth to an unpredictable future, to an event that is still to come

that cannot be anticipated within any horizons. It is to be an interruptive event, an unpredictable

event, perhaps, even, an apocalyptic event - a messianic event. Derrida claims that this

unpredictability is necessary as part of the structure of the promise because it maintains the need

for faith and belief in what is wholly other (than the believer, than the expected). It is this

necessity of belief that undergirds the promise, indeed, that is the promise itself.

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[1] Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone" *Acts of Religion* ed. Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 40-101; 74. Hereafter referred to in text as FK.

[2] Throughout this thesis, I will be employing the term "religious confessions" to apply to a set of beliefs or dogmas which outline a particular orthodoxy. I am aware that "confession" has many other meanings, religious and otherwise, but I will be using it only in the above sense, unless otherwise noted.

This "deconstructive"[3] critique of the determinate religious confessions has, I believe,

long been misunderstood. I will argue that deconstruction's critique of the determinacy of

religious confessions cannot be properly understood unless it is situated in deconstruction's larger

view of religion. As the quote which begins this introduction suggests, deconstruction's take on

religion has as much to do with current, socio-historical contexts as it does with an "essence" of

religion. I believe that this point is often overlooked, leading to the belief that deconstruction's

critique of "determinacy" is a statement about the essential functioning of determination.[4] In other

words, some people seem to construe deconstruction's critique of the determinacy of the

determinate religious confessions as a critique of determinacy as such. I will argue, however, that

this is not the case. Rather, deconstruction critiques the socio-historically contextual determinacy

that has characterized the determinate religions. It critiques this determinacy as exclusive[5] and

violent, I will claim, because this type of determinacy is intimately wound up with a patriarchal

culture that is, at its core, constituted by a violent betrayal of the primordially peaceful relation

with the other. This primordially peaceful relation is, for deconstruction, itself a foundation of

religiosity, the "possibility" of the religious, and so deconstruction's critique of the determinate

religious confessions is, in fact, a critique of religion on the basis of the possibility of the

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[3]I ask forgiveness, but I will be using the term "deconstruction" throughout this thesis to denote a certain style of thinking, found mainly in the thought of Derrida and its appropriation by John D. Caputo. I mean to imply especially the work of these two figures when I use the term "deconstruction", though I am aware that, for them, deconstruction might not even exist. Hence, I ask forgiveness of them (and thank them for their smiles, "wherever they are". . .).

[4]For an example of this, see *Religion With/Out Religion: The Prayers and Tears of John D. Caputo* ed. James H. Olthuis (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); see especially Ron Kuipers' "Dangerous safety, safe danger" (pg. 20-33) and Shane Cudney's "Religion without religion" (pg. 34-49).

[5]I will use the term "exclusion" to refer to a pathology that I will explore in this thesis. In other words, "exclusion" constitutes a violent betrayal of peaceful, mutual relationality. As such, it must be kept terminologically separate from "distinction," which I will use to term the peaceful difference that characterizes the mutuality of the primordial relation.

religious.

My point in this thesis will be to show that deconstruction does not seek to eliminate the determinate religions in favour of an empty religious confession. Rather, deconstruction seeks to hold the determinate religions accountable to the very condition of their own possibility, highlighting the ways in which the historical development and determination of these religions has functioned to position them in opposition to that which makes possible the religious. Ultimately, I will show that deconstruction's critique of the determinate religious confessions is itself an example of a prophetic *call to justice*, and hence of a certain deconstructive religious confession.

Such a re-reading of deconstruction's critique of the determinate religious confessions must take seriously the entirety of deconstruction's view of religion. Only when situated within deconstruction's larger view of religion will the historically-conditioned aspects of the determinate religions be separable from the more "essential" possibility of the religious. Once these two "aspects" of the religious can be separated, it will become more clear that deconstruction critiques religion, as it exists and functions today, *in the name of* the possibility of peaceful religiosity. In order to arrive at that point, one will first have to follow deconstruction through the many seemingly "non-religious" themes that are all part of its larger view on religion. This will make clear why Derrida believes that a study on the essence of religion must, first of all, adopt a "more direct, global, massive and immediate" scale (FK, 74). In doing so, we will examine, not only the question "What do I love when I love my God?",[6] but also "(What) Do I

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[6]Augustine, *Confessions*, (X, 7). For the importance of this question to deconstruction, see John D. Caputo, "What do I love when I love my God? Deconstruction and Radical Orthodoxy," in *Questioning God* eds. John D. Caputo, Michael Scanlon and Mark Dooley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

not love, when I Confess to Loving my God?"[7] We will see how deconstruction suggests that

exclusive religious confessions are part of a search for community necessitated by, and founded

upon, an exclusionary culture that is at odds with deconstruction's vision of just intersubjective

relations. It is in critiquing this unjust theory of intersubjectivity that deconstruction exhibits a call

to justice that is, for deconstruction, religious.

The structure of this work will be as follows: I will begin by situating deconstruction's

critique of religious confessions within its larger view of religion (Chapter 1). Next, I will

examine the theory of subject formation that seems to undergird deconstruction and its critique,

which I will call "Socialization as Mutuality" (Chapter 2). Thirdly, I will look at how religion is

tied to a particular conception of thinking by way of the theory of subject formation that seems to

undergird the patriarchal system, which I will characterize by the term "abjection." Using the

psychoanalytic metaphor of "acting-out" and "original trauma", I will explain how this theory of

subject formation has serious cultural consequences in many areas, including that of religious

confessions (Chapter 3). Finally, I will discuss how abjection causes religion to function as a

"search for community" that is, in fact, a betrayal of "socialization as mutuality", and explore how

"socialization as mutuality" provides a base from which deconstruction issues its critique as a call

to justice that embodies a deconstructive religious confession (Chapter 4).

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[7]This question comes out of an interaction between myself and James K.A. Smith at the "Encounters with Augustine" conference held at Lewiston University in February of 2003. See also Smith's paper given at that conference, "On (True) Religion: Contesting Postmodern Augustines" and my response.

Chapter 1: Deconstruction and Religion (and psychoanalysis, and ...)

In this chapter, I would like to re-examine deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious

confessions in terms of its larger view of religion. Specifically, I would like to look at what

Derrida views as the two sources of religion as well as the possible responses of religion that he

discusses. To do this, I will begin by looking at the first source of religion, the experience of the

"unscathed," and explore its ties to repression, fear, and psychoanalysis (Section I). Next, I will

turn to the second source of religion, the experience of the fiduciary, and its ties to what Derrida

calls the "structure of the promise," and also, therefore, to a theory of intersubjectivity (Section

II). Finally, by paying attention to how these two sources of religion are inter-related, I will

examine what Derrida calls the "either/or" response of religion, and show how this links issues of

fear and repression to theories of intersubjectivity in deconstruction's views of religion (Section

III).

I. The *Unscathed*

In "Faith and Knowledge: the Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone,"[8]

Derrida speaks of a dual experience, or rather an experience of two different sources of religion:

the experience of sacredness (the *unscathed*) and the experience of belief (the *fiduciary* - FK, 97,

98). In a helpful footnote, Derrida explains what he means by the unscathed: "This is indeed what

the word 'unscathed' <*indemne*> says: the pure, non-contaminated, untouched, the sacred and

holy before all profanation, all wound, all offence, all lesion" (FK. 61 n. 16). This search for the

pure and holy, the purely holy, is reflected in language used to talk of God as "Most Holy" or of

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[8]See footnote 1.

the "Sacred" religious spaces.[9] Derrida himself realizes the high place which the "holy" and the "sacred" occupy in religious discourse when he states: "Is not the unscathed <*l'indemne*> the very matter - the thing itself - of religion?" (FK, 61).

Often times, however, this search for the "pure" requires a certain "purifying" of that which is perhaps impure. This "purification" Derrida refers to as indemnification, which he will use "here or there to designate both the process of compensation and the restitution, sometimes sacrificial, that *reconstitutes* purity intact, renders integrity safe and sound, restores cleanliness <*propreté*> and property unimpaired" (FK, 61 n. 16). This connection between the unscathed, as a source of religion, and indemnification is what enables Derrida to speak of the auto-immunity of religion, that is, every religion's attempts to "restore the unscathed (*heilig*)[10] that it itself threatens" (FK, 66). But why "threatens?" What is it in religion that "threatens" the pure and holy, when it is precisely the pure and holy, the "unscathed," which is "the very matter of religion?" Derrida seems to believe that it is the very acts of humanity, of the religious people, that are "unholy," and therefore threaten the "holy." Not just the acts, but the fact that humanity is not "holy," not "sacred," not "divine." As such, every interaction between the "holy" and the "not-holy" (human) would be necessarily tainted by the "not-holy."[11] Derrida attributes this to a certain "Heideggerian temptation" in attempts to understand religion, which would seek to get behind the theological (discourse on God, faith, or revelation) to the theio-logical (discourse on being-divine, on the essence and the divinity of the divine). In Heidegger, this reveals itself in the question of

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[9]On this notion of the sacred, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* trans. Willard R. Trask (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959).

[10]Derrida takes this word, *heilig*, (roughly translated, "saved") from the Heideggerean discourse; see Heidegger, *Andenken* (1943) and Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," 54 n. 9.

[11] This foreshadows the "possibility"/ "determinate necessity" distinction that will be discussed in chapter 2 below.

revelation: "is revealability (*Offenbarkeit*) more originary than revelation (*Offenbarung*), and

hence independent of all religion?" (FK, 54).[12] In terms of the "holy," this would mean that the

essence of the divine would have to be a "holiness" so holy that it would necessarily be corrupted

by human act, thought, or word.

To counteract this "corruption" of the divine, religious humanity is forced to "purify," as

best it can, itself from all human and therefore "corrupting" influences. This "purifying," as auto-

immune indemnification, often takes a sacrificial tone, and it constitutes the movement of every

religion to keep itself pure, sacred, holy - even if it must immunize itself, immunize against itself,

in order to do so. The auto-immunization of religion(s) acts, often, by means of repression,

displacing many other topics (for example, the "determination of the 'world,'of 'history,' of the

'day' and of the 'present.'" - FK, 62) under the rubric of that great Latin word, spoken most often

via Anglo-American (FK, 64), *religio*. Displaced, "which is to say, as is always the case with the

topics of repression, inscribed in other places or other systems; this never occurs without

symptoms and fantasies, without spectres (*phantasmata*) to be investigated" (FK, 62).[13]

This talk of "repression" in religion resurfaces in deconstruction's critique of exclusive

religious confessions. John D. Caputo, a leading figure in deconstruction in North America, uses

precisely the language of repression to explain his critique of exclusive religious confessions:

"The extremism [violence] to which fundamentalist religion seems congenitally disposed is, I

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[12]A question which applies also to Derrida's views on "messianicity," and which his answer is not so clear: does the structure of messianicity come before the determinate messianisms, or vice versa? Derrida himself "hesitates between these possibilities" - cf. Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), esp. Part One, "The Villanova Roundtable." See also John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 136-137.

[13] Investigating some of these "spectres" is exactly what I will be trying to do in chapters 3 and 4.

think, a return of the repressed, to speak psychoanalytically,"[14] or again "the extremism and violence to which [fundamentalism] is prone are symptomatic expressions of this repression" (OR,108). What is at the core of this repression? "At the core of fundamentalism, I maintain, there lies a repressed fear that faith is only faith and as such a risk with no guarantee of anything" (OR, 124). At the core of deconstruction's problem with exclusive religions and their exclusive confessions is repression: a repressed fear.

But what, exactly, is it that is feared? What are fundamentalists afraid *of*? Caputo seems to suggest, in the quote above, that the fundamentalists are afraid that there is nothing firm and solid to believe in, no certainty on which to base their lives. Yet this seems unsatisfactory, or rather, this seems to not be the most deep-seated fear. After all, why would lack of certainty for one's beliefs inspire fear? Could it perhaps be because we are afraid of doing something *wrong*, and afraid that our wrong actions will leave us *excluded*? Aren't fundamentalists really afraid of falling out of God's favour, and so finding themselves on the outside of "God's chosen people"?

It is this fear of being excluded, then, that seems to lie at the heart of deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions. This would seem to imply that a certain degree of psychoanalysis is necessary in understanding that critique. This implication is backed up, not only by Caputo's evocation of psychoanalysis in his explanation of this critique (OR, 107), but also by Derrida, who asserts that "psychoanalytic knowledge can in turn uproot and reawaken faith" (FK, 90). This occurs, as I will later claim, by way of the psychoanalytic idea of "testimony" or "witnessing," which deconstruction picks up in its discussions on the second source of religion,

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[14]John D. Caputo, *On Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 107. Hereafter cited in text as OR.

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the experience of belief.

Before I turn to this second source, however, it is important to note what has been uncovered so far about deconstruction and religion. Deconstruction views an experience of the "unscathed" (holy, sacred) as one source of religion "within the limits of reason alone," specifically within a certain conception of reason that has dominated Western thought, on religion and otherwise, since the Enlightenment(s) (FK, 53).[15] In this experience of the "unscathed" there is a necessary "auto-immune indemnification" that must occur. This indemnification acts by way of repression, and this repression lies at the core of deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions. There is, then, an integral link between the "unscathed" as a source of religion on the one hand, and repression and fear on the other. Deconstruction does not only critique exclusive religions because of a fear of repression, but also critiques it for the repression of a fear.

II. The *Fiduciary*

Over and against the experience of the unscathed, but also with it, supporting it and challenging it, is the second source of religion, the experience of belief. This second experience is intimately tied up with the first especially by way of (a particular) language, tradition, and imperialism. For speaking of religion is, Derrida points out, to speak Latin: "Does not 'the question of *religio*,' however, quite simply merge, one could say, with the question of Latin?" (FK, 66), which would be the question of the Judeo-Christian tradition (FK, 50 ff.), of Western history, of languages (dead or alive), and of the globalization and latinization, the *globalatinization* of the world today (FK, 67). But what if *religio* is to be something other than a

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[15]Section II will explain why religion must be thought in the context of this Western history and conception of reason.

Latin word? What if religion is to be something, not merely Western or Judeo-Christian, but something of a "universal?" Then *religio* would have to be translatable into other languages, traditions, contexts:

> And what if *religio* remained untranslatable? No *religio* without *sacramentum*, without alliance and promise of testifying truthfully to the truth, which is to say, to speak the truth: that is to say, to begin with, no religion without the promise of keeping one's promise to tell the truth - and to have already told it! - in the very act of promising. To have already told it, *veritas*, in Latin, and thus to consider it told. The event to come has already taken place. The promise promises *itself*, it is *already* promised, that is the sworn faith, the given word, and hence the response. *Religio* would begin there. (FK, 67)

Religio, then, is grounded in the experience of belief: belief in the promise of truthful testimony that has always already occurred. The promise of "truthful testimony" relies upon the structure of the promise, which calls forth, not only to an unpredictable, interruptive, perhaps even apocalyptic, event - a messianic event, which is always to come; no, the structure of the promise points out also that the "event to come has already taken place" (FK, 67). This messianic event (always to come yet always already taken place) is the first promise, the pre-archaic promise, the promise before the promise, which is the promise that one speaks the truth, that one's testimony is accurate (even, perhaps especially, when one lies or perjures oneself - FK, 98). In speaking, no matter what one is saying, one has already said "yes" to this first promise, the structure of every promise. One has always already said "yes," so, in order to acquiesce to something, one must always say, one is always saying, not just "yes" to it, but "yes, yes" [*oui, oui*]: "yes" to what is promised or agreed to, but "yes" first of all to the other, to the very structure of the promise, of language, of relationship to the other itself.

This "messianic event" of the first promise, which "is involved <*engagé*> in every address

to the other" and therefore "conditions every 'social bond'" (FK, 98), is an evocation of faith, of

belief in something unpredictable, unprovable, something "miraculous." The promise that one is

always telling the truth "amounts to saying: 'Believe what I say as one believes in a miracle.'

Even the slightest testimony concerning the most plausible, ordinary or everyday thing cannot do

otherwise: it must appeal to faith as would a miracle" (FK, 98). And just as we have said that

every question of *religio* is a question of language, tradition, context, etc., and hence every

"religious" question cannot be divorced from questions of every rational and scientific "-ology,"

every *logos*, that seeks to understand language, tradition, context, etc., (of course one is thinking

of anthrop*ology*, socio*logy*, etc.), similarly each of these "scientific" questions cannot be divorced

from questions of belief, and hence of religion, since belief is "implied in every 'social bond,'

however ordinary, it also renders itself indispensable to Science no less than to Philosophy and to

Religion" (FK, 99). If every "religious" question can be looked at scientifically, it is no less true

that every scientific question can be looked at "religiously." Religion and Reason are not

opposed, as the Enlightenment(s) claimed they were; rather, they are somehow connected.[16]

Religion and Reason are connected, we have said, because both are grounded in the

promise of "truthful testimony." But what is meant by "testimony"? Derrida intends at least two

different implications through the term "testimony," one intersubjective and one psychoanalytic.

Derrida takes a brief tour through Heidegger to explain the intersubjective implication of the term.

He begins by tracing the affirmation of "a certain *testimonial sacredness*" in Heidegger's work,

from "attestation" (*Bezeugung*) in *Being and Time* through all the concepts related to it, including

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[16]Section III below will examine the question of the interrelation between Religion and Reason in greater
detail.

conscience (*Gewissen*), originary responsibility or guilt (*Schuldigsein*) and resolute determination (*Entschlossenheit*) (FK, 95-96). In fact, Derrida claims that the reader of Heidegger's work and Heidegger himself are both situated in a space of faith/belief "from the moment that Heidegger says 'we' to justify the choice of the 'exemplary' being that is *Dasein*" because this "we" is made possible by a *Faktum*, a "vague and ordinary pre-comprehension of the meaning of being, and first of all of the words 'is' or 'be' in language or in a language" (FK, 96).[17] This *Faktum*, which is an area of "faith incessantly reaffirmed throughout an open chain of concepts" (FK, 96), is the very condition of intersubjectivity for Derrida's Heidegger:

> We are speaking here of the belief that is demanded, required, of the faithful
> belief in what, having come from the utterly other <*de l'autre tout autre*>,
> there where its originary presentation in person would forever be impossible
> (witnessing or given word in the most elementary and irreducible sense, promise of
> truth up to and including perjury), would constitute the condition of *Mitsein*, of the
> relation to or address of the other in general. (FK, 97-98)

Testimony, then, is the condition of *Mitsein*, "being-with," intersubjectivity. But it also has other, psychoanalytic, overtones. The idea of testimony/witnessing is popular in certain psychoanalytic discourses as a means of changing currently repressive societal structures.[18] Hence, one could suggest that perhaps it is in this notion of testimony/witnessing that Derrida sees the hope for a reawakening of faith by psychoanalysis.[19] If this is the case, then such an attempt would have to take seriously the intersubjective elements of testimony, as "the relation to the other would disclose itself to be the secret of testimonial experience - and hence, of a certain

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[17]Derrida bases his analysis in this section largely on § 2 of *Sein und Zeit*. See also Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. trans Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[18]For an excellent example of this, see Kelly Oliver's book *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[19]Cf. FK, 90; also, see the discussion of the role of psychoanalysis as a "reawakener" of faith in Section I, above.

faith" (FK, 99).[20] But it would also have to take seriously the psychoanalytic elements of

testimony, and the link between the experience of the "unscathed" in religion and psychoanalysis.

But now we have come full circle: we have arrived, in our explication of the second

source of religion, back at the first source of religion. Derrida himself is aware of the integrated

nature of these two sources, and the role of testimony/witnessing to bring them together: the

"experience of witnessing situates a convergence of *these* two sources: the *unscathed* (the safe,

the sacred or the saintly) and the *fiduciary* (trustworthiness, fidelity, credit, belief or faith, 'good

faith')" (FK, 98). Witnessing/testimony is, then, both the condition of intersubjectivity and the

site of the hope of a reawakening of faith by psychoanalysis. As such, it is the convergence of the

two sources of religion. The two sources of religion come together in the condition of

intersubjectivity.[21]

III. "Religion is the [Either/Or] Response"

The connection between religion, psychoanalysis, and intersubjectivity is implicit also in

the two religious responses that Derrida speaks of; or, rather, Derrida claims that there is one

response, "religion is the response" (FK, 64), and it is an either/or: "*Either* it addresses the

absolute other as such, with an address that is understood, heard, respected faithfully and

responsibly; *or* it retorts, retaliates, compensates and *indemnifies itself* in the war of resentment

and of reactivity" (FK, 66). The response of religion (belonging to religion? on behalf of religion?

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[20]By characterizing this relation to the other as a "non-relationship," or an "absolute *interruption*" (FK, 99), Derrida allies himself within a certain Levinasian paradigm of intersubjectivity. This Levinasian paradigm, as I will discuss later, evidences a connection, a (non-) relation, to the other as being a necessary part of subject formation *and of being a subject* - one cannot be a subject and not be in relation with the other(s).

[21]"The condition of intersubjectivity" - does this mean the condition, the state of health, of intersubjectivity, here, now, in "fact"? Or does it mean the condition *for* intersubjectivity, the condition of possibility so that intersubjectivity might happen?

to religion?) is either a positive relationship to and with the other, or indemnification, auto-immunity, repression. The response of religion, then, is, for Derrida, an intersubjective response: either an intersubjectivity that honours and connects with the other, or an intersubjectivity that sacrifices the self in a violent struggle with the other.

Religion responds with a violent intersubjectivity by way of indemnification, which has earlier been shown to be tied necessarily to repression. Repression, in turn, calls to mind psychoanalysis, which is the space of a certain type of hope, religious hope,[22] for Derrida: "it is true that psychoanalytic knowledge can in turn uproot and reawaken faith by opening itself to a new space of testimoniality, to a new instance of attestation, to a new experience of the symptom and of truth" (FK, 90). Here we hear Derrida claiming that psychoanalysis can reawaken faith by "uprooting" it, and "uproot" it by way of a new "testimoniality." Testimony, one will recall, is the place where both sources of religion "within the limits of reason alone" converge: the (repressive) experience of the unscathed, and the (intersubjective) experience of belief. Deconstruction seems to believe that faith can be reawakened by challenging "religion within the limits of reason alone," and providing a new conception of the pre-condition of intersubjectivity.

To understand why this is the case, we must first understand why Derrida speaks of religion "within the limits of reason alone." This is, of course, a reference to Kant, and so to a certain (Western, Christian, and post-Enlightenment) tradition of thinking. Recall, as stated above, that for Derrida, to speak of religion is to say *religio*, which is to speak Latin and Christian. As such, "religion" itself is a very particularly situated phenomenon. Is this to say that Derrida thinks that God or faith is a Western and Christian phenomenon? Far from it. Derrida is

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[22] For more on the notion of religious hope in deconstruction, see chapter 4 below.

careful to distinguish "religion" from "faith" (and even "faith" from God): "But religion does not

follow the movement of **faith** any more necessarily than the latter rushes towards faith in God.

For if the concept of 'religion' implies an institution that is separable, identifiable,

circumscribable, tied through its letter to the Roman *ius*, its essential relation both to faith and to

God is anything but self-evident" (FK, 69). If, then, religion is not necessarily tied to faith or to

God, what is it tied to? For Derrida, there seems to be at least two answers: a search for

community, and a style or conception of thinking.

In discussing possible etymologies of the term "religion," Derrida reveals a particular

(perhaps peculiar) take on religion's "beginnings." He talks of "two provenances" of *religio*: first,

relegere, "bringing together in order to return and begin again" (FK, 73); and second, *religare*,

"etymology 'invented by Christians,' as Benveniste says, and linking religion to the *link*,

precisely, to obligation, ligament, and hence to obligation, to debt, etc., between men or between

man and God" (FK, 73-74).[23] Both of these etymologies, however, seem to have something in

common: a search for community, a need to "bring together" or "link" people with each other,

either to begin something again, or out of debt, obligation, etc. Regardless, both etymologies

evidence a tie between *religio*, between Western religion, and a search for community.

Why this need for community? I suggest it comes from a certain conception of

intersubjectivity, a "testimony," that deconstruction thinks needs to be "uprooted" in order to

reawaken faith from its slumber in the "institution" of religion. This conception of

intersubjectivity is one that deconstruction views as exclusive, and it undergirds the society of the

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[23]Derrida quotes from Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. Elizabeth Palmer
(London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 516 ff. See also FK, 73 n. 22.

West.[24] Religion does not operate free from the constraints of the society surrounding it; Derrida alludes to this when he describes the question of religion as the question of Latin (FK, 66). Rather, he notices that religion, like other aspects of that society (e.g. Reason), come from a similar source. Rather than continuing to "naïvely" oppose reason and religion, "technoscientific Modernity and Religion" (FK, 65), Derrida is looking to "understand" the connection between them, the way in which the two come together, "how the imperturbable and interminable development of critical and technoscientific reason, far from opposing religion, bears, supports and supposes it" (FK, 65-66). To this end, Derrida is not only challenging the project of locating religion "within the limits of reason alone," he is seeking to find the common ancestry that supports the two, the fount from which these two rivers flow: "It would be necessary to demonstrate, which would not be simple, that religion and reason have the same source" (FK, 66).[25] The common source, the ancestry or heritage common to both "technoscientific" reason and religion, Derrida alludes to near the end of "Faith and Knowledge" when he talks of testimony/witnessing as the condition of intersubjectivity (FK, 98).

If religion, then, is tied more closely to a particular tradition underlying society than it is to faith or God, then perhaps Derrida's critique of the exclusive nature of religious confessions can be re-evaluated. Perhaps he is not seeking to install a new religious dogma, a "non-dogmatic dogma," but rather is critiquing the exclusive practices, the exclusive tradition (which I will call patriarchy and which Derrida refers to as the "technoscientific" or the "globalatinized" world), that undergirds these exclusive religions. In critiquing this tradition, Derrida is merely continuing

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[24]I will examine this conception of intersubjectivity in greater detail in Chapter 3.
[25]Recall earlier the connection made between the "scientific" nature of religious questions and the "religious" nature of scientific questions.

his project of challenging the "metaphysics of presence."[26] He is searching for the exclusive

practices, not only of religious confessions, but of the tradition that underlies both those

confessions and the conception of reason that he so often deals with.

It seems, then, that Derrida's critique of religious confessions must be repositioned in light

of his larger view of religion. Doing so will show Derrida's critique of the "exclusive" nature of

religious confessions to be less a matter of dogmatic content than it is a matter of intersubjective

relationality. In explaining his larger view of religion "within the limits of reason alone," which is

to say, his view of Western, Christian religion in its "technoscientific" (I will call it patriarchal)

context, Derrida posits two sources of this religion: an experience of the unscathed and an

experience of the fiduciary. These two he connects with psychoanalysis (which has a heavy focus

on subject formation) and intersubjectivity, respectively. Hence, I think it is legitimate to evaluate

his critique of exclusive religious confessions as a critique of exclusive practices of

intersubjectivity.[27]

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[26]Len Lawlor has argued that Derrida moves from a critique of metaphysics to a critique of Christianity in an effort to expand his critique, as the "Christian" world includes and incorporates the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman influences. Cf. Derrida's use of the term "jewgreek" in "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," *Writing and Difference* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) 79-153; see also Lawlor's "'Creation Waits in Anticipation:' From a critique of Metaphysics to a Critique of Christianity in Derrida" (oral lecture, given at University of Toronto, May 24, 2005).

[27] For the purposes of this paper, I assume that a theory of intersubjectivity, as an explanation of the way in which subjects relate to each other, includes an explanation of how subjects are formed within that theory. Therefore, both the intersubjective and psychoanalytic (subject formation) implications of testimony are referred to by the term "intersubjectivity." Where it is important to distinguish between these, I will do so.

Chapter 2: Deconstruction's Intersubjective Groundwork

In chapter 1, I sought to show that deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious

confessions has, at its heart, a critique of the theories of intersubjectivity that undergird those

confessions. Because "religion" is a socially conditioned, separable, and identifiable "institution"

(FK, 69) of the Western Judeo-Christian society, to critique it is not to critique God, nor to seek to

abandon faith. Nor does calling into question the way that religion operates mean to call into

question the necessity of religion itself. Much like a critique of society does not call one to

abandon society as a project (who could imagine such a thing?), but rather calls one to re-evaluate

that society, and perhaps re-found it on other, hopefully "better", grounds, similarly

deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions could be a call to reconceive of the

very grounds on which those confessions are founded. Further, these "grounds" which undergird

determinate religions, which is to say, historically situated and conditioned religions, are not

ontological, but are themselves historical and socially conditioned. Deconstruction's critique of

exclusive religious confessions, then, can be seen as a critique of the grounds that undergird

Western, Judeo-Christian society.

Specifically, I would suggest that deconstruction critiques the *intersubjectivity* that

undergirds the determinate religious confessions. If this intersubjectivity could be shown to be

exclusive, then it should come as no surprise that religions founded upon this intersubjectivity

would repeat this exclusion. I will argue that deconstruction finds the theories of intersubjectivity

that underlie the determinate religions to indeed be exclusionary. Before that can be shown,

however, one would need to understand where deconstruction is speaking from: what theory of

intersubjectivity does deconstruction hold that would cause them to view other such theories as

exclusive? That will be the subject of this chapter. I will seek to elaborate here the theory of intersubjectivity that I see undergirding deconstruction. To do this, I will begin by discussing the "nontological" groundwork laid by Emmanuel Levinas (Section I). Next, I will discuss how this groundwork is shaped into a more "fleshed out" version of a theory of intersubjectivity by thinkers such as Luce Irigaray (Section II). Finally, I will seek to show that deconstruction thinks of intersubjectivity along the same lines as do Levinas and Irigaray, and that this positions deconstruction to take up its critique of "determinate" religious confessions (Section III).

I. Levinas' 'Nontological' Groundwork

Emmanuel Levinas perhaps deserves credit for introducing a conception of intersubjectivity that emphasizes the radical interdependence of people into contemporary philosophical discourse (at least in France). His "ethics as first philosophy" is actually a "radical nontology"[28] that questions the monadistic[29] subject found in Husserlian and Heideggerian discourses.[30] Hence Levinas asserts that one's subjectivity comes from relation to the other.[31] In

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[28] I have coined this term to point out the ways in which Levinas (perpendicularly) parallels Heidegger's "fundamental ontology." I term it "nontological" because Levinas' project (especially in *Otherwise than Being* and *Totality and Infinity*) seeks to establish the conditions of possibility for the development of the subject. As such, the project remains, like Heidegger's, ontological. However, Levinas challenges ontology by pointing out how ontology always reduces everything to the realm of the Same, of the Ego. Levinas' emphasis on the Other is a direct challenge to ontology. Hence, the phrase "perpendicular parallel" of Heidegger: parallel, because Levinas also seeks to show the conditions of possibility; perpendicular because Levinas emphasizes the vertical (self-Other as transcendence) relationship, while Heidegger emphasizes the horizontal (immanent connections of Dasein in the world; horizons). See Levinas, "Is Ontology Fundamental?" *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings* eds. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 1-10; and Levinas, "Transcendence and Height" *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 11-31.

[29] In the phenomenological sense of monad as "solitude" or "ownness." Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* trans. David Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 68. See also Kelly Oliver, *Family Values: Subjects Between Nature and Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 137. Hereafter cited in text as FV.

[30] While Husserl's subject has often been shown to be monadistic in this way (see, for example, Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*), the question of Dasein in Heidegger is slightly more complex. While Dasein is primordially in relation with other Daseins and the world (*mit-dasein*), the individualizing role of "being-towards-death" calls that primordial relationality into question. Thanks to Lambert Zuidervaart who examined this dynamic in a seminar he led

fact, Levinas claims that it is the other who is the breath that animates me ("inspires" me),

"alterity in the same" (OTB, 67). As such, for Levinas the subject can never not be in relation[32]

with the other because the role of the other "in me" (OTB, 69) is necessarily tied up with

sensibility, and with my responsibility: "The animation, the very pneuma of the psyche, alterity

in identity, is the identity of a body exposed to the other, becoming 'for the other,' the possibility

of giving" (OTB, 69). The subject's relationship with the other, then, the other who is always "in

me,"[33] is not something that the subject can ever do without, because that relation is the very

spirit/breath (pneuma) that animates the psyche of the self, a self that is like a body always

already "exposed to the other." That which makes the subject a subject, indeed, makes it that very

subject which it itself is,[34] is its relation to the other. Without this relation to the other, the subject

would simply cease to be (that subject which it is). In Levinas the subject can never not be in

relation to the other.

Further, this relation to the other is characterized by peace. It has often been claimed that

Levinas puts forward a theory of violence, an "ontology of violence."[35] The claims of Levinas'

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at the Institute for Christian Studies in Spring 2005, entitled "Truth and Authenticity: Heidegger's *Being and Time*."

[31]Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, Or Beyond Essence* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 67. Hereafter cited in text as OTB. While this could be said also of theorists of abjection, as I will show in the next chapter, in Levinas this relationship cannot be avoided. For Freud and Lacan, for example, abjecting the other remains a possibility. Even if the abjected other haunts the subject, as lack or desire, the subject, especially the male subject, stands on its own after individuation. Therefore, if it can stand on its own after individuation, it must be said that in theories of abjection, subjectivity is *not* essentially in relationship with others, though subjectivity may require relationship with others in its formation. In Levinas, however, the subject must always be in relationship with others.

[32]Though Levinas is uncomfortable with the term "relation" as it implies, in Levinas' opinion, too much reciprocity. He prefers to speak of the "relation without relation." Cf. OTB, 70, 85.

[33] Though he speaks of the other "in me", Levinas is clear that the other remains different from me, even referring to is as "absolute difference" (OTB, 70).

[34] Ricouer refers to this uniqueness, this "that very subject which it itself is," as "ipseity." Cf. Paul Ricouer, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[35]See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); see also James K.A. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational*

violence stem from his use of terms such as "hostage" and "persecution" to describe the subject in relation to the other.[36] However, I believe that to conceive of Levinas as purporting a necessary violence between self and other is to misunderstand Levinas (though a very understandable misunderstanding, given the frequency with which Levinas employs hostage-taking and other violent imagery). For Levinas, the relation with the other does not become "violent"[37] until *after* the subject is formed ("thematized" into the "said") which is, in some sense, beyond the realm of what Levinas is discussing, if I am right in saying that he offers a "radical nontology." Levinas states that the relation of the subject to the other

> outside of every system, before any correlation, is an accord or peace between planes which, as soon as they are thematized, make an irreparable cleavage, like vowels in a dieresis, maintaining a hiatus without elision . . . Yet they are in accord prior to thematization, in an accord, a chord, which is possible only as an arpeggio . . . Far from negating intelligibility, this kind of accord is the very rationality of signification in which the tautological identity, the ego, receives the other, and takes on the meaning of an irreplaceable identity by giving to the other. (OTB, 70)

It is only because of the "peaceful" accord of the-one-for-the-other that any talk of a "relationship," violent or peaceful, between the ego and the other makes sense.

But does Levinas here implicitly claim that violence is necessary in order for the subject to come to be?[38] More accurately, does Levinas claim that, in becoming a subject, in being "thematized" in the "said" rather than remaining in the unthematizable "saying," the subject

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Hermeneutic (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 124 ff.

[36]See, for example, Levinas' "Substitution," in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 79-95.

[37]The "violence" attributed to the pre-subjective relation (without relation) is what Derrida calls a pre-ethical violence, if such a thing makes sense: ". . . supposing, as we said above, that it is somehow meaningful to speak of preethical violence. For this transcendental origin, as the irreducible violence of the relation to the other, is at the same time nonviolence, since it opens the relation to the other. It is an economy. And it is this economy which, by this opening, will permit access to the other to be determined, in ethical freedom, as moral violence or nonviolence." Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," 128-129.

[38]The importance of this claim, i.e. whether or not violence is necessary in order for the subject to come to be, will become clear in the next chapter regarding abjection theories.

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necessarily commits violence, a violence of betrayal? This would seem to be true only if the subject that comes to be is a subject that is in opposition to the peaceful accord of the one-for-the-other. In other words, if the "pre-subject" becomes a monadistic subject, this would constitute a betrayal of the peaceful relationship to the other, and would be a violent renunciation of this relationship. This is because a monadistic subject necessarily cannot be in peaceful relationship with others. To become *this type* of subject, the "pre-subject" would have to violently renounce its relationship to the other, excluding the other from itself. Abjecting the other. But it is precisely this type of monadistic (Husserlian) subject that Levinas is trying to overcome. Levinas states that his project, which I have termed a "radical nontology," is "an attack made immediately on the plenitude of the complacency in oneself . . ., on the identity in enjoyment . . ., on life in which signification, the for-the-other, is swallowed up" (OTB, 74). It seems like Levinas is critiquing (even to the point of attack!) precisely the type of self-complacent, self-identical, self-absorbed ego that we have characterized as "monadistic." Given this, it seems unlikely that Levinas, in his critique of such a subject, would reinforce that subject. If Levinas does end up by (re-) positing a monadistic subject (a contention that I am not ready to concede),[39] then this positing should be read as antithetical to his project; as, ironically, non-Levinasian. For Levinas, "attacking" the monadistic subject of Husserl is necessary, because the subject is, in fact, not monadistic, but rather, from before the start, is characterized by peaceful relationship with the other.[40]

Another question that can arise, however, is whether or not Levinas' theory does enough to retain the distinction between self and other; specifically, in his feverish attempts to overcome

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[39]Rather, I believe that Levinas is employing the possibility/determinate necessity distinction that Derrida uses more explicitly; see FK, 93-94 and the discussion of it in Section III below.

[40]For more on this, see my "When Friends Attack: Milbank on Levinas" (unpublished), 13 ff.

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the dominance of the (Husserlian) ego, Levinas may go too far, and absorb the self into the other

(which is the opposite of the ego's tendency to reduce everything to itself).[41] This critique of

Levinas comes from the self-sacrificial tone that is sometimes found in his work. For example,

Levinas commands one to give to the other even "the very bread I eat" (OTB, 72). If we

remember, however, that Levinas is not giving us an ethical system so much as a "pre-ethic,"[42] a

nontological framework, then such language no longer comes across as an ethical call to self-

sacrifice. This does not solve the problem, but merely pushes it to the next level - rather than a

call for a subject to act self-sacrificially, such language could be viewed as a description of

nontological boundary erasure, reducing the distinction between the self and the other to the point

of absorbing the self into the other. Such an interpretation of Levinas, though, fails to take into

account his hyperbolic reaction to his Husserlian context.[43] Because the very idea of reducing the

self to the *other* would have been so counter-intuitive as to have been almost impossible in a

Husserlian context, Levinas is not careful, in his own writing, to guard against language that

could be interpreted in this way. I do not believe, however, that this is because Levinas believes

the self ought to be reduced to the other. Rather, it is clear that Levinas does not advocate self-

surrender, because he does, occasionally, speak in favour of self-affirmation. For example,

Levinas claims that in order to give "the very bread I eat," "one has to first enjoy one's bread . . .

Enjoyment is an ineluctable moment of sensibility" (OTB, 72). "Sensibility" refers to the

relationship of the one-for-the-other (OTB, 69, 71), while "enjoyment is the singularization of the

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[41]James H. Olthuis, among others, levels this critique of Levinas; see his "Face to Face: Ethical Asymmetry or the Symmetry of Mutuality?" *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 25/4 (1996): 459-479.
    [42]I wish to thank Michèle Leaman, who introduced me to the idea of a "pre-ethic" in Levinas.
    [43]For more on this, especially the notion of hyperbole as a philosophical term, see Ricouer, *Oneself as Another*, 340 ff. Here, Ricoeur also notes that the Levinasian theme of "testimony" gives us reason to think that Levinas has some notion of self-attestation operating in his work.

ego . . . it is the very movement of egoism" (OTB, 73). Levinas is saying, therefore, that the singularization of the self is a necessary part of the relationship with the other.[44]

I have sought to show here that Levinas lays the "nontological" groundwork for a very particular view of subject formation, which I will call "socialization as mutuality." By this I mean a theory that views the subject as being inherently in relation with other people (social), and that these relations with other people are characterized by peaceful distinction (the other is not absorbed in me or vice versa) but not isolation (I am never alone, separated from others). Levinas lays the groundwork for such a theory by giving us a theory that emphasizes the socialization of the subject or, perhaps more accurately, the subject *as* social: the subject *is* only by means of its relations with others. Further, these relations are characterized, (pre-)primordially by peace.[45]

II. "Fleshing-Out" the Groundwork

Levinas' "nontological" groundwork, while promising, is not without its problems. The Hussserlian context in which Levinas was writing caused him to react, "hyperbolically," by overemphasizing the relation of the other through language that seems violent and which seems to absorb the self into the other. While I have attempted to give reasons as to why I think that Levinas should not be read in this way, I do realize that his language is difficult for many readers to overcome. Thankfully, however, the idea of "socialization as mutuality" did not end with Levinas. Rather, an entire generation of thinkers (especially in France) came after him and built on his work. These people were often more careful on issues of violence and self-absorption than

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[44]This is why Levinas can say that "The ego may be called, in the name of this unlimited responsibility, to be concerned also with itself." Levinas, "Substitution," *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 79-95; 95. For more on the idea of self-attestation in Levinas, see "When Friends Attack: Milbank on Levinas," 11-13.

[45]". . . it is, however, not certain that war was at the beginning" (OTB, 118). See also Levinas, "Substitution" *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 91.

Levinas had been. Also, while Levinas remained for the most part on the level of "pre-ethic," or "nontological" groundwork, the next generation of thinkers sought to "flesh out" this groundwork through a more explicit theory of intersubjectivity.

Luce Irigaray is one of the leading figures of this next generation of French thinkers. She is much more careful to maintain the balance between self and other than is Levinas. She quite explicitly states that there can be *"no love of other without love of same."*[46] Irigaray provides an explanation of the subject that remains in accord with the peaceful accord between the "pre-subject" and the other in Levinas. Therefore, Irigaray's subject provides a way of conceiving of becoming-subject in Levinas' theory that does not require this becoming to be violent.[47] By conceiving of a subject in peaceful relationship with others, Irigaray is able to offer a realization of Levinas' nontological framework that embodies what I have earlier called "socialization as mutuality." Like Levinas, Irigaray shows the necessity of the subject's being in relation with others.[48] And, better than Levinas, Irigaray shows that this relation with the other must be one of mutuality.

Irigaray is clear that the subject must always be in relation with others. This relation with the other does not, however, come at the expense of the relation to the self. Rather, the relationship to the other is an outgrowing (perhaps an out-going) of one's relationship with oneself, just as one's relationship with oneself is reliant upon one's relationships with others. For

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[46]Luce Irigaray, *Ethics of Sexual Difference* trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 104. Hereafter cited in text as ESD.

[47]The greater attention paid to the "becoming-subject" vis-à-vis the possibility of subjectivity shows Irigaray's psychoanalytic training as compared to Levinas' more phenomenological bent. By looking at the "becoming-subject" aspect of intersubjectivity, we see another avenue by which psychoanalysis makes its way into phenomenology, in general, and deconstruction more specifically.

[48]As opposed to abjection theories, which show the necessity of the self's having been (at some previous time) in relation to the other; see chapter 3.

Irigaray, the subject only becomes itself because of its relationship with others. The other is not the same as the subject and as such the other is *different*, provides a difference, which calls the subject to relationship and to becoming. It is this difference which signifies the space between subject and other, between me and you, that allows us to remain distinct, and also allows us to be in relationship.[49] This space also gives rise to the importance of embrace or the caress. While the look (vision being patriarchy's preferred way of perceiving the world) seeks to erase the space of difference by reducing everything to the subject's field of vision, the caress, as the touching of more than one body, re-affirms not only the subject, in touching, but also the space and value of the other, as touched, as well as the boundary (space) between them - the lover's touch never traverses the boundary of the beloved's skin.[50] The embrace/caress, then, reaffirms the mutuality of social relationships. There can be no embrace without two different ones (people, subjects, etc.).[51]

The embrace not only acknowledges the other for her relationship to me, but also acknowledges the other *as other*. By so doing, it truly acknowledges the other - acknowledging the other only for her relation to me is really to reduce the other to me, to the "other of the same."[52] To allow the other to remain distinct from me, without, by so doing, therefore isolating myself from the other - to allow myself and the other to *come together* while still remaining *distinct* is the unique role of the embrace/caress.[53] The embrace/caress simultaneously reinforces

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[49]See ESD, 13; see also Irigaray, *to be two* trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc (New York: Routledge, 2001), and Oliver, *Witnessing*, 215-218.

[50]See Irigaray, "The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 'The Intertwining - The Chiasm'" ESD, 151-184; see also Irigaray, "The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 'Phenomenology of Eros'" ESD, 185-217.

[51]See Irigaray, *i love to you*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996); especially 104 ff.

[52]The woman as "other of the [male] same" is one of the main themes of *Ethics of Sexual Difference*.

[53]While I am relating embrace and caress, one must not conflate the two: embrace can have undertones of "encompassing," "wrapping around," or "swallowing up" the other that caress does not have. Caress, while perhaps

the space between us, while also manifesting the flow of love in and across that space.[54]

The space between subject and other is also the space of desire. In a theory of socialization as mutuality, desire is the excess of identification. "Desire does not say 'you are like me so I want you,' nor does it say 'you are not like me so I can be sure that I am me'; rather, desire says 'because you are not me, I can move out of myself towards you.' Desire is the excess of the other in one's own identification" (FV, 95). Desire, thought of as excess rather than as lack, evidences a major difference in how one thinks of subjectivity:

> Hegel was right that the subject is desire. But desire is not as he
> describes it. Desire is not the urge to overcome the otherness in
> the self and to recuperate oneself from the other. Subjectivity
> does not attempt to close in on itself and fortify itself against the
> other. Rather, subjectivity opens itself onto the other, multiplies
> itself but not in the sense of reproducing myself. Desire is the urge
> to move out into otherness. I do not define myself in relation to a
> hostile external world against which I am me by virtue of denying
> everything that I am not. Rather, I am *by virtue* of what I am not.
> I am by virtue of my engagement with what I am not. (FV, 95-96)

Desire as excess shows the importance of being in relationship ("engagement") with the other. This is because desire as excess exhibits a notion of subjectivity that views the subject, not as closed in upon itself, monastically, monadistically, but as always open onto the other in peaceful engagement. This notion of subjectivity I have called "socialization as mutuality."

To see concretely how theories of socialization as mutuality look in the relation between subjects, let us look at the example of the mother-infant relationship. In theories of socialization

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being less smothering, can (but does not necessarily) have a sexual implication that also limits its effectiveness as a metaphor. I will continue to use embrace as a model of the subject's relation to the other; by this metaphor, I do not, however, intend the "encompassing" undertones that this word can have. This is why I will write it as embrace/caress.

[54]For more on the notion of the space between us as that which makes communication and communion possible, as well as the flow of love through that space, see Oliver, *Witnessing*, 191-198. In this passage, Oliver relies heavily on the work of psychologist J.J. Gibson; see also Gibson's *The Perception of the Visual World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950) and "Ecological Optics" *Vision Research* 1 (1961): 253-262.

as mutuality, the mother-infant relationship (indeed, even the mother-fetus relationship) is seen as one of cooperative communion between people in relation (FV, 161). Theorists of socialization as mutuality can claim that "[t]he first bodily relationship between mother and infant sets up rather than threatens the social" (FV, 61) because, emphasizing "the importance of touch and social contact for infant development," they can claim that "from the beginning infants are interested in the world and are not part of an antisocial mother-infant dyad" (FV, 59).[55] Because the mother-infant dyad is thought of as a healthy social relationship, there need be no violent break in order to initiate the social.[56] Applying this conception of the dyad-as-relationship to the mother-fetus relationship, we can come to think of life in the womb, not on the model of a parasite attacking a host, or the fetus holding hostage the mother, but on the model of communication and communion across the space of the placenta.[57] In this way, neither the maternal body nor the mother need to be repudiated by the infant, but rather the relationship between the mother/maternal body and the infant already situates both parties as subjects in relation with an other.

Further, because the mother is a social agent, not merely a role but a person, the chance for mutual relations, between mothers and infants and mothers and fathers - between men and women - is nourished. Viewing the mother-child relationship as the first social relationship

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[55]See also Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon, 1988); Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Cynthia Willet, *Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[56]This is in stark opposition to abjection theories, as chapter 3 will show.

[57]"There are some biologists, however, who see the placenta as a medium of exchange, even communication, between the fetus and the maternal body. Biologist Hélène Rouch, for example, describes the placenta as the medium through which the maternal body and fetus have a relationship . . . She describes the relationship as one of exchange and mutual cooperation rather than a hostile takeover by an alien parasite" (FV, 30). See also Hélène Rouch, "Interview" in Luce Irigaray J*e, Tu, Nous: Toward a Culture of Difference* trans. Alison Martin (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). Also, Oliver provides an extensive analysis of the mother-fetus relationship, both the traditional view and recent, more peaceful reinterpretations, in the first chapter of *Family Values*, "Animal Body Mother."

means that the father does not have to break into the mother-child relationship like an intruder, from the outside. "[W]e need not agree to the idea that human beings must be pulled by their fathers away from maternal bliss into a reality they resent."[58] Instead, the father can be understood as entering into relationship with the infant himself, as a present, embodied person in loving relationship with the child. This relationship can echo that of the mother-child, as well, perhaps, as that of the man-woman (who will become father-mother). In a theory of subject formation that views socialization as mutuality, the child can *grow* into being a mutual partner in social relationships peacefully, rather than doing so at the expense of a violent repudiation of the mother.[59]

Socialization as mutuality, then, provides us with a theory of subject formation that provides for the development of subjectivity by way of peaceful relationships with others. This chance for subjectivity is open to all genders, and allows for the possibility of subject development that does not isolate the self from others, that acknowledges the role of the other in the constitution of the self, and that allows for the relation to the other to be one of peaceful embrace.

III. Deconstruction and the Possibility of "Socialization as Mutuality"

I have sought, so far in this chapter, to establish a notion of intersubjectivity premised on peaceful relationship between subjects, between self and other. I have called this idea "socialization as mutuality." I will now seek to establish a link between "socialization as mutuality" and deconstruction in order to show that deconstruction has a theory of

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[58]Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*, 174. See also Oliver's discussion of this (FV, 59).

[59]Such a theory of subject formation also takes seriously the role of the embrace/caress (touch) in the development of the child. See Stern, *Interpersonal World*; also John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (New York: Shocken Books, 1966) and Bowlby, *Attachment* (London: Penguin Books, 1971). See also Oliver's discussion of this, FV, 58-61.

intersubjectivity characterized by this "socialization as mutuality." This will give us an understanding of deconstruction's starting point in its critique of other theories of intersubjectivity.

That Derrida follows Levinas in his theory of intersubjectivity should surprise no one. In his later work on Levinas, "A Word of Welcome,"[60] Derrida, like Levinas, speaks of "the other in me" (AW, 23).[61] Derrida describes the relationship between subjects, between self and other, as "separation without negation and thus without exclusion" (AW, 54). Not only is Derrida in line with "socialization as mutuality" by offering a vision of intersubjectivity that is in favour of non-exclusive separation, but he also views this relationship as peaceful: "The fundamental fact of the ontological scission into same and other is a *non-allergic* relation of the same with the other" (AW, 91; my emphasis). It is clear that Derrida believes himself to be following Levinas on this score: "These are the final pages of *Totality and Infinity*. They declare peace, peace now" (AW, 91). Derrida, then, explicitly claims himself to be following Levinas in his view of the peaceful relationship between self and other, the peaceful relationship between subjects. Derrida, again following Levinas, also believes that this peaceful relationship between the self and the other is necessary to the subjectivity of the self. In fact, like Levinas, Derrida believes that it is the very relationship with the other that makes the subject what it is (AW, 48). One can see why Derrida says of himself that he "never has any objection" to Levinas.[62]

Derrida, then, has a theory of intersubjectivity that is characterized by peaceful relationship to the other. This relationship constitutes, one could say, the very nature of

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[60]Jacques Derrida, "A Word of Welcome" *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). Hereafter cited in text as AW.
[61]Cf. OTB, 70, for example; see also n. 5 above.
[62]*Altérités*, 74; see Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase" in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 293.

subjectivity itself. In other words, Derrida has "socialization as mutuality" as his operative

theory of intersubjectivity. This manifests itself, in terms of his talk on religion, in regards to the

either/or response of religion. The reader will recall that Derrida claims that the response of

religion is either a connection with the other in which the other is honoured and connected with,

or a violent intersubjectivity that seems to sacrifice (indemnify) the self in relation to the other

(FK, 66). For Derrida, the two outcomes of this response can never be fully separated (FK, 66).

But how can this be, if Derrida operates on a model of "socialization as mutuality?" Haven't we

characterized such a model as being inherently peaceful? How, then, can he believe that violent

indemnification is necessary?

The answer, quite simply, is that he does *not* believe that violent indemnification is

necessary; or rather, that while the violent struggle between self and other might be necessary in

a religion "within the limits of reason alone," there is no reason to think that this violence is

necessary in the structure of religiosity. Derrida is quite adamant that there must be a difference

between the possibility or the structure of "religiosity," on the one hand, and the determinate

contents of specific "religions" on the other. This is because religion is not only "an institution

that is separable, identifiable, circumscribable," (FK, 69), but is, more tellingly, "an instituted

apparatus consisting of dogmas or of articles of faith that are both determinate and *inseparable*

from a given historical socius (Church, clergy, socially legitimated authority, people, shared

idiom, community of the faithful committed to the same faith and sanctioning the same history)"

(FK, 93; emphasis added). Because religion is historically determined, it must, necessarily, be

different from the possibility or structure of "religiosity":[63]

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[63]Derrida here seems to be giving in to the "Heideggerian temptation" (FK, 54) we discussed in chapter 1.

But the gap between the opening of this *possibility* (*as a universal structure*) and the *determinate necessity* of this or that religion will always remain irreducible; and sometimes <it operates> within each religion, between on the one hand that which keeps it closest to its "pure" and proper possibility, and on the other, its own historically determined necessities or authorities . . . [I]t seems impossible to deny the *possibility* in whose name - thanks to which - the derived *necessity* (the authority or determinate belief) would be put into question, suspended, rejected or criticized, even deconstructed. (FK, 93-94)

This gap between the "possibility" and the "determinate necessity" is very important to Derrida. It is in seeking to preserve or honour the possibility that he critiques the determinate necessity. In seeking to preserve the possibility of a peaceful intersubjective response of religion/religiosity, Derrida can critique the violence of current, "determinate" religions. Derrida can think that violence is necessary in religion's intersubjective response without this implying that the possibility of intersubjectivity or religiosity is necessarily infected by this violence.

If this were to be true, however, it would imply that there would be a fundamental violence that affects religion's historical situation. Because we have seen that questions of religion are, for Derrida, necessarily tied to questions of intersubjectivity, this would imply that there is a fundamental violence that affects the theory of intersubjectivity that undergirds religion (that great Latin, Christian, "Enlightened," institution). The violence of this theory of intersubjectivity would be all the more apparent, and all the more atrocious, in light of the non-violent theory of intersubjectivity that we have been discussing under the rubric of "socialization as mutuality."[64] I have sought, in this chapter, to explain the theory of "socialization as

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[64]Indeed, the distinction between *possibility* and *determinate necessity* could provide a way of re-reading Levinas (and so Derrida) that would be able to reconcile the peaceful talk of the "relation without relation" of the self and other with the violent imagery used to describe it: perhaps this discord comes from the difference between a possibility of peaceful intersubjectivity that has so far always been betrayed within historically determined theories of intersubjectivity. In other words, because, historically speaking, the subject formed has been the monadistic subject, there has always been, historically speaking, a betrayal or violence committed against the peaceful "relation

mutuality" because I believe it, or something similar to it, undergirds Derrida's critique of the

"violence" of current theories of intersubjectivity, and also therefore current religious

confessions. "Socialization as mutuality" provides the possibility of peaceful intersubjective

relations that enables us to view other conceptions of intersubjectivity as violent. Let us now turn

our attention to one of those "other conceptions."

without relation" between the self and the other.

Chapter 3: Abjection and Exclusion: Religion's tie to a certain "style" of thinking

In chapter 1 we saw that deconstruction claims religion is at least as closely tied to a search for community and a certain "style" or conception of thinking as it is to God or faith. This is because of the socially-constructed character of religion vis à vis the *possibility* of the religious (religiosity). Having explored deconstruction's intersubjective grounding in chapter 2, let us now turn to the determining of religion in a socio-historical context.[65] On this issue, I have, so far, sought to show that there is a close connection between religion and theories of intersubjectivity in deconstruction. This has suggested that perhaps deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions has at its heart a critique of exclusive theories and practices of intersubjectivity. Undergirding deconstruction's critique, then, must be a theory of intersubjectivity that positions it in such a way as to be able to view other such theories as exclusive. I have called this view of intersubjectivity "socialization as mutuality." It is characterized by a necessary relation between self and other that is both peaceful and mutual (i.e. reinforces the need to distinguish between self and other). After elaborating on what a theory of "socialization as mutuality" would be like, I sought to show that, not only is deconstruction in line with such a view, but deconstruction's view of the distinction between "possibility" and "determinate necessity," which underlies its view of religion, also provides a framework from which to understand deconstruction's critique of the "violence" of exclusionary practices: while the "possibility" of religiosity (and intersubjectivity) is one of peaceful mutuality, the historical "determinate necessity" of the Western, Judeo-Christian society has been characterized by a

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[65] Chapter 4 will examine the relation between deconstruction's intersubjective groundwork, "socialization as mutuality", and the possibility of religiosity.

monadistic subject, and so by a violent renunciation of the peaceful, mutual "relation without relation" between the self and other.

To understand this last claim, it is perhaps necessary to understand the theory of intersubjectivity that undergirds the "monadistic" subject. In elaborating this theory, which I will refer to as "abjection," it will become clear that it is fundamentally at odds with "socialization as mutuality" to such an extent that a person who holds to "socialization as mutuality" would have to view "abjection" as an exclusionary theory. Because, as chapter 2 has shown us, deconstruction does hold to "socialization as mutuality," it must view "abjection" as necessarily exclusive. Given the ties between intersubjectivity and religion highlighted in chapter 1, this would lead deconstruction to view religions (and religious confessions) that are founded on "abjection," or that are conditioned by societies which are themselves founded on "abjection," as necessarily exclusive. If all this is true, it should not surprise us that deconstruction would view "determinate religions" as exclusive: religion, after all, being a Latin word, the "determinate religions" are determined by the Latin (that is Western, Judeo-Christian, patriarchal) society, which itself is determined by an exclusive theory of intersubjectivity. The "determinate religions" are, therefore, necessarily exclusive, not because they have content or because they seek to make a distinction, but because they are founded on and determined by exclusionary theories and practices of intersubjectivity. Deconstruction's critique of determinate religions is, in fact, a critique of the theory of relationality that undergirds those religions.

Examining this in greater detail will reveal how religion is tied to a particular "style" of thinking. Specifically, I will seek to show that there is a tie between the determinate religions and patriarchal or "male" rationality. The tie between these is that both are consequences of the

exclusive theory of intersubjectivity that undergirds Western, Judeo-Christian society. In order to better understand how this theory of intersubjectivity affects religion, rationality, and many other aspects of a society, I will employ the psychoanalytic notion of "acting-out" a repressed trauma metaphorically. In other words, my contention is that, like a subject who has repressed a trauma unconsciously "acts-out" that trauma in other aspects of that subject's life, similarly the exclusion that abjection places at the foundation of Western society directly affects the way in which Western society thinks about, and enacts, many different cultural aspects, including religious confessions and rationality.[66]

To prove this, I will begin by explaining the theory of "abjection" that undergirds the monadistic subject (Section I). Next, I will discuss how "abjection" is a traumatic exclusion caused by fear (Section II). Finally, I will elaborate on how we see this exclusion "acted-out" in patriarchal culture, and especially in religious confessions (Section III).

I. Abjecting the Other

In chapter 2, we saw that deconstruction relies on a notion of "socialization as mutuality" as the "place" from which it critiques other theories of intersubjectivity. "Socialization as mutuality" is the assertion that a peaceful relation to the other is necessary for subjectivity. Implicit in this peaceful relation is the maintenance of the distinction between self and other - neither can be reduced to the other if a peaceful relation is to be maintained. We have also said that, in order for a monadistic subject to be possible, this peaceful relation to the other must be

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[66] I do not, however, intend for Western society, or the determinate religions themselves, to be viewed as subjects that repress or act-out something in the same way that a human subject does. While people undoubtedly experience religion in a psychic way (along with many other ways), I do not intend to reduce all of religion to this psychic aspect, nor suggest that Christianity, for example, is a subject that can have psychic experiences. Rather, I use this metaphor only to suggest that the way that abjection influences many aspects of a society is analogous to the way in which a repressed trauma can affect a subject in many unconscious ways.

repudiated. This repudiation would constitute a betrayal of that primordial relation, and so an exclusion. Theories of subject formation that focus on abjection offer us a view that begins with relation to the other, but then repudiates that relation in order to establish subjectivity. As such, it seems to be precisely the type of theory that would undergird the monadistic subject. It will, therefore, be helpful to examine abjection as a means of understanding deconstruction's critique of the relationality that undergirds religion.

Abjection theories of intersubjectivity acknowledge that the other is a necessary component of subject formation. The relation with the other that is described in these theories, however, is one of violent repudiation, expulsion, and exclusion.[67] As such, the relation with the other that is described in this theory is not that of "socialization as mutuality." Further, such a theory, though it may seem to acknowledge that subjectivity is the result of relations with others, does not, in fact, make relation with the other necessary to subjectivity at all. Rather, relation with the other is necessary in the *formation* of the subject, but not in its role or function as subject. In other words, that which is other is not necessary for the subject to be a subject, but only for the subject to *become* a subject. This will, ultimately, prove problematic in terms of whether there is even a relation to the *other* at any point in an abjection theory.

But perhaps I get ahead of myself. To begin, theories of abjection posit that the subject comes into being by violently opposing itself to that which it is not. "The abject has only one quality of the object - that of being opposed to *I*" (PH, 1). This opposition, though, is not a straightforward "I versus you," or "I versus it." Rather, the opposition, the abject, sets the boundaries of what constitutes me, by drawing me "toward the place where meaning collapses"

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[67] ". . . what is *abject*, . . . the jettisoned object, is radically excluded." Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2. Hereafter cited in text as PH.

(PH, 2). The abject is that which "does not cease challenging its master" (PH, 2) from its (non-)place, "ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (PH, 1). The abject is that which the subject, before it can be properly called a "subject," must reject and push aside, so that it may become a subject. The abject, then, is not only that which the subject cannot have, cannot be, but it is also that which the subject cannot be without: the abject becomes necessary as "my safeguards," "the border of my condition as a living being" (PH, 2, 3). Calling to us from beyond the realm of the possible, the abject strikes us as "uncanny" (in the Freudian sense). But for all its uncanniness and non-possibility, the abject remains hostile, threatening, a threat: "Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us" (PH, 4).

As abject, that which is other to the subject is necessary to subjectivity. However, it is necessary as rejected, pushed away. Expelled. This violent expulsion is necessary to subjectivity, as "*a precondition of narcissism*" (PH, 13) or love of the self. Without abjection, we cannot come to be a self. With abjection, however, we must violently repudiate the natural (the most ready examples of the abject being feces, menstrual blood, the corpse - PH, 2-4) in order to enter the realm of the social, the symbolic order of language. Our "choice," on this view,[68] is between violent sociality or peaceful non-individuation. Really, this is no choice at all, as, not being individuated, there would be no self to be the subject of the choice. By the time the choice has come, it has already been made. And the choice is violent exclusion.

In many ways, this view is not that different from Levinas, and hence from "socialization as mutuality." Levinas also believes that one encounters the other before one becomes a subject; indeed, the subject is the result of the very relation (without relation) to the other. Hence also for

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[68]I am relying heavily on Kristeva's interpretation of abjection. Other theorists of abjection in this manner include: Freud and Lacan, but also Teresa Brennan and Judith Butler. See FV, 97.

Levinas, the relation to the other is not something that the subject can *choose* to do, or not do. The choice has already been made (similarly, in Derrida, "the event to come has already taken place" - FK, 67), and not by the subject. However, the difference (and a big difference it is, as we shall see) is that in abjection, the subject must violently exclude the other, and so betray the primordial relation, while in Levinas one must always seek to honor one's responsibility, that is, one's relation (without relation) to the other.

This exclusion of the other ends up negatively affecting the subject's view of itself. Abjection occurs before the subject has individuated itself. In fact, as stated above, abjection is a necessary part of this individuation - the subject needs the abject to help define the boundaries of the subject. If, however, this individuation/boundary making hasn't yet occurred at the time of abjection, but is occasioned in the abjection, then there is no firm distinction between (what will become) the subject and what is abjected. Therefore, it makes sense to speak of that which is abjected as "part of" the subject and of the subject as being "part of" what is abjected. This is the "ambiguity" of the abject that Kristeva speaks of (PH, 9-10). This ambiguity means that what is abjected is the "subject" itself (in scare quotes because it has not yet become the subject): "But since the [abject] is not an 'other' for 'me' . . . I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*" (PH, 3). By expelling (abjecting) itself, even as it forms itself, the subject is always already constituted by a sense of lack, of what is missing.

This talk of "lack" is prevalent in the Lacanian discourse of psychoanalysis. Without delving too far afield, I believe that some talk of lack is helpful in examining the current problematic. Lacan posits the phallus as that which is put in place to satisfy lack. The feminine,

who has been "castrated" (has no phallus), desires the phallus. The masculine fears castration (loss of phallus) and the resulting return to lack. The masculine, then, relates to the phallus as an external object, rather than as a part of its own anatomy. The phallus, as that which satisfies lack, evidences man's loss of touch with his body. However, no phallus, anatomical or otherwise (as symbol of Law, of the symbolic, of [male] language), can satisfy the lack that the subject feels. What the subject lacks is relationship (with others and itself). Even though the phallus may symbolize the introduction to the social, this "social" is the masculine social, founded on universality, objectivity - and exclusion of relationship.[69]

Closely related to lack in theories of abjection is the idea of desire. Desire is the flip side of lack: one desires always (and only) that which one lacks. Lack evidences a (bad) absence, and desire is that which motivates one to make this absence present. Desire, then, is always for that which one does not possess (to use language of ownership and virility)[70] or for that which one is not (to use language of ontology). As such, it is in opposition to identification (that which one is). "You desire what you are not and you identify with what you are" (FV, 95). In many theories of abjection, identification also comes to characterize the pre-individualized state of the subject. As such, desire and identification, opposed as they are, create a paradoxical (and exclusive) situation: by identifying with what I am, whatever group I am, I desire that which I am not. However, I must abject that which I am not so that I can realize who I am. Therefore, my desire is always for that which I have expelled, and which I am defined in opposition to - I am condemned to desire that which I must negate in order to be myself. I am condemned to desire that which I can never be, and that which I must violently repudiate in order to become a subject.

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[69]The relationship between the masculine social and universality, objectivity, exclusion of relationship, etc., will be explored further in section III below.
    [70]For more on this idea of virility and virile subjectivity, see Oliver, *Family Values*, 119-194.

In order to possess or be that which I desire, I must reduce that which I desire into that which I identify with; I must reduce the other into the same (FV, 95). In this way, true alterity is excluded, as is relationship with something other than myself.[71]

We have seen, then, that "socialization as mutuality" and abjection begin from what seems like similar grounds: necessary relation to the other. However, we can now see the importance of the difference noted above between how each theory reacts to this "relation": while Levinas seeks to honour the other, and so value that primordial relation and set the ground for possible inter-subjective relationships, abjection excludes the other, and so betrays that primordial relation, making any sort of relationship with the other impossible. In terms of deconstruction's view of religion, this difference comes down to the different responses of religion: either one honours and connects with the other, or else one indemnifies the relationship (either by indemnifying the self or the other). Here we see that "socialization as mutuality" and abjection are already functioning in very different ways in terms of deconstruction's critique of religion.

But the difference between "socialization as mutuality" and abjection matters to more than deconstruction. Take, for example, the relationship between a mother and an infant, as discussed in chapter 2 above. Recall that in "socialization as mutuality," viewing the mother-infant relation as communication and communion across space, by way of the caress/embrace, enhanced the ability of social relationships. The mother-infant relationship was viewed as the first social relation, and so the infant could peacefully *grow* into becoming a mutual partner in social relationships, and in the social sphere at large. The difference between the infant and the

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[71]Contrast the notions of lack and desire in abjection theories to the discussion of desire as excess in relation to "socialization as mutuality"; chapter 2, above.

fully socialized adult was one of growth and continuity.

In theories of subject formation founded on abjection, however, the relationship between mother and infant is initially characterized by the infant's identification with the mother. Beginning in the womb, when the two bodies seem to be one, and until differentiation occurs, the infant does not realize it is distinct from the mother. This primordial unity is viewed as a "natural" unity (ostensibly because of the "natural" biology of the womb) that must be interrupted, even violently repudiated, in order for the infant to enter into the realm of the social.[72] This stems from the characterization of the relationship between infant and mother as primordially one of "identification." Thought this way, there can be no choice but violence in order for the infant to individuate and join the social realm. The primordial relation with the (m)other must be renounced, and the (m)other excluded, in order for subjectivity to occur.

By positing the mother and child as one, it becomes necessary for the child to then reject this identification, and by extension the mother, in order for the infant to set itself up as an individual. When gender is factored in, this results in a second step of exclusion: infant sons must identify with the father (who is "like them" biologically), and therefore (remembering the earlier talk of desire/identification and lack/abject) abject or violently expel that which is other (the feminine, the mother). The son is then left lacking, and so desiring, that which it has abjected, not being consciously aware that it has abjected a part of itself with that mother. The son always seeks a mother substitute, not out of love for the mother, but because it seeks that of itself which has been lost in abjecting the mother (ESD, 60). However, because one can only desire what is lacked, this desire can never be fulfilled - any desire for the mother "fulfilled" is

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[72]For a discussion of this, and its relation to male rationality, see Jessica Benjamin, "The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination" in Hester Eisenstein and Mill Jardine, eds. *The Future of Difference* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 41-70. Hereafter cited in text as BL.

actually only the son's reduction of the mother/feminine to something he can identify with, that

is, something like him, i.e. the masculine.[73]

Conversely, the daughter must identify with the mother, who is like her biologically.

Therefore she never adequately separates from the mother. Because the separation resulting from

the abjection of the mother is a necessary step for narcissism (PH, 13), and so for subjectivity,

the daughter, who must identify with what is like her (mother) and so cannot abject the mother,

is never fully able to achieve subjectivity. The daughter is unable to enter the social. Further,

because only the son can enter the social, the "social" is little more than the title given to the

identification of sons with fathers, of men with men, of the masculine with itself. As such, it

remains in an economy of the Same. In a theory of abjection, the "social" leaves no place for two

different ones to meet (ESD, 66-71).

It is not only the infants but also the parents who are excluded in a theory of abjection.

By being identified with the infant as a "natural" unity, the mother is excluded from any sort of

individuated subjectivity of her own. She is reduced to the role that she plays, the role of mother.

Even here, she is not individuated, as the role of mother, qua mother, does not exist - rather, she

exists only as part of the unity mother/infant. As such, she is condemned to being violently

repudiated (by the son) or guilty (before the daughter of not allowing the daughter to

individuate). Further, the father is excluded from any type of relationship with the infant

whatsoever. Where is the father in the mother/infant unity? The father is that which breaks up

this unity, calling the son into the social. But what about the daughter who cannot enter the

social? And what about before the son abjects the mother? The father is not "father" at all,

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[73]This is what Irigaray means with her talk of woman as the "other of the same" in *Ethics of Sexual Difference.*

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because he has no relation to his infant children.

Theories of abjection, then, make violence a necessary part of subjectivity and/or selfhood. To be a subject, there must be violent detachment and expulsion of that which is other to the self (e.g. the mother). By expelling that which is other, however, the self is left alone, self-same, self-identical. Ironically, this theory of subject formation that makes relation with the other necessary to subjectivity is left with a subject that is alone, monadistic,[74] in relation to others, but incapable of true relationship. The subject formed by abjection remains the monadistic and exclusive subject of patriarchy.

II. Abjection as Exclusion

In Section I, I sought to elaborate on the abjection theory of intersubjectivity that undergirds the patriarchal culture of the latinized, Chrisitianized West (and, increasingly, of the entire *globalatinized* world - FK, 67). Now, I will seek to show that abjecting the other functions similarly to a "traumatic" exclusion at the heart of patriarchal culture that is repressed, and subsequently "acted-out" in many different aspects of that culture, including religion and religious confessions.

Before I do so, however, I should take a moment to explain the psychoanalytic metaphor I will be employing in this chapter. The idea to employ this metaphor comes from deconstruction's own use of psychoanalytic metaphors in its talk of religion.[75] Specifically, Caputo refers to the "extremism" or violence of the exclusive religions as "a return of the repressed, to speak psychoanalytically" (OR, 107), or again "the extremism and violence to which [fundamentalism] is prone are symptomatic expressions of this repression" (OR,108). At

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[74]In the phenomenological sense of monad as "solitude" or "ownness." Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* trans. David Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 68. See also FV, 137.

[75]I have discussed this in greater detail in Chapter 1.

the core of this exclusionary violence, Caputo maintains, there lies a repressed fear (OR, 124).

As Caputo has already called to mind the psychoanalytic discourse, I thought it fit to apply

psychoanalytic tools and terminology to a discussion of deconstruction's critique of exclusive

religious confessions. I will especially be focusing on the issue of repression and its

consequences. Because repression is never fully successful, as Freud made us all aware, there are

different ways of "dealing" with the repressed: "acting-out" (repeating) or "working-through." In

"acting-out," Freud claims "[t]he patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten or

repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it,

without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it."[76] This acting-out is, I will claim in Section

III, helpful in understanding the way that the exclusion of abjection finds its way into other

aspects of patriarchal culture, including religion.

Contrasted with this "acting-out" is "working-through," which is also a repetition, but

one that, through interpretation, helps the subject free itself from repetition mechanisms.[77] The

interpretation necessary for "working-through" has a transformative function that allows the

subject to "reconfigure the ways in which [it] thinks of [itself] and others."[78] Through this

reconfiguration, interpretation can help the subject to re-evaluate that which it has repressed, and

understand it in a new way that is less harmful to itself and to others. In other (less technical)

words, while acting-out is an (unhealthy) defense mechanism, working-through helps one deal

with the problem in a healthy way.

It seems to me that deconstruction sees in psychoanalysis a way of re-interpreting the

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[76]Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" (1914) in *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud: Standard Edition* (London: Hogarth), 150. See discussion of this in Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing*, 76 ff.
[77]Oliver, *Witnessing*, 77, 218.
78 *Ibid.*, 76.

repressed trauma at the heart of exclusive religions. Derrida claims that "psychoanalytic knowledge can in turn uproot and reawaken faith by opening itself to a new space of testimoniality, to a new instance of attestation" (FK, 90). It is precisely through the transformative re-interpretation of "working-through" that such an "uprooting" or "reawakening" can take place.

In thinking of exclusive religious confessions as a "return [repetition] of the repressed," deconstruction seems to suggest that exclusive religious confessions repeat some "original trauma" that necessitated the repression in the first place. What is this original trauma? Well, if the repetition of this trauma, its "acting-out," is an act of exclusion, then the thing being repeated, the original trauma, is itself an act of (violent) exclusion. Fundamentalists, Caputo seems to be claiming, act-out violently because they are unconsciously repeating an original act of exclusionary violence that they were traumatized by, though they no longer remember this act.

Abjection, the theory of intersubjectivity that undergirds the monadistic subject of the patriarchal culture, is characterized, we have shown above, by precisely this type of exclusion. According to abjection theory, every subject has become a subject by way of a violent exclusion (repudiation) of the (m)other with whom it was primordially in relation. Every subject, then, has at its core an exclusion of the other. Further, because the primordial relation to the other is one of peace and not of violence, such an exclusion constitutes a betrayal of that relation. At the core of every subject, then, is also a betrayal - of the other, to whom the subject was in peaceful relation, and of itself, of the peaceful, mutual relationality that characterizes the self in relation to the other. Kelly Oliver makes very clear the connection between abjection and necessary violence, exclusion, mistrust, etc.:

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On the level of individual identification, if self-identity is formed by rejecting what is different, in the first instance, as the story goes, the infant rejects its mother. If abjection of the mother or maternal body is described as a normal or natural part of child development, then one consequence is that without some antidote to this abjection, all of our images of mothers and maternal bodies are at some level abject because we all necessarily rejected our own mothers in order to become individuals. On the level of social identification, if group identity is formed by rejecting what is different, then war, hatred, and oppression are inevitable and unavoidable parts of social development.

. . . If abjection is necessary to self-identity, then peace cooperation, liberation, and equality become impossible dreams. If my ability to individuate *necessitates* that I hate and exclude you because you are different, then protecting the minimum conditions for my individuation, must threaten the minimum conditions for your own individuation. My argument is that the notion of identity based on abjection describes individuals as inherently antagonistic in the essence of their individuality and self-identity. Theories that normalize abjection leave us stuck at the level of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, where a fight to the death is inevitable. (FV, 99-100)

If abjection represents a traumatic act of exclusion that affects every subject at its core, however, why would people, situated in a space of peaceful mutuality, "socialization as mutuality," move away from that peaceful relation towards one of exclusion and abjection? How did we get from "socialization as mutuality" to abjection? For deconstruction, the answer seems to be fear (OR, 124). I would support this, but suggest that, rather than it being uncertainty that the subject is afraid of (as Caputo seems to suggest), it is, in fact, being rejected, pushed away, not loved, that the subject is afraid of. While in peaceful relation, the subject is afraid that the other will reject her, not love her, decide to love another other instead of the subject.

This primordial fear lies at the heart of many religions' foundational stories. As we are dealing here largely with the Judeo-Christian tradition, let us turn to that narrative to look for an example of this. One finds such an example in the story of the Fall. Before the Fall, everything is

good. This is shown, not by humanity's obedience to God, but by humanity's close relationship with God (people walk with God in the Garden, in peaceful and personal relationship) and each other. Hence, at the end of the second chapter of Genesis, just before the Fall narrative begins and interrupts the good Creation, we are told that "a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:24-25).[79] "Naked" here implies not only physical nudity, but also the nakedness of emotional vulnerability - this is why it follows immediately on the heels of a description of man and woman coming together in peaceful relationship. Woman, in fact, is God's answer to man's search for a helper, and man's response to this gift from God is the first hymn in the Bible: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23).

Shortly after this hymn is sung, God again comes to walk with the man and the woman. Having eaten of the apple, the man and the woman are now ashamed of their nudity and vulnerability and attempt to hide it: they hide their physical nudity under loincloths of leaves (Gen 3:7), and their emotional vulnerability they hide by removing themselves from the close walk with God, for example by purposefully avoiding God when God approaches (3:8). Not being able to find the man and woman, God is saddened, and cries out for them: "Where are you?" (3:9). God wishes for the man and woman to reveal themselves to God, to not hide from their relationship. But the man is afraid of his vulnerability: "'I heard the sound of you [God] in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself'" (3:10). Now, contrast the peaceful and joyous hymn of mutual relationship ("bone of my bones") with humanity's response to God when God asks about what they've done:

79All biblical citations, unless otherwise noted, come from the New Revised Standard Version.

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"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." (Gen. 3:11-13)

What is important here is, first, Adam's response: no longer is woman "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;" no, now the woman becomes a scapegoat to be blamed for Adam's shame - "it was her - her fault, not mine, her fault." Here, we see the first sin: exclusion. Adam excludes Eve from right relationship with God and with himself, by distancing himself from her and blaming her for the wrong. God then gives humanity a chance to make up for this exclusion by turning to Eve to ask her what happened. Alas, Eve, too, sins by excluding - this time, excluding nature (the serpent) from right relationship with God and with humanity. The original sin, then, is not disobedience but exclusion, not eating of the Tree of Knowledge, but putting distance and walls between oneself and others rather than turning to each other for comfort and support in times of trouble. This original sin was caused by fear: afraid that God would no longer love him, Adam seeks to protect himself by blaming Eve - "please don't be angry with me, God. Love me, love me. Be angry at the woman. She did it! Be angry with her, but continue to love me!" Eve, in turn, seeks to remain in God's love by getting God to be angry at nature: "It was the snake's fault. Please, be angry with the snake, but continue to love me, God!"

But God is not angry, and God does continue to love. Unfortunately, humanity has made a decision, and there are certain consequences that result from that decision. God's "curse" in Gen. 3:14-19 gives a description of these consequences. Having chosen to separate themselves from right relationship with other humans and nature, God points out that this will mean fractious relationships between humanity and creation, as well as between man and woman, and

parent and child. God does not angrily say, "Because you have disobeyed me, I will punish you with the following curses." Rather, God, tears streaming down God's face, quietly sobs: "Why, why did you choose to treat each other this way? Don't you see what this will mean? Don't you see you will end up feeling isolated and at odds with each other? Why?" Humanity has chosen, and what humanity has chosen is exclusion. But God remains a God of love, and so, to protect humanity from an eternity of living in this exclusionary and broken environment, God sorrowfully sends the man and the woman away from that which could give them eternal life: "'. . . and now, [man] might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' - therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden" (Gen 3:22-23). God sends humanity out of the Garden, not in anger as a punishment, but in sorrow to protect humanity from having to live eternally with the consequences of its choice of exclusion.

We can see, then, that the foundational story of the Judeo-Christian culture illustrates what we have been discussing here as the "original trauma;" humanity begins in peaceful relationship, but fear causes the man and woman to blame each other, and so put distance between each other, in an effort to not fall out of God's favour. Fear of being no longer loved causes them to exclude each other, and begins a process that leads to institutionalized, structural exclusion. This is similar to abjection, in which humanity begins in peaceful relation, but repudiates this relation out of fear (of not becoming an individual). Out of this repudiation comes exclusion that is enacted on an institutional and structural level.

III. The Cultural "Acting-Out" of Exclusion

We have already seen that abjection undergirds the patriarchal culture and its monadistic subject. We have also seen how the exclusion inherent in abjection functions similarly to an

"original trauma," caused by fear. Let us now look at how the repression of this trauma has led to the emergence of a culture that is founded on exclusion, and unconsciously "acts-out" this exclusion in many different ways, including in exclusive religious confessions.

We ended the last section by noting that the Fall narrative in the Judeo-Christian culture has led to an institutionalized, structural exclusion. This happened largely by way of repression. The Judeo-Christian culture has repressed the memory of the man and the woman's acts of exclusion. Repressing these acts, the culture needed a new interpretation to make sense of the Fall narrative. In this "new" interpretation (which is now the "old," that is, traditional, interpretation), the primordial peaceful and mutual relation between man and woman and between humanity and God is forgotten, and replaced with an hierarchical vision that features a dominant (God; man) and a subservient (humanity; woman) party. In this interpretation, the "relation" between subservient and dominant is one of obedience, and it is the betrayal of this obedience that occasions the first sin. Hence, the first sin is thought of as humanity's disobedience of God by eating the apple, and the woman's disobedience of the man by leading him into sin.

The story of how this plays out is by now well-known: snake tempts woman, woman gives in to temptation, then proceeds to tempt man, who also gives in to temptation. Sin enters the world. God is angry, and His[80] punishment for sinful humanity is banishment from His presence and from the paradisaical Garden. But this is not all of the punishment. Not only is humanity excluded from God's presence and from paradise, but God saddles the players in this now sin-full scene with other punishments as well: the deceitful serpent is excluded from right

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[80]I purposefully leave the pronoun for God in the masculine here as this interpretation of the story, as I will show, leads to a conception of a God who is male.

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relationship with other animals ("cursed are you among all animals" - Genesis 3:14) and from

peaceful relationship with humanity ("I will put enmity between you and the woman, between

your offspring and hers" - Gen.3:15); the woman is excluded from right relationship with her

body and her children ("I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring

forth children" - Gen 3:16) and with the man ("your desire shall be for your husband, and he

shall rule over you"- Gen 3:16); and the man is excluded from right relationship with the natural

world ("cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you" - Gen 3:17-18) and from God ("you are dust" -

Gen 3:19, thereby downplaying the role of God's breath in humanity, cf. Gen 2:7). Because of its

own sinfulness (thought of as disobedience), humanity finds itself excluded from the presence of

God, from itself, and from the natural world.

According to the traditional view, this primordial exclusion occasions the beginning of

human history. From its beginning, then, (Judeo-Christian) humanity has been founded (perhaps,

has re-founded itself?) upon this traumatic event of a divinely-ordained exclusion and

banishment. This exclusion, in turn, has found its way into even the most basic of human

relations - the family. From birth, humanity finds itself at odds with itself: child with mother,

wife with husband, husband with the work of his hands.[81] The entirety of each individual

human's existence is affected by the Fall and the Curse.

But a funny thing happened on the way from the Garden: humanity forgot the role that

the rejection of peaceful relationality played in the Genesis 3 story. Having downplayed this

primordial peaceful and mutual relationality in favour of hierarchical notions of dominance and

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[81] It is interesting, from a feminist point of view, to note that the punishment meted out does not mention the man as being in relation to any other human being, but only as being in relation to his work, while the woman is depicted solely in terms of relations to other people - children and husband.

disobedience, the Judeo-Christian tradition turned the consequences of humanity's choice of exclusion into Divine prescriptions. The most damaging consequence of this "forgetting," this repression, has been in the area of subject formation. By taking the Genesis 3 chapter as pseudo-normative, especially for the area of gender relations, religious people have normalized the exclusionary trauma and made exclusion ubiquitous by way of theories of intersubjectivity founded on abjection. The violent acting-out of exclusive religious confessions that deconstruction critiques is but a reification of this more deeply ingrained acting-out of the trauma of exclusion through exclusive practices of intersubjectivity.

Beginning with God's "punishment" to Eve that "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16), the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Western world has created a patriarchal system that not only oppresses women (which it most definitely does), but also disadvantages all people, causing them to conceive of themselves as individuals and alone.[82] We have already seen how different conceptions of intersubjectivity and subject formation shape interpretations of how the family ought to operate. In looking at abjection theories, we noted how such theories adversely shape the relation between parents and children, in effect making these, and all relationships with an other, impossible. Luce Irigaray, speaking of the annulment of the relationship between parent and child as two subjects, states:

> This annulment of my attention towards the parental other, in particular
> towards the mother, and of her intention towards me, makes this Sartrian
> consciousness - and perhaps the consciousness of the whole of Western
> philosophy? - into a consciousness which is neither ethical nor true [...]
> Since the first relationship between two consciousnesses has been erased,

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[82]Luce Irigaray does an excellent job of explaining how patriarchy is damaging to both sexes in *Ethics of Sexual Difference* and in *to be two*.

each one has been transformed into a zombie, into a neutral individual, into an abstract creature. The concrete encounter with the other, entering into carnal presence with him, has become impossible. We are no longer two, but subjugated, both of us, to an abstract order which divides us into one+one+... parts of a community. We are, in a certain sense, shareholders of an abstract consciousness. Even supposing that everyone possesses the same number of shares of this capital of consciousness, the fact remains that the subject is already an automaton and an imperialist despot: 'Any sort of other is too much for him', as Sartre writes. He wants to be alone in the world, and a relationship with the other corresponds to 'hell'.[83]

By following a particular re-interpretation of the Fall narrative by conceiving of the relationship between mother and child as violent (painful), Judeo-Christian culture has come to conceive of people as persons, individuals (almost monads), who must, at best, try to overcome their primordial individuality to come into contact with other people, and, at worst, view relationship with the other as hell.[84] The repression of humanity's original acts of exclusion in the Garden, the reinterpretation of the story towards a hierarchical view of sin-as-disobedience, and the resulting (un-interpreted) repetition of this exclusion in conceptions of the mother-child relationship have led to a patriarchal system that leaves all people excluded from each other, unconnected and alone (FV, 232).

The patriarchal system put in play by the unconscious acting-out of exclusion gives rise, I will argue, to a particular type of rationality that finds expression in a pathologically exclusive use of language, evidenced by the emphasis on the proposition. Religious confessions find themselves situated in this pathological use of language.[85] Therefore, religious confessions over-

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[83]Irigaray, *two be two*, 31-32.

[84]This view of the other as hell is most famously put forward in Sartre's play, *Huis Clos* (France: Librairie Gallimard, 1945); translated as "No Exit" (New York: Vintage Books, 1955). Irigaray states: "If the relationship with the other resembles hell, the cause could be precisely this abstract consciousness which dominates, alienates and erases this child in us." Luce Irigaray, *to be two*, 32.

85 Derrida himself emphasizes the relation between religion and language when he writes that "if, today, the 'question of religion' actually appears in a new and different light, . . . then what is at stake is language, certainly

emphasize the proposition and, by necessity, are pathologically exclusionary.

Jessica Benjamin examines the relation between the formation of male identity and the patriarchal system (BL, 45). The answer she discovers is male rationality: "the boy's earliest experience of becoming an individual has paved the way for a thought which is 'premised on a radical dichotomy between subject and object.' This is the dichotomy which, in science and in other rational creations, denies the mutual recognition of subjects"[86] (BL, 45). Benjamin's claim is that the boy, brought up to think of himself as unable to be or to become like his mother, the primary care-giver and nurturer, but as only able to "have her," learns very early on to objectify the mother by (more or less violently) repudiating her. "This repudiation of the mother by men has also meant that she is not recognized as an independent person, another subject, but as something Other: as nature, as an instrument or object" (BL, 44). It is this early experience of repudiation that Benjamin claims "paves the way" for a thought premised on the dichotomy between subject and object. It is this dichotomy that fuels male rationality: "The rational mind, then, is derived from a one-sided experience of differentiation - an experience which closes out the reality of the other" (BL, 45-46).

Male rationality,[87] in turn, is linked with a particular (male) linguistic syntax that repeats this "closing out" (exclusion) of the reality of the other. Irigaray, examining the different ways in which men and women use language, claims that women "communicate more and that men use language in order to denote reality or to produce and establish their truths rather than to

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- and more precisely the idiom, literality, writing, that forms the element of all revelation and of all *belief,* an element that ultimately is irreducible and untranslatable - but an idiom that above all is inseparable from the social nexus. . . In these times, language and nation form the historical body of all religious passion" (FK, 44).

[86] The quote within this text comes from Evelyn Fox Keller, "Gender and Science," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* 1:3 (1978), 409-443; 424.

87 Derrida refers to this "male rationality" as "the tele-techno-capitalistico-scientific fiduciarity, in all of its mediatic and globalizing dimensions" (FK, 81).

communicate (immediately or mediately) among themselves."[88] This is because "men's

teleology implies rather an abandonment of immediate communication - of intersubjectivity and

dialogue - in order to set off in quest of an *oeuvre* (in which they usually alienate themselves)

and, among other things, a spiritual journey compelled by a transcendence appropriate to their

ego."[89] The subject-object duality of male rationality finds its linguistic correlate, then, in a use

of language that "declares the reality or truth of things and transmits information" rather than

facilitating and maintaining communication - "And it is not just the lexicon we are talking about,

but a syntax."[90]

Part of this male syntax is the use of the proposition as the main form of linguistic

expression.[91] The proposition (by which I mean something in the form of "S is p") connects

objectification (already shown to be part of "male" rationality) with objectivity and

universality.[92] By de-emphasizing the relations that a subject has with what it is talking about,

turning other people and the environment into "things," objectification paves the way for

forgetting the subject's place in those relations.[93] Viewing the other subject as an object, the

speaking subject loses its sense of relation to that other subject, and therefore loses touch with its

own point of view. Losing this point of view, it becomes easy to think of oneself as merely

speaking of what "just is" - objectivity. This in turn causes one also to lose the "object's"

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[88] Luce Irigaray, *i love to you*, 101. For a more detailed account of the differences in language use between men and women, see chapters 6 and 7 of *i love to you*, pg. 69-95. See also Irigaray, *Sexes and Genres through Languages: Elements of Sexual Communication* trans. Gail Schwab (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

[89] *Ibid.*, 100.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] This is part of what Irigaray refers to as the phallomorphic sexual metaphoricity of western rationality; cf. Mary Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 59.

[92] It is because of this emphasis on abstraction, universality and objectification that I link patriarchal culture (later, phallomorphic discourse) with what Derrida terms "tele-technological or technoscientific" rationality; see FK,61-62; 57.

[93] "This *forgetting* is fundamental to the virile subject's fantasy of control." Oliver, *Family Values*, 132.

situatedness, thereby leading to claims of universality.[94] What becomes important, in the use of

language that follows from objectification, is not relationship, but that which can be evaluated in

terms of objectivity and universality: truth.

The proposition finds its place in all of this by being the "container" of truth.[95] The

proposition is something that can be true.[96] Hence, it has a privileged place in any syntactical

system that emphasizes truth. This can be problematic when the proposition (and truthfulness)

become the overwhelming dictator of what counts as valid (or reasonable, or good, etc...), often

at the expense of at least two aspects of relationality: action and affect.[97] Barry Allen does an

excellent job in his *Knowledge and Civilization* of tracing the way in which Western philosophy

has become obsessed with this notion of truth. It manifests itself in what he terms the

"propositional bias," which is the bias that truth is most important to language, and therefore

propositions, as things which can be true, become the most important tool in a linguistic syntax.

Propositions, in short, become the most effective, the "best," example of language (and of

knowledge).

Allen does not hesitate to show that Western thought conceived on the basis of this

"propositional bias" is the result of what we have here been calling male rationality. Having tied

Western philosophy to an "epistemological bias," the main tenet of which is the "propositional

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[94]Mary Whitford also explores the connection between male rationality and universality; cf. Whitford, *Luce Irigaray*, 56.

[95] "Masculinity signifies rationality, control, and containment" - FV, 131. For more on the connection between male ("virile") subjectivity and the notion of "containment," see Oliver's discussion of this in *Family Values*, 130 ff.

[96]Barry Allen gives this as a "functional definition" of a proposition; Barry Allen, *Knowledge and Civilization* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 2004), 14.

[97] Truth (or the doxic, given the traditional connection between truth and belief [Allen, 18 ff.]) has long been privileged over action (praxis) and affect (aesthesis), as Allen shows in *Knowledge and Civilization*. Christopher Lasch has hinted at some possible religious consequences of this in his *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988).

bias," Allen goes on to say that epistemology is gendered and biased, despite its desperate claims to the contrary.[98] In fact, Allen articulates this in a way that hearkens back to the talk of psychoanalysis and pathology that we are discussing here: "The epistemological project, with its insistence on certainty, universality, purity, and totality, may be no more than an expression of male pathologies: separation anxiety, obsession with control, fear of contamination."[99] The Western way of thinking (rationality) is intimately tied to the proposition, and evidences a (pathological) male way of being in the world.[100] This pathological way of being in the world is characterized by a loss of the relationality that characterizes "socialization as mutuality." This loss manifests itself in two distinct, but inter-connected ways: the loss of embodiment, and the loss of "with-ing."[101] Both of these evidence, ultimately, the relationality that has been lost in abjection theories of intersubjectivity.

We have already discussed how, in abjection theories, the maternal body, indeed, the feminine in general, has been excluded from the social realm of discourse. We have also briefly touched on the exclusion of the male body from discourse through the "absent father" who has no relationship with his children. I would like now to discuss further the exclusion of embodiment (both male and female) from the realm of discourse. This exclusion finds itself acted-out in Western, Judeo-Christian culture by way of a male linguistic syntax. I will argue that this exclusion of embodiment manifests itself in two ways: by omission and by commission.

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[98] Allen, *Knowledge and Civilization,* 41 ff.

[99] *Ibid.,* 41-42. Cf. "separation anxiety" with Oliver's discussion of the mother-child relationship in *Family Values,* and "fear of contamination" with Benjamin's talk of" Differentiation and Male Rationality" in "Bonds of Love."

[100] Allen's use of the term "pathologies" suggests, in line with this paper, that this "male" way of being in the world is not a healthy one, and that a more healthy way of being in the world might be possible, if the "pathology" (in our case, the "acting-out") can be treated.

[101] For more on the idea of "with-ing," consult the work of James H. Olthuis, especially his *The Beautiful Risk: A New Psychology of Loving and Being Loved* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

First, the physical body is omitted from discourse, and secondly, the visible maleness of the body (i.e. the phallus) is abstracted, universalized, and symbolized into discourse in formative ways.

The absence of the body from discourse and linguistic practices is difficult to discuss, precisely because the body, as that which is abjected from discourse (FV, 131), is therefore not able to be discussed within that discourse. This lesson is perhaps nowhere more evident than in Derrida's own work, especially "Circumfession."[102] In "Circumfession," Derrida tries to challenge an attempt made by a friend (Geoffrey Bennington) to systematize Derrida's work, to make of it, as it were, an interactive computer program "which, in spite of its difficulty, would in principle be accessible to any user."[103] "Circumfession," then, is meant to be something "escaping the proposed systematization, surprising it."[104] Derrida attempts to escape this systematization by writing precisely what cannot be written - the warm blood of the living body (FV, 69). The result of this attempt is what Derrida himself describes (and I echo this description!) as an "idiomatic, unbroachable, unreadable, uncircumcised piece of writing" (Cir, 194). The fact that the piece is "uncircumcised" is extremely important. It evidences one of the main foci of "Circumfession": circumcision. The blood shed at circumcision, along with the blood from his dying mother's bed sores, constitute the blood of the living body that Derrida is trying to write.[105] Derrida dreams of a writing that would be like bleeding, merely allowing oneself to flow out, on to the page, without having to be determined, inscribed, chosen, filtered,

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102 Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession" in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Hereafter cited in text as "Cir". In "Confessing the Other: Excess, Violence, and Voyeurism" (unpublished), I have examined the ways in which "Circumfession" might prove helpful conceiving of a new way of confessing.

103 Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, 1.

104 *Ibid.*

105Circumcision also bears an obvious reference to the penis, which will come up again later in regards to the phallus as part of the male linguistic syntax.

etc.(Cir, 12). But this is not the way writing works now. Hence, the importance of circumcision:

"The text is the mark of circumcision, the skin cut from the body, from the sex - skin without

blood" (FV, 75).

Derrida's attempts to challenge the patriarchal culture, and the abjection theory that

undergirds it, are revealed in "Circumfession" in part by the way in which Derrida deals with his

own circumcision. Derrida tells of his circumcision, not as a symbolic entrance into the covenant

people, nor as a sign of acceptance into the social/cultural, but as a personal story about "Elie,"

the Jewish name that his mom called him as a child. In trying to escape Bennington's

systematization (and, analogously, the systematization of the male linguistic syntax), Derrida

turns, not to another theory, but to the radical uniqueness (ipseity) of every person; he turns, not

to Derrida, the scholar, but to "Jackie" the person.[106] To himself, his body and his blood:

> I call it circumcision, see the blood but also what comes, cauterization,
> coagulation or not, strictly contain the outpouring of circumcision, one
> circumcision, *mine, the only one*, rather than circumnavigation or circum-
> ference, although the unforgettable circumcision has carried me to the place I had
> to go to, and circumfession if I want to say and do something of an avowal
> *without truth* turning around itself, an avowal without "hymn" (hymnology) and
> without "virtue" (aretalogy), *without managing to close itself on its possibility*,
> unsealing abandoning the circle open, wandering on the periphery, taking the
> pulse of an encircling phrase, the pulsion of the paragraph *which never
> circumpletes itself, as long as the blood,* what I call thus and thus call, *continues
> its venue in its vein.* (Cir, 14-15; my emphasis)

Here we see Derrida returning the emphasis to the blood, flowing blood. Blood, the living body,

is that which challenges the paragraph (proposition, writing, male syntax), keeping it always

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106 This would seem to be in line with Derrida's view of the "abstract messianicity" that undergirds the experience of faith at the heart of testimony. Derrida claims that this "abstract messianicity," which he also calls "this justice," "alone allows the hope, beyond all messianisms, of a universalizable culture of singularities" (FK, 56). Something like this "universalizable culture of singularities" seems to be a good place to begin if one were to look for a religious "goal" in Derrida.

open, never completed, circumpleted, "as long as the blood . . . continues its venue in its vein."[107]

This is one reason why Derrida, that great proponent of undecidability and the undetermined

nature of all language systems, can say that circumcision is "all I've ever talked about:"

> Circumcision, that's all I've ever talked about, consider the discourse on the limit, margins, marks, marches, etc., the closure, the ring (alliance and gift), the sacrifice, the writing of the body, the *pharmakos* excluded or cut off, the cutting/sewing of *Glas*, the blow and the sewing back up, whence the hypothesis according to which it's that, circumcision, that, without knowing it, never talking about it or talking about it in passing, as though it were an example, that I was always speaking or having spoken, unless, another hypothesis, circumcision itself were merely an example of the thing I was talking about (Cir, 70-71).

If circumcision is all Derrida has ever talked about, could that be because, in his attempts to open

up the system to that which is undetermined in it, he found the living body as the prime example

of that which leaves linguistic systems open? Is it because the body, abjected from language in

the patriarchal syntax, haunts[108] language as that which has been excluded, but remains, present

in its absence? Does circumcision remain a primal example of the lack of embodiment in

language because it points, not only to the loss of blood and the living body, but also to the

symbolization (and related abstraction) of the penis, rendering it no longer part of the (male)

body, but an abstracted sign of the Law?

Ironically, the loss of embodiment in language manifests itself in the overemphasis on the

penis in linguistic discourse. Irigaray refers to this as the phallomorphic sexual metaphoricity of

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107 The word "venue" here calls to mind the French verb *venir* ("to come"), which has a large role in Derrida's work on the messianic. Derrida challenges religious confessions by seeking to use the notion of the coming Messiah, always yet to come, to keep open "determinate messianisms." This is invoked in the imperative form of *venir, Viens!* ("Come!"). Not only does the "venue" of the blood call this to mind, but the word "vein," the very "venue" of the blood, is in the plural a transliteration of the imperative/exhortation *Viens*. This further highlights how the blood keeps open the structures of language.

108 Cf. Derrida's "hauntology" of specters, ghosts, and *revenants* in Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Caputo's explanation/appropriation of this idea in John D. Caputo, *Prayers and Tears,* 118 ff, where he describes the Derridean *revenants* as "a revisitation of the so-called living present by the spirits of the past" (121).

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western rationality.[109] This phallomorphism is characterized by the principles of identity, non-contradiction, and binarism. As Mary Whitford describes it, "[a]ll these principles are based upon the possibility of individuating, or distinguishing one thing from another, upon the belief in the necessity of stable forms. An equation is made between the (symbolic) phallus, stable form, identity, and individuation."[110] The penis becomes the symbol for masculinity. Because embodiment is denied, however, in abjection theories that call for a repudiation of the natural/mother in order to enter the realm of the social/linguistic/Father (patriarchal syntax), the penis (as sign of male embodiment) is repressed, and ends up being unconsciously repeated/acted-out via the linguistic phallus. Identity, individuality, and stability become part of the male syntax as an unconscious avowal of the excluded body. That this body is thought of as virility and stability, and not as weakness or limpness, also shows the exclusion of embodiment in discourse: first, because the penis of the male body is more often limp and weak than it is virile and stable (indeed, its very ability to change sizes and the movement of the testicles suggest something quite other than stability); second, because the phallus must be thought of as strong so that "virile" male subjectivity can protect itself against its (repressed) fears of being excluded, unloved - the hope being that strength will either earn love, or, if not, will be able to coerce love. The subject formed by abjection needs a myth of individual strength so that it can stand strong against that which is other to it, which it views as hostile and fearful (FV, 132-133), and earn love.[111]

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109 Cf. Irigaray, *This Sex Which is not One* trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 26. Mary Whitford elaborates on this in her excellent work on Irigaray, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine;* see especially pg. 59 ff.

110 Whitford, *Luce Irigaray*, 59.

111 For more on how I am employing the term "love," see the work of James H. Olthuis, especially *The Beautiful Risk.*

We can see, then, that the patriarchal syntax is based upon the phallus: stable,

individualized, virile.[112] The phallus, however, is only marginally connected to the embodied

male penis - it is an abstraction of the penis, reducing the physicality of an embodied penis to a

universal concept that ignores bodily singularity and relationality (ESD, 61).[113] As such, the

"phallomorphic" or "phallocentric" discourse of Western rationality symbolizes the abjection of

the body that grows from abjection theories of subject formation and intersubjectivity.

Phallomorphic discourse, therefore, necessarily maintains the pathological exclusion that

characterizes those theories of abjection.

The abjection of the body from patriarchal (phallomorphic) discourse is a symptom of a

deeper, but not unrelated, exclusion: the exclusion of "with-ing." The pathological (male) way of

being in the world,[114] metonymized in the proposition, is at its core exclusionary. Martin

Heidegger, in describing the statement/proposition (*Aussage*), says: "This levelling [sic] down of

the primordial 'as' of circumspect interpretation to the as of the determination of objective

presence is the speciality of the statement."[115] Bearing in mind that the "primordial 'as' of

circumspect interpretation" can also be referred to as the "with-which," and that the "as of the

determination of objective presence" can also be referred to as the "about-which," the preceding

statement can be simplified to: "This levelling down of the 'with-which' to the 'about-which' is

the speciality of the statement." When applied to the proposition,[116] this would seem to suggest

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112 See Oliver's discussion of "virile subjectivity" in *Family Values*, 120-162.

113 For more on the relational aspect of the body/embodiment, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

[114]Mary Whitford echoes my claim here that (male) rationality is but one part of a pathological culture: "rationality as we know it is implicated in a whole cultural pathology." Whitford, *Luce Irigaray*, 58.

[115]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 148; Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Seventh Edition (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), 158.

[116]I am aware of the dangers of playing fast and loose with Heidegger. However, I feel that the link between statement (*Aussage*) and proposition is valid. I see no compelling reasons to differentiate between *Aussage*

that the speciality of the proposition is this "leveling down,"[117] that is, the movement from the "with" to the "about." This movement, I believe, constitutes a loss - a loss of the relationship between the speaker and that which is spoken about. The "subject-hood" (or sociality) of that which is spoken about, its ability to enter into a real, non-objectified relationship with the speaker, is lost in this movement from the "with" to the "about" - instead of noticing oneself as "with" that which is spoken about, the speaker believes himself to be distanced from that which is spoken about, "objective" in relation to the objectified object. Therefore, the "subject-hood" of the thing spoken about is excluded in the proposition, as is the ability-to-be-in-relation of the speaker. I will use the term "with-ing" to denote these two aspects of the relationship that are lost in the propositional movement of objectification.

The exclusion of this "with-ing" relationship can be seen when two or more contradictory propositions are asserted. This is often the case in religious confessions. Religious confessions have become propositional. In church services, the leader of the service will often say something such as "Let us now confess our common faith" in order to prompt the congregation to recite the Apostle's Creed or other statement of church beliefs. Having lost the *relationship* between the speaker and what is spoken about, propositions are left only to assert logical "relations" - S is p ("God is Triune" or "There is only one Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet"). However, what is asserted is not viewed as a "relation" at all, not even a logical one. Rather, it is conceived of as a statement of the way things "just are." Having lost the relation to what is being spoken about, the speaker also comes to lose his relationship with himself, that is, the sense of his own point of

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in Heidegger and proposition as I am employing it here.

[117]Lambert Zuidervaart raises an objection to Heidegger's use of such value-loaded terms as "levelling-down." See his *Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), especially chapter 4, "Truth as Disclosure." I, however, echo the implicit claim in Heidegger that something has been lost, historically, in the emphasis on the proposition/statement.

view. This being the case, he loses the sense of the expressive function of propositions (i.e. the

fact that they *express* one's point of view)[118] and the communicative function of language (i.e

that language is intended to bring people into relationship with each other),[119] and finds himself

in a position of not being able to tolerate dissenters. In other words, having lost the sense of

relationship, the speaker of propositions finds himself only able to "relate" to other speakers in

terms of the evaluation of their asserted propositions - in terms of truth and falsity. Difference,

then, becomes falsehood, unfairly tied to deception, and is stigmatized. With difference thought

of as deception, and deception as evil (Satan as the Great Deceiver), religious confessions

become unable to tolerate anything except sameness. But even this sameness loses any sense of

relationship (the speaker having lost his sense of relationship to himself), and becomes mere

tautologous truth claims. There is, simply, no relation between self and other, between two

different ones, left in a patriarchal culture.[120]

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[118]See Allen, *Knowledge and Civilization*, 67.

[119] See Irigaray, *i love to you*, 100. See also Oliver, *Family Values*, 55-56.

[120] For more on the role of abjection theories in the construction of a patriarchal culture, I turn the reader to J.C. Smith's *Psychoanalytic Roots of Patriarchy: The Neurotic Foundations of Social Order* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1990). In this book, Smith lists the presuppositions of patriarchy (p. 43). All five of these presuppositions (which, for reasons of space I will not reproduce here) seem to be contestable on the terms of "socialization as mutuality."

Chapter 4: *Facere Veritatem*: Religion and the Search for Community

Deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions is often thought to be an

attempt to establish or endorse a *new* religion, at least a new conception of religion, one that

seeks to empty religious confessions of all content, thereby leaving them non-exclusive, but also

empty. However, I believe that this conception of deconstruction's critique is fundamentally

misguided. It fails to take into account deconstruction's larger view of religion in situating the

critique. When the larger religious context of deconstruction is taken into account,

deconstruction's critique of religious confessions takes on a new tone. Because of the

fundamentally social and historical context of the "determinate religions," they are necessarily

tied up with a myriad of other, seemingly "non-religious" factors. Questions of language, nation,

culture, and the nature of intersubjective relations all factor into deconstruction's view of

religion. This socio-historical context of the "determinate religions" implies that there are other

factors influencing the determination of these religions other than "religiosity." That is, there is

more than just the "possibility" of the religious involved in determining the "determinate

religions." As such, deconstruction's critique of the determinacy of the "determinate religions" is

not a critique of finitude qua finitude, but is a critique of the *way* in which the religions have

been determined. This can sound like a critique of determinacy as such because deconstruction

maintains that as long as religions are situated in the exclusive culture of patriarchy (i.e. the

phallomorphic, latinized, Judeo-Christian West), they will continue to be determined by that

exclusive culture. Because that culture is *pathologically* exclusive, as chapter 3 examined, the

religions determined by that culture will be shaped by that pathological exclusion.

Deconstruction's critique of the exclusive nature of the determinate religions is, in fact, a critique

of the patriarchal culture that undergirds those religions.

The patriarchal culture that undergirds the determinate religions is itself undergirded by a theory of intersubjectivity based on abjection. Abjection constitutes a betrayal of the peaceful, mutual relation with the other that characterizes "socialization as mutuality." Because deconstruction is founded on a notion of "socialization as mutuality," as chapter 2 demonstrated, deconstruction critiques abjection, and the patriarchal culture that it supports, as a (violent) betrayal of that primordial relation. Deconstruction, though, seems to be caught in a bind: on the one hand, it acknowledges the fundamental nature of religiosity - even science is undergirded by religious faith (FK, 99); on the other hand, if every determination of religiosity is necessarily caught up in the patriarchal culture of pathological exclusion, then every religion is necessarily exclusive. Religion becomes both fundamental and necessarily exclusive and violent. For a theory that is founded on the notion of peaceful, mutual relation with the other, this constitutes quite a bind indeed!

In seeking to loosen the knot of this bind, let us turn back to deconstruction's view of religion. Specifically, let us return to what religion is tied up with. Derrida is careful to point out that "religion does not follow the movement of **faith** any more necessarily than the latter rushes towards faith in God" (FK, 69).[121] Though religion is not necessarily tied to faith or to God, it must be tied to something. Derrida claims religion is tied to two things: a search for community, and a style or conception of thinking. Chapter 3 went quite in-depth in its examination of the relation between religion and a particular conception of thinking (i.e. "male" or phallomorphic rationality). This examination led us to understand deconstruction's critique of religion as a

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[121]See also chapter 1 above.

critique of the culture that undergirds both that religion and the conception of thinking that it is tied to. Specifically, we noted that the patriarchal style of thinking, with its emphasis on truth, led to the overemphasis of the proposition vis-à-vis more "relational" aspects, such as action and affect.[122] But lest religion's tie to a particular conception of thinking be the tie that binds religiosity to violence and exclusion, we must now look at the other thing that religion is tied to: a search for community. By examining this tie closely, we will see that deconstruction intends violence to apply only to a certain conception of religion, one tied to the pathological exclusion of patriarchy. Outside of this view of the determinate religions, or the determining of the religious, deconstruction seems quite willing to see in religiosity a certain striving towards peaceful mutuality. This will manifest itself in a *call to justice* that seeks to overturn the evils of pathological, patriarchal exclusion while still avowing the seriousness and ubiquity of patriarchy and its exclusions.

In this chapter, then, I will begin by examining the (etymological) connection between religion and the search for community, and show how this is bound up, necessarily, with patriarchal exclusion (Section I). Next, I will suggest that deconstruction does indeed have a place for, a hope for, the possibility of a certain peaceful religiosity (Section II). Finally, I will seek to elaborate how such a "peaceful religiosity" could perhaps be possible in terms of a religious confession (Section III).

I. Religion and/as the Search for Community

In a particular section of "Faith and Knowledge," Derrida examines the beginnings of the term religion. Religion is, as we have already made so much of, a Latin word: *religio*. Derrida

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[122]We also referred to this in terms of an over-emphasis on the doxic (doxa (beliefs) thought in terms of rational beliefs, i.e. orthodoxy, not in terms of praise or religious belief, i.e. doxology) at the expense of praxis and aesthesis.

posits a dual etymological provenance for *religio*: first, *relegere*, "bringing together in order to

return and begin again" (FK, 73); and second, *religare*, "etymology 'invented by Christians,' as

Benveniste says, and linking religion to the *link*, precisely, to obligation, ligament, and hence to

obligation, to debt, etc., between men or between man and God" (FK, 73-74).[123] Note, however,

that both of these different etymologies hold something in common: a search for community.

While *relegere* seeks to "bring together" for the sake of getting back to an original place, perhaps

- "to return and begin again" - *religare* seeks to found community on obligation, debt,[124] etc.

Whatever the motivation, however, both etymologies are seeking community of some kind.

Religion, then, in its Latin etymology, seems intimately wound up with a search for

community. As Derrida puts it: "In both cases (*re-legere* or *re-ligare*), what is at issue is indeed a

persistent bond that bonds itself first and foremost to itself. What is at issue is indeed a reunion

<*rassemblement*>, a re-assembling, a re-collecting. A resistance or a reaction to dis-junction. To

ab-solute alterity" (FK, 74). It is particularly telling that Derrida characterizes this search for

community as a "reaction to dis-junction" and/or to "alterity." Religion as a reaction to

disjunction from the other - is this not the theme of religion's tie to a particular conception of

thinking, as discussed in chapter 3? Indeed, doesn't conceiving of religion in this way evidence a

certain historical situation of religion, namely one that sees a disjunction between the self and the

other that would need to be overcome? And why would deconstruction, premised as it is on

peaceful, mutual relation with the other, think that there was such a disjunction between self and

other?

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[123]Derrida quotes from Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. Elizabeth Palmer
Faber and Faber [sic] (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 516 ff. See also FK, 73 n. 22, and chapter 1 above.
      [124]One must think of Nietzsche if one is to talk of the relation of Christianity to debt; cf. the second essay
of his *Genealogy of Morals* trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Anchor Books, 1956).

Indeed, talking of religion as a search for community does seem to be connected to abjection, and so to patriarchal culture. Only on a model of abjection would there be a disjunction between self and other that would need to be overcome. Further, only on an abjection model would it be assumed that this disjunction could be overcome by "circling the wagons," so to speak, by bonding "itself first and foremost to itself." Because it views the other as something to be feared (lest the other reject me, not love me), abjection thinks that the proper response to the other is to strengthen one's individuality.[125] Only by becoming stronger in myself, and so creating the myth that I then need less from the other, can the self be assured of not being rejected (in that, if I don't need the other, I cannot be rejected by the other). Like someone afraid to commit to a relationship, abjection theory says "You can't hurt me if I don't need you."

In order to strengthen the "I," though, it becomes necessary to find a community where one does feel loved and accepted. This is because, though abjection theory may try to deny it, relation with the other is necessary to subjectivity: I am always in relation to the other. If I can ensure, then, that the "other" (who really becomes little more than an extension of myself, "other of the same") with whom I associate is like me, then I don't need to fear being rejected by that "other." I can push away, exclude, reject everyone else, as long as there is some group in which I feel accepted.

"Socialization as mutuality" would seem to suggest that we are already part of a community, and this community can never reject us. Indeed, the other has already accepted us, loved us, chosen us, since it is the relation to the other that calls me into being: if I exist, it is

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[125]Cf. Kelly Oliver on the notion of "virile subjectivity" in *Family Values*, 119-194.

because the other has caused me to be.[126] Abjection, however, rejects this necessary relationship, instead calling for the repudiation of the primordial relation to the other (wrongly thought of as identification) as a step to individuation. By rejecting this peaceful, mutual relation to the other, abjection rejects the acceptance always already offered by the other. Therefore, abjection must posit another source of acceptance and community. Having rejected the other, the subject in abjection theory must then go out and find others to relate to. Having rejected the embrace/caress of the other, the subject in abjection theory must search for loving community.

Such a search for community is necessary only as a result of abjection. As such, it will remain founded on an exclusive core, and, as Oliver states, "[i]f abjection is necessary to self-identity, then peace, cooperation, liberation, and equality become impossible dreams" (FV, 99). Because it starts with violent repudiation, the search for community necessitated by abjection will necessarily be violent. Derrida is aware of this when he points out that "community" and "ammunition" have the same root: *munis.*[127] The search for community undergone by the subject of abjection is dangerous because it is not a search for community at all, but is, instead, a construction of a "community." The subject seeks to build for itself a group of "others" with whom to relate. Not only is this impossible, doomed to relate only to "others of the same," but it can also be quite dangerous, as those who think or act or look differently are violently excluded from the new "community." The search for community becomes ammunition used to attack that which is truly other (and sometimes ammunition even detonates within the walls of one's own

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[126]I think also of James H. Olthuis' statement: "I was loved, therefore I am." *The Beautiful Risk,* 71.

[127] "[C]ommunio is a word for military formation and is a kissing cousin of the word 'munitions': to have a communio is to be fortified on all sides, to build a 'common' (com) 'defense' (munis), as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out. The self-protective closure of 'community,' then, would be just about the opposite of . . . preparation for the incoming of the other, 'open' and 'porous'to the other. . . " Derrida and Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell,* 108.

house!).

II. Deconstruction's Religious Hope

The etymological provenance of *religio* suggests that religion developed as a search for community: feeling cut off from others, people turned towards religion to construct a community in which they could feel accepted. That this community came to be defined by questions of orthodoxy (i.e. "If you believe what I believe, then you are a part of the group that I am a part of") rather than praxis or aesthesis evidences the exclusionary root that undergirded this search for community - just as patriarchal exclusion led to a conception of reason that overemphasizes truth at the expense of relationality, so it led also to the religious "search for community" that turns out to be little more than ammunition used to attack that which is truly other. Both of these outcomes show the exclusion that lies at the heart of abjection, and so of patriarchy: relation with the other is excluded, so relationships with any truly other become impossible.

It is this dis-junction from alterity that, according to Derrida, lies at the heart of the religious search for community. Because, as we have shown, this dis-junction is the result of abjection, that is, of a particular (if ubiquitous) socio-historical determination, the violent search for community that characterizes the determinate religions need not necessarily characterize religiosity, the very possibility of the religious. The "possibility"/ "determinate necessity" distinction suggests that there is no reason to think that deconstruction cannot hope for a peaceful religiosity.

The problem, however, is that religiosity, like all such "possibilities," while it must be kept distinct from the "determinate necessities," at the same time can never be experienced

except within one of those determinations (FK, 48).[128] Since the determinations of religiosity are

necessarily shaped by patriarchy (religion being a Latin word and all), it is not quite so simple to

hope for a religiosity that is peaceful. Rather, it is not easy to hope that a peaceful religiosity will

make any difference here and now. The question of the violence of the determination of a

peaceful religiosity is why Derrida says that the messianic event, the religious event, must

"puncture every horizon of expectation," thereby making it possible for him to claim that "the

absence of horizon conditions the future itself" (FK, 47). Why all this fear of horizons and

expectations? Does this not show that deconstruction is hoping for an empty religious

confession, one that comes close to being a religion, but "pulls out" before the big moment,

withdraws, just at the end, a little bit short of being truly religious?[129] Is deconstruction just

teasing us with the possibility of peaceful religiosity, while secretly believing that there is only

violence and war? No - it is in the very name of peaceful religiosity that deconstruction critiques

the violence of the "determinate religions" (FK, 93-94): it is only because it can conceive of

something better, more peaceful, that deconstruction can critique the "determinate religions" as

violent.

Of course, deconstruction's critique is also socio-historically determined. For it, too, then

"[r]eligion never appears quite pure. Its outward form is ever determined by something else."[130]

In other words, the "horizons of expectations" that deconstruction challenges are necessarily

determined by socio-historical conditions, and hence are, in our patriarchal culture, currently tied

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[128]See also Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, 136-137; Derrrida and Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 3-28.
    [129]The theological movement known as Radical Orthodoxy often critiques deconstruction for its "onanistic" tendencies; see Graham Ward, "Questioning God" *Questioning God* eds. John D. Caputo, Michael Scanlon and Mark Dooley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
    [130]Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Second Speech: The Nature of Religion" in *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology* ed. Keith Clements (London: Collins, 1987), 76-95; 80-81.

to exclusion and violence. Without these "horizons of expectations," however, doesn't

deconstruction risk repeating the mistake that Derrida claims Levinas makes, i.e. if the absolute

other is so absolute-*ly* other as to be unrecognizable, then the other will never be encountered?[131]

In other words, if I cannot expect the peace of religiosity, if I have no horizons in which to

receive that peace, then I cannot ever experience the peace of religiosity. This, however, is not

entirely true. While it remains true in a certain (Husserlian) sense, this sense seems, to me, to be

too tied to the conscious and rational mind. Phenomenologically speaking, if I have no

intuitions/intentions of something, I can never perceive or experience that thing. If something is

to be understood, it must come to me on my own terms, in ways I can understand, in my own

sphere of "ownness."

But it is precisely this Husserlian subject that deconstruction is critiquing. Similarly, the

over-emphasis on the rational is part of the patriarchal culture of exclusion that deconstruction

challenges. Perhaps, deconstruction could be after another way of encountering the other, a way

that is not rationally determined. I would suggest that perhaps the aesthetic[132] realm would

provide a way in which the other could encounter me outside of any horizon of expectation. Of

course, if the other were to encounter me in such a way, that is, non-rationally but rather

affectively, then I would not be sure of what it was that I was encountering, but only that I was

encountering something. This is why "if a voice speaks to me, it is I myself who must decide

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[131]Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," 126; see my "Confessing the Other: Excess, Violence and Voyeurism" (unpublished) for more on the distinction between the infinite other and the infinite-*ly* other.

[132] I will use the term "aesthetic" to refer to what Schleiermacher calls the affective or "feeling," that is, that which is deep-seated and prior to the rational; see Schleiermacher, "Second Speech," 83. An "aesthetic" encounter, then, would be one in which the thing encountered was "felt" (in the deep sense) in a way that was not necessarily understood (rationally) or understandable (rationally), but an encounter that is nonetheless experienced, "perceived" (but in a sense of that term that does not presume the fulfillment of rational categories), by the subject.

whether the voice is or is not that of an angel."[133] The basis on which this decision would have to

be made would be non-rational, that is affective. If such a non-rational, affective encounter is

possible (Levinas and Derrida clearly seem to think it is),[134] then perhaps a peaceful religiosity is

also possible, one that is not conditioned or determined by patriarchal exclusion.

In order for one to be content with experiencing religion on the level of the affective,

however, one would need to give up the idea that the religious must be (rationally) known[135] in

order to be religious. Once one no longer "knows" what it is that one worships ("What do I love

when I love my God?"),[136] it becomes much more difficult to base one's search for a community

on the grounds of religious orthodoxy. After all, if one doesn't know what one believes, how

could one build a community based on a shared set of beliefs? Of course, it is not entirely fair to

say that, in the religious according to deconstruction, one doesn't know what one believes.

Rather, one always knows that one believes in God (or love, or justice, etc.). Indeed, in the

religious according to deconstruction, love becomes much more important than belief: one

knows that one loves God, even if one is not sure who or what that God is that one loves. After

all, "anybody worth their salt loves God. If you do not love God, what good are you? . . .

Religion is for lovers . . . people who believe in something, who hope like mad in something,

who love something with a love that surpasses understanding" (OR, 2). In deconstruction, then,

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[133]Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existensialism and Humanism," *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings* ed. Stephen Priest (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 20-57; 31. Of course, unlike Sartre, Derrida is not so sure that we can always decide what it is. However, I believe it is possible that, were the use of the aesthetic capacity to be cultivated as the use of the rational capacity is, one might be able to *feel* whether the other who comes is peaceful or not.

[134] Hence they can claim, as discussed in chapter 2 above, that one encounters the other before one becomes a self capable of rational decision.

[135] For more on other ways of knowing besides the rational, see *Knowing Other-wise: Philosophy at the threshold of spirituality* ed. James H. Olthuis (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997).

[136]Augustine, *Confessions*, (X, 7). For the importance of this question to deconstruction, see John D. Caputo, "What do I love when I love my God? Deconstruction and Radical Orthodoxy," in *Questioning God* eds. John D. Caputo, Michael Scanlon and Mark Dooley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

belief is not ignored or abandoned in favour of a willy-nilly nihilism. Rather, belief is surpassed (to use Biblical language), exceeded (to use the language of "socialization as mutuality"), by love. Hence, for deconstruction, love becomes the criterion of truth (OR, 3). And the criterion of love, the measure of love, is . . . love: "For if love is the measure, the only measure of love is love without measure (Augustine again)" (OR, 4).

Deconstruction, then, can be seen as seeking to overcome patriarchy's reliance on rational belief. In doing this, it puts forward the possibility of encountering the other in a way that is not pre-conditioned, pre-determined, by what is reasonable or rational. Rather, the other can be encountered affectively, aesthetically. Such an affective encounter, of course, leaves the door open for all kinds of others to encounter me. Is the religious person left unable to distinguish between the devil and the deity, between the sacrilegious and the sacred? Far from it, for while the event of the coming of the other might not be rationally determined, expected within certain (rational) horizons, it can still be measured, measured by love. This measuring (by love) is not a determination in the same way as the religions are determined now for two reasons: 1) the only measure of love, as we have said, is love without measure, and unconditional love does not determine in the same way as do socio-historical circumstances; 2) more importantly, it is not us who measure, according to deconstruction, but love (and "God is love" - 1 John 4:16): love measures the other, love measures us, and, perhaps, we are the measure of God's love (to each other).

III. The search for justice

I have sought, in the previous section, to denote a possibility for religious hope in Derrida. I found this hope for peaceful religiosity in the aesthetic (affective) sphere, which does

not bear the same relationship to patriarchal exclusion as does the rational sphere, but instead

seeks "another way of knowing."[137] It seems to me that such a re-valuing of the aesthetic sphere

is in line with Derrida's critique of the over-emphasis on reason in patriarchal culture. But such

an aesthetic hope is not enough - we need also a praxis that seeks to help those who have been

excluded and harmed. If we are, indeed, the measure of God's love (to each other), and are

responsible "for all before all" (OTB, 146),[138] then an aesthetic encounter with the other is not

enough. To paraphrase Marx: "religious people have only interpreted the world, in various ways;

the point is to change it."[139]

While an emphasis on the aesthetic as the way in which to experience the coming of the

religious event is one way to counter the influence of the exclusion of patriarchy on religion,

another way is also necessary. This is because, as chapter 3 showed, the determinate religions

"act-out" the exclusion that is at the core of abjection in a myriad of destructive and violent

ways. Religions, in their attempt to establish communities, inevitably exclude and commit

violence against some people: "Hence the even more pressing obligation: not to forget those <of

either gender> whom this implicit contract or this 'being-together' is obliged to exclude" (FK,

47). Part of seeking the peaceful possibility of religiosity, then, is to attend to those others whom

have been harmed, not only those harmed "in the name of religion," but all others, with whom

we are related in the "community," perhaps the "community without com-munity,"[140] of the

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[137] James H. Olthuis, "Introduction: Love/Knowledge: Sojourning with Others, Meeting with Differences" in *Knowing Other-wise*, 1-15; 1.

[138] See also Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London and New York: Quartet Books, 1990), 288 (translation altered).

[139] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings, Second Edition* ed. David McLellan (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 171-174; 173.

[140] A "community without com-munity" would be a "community" without "common defense"; see n. 127 above. Community is not the best word to be use here, so I attempted to come up with a substitute. Derrida and

living. Because we are related to others in peaceful, mutual relations, when we see those others with whom we are related experiencing pain, suffering, etc., we have an obligation, a responsibility, to assist them. The name of this responsibility, that which calls us to this responsibility, is Justice.

Justice is an important religious theme for deconstruction. Derrida claims that "an invincible desire for justice" is linked with the possibility of religiosity (FK, 56). He refers to this possibility as an "abstract messianicity" that founds "all relation to the other in testimony" (FK, 56). The possibility of religiosity is at the core of belief and intersubjectivity. This is then tied directly to justice, which "alone allows the hope, beyond all 'messianisms,' of a universalizable culture of singularities" (FK, 56). Here, then, Derrida very explicitly allies justice with the religious hope discussed in Section II.

There are a few important features of this justice that I would like to highlight here in relation to the religious. First, this justice is tied irrevocably to the primordial intersubjectivity that conditions every relation to the other. Since we know that, for Derrida, this primordial intersubjectivity is one of "socialization as mutuality," this tie seems to suggest that "socialization as mutuality" has some important role to play in the call of justice. Secondly, that which is hoped for, the religious hope "beyond all 'messianisms,'" is a "universalizable culture of singularities." What could this odd nomenclature mean? Well, first, the emphasis on

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Caputo would use the word "community" here, as they believe that "[a] 'universal community' excluding no one is a contradiction in terms; communities always have an inside and an outside" (Derrida and Caputo, *Deconstruction in a* Nutshell, 108). I mean to designate, by this term, the undeterminable extent of people and things with which every subject finds itself in relation. It is this primordial "community without com-munity" which abjection causes the subject to not see itself as part of, and hence the need to create/discover another community, this time one based on a certain merit (often adherence to an orthodoxy) in order to be included. The beauty of the primordial "community without com-munity" lies in its unconditioned nature - one is, merely by virtue of being, already part of this "community without com-munity."

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singularities implies that Derrida places value, first and foremost, on the radical singularity

(ipseity) of each person. In other words, one ought to be valued for one's ipseity, and not for

one's ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender, etc. This is, of course, not to suggest that those

things don't matter. Surely they do, as one's ipseity, the reader will recall, is a result of the

relation to the other (OTB, 69), and this relation to the other is sure to be influenced by factors

such as gender, ethnicity, etc. But valuing the subject for its ipseity is not to radically

individualize a culture. Not only is the subject's ipseity a result of its relation to the other, but

also Derrida seeks a "universalizable culture" of singularities; in other words, a culture in which

all singularities are valued, valued as singularities, a culture in which the value of ipseity, *qua*

ipseity, is appreciated and held up.

With such a goal in mind, it could be difficult to find a basis from which to strive for

justice. After all, how does one hold someone accountable for something while still honouring

their singularity? Derrida hints at the answer immediately after he offers his hope of a culture of

singularities: "This justice inscribes itself in advance in the promise, in the act of faith or in the

appeal to faith that inhabits every act of language and every address to the other" (FK, 56). The

"promise" or "appeal to faith" that inhabits every address to the other is, the reader will recall

from chapter 1, tied to testimony. This testimony has a dual meaning in deconstruction's take on

religion: one psychoanalytic, one intersubjective. So far in this thesis, we have seen how these

two meanings have come together throughout deconstruction's talk of religion, especially in the

notion of theories of intersubjectivity that exert control over the formation and functioning of a

culture. In other words, this thesis has been examining how the notion of testimony changes if

one has a conception of intersubjectivity as abjection or one of "socialization as mutuality." If

justice is tied to testimony, and deconstruction supports a "socialization as mutuality" style of testimony, then justice, in deconstruction, must be tied to "socialization as mutuality."

In fact, what else could a "universalizable culture of singularities" be except a culture that is founded on the principles of "socialization as mutuality?" Does "socialization as mutuality" not seek to support "singularities," ipseities as we have also called them, by highlighting the necessity of maintaining the distinction between the self and the other while still emphasizing that the ipseity of the self comes from its relation to the other? Does it not also seek to "universalize," to a certain extent, this culture of singularities by positing that each singularity is necessarily in relation to other such singularities? That these relations between singularities are necessary to the very existence of each of those singularities? Is "socialization as mutuality" not "inscribed in the promise" in the "appeal to faith," as the condition of belief and intersubjectivity? Is "socialization as mutuality," then, not the very inscription of justice?

If "socialization as mutuality" is indeed the "inscription of justice," then this inscription is not to be spoken, but enacted.[141] Deconstruction's "invincible desire for justice" is not just based on a "theory" of intersubjectivity; it seeks to critique everywhere where that theory is being violated. Deconstruction's view of religion, therefore, has a very "praxical" (focus on *praxis*) bent. Rather than speaking or believing the truth, deconstruction seeks to "do the truth." In this, deconstruction again claims to be following Augustine: *facere veritatem,* "making" or "doing" the truth (OR, 115). In this conception of "doing the truth," as in the measuring of the encounter with the other, love is of utmost importance. But, deconstruction claims, "love is a *how*, not a *what*" (OR, 134). Caputo even claims to want to rewrite Augustine's question as

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[141] Indeed, perhaps this inscription *cannot* be spoken, at least not yet, as language is tied to exclusionary societies that are themselves determined in such a way as to be betrayals of socialization as "mutuality."

"How do I love when I love my God?" (OR, 134). This revision, this shift, from a question of "what" to a question of "how" evidences the praxical shift in the religious according to deconstruction - no longer ought religion be concerned first and foremost with knowing the truth, speaking or confessing the truth, but the concern ought to be with "doing the truth," *facere veritatem.*

This shift in focus would give religious confessions, thought along more deconstructive lines, a different look. First of all, religious confessions would no longer be primarily propositions articulated within a phallomorphic discourse. Rather, they would need to be embodied, which is to say not only articulated in a discourse that re-values embodiment, but also, and more importantly, *enacted* by human bodies for the good of other human bodies. Religious confessions would have to be examples of "doing the truth." This would not eliminate the possibility of them being also linguistic, nor would it entail that religious confessions are sufficient for "doing the truth." Confessing, linguistically, what one believes in would be one way of "doing the truth," and a way that would not be valued any higher than would practically enacting one's confessions, or experiencing the religious affectively. There are, according to deconstruction, many ways of confessing, of "doing the truth" - and none are to be more highly valued than the others.

This equality must remain, however, grounded in justice. Justice, inscribed in "socialization as mutuality," can be enacted in a return to peaceful, mutual relations with the other. This grounding in justice would then set the stage for the (in)determination of religious confessions thought along deconstructive lines: religious confessions would be, primarily, a *call for justice*. As such, they would be an invitation, inviting all who hear to participate in justice,

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that is, in the peaceful, mutual relations between self and other. Such a conception of religious

confessions would function to give physical and praxical life to the possibility of religiosity

(linked, as it is, to an "invincible desire for justice"). It would do this without thereby necessarily

determining that possibility along the exclusionary lines of patriarchal culture, because religious

confessions as a *call for justice* would, in fact, be a call that challenges that patriarchal exclusion

down to its very core.[142] It would seek to point out the peaceful relation to the other that

necessarily shapes and constitutes each one of us, as well as violations of that peaceful relation.

Religious confessions, thought along deconstructive lines, would function prophetically,[143]

calling a wayward culture back to the just relations it has turned its back on.[144]

This first prophetic call would go out to the determinate religions. Deconstruction, in the

name of religious justice, must critique any religion that violates the conditions of its own

possibility ("socialization as mutuality" being at least part of the possibility of religiosity). With

such an obligation in mind, any determination of religion that "acts-out" the exclusionary nature

of patriarchy would be open for critique. This comes back again to the either/or response of the

religious: either one has a peaceful connection with the other (e.g. "socialization as mutuality"),

or one indemnifies the relation with the other in violent sacrifice (e.g. abjection). While

deconstruction holds that, at least for now, in our patriarchal culture, these two cannot be entirely

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[142] As such, it would be possible, perhaps even necessary, for the "determined" nature of this call to be always changing, never two times the same way; as the society/culture changed over time, so would the call needed to bring it back to justice. In this way, the deconstructive *call to justice* can be seen as an example of what deconstruction calls *non-identical repetition*.

[143] Derrida himself acknowledges "certain prophetic resonances" within deconstruction, going so far as to wonder whether deconstruction, which assumes "a certain prophetic *allure*," isn't "a twentieth-century brand of prophecy?" See Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction and the other" (interview) in *States of Mind: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* ed. Richard Kearney (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 156-176; 169. See also Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, 196.

[144] Thinking of deconstruction along prophetic lines also enables one to think of deconstruction, not just as a call to justice, but also as a response to the call (of justice?): "Deconstruction is therefore vocation – a response to a call." Derrida, "Deconstruction and the other," 168.

separated from each other (FK, 66), it also believes that, in the name of the possibility of peaceful religiosity, it *must* critique the violent relationality of abjection and patriarchy. For deconstruction, the two themes/streams, i.e. "the prophetic passion to let justice flow"[145] and the open and peaceful relationship with the other, converge or "flow together."[146] There is no justice without right relationality, no right relationality without justice, and neither without challenging and overthrowing patriarchy.

Deconstruction's view of religion, then, offers a critique of the patriarchal underpinnings of the determinate religions: deconstruction's emphasis on the aesthetic "location" of the experience of the other and the praxical overtones of the "invincible desire for justice" as "doing the truth" both function to challenge patriarchy's over-emphasis on the rational (orthodoxy). This begins to challenge the loss of relationality (embodiment and "with-ing") characteristic of abjection and patriarchy. By seeking to re-introduce peaceful, mutual relations between self and other, deconstruction's critique of determinate religious confessions constitutes a religious confession on its own terms - it is a *call for justice*, seeking to reawaken religion to the peaceful relationality that is at the heart of the possibility of religiosity, and on which religion has turned its back.

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[145] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears,* 114.

[146] James H. Olthuis, "Review of 'The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida' and 'Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida,'" *International Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XXXIX, No. 3 Issue No. 155 (September 1999), 347-353; 348.

Conclusion

Deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions should be understood as a religious confession in its own, deconstructive, way. It can be thought of in this way because it is a *call to justice*. It calls the exclusive religious confessions to return to the religiosity that characterizes the very possibility of the religious. Religiosity, as the possibility of the religious, is closely tied up with Justice, and with testimony (which itself is tied up with intersubjectivity). Hence, religiosity and justice are tied to intersubjectivity, and, more specifically, to peaceful and mutual relations with others. This peaceful, mutual relation with others is characteristic of "socialization as mutuality," the theory of intersubjectivity that I claim undergirds deconstruction and its critique.

Deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions, then, is a critique of the *way* in which those confessions have been determined. This critique comes from a desire for peace and justice that is founded in the possibility of the religious. Deconstruction critiques the determinate religions because they have allowed their religious call (to justice, to peaceful and mutual relations with the other) to be compromised by a society that is exclusionary at its core. This exclusionary core of patriarchal, Western, Judeo-Christian society exists because of abjection – abjection rejects the peaceful relation with the other in favour of an individualized, monadistic subject who must then search for a community of similar individuals. These "other" individuals are really just extensions of that subject, "others of the same" as Irigaray would say. Such a community of "others of the same" necessarily excludes actual alterity because it has declared acceptance into the community to be based on merit (usually agreement with a particular orthodoxy), and so those who don't "measure up" are automatically outsiders who

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must be immunized against in order to preserve the health of the community.

For deconstruction, however, we are always a part of "community without com-munity." This "community without com-munity" is the primordial situation of being in peaceful, mutual relations with others. Because the subject begins in this community (without "com-munity", that is, without "common defenses"), there is no need for the subject to search for a community in which to find acceptance – acceptance is already given, before the subject is a subject, by the other in the "relation without relation" of the "community without com-munity." This acceptance is not based on merit, or adherence to a particular orthodoxy. It is an unconditional love, offered to all merely because of their existence. This love, always already offered by the other, establishes my subjectivity: "I was loved, therefore I am."[147] For deconstruction, this unconditional love characterizes our primordial (or pre-primordial) situation in the "community without com-munity."

It should not be a surprise, then, that deconstruction, with such a view in place, finds problematic the violent "search for community" of religion in a patriarchal culture. This search for community, as we have seen, constitutes a betrayal of the peaceful, mutual relations of "socialization as mutuality." This betrayal is necessitated by a theory of intersubjectivity predicated on abjection. As we have seen, such a theory of abjection undergirds the patriarchal culture of Western, Judeo-Christian society. Much like a subject who unconsciously acts-out a repressed trauma, so this society "acts-out" this abjection that is at its core in a myriad of ways. We have studied two of these ways in more detail here: a particular style of thinking that emphasizes abstraction not embodiment, truth and not relationality; and a "search for

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[147] Olthuis, *Beautiful Risk*, 71.

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community" that violates peaceful relations with others by establishing an accepted "inside" and a despised "outside." The determinate religious confessions that deconstruction critiques follow from the same core of abjection as do "male" rationality and the "search for community." As such, they are necessarily exclusive in a way that violates peaceful mutuality. Hence, deconstruction, in the name of the Justice that stands under the possibility of religiosity, must critique the exclusion of the "determinate" religious confessions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc.). Doing so is not a call to cease religious confessions altogether, nor does it cease to replace them with a dogmatically empty "new" religious confession, which would really just be a repetition of the old, exclusive confessions but with new boundaries of "inside" and "outside." Rather, deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions is done in the name of the possibility of the religious. It is done to "save the name" of the religious, so to speak. In so doing, it enacts what could be called a deconstructive religious confession: a call to justice.

In this thesis, I began by situating deconstruction's critique of exclusive religious confessions within deconstruction's larger view of religion. Doing so helped to highlight the connection that Derrida posits between religion and other, seemingly "non-religious" cultural actions, such as language, psychoanalysis, and intersubjectivity. Specifically, we learned that, for Derrida, religion is, at its core, connected to theories of intersubjectivity. Next, I sought to explain the peaceful and mutual theory of intersubjectivity that motivates deconstruction. This theory of intersubjectivity, which I referred to as "socialization as mutuality," provides deconstruction with the possibility of a peaceful "religiosity" that enables it to view, and critique, the current manifestations of this religiosity, in the determinate religions, as violent and exclusionary. Having highlighted the distinction between the possibility of the religious and the

determinate necessity of the historical religions, I then moved to examine the ties between the determinate religions and a particular style of thinking. I referred to this thinking as "patriarchal" or "male" rationality, and explained how it followed from a theory of intersubjectivity ("abjection") that was at its core exclusionary, and therefore fundamentally disagreed with "socialization as mutuality." Finally, I sought to show that the determinate religions, because of this core of abjection, are constituted, in large part, by a "search for community." Because this search is premised on an exclusionary core, however, the communities that it founds are themselves necessarily exclusionary. In opposition to these exclusionary communities, deconstruction provides a vision that, by returning to "socialization as mutuality," can talk of a peaceful "community without com-munity" that encourages peaceful and mutual relations between subjects. Because it views "socialization as mutuality" as an inscription of justice (and justice is tied to the possibility of religiosity), deconstruction views its critique of exclusive religious confessions as a religious move in its own right, a deconstructive religious confession, if you will, that functions as a *call to justice*. This deconstructive religious confession has a praxical bent, and implicitly assumes a certain "affective" or "aesthetic" experience of the other, which both serve to challenge the dominance of rationality in the patriarchal system that follows from abjection. As such, deconstruction's call to justice is itself an embodiment of the religious vision that motivates its critique. Rather than a nihilistic critique of religion, deconstruction would better be viewed as a religious confession in its own right, one that seeks to live out the prophetic call to "let justice roll down like waters" (Amos 5:24).

O river of Justice, roll down on us. Wash over the earth and save us! Let us float in your waters, drift lazily in your seas, before we drown in the blood of martyrs and of all those killed

"in the name of God." Come, O Justice, come quickly!

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