

# Body, Being, and the Emerging Ecozoic: Thomas Berry's Relevance to Modern Medicine

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## Introduction

Common to all living beings, including the human being, is the tacit organismic knowing how to *be*—to sustain life—and how to *become*—to produce and to actualize life. I am referring specifically to the biologic processes of autopoiesis and morphogenesis defined by Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, and Rupert Sheldrake, respectively.<sup>1</sup> If we follow this thread even briefly, we soon come to the realization that every living being is enminded with an innateness toward flourishing.<sup>2</sup> In this essay, I suggest Thomas Berry was referring to this enminded nature of *being* and *becoming* when he referred to all living systems, the biosphere, and the whole of the cosmos as “ensouled,”<sup>3</sup> though he enfolded the mere biological with

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1. Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980). Maturana and Varela originate the notion *autopoiesis*, which describes the self-organizing and self-actualizing qualities of all living organisms. For an elaboration on embodied cognition, see also: Francisco, J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993). For a sophisticated and interdisciplinary contribution to the discourse on “mind in life,” see also: Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge: The Balkans Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). Regarding morphogenesis, see: Rupert Sheldrake, *Morphic Resonance: The Nature of Formative Causation* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2009); and Rupert Sheldrake, “Morphic Fields,” *World Futures: The Journal of New Paradigm Research*, 62 (2006), 31-41.
  2. Mark Johnson and Tim Rohrer, “We are Living Creatures: Embodiment, American Pragmatism, and the Cognitive Organism,” in *Body, Language, and Mind*, vol. 1, eds. Jordan Zlatev et al. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 17-54.
  3. Ever since the time of Descartes in the first half of the seventeenth century,

the numinous.

Thomas Berry offered to us a providential vision that urges a resuscitation of the human being. In his 1991 Schumacher lecture, Berry outlined six conditions necessary for emergence into the Ecozoic era.<sup>4</sup> The essence of these conditions is that the human being must relinquish alienation from living and endeavor instead toward psychic communion with all life processes—with *being* and *becoming*. Such a communion is not merely epistemological; rather, it must be a living ontology. Berry elsewhere outlines what he refers to as “six transcendences”<sup>5</sup> of the human being—penumbras, which

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Western humans, in their dominant life attitudes, have been autistic in relation to the non-human components of the planet. Whatever the abuse of the natural world by humans prior to that time, the living world was recognized until then in its proper biological functioning as having an “anima,” a soul. Every living being was by definition an *ensouled* being with a voice that spoke to the depths of the human of wondrous and divine mysteries, a voice that was heard quite clearly by the poets and musicians and scientists and philosophers and mystics of the world, a voice heard also with special sensitivity by the children. Thomas Berry, “The Ecozoic Era,” (paper presented at the Eleventh Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures, Great Barrington, MA, October, 1991) (*italics added*), <http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/publications/lectures/berry/thomas/the-ecozoic-era>.

4 Ibid.

5. Thomas Berry, *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 2006), 25-32. Berry suggests what makes us vulnerable is, first, a “*transcendent, personal, monotheistic deity*.” Displacing the Divine from immanency has the tendency to “desacralize the phenomenal world.” Second, Berry contends that we have transcended, accordingly, the nature of the human being by assigning *human as spiritual* and the natural world as material. That which is material, by its very object nature becomes external. Third, we are made vulnerable by our “primacy of belief in *redemption*”—the notion that “we are not of this world,” and thus, only sojourners on this material and earthly plane. Berry suggests the fourth transcendence, the “*transcendence of mind*,” is a Cartesian legacy, which splits mind from materiality and makes that which is material void of an *anima*. Materiality is rendered, thus, mechanistic, and, in effect, “desouls” the world. The fifth transcendence, a *transcendent technology*, allows us to transcend the basic laws of biology, which otherwise place limits on species and life-processes. The sixth transcendence is the belief in a “*transcendent historical destiny*” for the human being. That we are destined for another *transphenomonal* place and/or mode of being significantly diminishes our

hinder a flourishing humanity and therefore, increasingly, all of the natural world. He puts forth a foundation upon which we reckon our existence.

In this paper, I suggest that Thomas Berry's appeal to humanity for an emerging Ecozoic era finds relevance in medical theory and practice. I consider Berry's six transcendences within the context of anthropological and sociological attitudes toward the human body, a Cartesian "object" body, and a medical paradigm that renders the living body paradoxical and creates for the healthcare clinician—particularly the physician—an obstruction, a conundrum, and an ongoing master-slave dynamic. I offer to Western medicine an ecozoic body, an enminded flesh that is consistent with and an elaboration upon Berry's vision for the reinvention of the human being. Implicit in Berry's appeal is a renewed, ensouled communion with the human body, which understands that the human-nature relationship is intimate, integral, immanent, and always dynamic. Such a view is not anthropocentric. Rather, it is a foundational view of the embedded human.

I attempt here to achieve three aims that are distinct but inseparable. First, this paper pays homage to Thomas Berry on this occasion during which we convene to further his imaginings, to expound upon and indeed expand his contribution to and invocation for this binding endeavor which he termed *The Great Work*.<sup>6</sup> Second, I offer an embodied mode of writing that means to call forth within the reader a similar mode of embodied being—a living-lived and likewise intelligent, perceptive, and discerning mode of being. Third, I offer a brief analysis of Berry's vision for a flourishing Earth-human community in the context of Western modern medicine at a time when human and planetary health demonstrably, and with a crescendoing importunity, disclose that a flourishing humanity is inti-

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care for this material world, which includes our own bodied-being. Richard Tarnas provides a lucid and elaborate contextual account of the tendencies of the Western mind, which supports Berry's "six transcendences." See, Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine, 1991).

6. Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999).

mately dependent upon an equally robust vegetal-animal-mineral-biotic sphere.

### **The Cartesian Body: An Object Body**

Berry's concern about an object materiality finds congruence in anthropological and sociological considerations for an object human corporeality. As anthropologist and medical social scientist Margaret Lock insists, the human body mediates all human "reflection and action upon the world."<sup>7</sup> The body's centrality to a renewed relationship with *being*, particularly within a context of flourishing, is therefore immediate.

Though each of Berry's notable six transcendences of the human being is integral to each other one and to the whole of turning toward an Ecozoic era, I highlight three of Berry's six transcendences that exemplify human vulnerabilities toward an object ontology of the body. These transcendences are, according to Berry, the "*spiritual nature of the human*," the "*transcendence of mind*," and a "*transcendent historical destiny*."<sup>8</sup> What these three beliefs repeatedly convey to human beings is that the body is of the material world indistinguishable from all of nature. As such, our very flesh is external, object, and to be transcended.

The belief in an especially spiritual nature of the human being manages to bring about two insidious coups: first, that the human being is essentially a spiritual being isolates humanity as separate from, and therefore superlative in relation to all other living beings; second, such an attitude desacralizes materiality,<sup>9</sup> including our own corporeality. Berry elaborates upon the impact of segregating human life from all other living processes. Yet, I suggest Berry likewise intends that desacralizing our own flesh conveys comparable life-alienating meaning. When the body of our own being is desacralized, we lose our connection with life itself, because it is

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7. Margaret Lock, "Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22 (1993), 133-155.

8. Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 27.

9. *Ibid.*, 26.

by way of our body that we are beings-in-the-world. A lost “sacred dimension”<sup>10</sup> of our body—cells and inside our cells, marrow and maw—begets a body that becomes subservient to the spiritual realm. The body in this context—much like the natural world—is at risk of being viewed as a constraint or an obstruction.<sup>11</sup>

Philosopher Sally Gadow offers an insightful phenomenological perspective of the human self-body relation. Gadow maintains that disruption of immediacy occurs between the experience of self and body in psychic development of human experience. At the level of primary immediacy, there is a prevailing self-body unity, which is a unity of both being-*in-the-world* and being-acted-upon-*by-the-world*. Being and world are distinct but inseparable, as are self and body inextricably tied. When the nexus of being shifts from that of being-*in-the-world* toward a more inwardly focused experience of self as distinct, “the self-body experiences itself as acting upon and being acted upon, not by the world but by *a part of itself*.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the unity of being is disrupted. The body is established by the self as object and that upon which the self must act and be acted upon. The body, in short, has become an “objective reality.”<sup>13</sup> The body is no longer an essential subjectivity.<sup>14</sup>

Expounding on Hegel’s master-slave dynamic, Gadow eluci-

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10. Ibid.

11. Sally Gadow, “Body and Self: A Dialectic,” in *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives*, ed. V. Kestenbaum (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 86-100. See also: Richard J. Barron, “Why Aren’t More Doctors Phenomenologists?” in *The Body in Medical Thought and Practice*, ed. Drew Leder, 37-47 (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).

12. Gadow, “Body and Self,” 88. Emphasis in original.

13. Berry, *Evening Thoughts*. 26.

14. Gadow, in “Body and Self,” develops four stages of relationship between body and self as a “dialectical progression.” The earlier two stages are first, primary immediacy: the lived body; and second, disrupted immediacy: the object body, which I have offered here. The two later stages, not covered here, are third, cultivated immediacy: the harmony of the lived body and object body; fourth, aesthetic immediacy: the subject body as exemplified in aging and illness. Such a dialectical progression of the lived experience is, however, immanent, the understanding of which is important to an epistemology of the phenomenological development of the human being.

dates two features that are extant in an object body ontology: first, only the self is experienced as subject: the body is object, and thus becomes self's "vehicle and instrument, serving the will of the self as does the slave its master."<sup>15</sup> Second, there is the always plausible inversion of the above: the body "rebels, refuses to function, and through the asserted independence, the former master—the self—becomes the slave."<sup>16</sup> This phenomenological relationship between perceived self and perceived body functions quite similarly to the human-nature relationship that takes place in the context of a pride of human spiritual essentiality.

I now turn to Berry's *transcendence of mind*. The following four-word statement from Berry conveys an existential urgency: "Descartes desouled the world."<sup>17</sup> It is as if Berry is suggesting that something vital to all being has been stripped away. Indeed, Descartes left us with a legacy which insists: (i) that which is not mind is mechanism; (ii) mind is the only rational instrument of the human soul; and (iii) mechanism is causal, measurable, reductive, predictive, and replicable.<sup>18</sup> In other words, that which is not mind can be controlled by and be subservient to mind. Mind is to be found only in the thinking brain, supra-positioned above the rest of the body and presumed, thus, to be separate from the body, as if it were *non-body*.<sup>19</sup> Mind is subject. Body is object.

Phenomenologist David Michael Levin insists our Cartesian metaphysics renders the corporeal body incapable of thinking.<sup>20</sup> A body incapable of thinking is incapable of reason, and is there-

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15. Gadow, "Body and Self," 88-89.

16. *Ibid.*, 89.

17. Berry, *Evening Thoughts*. 26.

18. Berry, *Evening Thoughts* and "The Ecozoic Era." See also Drew Leder, "A Tale of Two Bodies: The Cartesian Corpse and the Lived Body," in *The Body in Medical Thought and Practice*, ed. Drew Leder, 17-35 (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).

19. Renée Eli, "Of Flesh and Flourishing: Body and the Innateness of Being and Becoming—A Literature Review" (unpublished manuscript), (San Francisco, CA: California Institute of Integral Studies, 2014).

20. David Michael Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being: Phenomenological Psychology and the Deconstruction of Nihilism* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

fore perceived to be of little to no value, if not immoral and void of good.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Grosz maintains that what we are left with is an abysmal “somatophobia.”<sup>22</sup>

Descartes’ notions regarding mind and body are not limited, however, to a dispassionate view of perceived reality. Phenomenologist Drew Leder asserts that Descartes’ metaphysics are influenced, if not powerfully driven, by a profound existential angst regarding mortality.<sup>23</sup> Descartes insisted that the human soul does not perish when the life of the body is extinguished, but the perishability of the body itself posed a significant threat to Descartes.<sup>24</sup> In an effort to advance medical science, Descartes “engaged for years in the dissection of dead animals and animal parts. At certain periods of his life he paid almost daily visits to butcher shops, collecting material for this purpose.”<sup>25</sup> The result is that we are rendered a medical philosophy and theory that is based not on the living body, but on the corpse.<sup>26</sup> Such a medical view of the human body must acknowledge that its worldview, theories, and practices are based on a body that is inanimate.<sup>27</sup>

While Descartes alone cannot be blamed for Berry’s sixth transcendence—a *transcendent historical destiny*—we see in Descartes this attitude and belief at work. As separate entities, body and soul are offered immeasurably distinct destinies: a certain death and decay of the body and an almost certain immortality of the soul. Relieved of the body, the soul is “destined by nature for pleasures and felicities much greater than those we enjoy in this world.”<sup>28</sup> Such a division of soul with body, and mind with body, divides ontological being and sets a teleological trajectory toward an oth-

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21. Ibid. See also, Leder, “A Tale of Two Bodies,” and Wanda S. Pillow, “Exposed Methodology: The Body as Deconstructive Practice,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10 (1997), 349-363.

22. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

23. Leder, “A Tale of Two Bodies.”

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 19.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Descartes, as quoted in Leder, “A Tale of Two Bodies,” 18.

erworldly place—beyond body, beyond materiality, beyond Earth.

### The Medical Body: A Paradoxical Body

It would seem that the body poses a conundrum.<sup>29</sup> On the one hand, the body is devoid of value, if not altogether negated,<sup>30</sup> and the body is materiality that will be transcended by an immortal soul. In other words, our body is instrumental, but not essential for the endeavors of the soul. On the other hand, the body is that which must be tended to, freed of infirmities and aging, and preserved with longevity. The body, in this context, is to be emancipated from its unavoidable mortality. For the scientist and the physician alike, this means the body is to become, in many senses, transparent *so that* it can be “known” and thus preserved as a life-sustaining physicality of the human being.<sup>31</sup>

In this sense, the body is a problem to be solved; and for the patient and physician, such a problem is rarely, if ever, experienced as the same reality.<sup>32</sup> The Cartesian object body presents to modern medicine, thus, as a paradoxical body. It is a body to be diagnosed and treated. It is the very same body that obstructs diagnosis and treatment, because it is a living body indwelt by a living human being.

Berry's suggestion regarding Western tendencies toward a belief in a *transcendent, personal monotheistic creative deity* is operative in Western modern medicine. Personal authority for our bodily-being has been displaced and projected onto another—the physician—whom, we believe, will save us from the vicissitudes of our corporeality, and particularly in this medical context, from *dis*-ease and aging.<sup>33</sup> But such a displaced authority for bodily being removes

29. Barron, “Why Aren't More Doctors Phenomenologists?,” 37-47. See also: Leder, “A Tale of Two Bodies.”

30. Abigail Bra and Claire Colet, “The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and the Politics of (Dis)Embodiment,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 24,(1998), 35-67. See also Leder, “A Tale of Two Bodies,” and Lock, “Cultivating the Body.”

31. Barron, “Why Aren't More Doctors Phenomenologists?”

32. Gadow, “Body and Self,” 86.

33. For more on bodily authority, see Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being*.



human care and responsibility for our own flesh and places it in the hands of another to whom we offer our bodily deeds and misdeeds in hopes of corporeal salvation—if only for a time. In doing so, we surrender inward communion with our intrinsic bodily authority, which has its own biological inclination toward knowing how to *be* and to *become*. We diminish, thus, our body's sacrality and vital essence, its "own inner form, its own spontaneity, its own voice,"<sup>34</sup> which gives language and meaning to our existence. We diminish our body's subject "ability to declare itself and to be present to other components of the universe in a subject-to-subject relationship."<sup>35</sup> We rely, instead, on another, whose view is external and deemed "objective," to convey to us the reality of our bodiedness and therefore, our *being* and our *becoming*.

Moreover, when we, by our attitudes and beliefs, desacralize our body, we unknowingly desacralize our existence. We are vulnerable, thus, to a *transcendent technology*, permitting us preservation of the instrument and vehicle that is the body, which, despite our attitudes, is our belonging.<sup>36</sup> Barron insists: "Since physicians are mostly searching for the disease within the body, the usual approach is to fix the mechanically defective agent of the self, an approach which, of course, separates body and self quite substantially."<sup>37</sup> Prior to Descartes, however, such a methodology of mechanically fixing the broken "part" was inconceivable. Certain moral forbiddance constrained "human tampering with nature."<sup>38</sup> Such a shift in world view toward mechanism and technological advancement allows human beings to surpass basic biological limits.<sup>39</sup> We are now not only able to preserve life and delay death, we can and do undermine the intrinsic restraints of human population growth on the planet.

What happens, however, when the body rebels or refuses to succumb to a medical regimen? What happens to the patient, and to the physician too? Our medical model is enigmatic, because its philoso-

34. Berry, "The Ecozoic Era."

35. Ibid.

36. Frédérique de Vignemont, "Embodiment, Ownership and Disownership," *Consciousness and Cognition*, (2010), 1-11.

37. Barron, "Why Aren't More Doctors Phenomenologists?" 40.

38. Leder, "The Tale of Two Bodies," 20.

39. Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 27.

phies and theories are derived from the dead even though our post-Cartesian angst is one of preserving the machine as long as medical technology will permit.

Berry suggests that we abide in a certain and ubiquitous resentment against our human condition because of our tendency to believe that “life might be other than it is.”<sup>40</sup> For Berry, it is this resentment that compels our efforts to transcend the “*very conditions of life* through our scientific technologies.”<sup>41</sup> Such an attitude is met with another supporting belief, or the third “transcendence”:<sup>42</sup> the primacy of belief in *redemption*. When the body turns away from *being* to *dying* and becomes master of the medical doctor and the patient too, we turn to the belief that we will be restored. We are, after all, according to this belief, not of this place. Nor are we of this body. We are only sojourners biding time as incarnate. For Western modern medicine, then, “the dead body is frequently the symbol of failure and termination of the therapeutic project. The business of the doctor is to attend the living, not the dead, and to preserve life in all but extreme circumstances.”<sup>43</sup> When the body refuses the therapeutic project, modern medicine must step aside. The work of the human thereafter is to shed the body so that the soul may be atoned.

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40. *Ibid.*, 28.

41. *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Leder, “The Tale of Two Bodies,” 17. Thomas Berry elaborated on the impact of the fourteenth century European plague that came to be known as Black Death upon the Western human psyche. In response to this catastrophic event and other social ills of the time, the Western psyche responded, according to Berry, in two distinct directions: first, toward a “religious redemption out of a tragic world,” and second, toward greater control over nature in a similar attempt to escape suffering. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 125.

### The Ecozoic Body: An Embedded, Ensouled Flesh<sup>44</sup>

What if we were to begin not only our imaginings, but our phenomenological *being*, with human body as a subject living-lived body? What if, in other words, being *with* the human body prompts in the human being a living-communion and context so eloquently and with such immediacy as to urge none other than a revivification of all modes of human *beingness*? It is, after all, by way of the body that the human comes into *being* moment-by-moment. How might the human call forth such an embodiment of being? I leave this question open, though not without providing further context for inquiring into such a mode of *being*.

By *subject*, I am referring to the body as *sentient*, which is to say that the human body is animated with organizing principles that enable the body to both sustain its living organism and to become the fullest expression of its *biological endowment*.<sup>45</sup> By *living*, I am referring to the moment-to-moment *dynamism* of the organismic body coupled with the surrounding environment.<sup>46</sup> Such a dynamic coupling shapes both the body and the *surrounding milieu in an always ongoing process of reciprocity, a process that is unending*.<sup>47</sup> By *lived*, I am referring to the *experience* of bodily *being*, which is moment-to-moment and that which becomes living bodily memory and meaning. Such a *sentient, dynamic, experiential* ontology of the human body as embedded within the whole living cosmos ensouls once again human flesh. I suggest this mode of subject living-lived

44. I borrow the term "flesh" from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). Of particular importance to this paper is Merleau-Ponty's position that flesh is the living threshold of being and world, a dimensional permeable organismic boundary that distinguishes being and dissolves the dichotomous division of inner and outer, serving instead, as the pervious, living-lived threshold that serves the dynamic coupling of bodily-being with surrounding milieu.

45. Lyn Margulis, "The Conscious Cell," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 929(1), (2001), 55-70.

46. See Thompson, *Mind in Life*, and Johnson and Rohrer, "We are Live Creatures."

47. Thompson, *Mind in Life*. See also Shel Drake, *Morphic Resonance*, and Shel Drake, "Morphic Fields."

body is consistent with Berry's appeal to the human being and to Western modern medicine.

In her editorial preface to Berry's *Evening Thoughts*, Mary Evelyn Tucker offers: "This is what Berry does for each of us, places us in the vast matrix of life so we experience kinship once again. He helps us to find our way home."<sup>48</sup> Berry encourages such kinship even in modern medicine. How does kinship find its expression, however, in Western modern medicine if the body is perceived as paradoxical, obstructive, and, in its connection to a self, problematic? How does modern medicine move away from dogmatism and strict empiricism to a living-lived bodily subject-to-subject philosophy and practice?<sup>49</sup> Is such an approach called for in the context of a human and other-than-human flourishing?

Berry insists that it is. He calls forth an ecological medical model, one that not only allows for an embedded subjectivity, but also urges an understanding of the always dynamic relationship of subject with subject—human with human, human with other-than-human.<sup>50</sup> A medical philosophy and theoretical construct whose ontological understanding is one of bodily subjectivity not only rectifies the medical body paradox, but it also reconciles strangely abstruse life-alienating tendencies in the context of an institution whose role it is to support life. A truly life-supporting medical system likewise acknowledges biological limits, natural cycles of waxing and waning, and the always dynamic reciprocity of human with other-than-human spheres. Berry writes: "In prior centuries, human illness was experienced within the well-being of the natural world with its abundance of air and water, and foods grown in fertile soul."<sup>51</sup> He adds:

The profession of medicine must now consider its role, not only

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48. Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Editor's Preface," in Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 10.

49. For more on dogmatism and empiricism in the history of Western medicine, see Richard A. Zaner, "Parted Bodies, Departed Souls: The Body in Ancient Medicine and Anatomy," in *The Body in Medical Thought and Practice*, ed. Drew Leder (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 101-122.

50. Berry, "The Ecozoic Era."

51. Berry, *The Great Work*, 67.

within the context of human society, but in the context of the Earth process. A healing Earth is prerequisite for the healing of the human. Adjustment of the human to the conditions and restraints of the natural world constitutes the primary medical prescription for human well-being. The medical profession needs to establish a way of sustaining the species as well as the individual if the human is to be viable as a species within the community of species.<sup>52</sup>

An ontological communion with our subject living-lived body embeds the human being within the broader *web of life*,<sup>53</sup> and permits us a return to the tacit understanding that we are a vast community of subjects,<sup>54</sup> each interacting and interdependent with the viability and flourishing of all life. Our body is “ensouled” flesh—*of* the world, *in* the world.

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52. Ibid.

53. Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems* (New York: Random House, 1996).

54. Berry, “The Ecozoic Era.”

