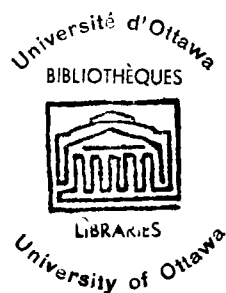


THE THEOLOGY OF A. N. WHITEHEAD:

A CRITICAL EVALUATION

by Paul B. Daly

Thesis presented to the Faculty
of Philosophy of the University
of Ottawa as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the de-
gree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

The Twentieth Century has not been at all hospitable to metaphysics. The ultimately general perspective on reality has largely given way to the partial view and the limited issue. However, one might well suspect that this situation is due, not so much to a lack of interest in the larger issues, as to a breakdown of confidence in our ability to validly cope with such issues. Yet, in the midst of this mistrust of reason, we have little hesitation in fashioning opinions about God and man, religion and morality, life and death, presumably because we must somehow adopt some views.

It seems that this has been particularly true in the case of our thinking about God. Whether or not we have been able to assent to God's existence, most entertain some notion, vague though it may be, about such a being. In fact, there has been considerable discussion in recent times about God, or, at least, about the notion of God. And throughout this discussion, the theology of Alfred North Whitehead has always figured prominently. Among the various theological views on the intellectual stage, Professor Whitehead's has been one of the few presented in the context of a general metaphysic. His is a highly intriguing, though sketchily developed, theology, which forms an integral part of a metaphysical interpretation of the facts of experience.

The present author regards any such metaphysical endeavor to be a step in the right direction. We can not turn our backs on metaphysics for long. But, in addition, the Philosophy of Organism of A. N. Whitehead must be regarded as an especially substantial and important intellectual

statement. He is most certainly one of the outstanding philosophers of this century, and, indeed, time will probably prove him to be one of the great figures in the history of philosophy. Thus, if it is true that we only relinquish an interest in metaphysics at our own cultural peril, and if it is also true that any systematic discussion about God requires a metaphysical context, then one can scarcely neglect the serious consideration of the Philosophy of Organism.

This dissertation addresses itself to Whitehead's theological thought. In effect, two questions are being asked of his theology:

- 1) How does it emerge in the context of his general metaphysic? and
- 2) How is it supported by the facts of experience? The first question calls for exposition, the second for evaluation. Thus, the scope and limits of this dissertation are defined. Its focal point is Whitehead's theology, which is seen in the framework of his metaphysical interpretation of the facts of experience and evaluated in the ultimate terms of the facts of experience themselves. Therefore, special consideration will be given to Whitehead's estimation of the empirical facts which underlie his entire philosophic position. The treatment of his general metaphysic will be developed no more than is judged necessary in function of understanding his discussion of the divine being.

In keeping with this general plan, then, the dissertation opens with a general background chapter following the career of Whitehead's intellectual development from his beginnings in mathematics and logic to his culmination in metaphysics. The second chapter endeavors to present the salient features of Whitehead's metaphysical interpretation

of experience with a view toward the emergence of his discussion of God within the context of his general position. This discussion is studied in the third chapter (God's existence) and in the fourth chapter (God's nature). Chapter Three presents Whitehead's argument for the existence of a uniquely functioning actual entity, while Chapter Four reconstructs Whitehead's description of the nature of such a unique actuality in terms both of general metaphysics and of the special function such a being must perform. Finally, Chapter Five is given to critical evaluation. The pivotal point of this evaluation is a criticism of Whitehead's empirical point of departure in the development of his metaphysic in general and of his theology in particular. Another reading of the facts of common experience is presented as being more adequate. On the basis of this new empirical reading, certain important metaphysical and theological notions in Whitehead's position are evaluated. The central contention of this criticism will be that Whitehead's inadequate empirical analysis has led him into a form of essentialism, whereas the empirical facts, viewed properly, indicate, rather, an existential interpretation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEXT

Introduction

No man's work can be adequately understood unless it is seen in the general context in which it was actually evolved. This first chapter is devoted to the brief treatment of certain general points concerning Professor Whitehead and his work which are deemed necessary to keep in mind for the proper appreciation of his mature thought.

As is the case with anyone, but especially with one such as Whitehead, having spent his life in academic circles, there is an intellectual journey through the years. One's mature thought has a history, and that of Whitehead has had a rich and varied one. This means that a correct grasp of his later writings is impossible without some general acquaintance with this development.

Moreover, it is of basic importance to investigate how one regards the nature and scope of one's own work. In this connection Whitehead was almost profuse in expressing what he understood by "philosophy," and what he was trying to accomplish in his philosophical thinking. A philosopher and his thought must at least be appraised on their own grounds.

Accordingly, in this first chapter, two background considerations will be taken up. Firstly, Whitehead's intellectual development will be outlined. This will involve a sketch of the phases of that development and a discussion of the various outside influences at

work. Secondly, there will be an investigation of Whitehead's notion of philosophy, its nature and method, and a look at his own philosophical aims. This last point will conclude with the presentation of his basic philosophical intuition, and thus will introduce the main body of this thesis.

Whitehead's Development

The Three Phases

In attempting to outline the intellectual history of Alfred North Whitehead, there are two levels on which one might proceed. In the words of M. H  lal, one might approach Whitehead's career "from the outside," that is, by tracing "the merely external direction of his evolution."¹ Such an approach, in other words, would investigate varied problems to which Whitehead addressed himself, their logical connections and the gradual expansion of their scope. This is a fairly straightforward process resulting in a division of Whitehead's work into three more or less distinct phases corresponding to his years at the Universities of Cambridge, then of London, and finally of Harvard.

On the other hand, one can seek "the interior meaning" of this evolution in terms of its "profound motivations."² By identifying the underlying motives which urged Whitehead on at every turn, one will be

¹G. H  lal, "Le Sens du D  veloppement philosophique de Whitehead," Dialogue, Vol. II (1963-4), p. 399.

²Ibid.

in a position to understand the continual development of his thought. More precisely, by bringing to light the basic guiding principles constituting, so to speak, Whitehead's peculiar bent of mind, we can then understand his entire life's work as one whole which, through successive periods, gradually realized the demands of those guiding principles. If this can be done satisfactorily, the result will cast light upon the question of influences on Whitehead's thinking, as well as upon the relation of his early work in mathematics and the philosophy of physical science to his later metaphysical work. Of course, the "interior approach" can only be realized in connection with the external or "problematic approach." It is only by observing Whitehead in action that one can discern the motivations governing his thinking.

The great difficulty in discovering these underlying principles which guided the whole of Whitehead's thought is pointed up by Lowe. "His own intellectual history never interested Whitehead."³ As a result, the reader who approaches his works chronologically, though easily struck by the gradual enlargement of Whitehead's thinking, must make a certain effort to grasp even the logical expansion of his problems, to say nothing of discovering his fundamental guiding principles. As Lowe continues further on, "[t]he observer can construct no neat picture of the whole. He can, by studying the so-called non-philosophical writings, avoid the deeper pitfalls; and he can, on the basis of the published

³v. Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962, p. 196.

evidence, draw probable conclusions."⁴ Needless to say, the complete task of doing so is beyond the scope of the present thesis. What follows is nothing else than a sketch.

As a structure to guide the outline, the author will follow the commonplace divisions of Whitehead's work into three periods: "A first devoted primarily to mathematical and logical investigations, a second to the philosophy of physical science, and a third to metaphysics and the historical role of metaphysical ideas in civilization."⁵

The Mathematical Period

The earliest and most lengthy period of Whitehead's professional activity was in the field of pure mathematics and was given mainly to establishing the logical foundations of pure mathematics. The task was to reveal pure mathematics to be a formal calculus of propositions rigidly deduced from definitions which, in turn, are conventional generalizations of concepts logically basic to all thinking.

This program was foreshadowed as early as 1898, the year Whitehead published A Treatise on Universal Algebra, with Applications.⁶

⁴v. Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, p. 196.

⁵v. Lowe, "Whitehead's Philosophical Development," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, Paul A. Schilpp (ed.), The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. III, (1st. ed.), Evanston and Chicago, Northwestern University, 1941, p. 17. This long article, an excellently detailed account of Whitehead's development, is substantially the content of Part II of Lowe's book cited above, in which the article underwent some minor alterations and was extended to include the latest (1941) publications of Whitehead.

⁶New York, Hafner Publishing Co., 1960.

The "applications" refer to his analysis of the general concept of space. But Whitehead's main concern in this work was to further the efforts of men such as Grassmann, Boole, and Hamilton. In his own words,

It is the object of the present work to exhibit the new algebras, in their detail, as being useful engines for the deduction of propositions; and in their several subordination to dominant ideas, as being representative symbolisms of fundamental conceptions.⁷

It is by freeing mathematics from the narrow confines of number, quantity and experienced space that its ultimate nature is going to be realized.

"Mathematics in its widest signification is the development of all types of formal, necessary, deductive reasoning."⁸ Mathematics thus developed as various pure calculi of symbolic reasoning can serve as a logical instrument in the investigation of "every province of thought, or of external experience, in which the succession of thoughts, or of events can be definitely ascertained and precisely stated."⁹

What Whitehead is here attempting to do in mathematics already reveals a mind with a twofold appreciation. On the one hand, he values the function of reason. On the other, he evidences an awareness of the autonomy and ultimate importance of concrete reality. Although, as shall be seen, Whitehead's rationalist tendency is considerably more evident than his empirical interest, nevertheless it is noteworthy that the latter is definitely present.

⁷New York, Hafner Publishing Co., 1960, p. viii.

⁸Idem, p. vi.

⁹Idem, p. viii.

Two main aspects of Whitehead's rationalist mentality already appear in this earliest work. One side of his rationalism is the urge to unify by seeking the common ground, gaining the synoptic view. Thus Whitehead attempts to work out in his Treatise the common and ultimate concepts and principles underlying the different algebraic calculi. This demand for rational coherence at the top is again in evidence in the opus magnum of this period, Principia Mathematica,¹⁰ authored conjointly by Whitehead and Russell. This great undertaking is a prolonged endeavor to develop pure mathematics from its roots in logic. Its execution involves overcoming the inconsistencies among existing mathematical premises through the discovery of ideas and axioms sufficiently general to allow the smooth deduction of all important mathematical propositions. The result is the unification of the various branches of pure mathematics.

While midway into this joint effort, Whitehead published a memoir entitled: "On Mathematical Concepts of the Material World."¹¹ In it he proposes five different schemes or "concepts" of the physical world and thereby gives another striking example of his rationalist bias for generality and coherence. The first scheme is that of classical physics with its ultimate instants of time, points of space, and particles of matter. Among its inconsistencies, as Whitehead understood

¹⁰Cambridge, At the University Press, Vol. I, 1910; Vol. II, 1912; Vol. III, 1913.

¹¹Philosophic Transactions, Royal Society of London, series A, Vol. CCV, 1906, p. 465-525.

this conception, was a theory of space totally unrelated to a theory of matter. The other four conceptions were proposed as alternative possible ways of overcoming the traditional dichotomy between matter and space. Whitehead's interest here is that of a logician with the rationalist desire to establish a coherent set of basic concepts. He is especially concerned with the final two conceptions which attempt to define points of space in terms of the properties of matter. Such coherence allows for the development of Euclidean geometry from basic physical concepts. This is the first statement in Whitehead's effort to integrate ordinary geometry into the physical sciences, a project that will continue to concern him for some time.

Another side of this rationalist turn of Whitehead's mind is his concern that all these efforts at generalization and integration be truly relevant to all areas of human experience and thought. In connection with the role of mathematical calculi, he declares that it is "to facilitate reasoning in connection with every province of thought, or of external experience."¹² The point being made is not that Whitehead considered formal schemes of thought to be relevant, but that he considered this relevance to be important. His purpose in seeking the synoptic vision is not to build castles, but rather to correct and to guide the assumptions and procedures of scientific thinking. This intention is plain as he begins the 1906 memoir. "The object of this memoir is to initiate the mathematical investigation of various possible

¹²Treatise, p. viii.

ways of conceiving the nature of the material world."¹³

And so a definite rationalist bias on Whitehead's part is outstanding in this early period. It is a tendency having two aspects, the one toward ultimate generalization and coherence, the other toward the correction and guidance of thought. Whitehead's mind strives for unity of vision by generalizing its viewpoint and thereby tries to understand the particular or the less general in terms of the more general. In a sense this is the philosophic mentality.

The second aspect of this rationalist tendency just discussed is significant beyond itself. It allows Whitehead's mind to escape the type of rationalism that is closed in upon its own abstractions. It is thus that he kept himself open, even in his mathematical reflections, to the world in which we live. Whitehead's sense of the empirical has already been noticed. It is clearly evidenced again at one point in his 1906 memoir. In criticizing the classical concept of the physical world, a task undertaken from a logical point of view, he nevertheless calls experience to the witness stand.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the above issue of the classical concept, if only we limit ourselves to the consideration of an unchanging world of space. Unfortunately, it is a changing world to which the complete concept must apply.¹⁴

By this remark, Whitehead shows he understands that the facts of experience have a critical relevance to scientific theory, and that theory, in turn, must be relevant to experience. In this period, all we

¹³"On Mathematical Concepts," p. 465.

¹⁴Idem, p. 473.

need expect as testimony of Whitehead's empirical sense are such brief comments as this scattered sparsely. After all, his intention at this time was to conduct himself as a mathematician and logician.¹⁵

A rationalist turn of mind. An empirical sense. Finally, it seems that a third basic character of Whitehead's mentality shows itself at this early stage. He reveals an interest in the operations and growth of the mind involved in the process of learning. In fact, this awareness of what might be called the element of subjectivity seems to form an organic link between Whitehead's rational bias and his feeling for the experiential. There are two educational papers published during his early London years which point to this fact. In "The Place of Mathematics in a Liberal Education," and in connection with the role of the teacher of mathematics, Whitehead remarks:

We have really two general aims before us. In the first place, we have to teach what logic is.[...]We have to make our pupils feel by an acquired instinct what it means when they see it.[...]In the second place, we have to make them understand that logic applies to life.¹⁶

The same idea appears the following year in Whitehead's presidential address to the London branch of the Mathematical Association:

The goal to be aimed at is that the pupil should acquire familiarity with abstract thought, should realize how it applies to particular concrete circumstances, and should know

¹⁵V. Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, p. 159.

¹⁶Journal of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics for the Southeastern Part of England, Vol. I, n. 1, 1912. Included in Science and Philosophy, Paterson, Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1964, p. 187.

how to apply general methods to its logical investigation.¹⁷

Here we see not merely Whitehead the mathematician. Rather we see someone who understands the dimensions of mentality and who conceives it as being poised between the abstract and the concrete. The important point to notice at this juncture is that, while still chiefly given to theoretical mathematics, Whitehead was also deeply interested in the education of the mind.

To conclude this brief investigation into Whitehead's earliest period, it is suggested that his thought reveals three fundamental characteristics which might be named: a rationalist bias, an empirical sense, and an awareness of subjectivity. Are these characteristics in evidence throughout the remainder of his intellectual career?

The Philosophy of Science Period

In the period just considered, we saw Whitehead concerned with logical and mathematical questions: the logical nature of algebraic calculi; the unification of the branches of mathematics; and especially the demonstration of Euclidean geometry as the science of physical space. Even in his educational lectures at this time he was mainly interested in the role of mathematics in the curriculum and how it should be taught.

The phase we are now beginning to investigate has a double significance. Whitehead's underlying concern in this second period of

¹⁷Mathematical Gazette, Vol. VII, n. 104, 1913. Included in Aims of Education and Other Essays, New York, The New American Library (Mentor Books), 1949, p. 82.

his development lies in direct continuity with his earlier period. Beyond the investigations which occupied him immediately during this second period, he was ultimately attacking "the muddle geometry had got into."¹⁸ By this he meant its traditional foundation in a set of a priori concepts and premises having no obvious connection with experienced space, and consequently having no connection with physical science. The justifiability of geometry as the science of space, a question which had concerned Whitehead since his 1906 memoir (as far as his published writings indicate), became acute as he approached Volume IV of Principia Mathematica, on Geometry, which he alone was to write. It was with the intention of eventually giving a sound statement of the principles of geometry in an age of non-metrical geometries and of the Theory of Relativity, that Whitehead undertook the philosophical investigation of scientific problems which occupies his published work during this period. What is meant by "space"? This was the question whose answer was fundamental to the fourth volume of the Principia. As he addressed himself to it, Whitehead began to see that its solution directly depended on a proper scientific concept of the physical world, of which space is only an element. This approach is to be expected from someone convinced that geometry is an integral part of physical science, the science of the physical world.

And so it was that Whitehead's analysis of what is meant by "space" led him again to a criticism of the classical concept of nature--

¹⁸V. Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, p. 193. From an interview Lowe had with Whitehead in 1937.

this time from an epistemological standpoint--and finally to the statement of his own concept of nature: a scheme of generalizations intended to be both coherent and relevant to the facts of experience.

This period, then, has two phases. The first consists in an epistemological criticism of the classical picture of the material world with the elaboration of his own concept being secondary and hesitant. The second phase is dominated by a developed presentation of a new concept of nature into which his criticisms of the classical concept are interwoven. The published works of the period as a whole date from 1914 to 1923. In keeping with the abbreviated character of this survey, what follows will concentrate on the culminating trilogy: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge, The Concept of Nature, and The Principle of Relativity, published in 1919, 1920, and 1922 respectively.

Before turning to these later works, however, a series of scientific papers dating from 1914 to 1917 merit brief attention. They are mainly concerned with the epistemology behind the concept of nature and the defective epistemology behind the classical concept of nature. There is a key passage in which Whitehead expresses his basic approach.

I insist on the radically untidy, ill-adjusted character of the fields of actual experience from which science starts. To grasp this fundamental truth is the first step in wisdom, when constructing a philosophy of science. This fact is concealed by the influence of language, moulded by science, which foists on us exact concepts as though they represented the immediate deliverances of experiences. The result is, that we imagine that we have immediate experience of a world of perfectly defined objects implicated in perfectly defined events which, as known to us by the direct deliverance of our senses, happen at exact instants of time, in a space formed by exact points, without parts and without magnitude:

the neat, trim, tidy, exact world which is the goal of scientific thought.

My contention is, that this world is a world of ideas, and that its internal relations are relations between abstract concepts, and that the elucidation of the precise connection between this world and the feelings of actual experience is the fundamental question of scientific philosophy. The question which I am inviting you to consider is this: How does exact thought apply to the fragmentary, vague continua of experience?¹⁹

This quotation is valuable for two reasons. Firstly, it is an admirable statement of the problem Whitehead was concerned with during the rest of his life, but especially during the early years of this second period. It centers on the justification of the abstract scheme of the material world in terms of points, instants, and point-particles. Secondly, it reveals the mind of Whitehead as he moves into his first philosophical period. Once again we see his rationalism in its twofold tendency toward abstract systematization and relevance, in this case with respect to the concrete (whereas purely formal mathematical schemes were only asked to be relevant to less general schemes of thinking). But what is more in evidence now is Whitehead's empirical sense. Sense experience reveals to us the actual world we live in and such experience is the datum and criterion of all further knowledge about the world. And in this epistemological context, the rational and empirical dimensions of Whitehead's thinking are presented in terms of the knowing subject. In particular, the close, fundamental relation between subjectivity and the empirical is insisted upon.

¹⁹Aims of Education, p. 104.

Moving to the latter half of this second period, Whitehead's efforts are seen to converge on the problem of constructing a new concept of nature to replace the Newtonian scheme. His epistemological criticism of this scheme had gradually shown him that its abstractions, as traditionally understood, had no empirical foundation. Such vacuous abstractions must be replaced by an exact set of concepts which not only possess a strict coherence, but which is also shown to be relevant to the facts of experience because it has been derived from experience.

The way out of the perplexities, as to the ultimate data of science in terms of which physical explanation is ultimately to be expressed, is to express the essential scientific concepts of time, space and material as issuing from fundamental relations between events and from recognitions of the characters of events. These relations of events are those immediate deliverances of observations which are referred to when we say that events are spread through time and space.²⁰

This is the heart of Whitehead's program for rebuilding the concept of nature. The scientific scheme must be an exact way of expressing something of the physical world as experienced. On its rational side, the emphasis is upon relevance. On its empirical side, the emphasis is upon the analysis of observational experience which discloses nature as being ultimately composed of events and their characters. Whitehead's interest in perception theory is still a main concern.

Before giving attention to Whitehead's twofold analysis of nature into events and their characters, a more immediate question occurs: What does Whitehead mean by "nature"?

²⁰An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge, 2nd ed., Cambridge, At the University Press, (1st. ed., 1919), 1925, p. 8.

Nature is that which we observe in perception through the senses. In this sense-perception we are aware of something which is not thought and which is self-contained for thought. This property of being self-contained for thought lies at the base of natural science. It means that nature can be thought of as a closed system whose mutual relations do not require the expression of the fact that they are thought about.²¹

The field of investigation for physical or natural science is limited to that of which we are aware in sense observation. By thinking about nature without thinking about thought, natural science is thinking "homogeneously" about nature. Whitehead defines nature further by excluding from it not only thought but also sense-awareness.

Accordingly nature as disclosed in sense-perception is self-contained as against sense-awareness, in addition to being self-contained as against thought. I will also express this self-containedness of nature by saying that nature is closed to mind.²²

In this way, Whitehead excludes conscious subjectivity from the realm of nature, and he conceives this latter as a self-contained network of events with their characters. Thus the common object of the natural sciences has a unity and a structure of its own independently of any perceiving mind.

But, on the other hand, the "nature" Whitehead is here defining is not to be taken as an exhaustive account of the whole of reality perceived beyond the perceiving subject. There are "moral [and] aesthetic values whose apprehension is vivid in proportion to self-conscious

²¹The Concept of Nature, The University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor Books), 1957, p. 3.

²²Idem, p. 4.

activity."²³ Such values, however, are likewise excluded from the object of the natural sciences, the reason being, it seems, that values are not given to us in sense-awareness. They are not disclosed in nature precisely as the terminus of sense-perception.

I am concerned exclusively with the generalizations of widest scope which can be effected respecting that which is known to us as the direct deliverance of sense-awareness.²⁴

The new scientific concept of nature Whitehead is working toward will consist in these "generalizations of widest scope" drawn from nature as the terminus of sense experience.

Turning now to what sense-awareness discloses nature to be, Whitehead is mainly struck by its passage.

[...]the immediate fact for awareness is the whole occurrence of nature. It is nature as an event present for sense-awareness, and essentially passing. There is no holding nature still and looking at it.[...]Thus the ultimate fact for sense-awareness is an event.²⁵

Nature, the terminus of sense-awareness, is immediately presented as an occurrence with a unity of its own. Elsewhere Whitehead calls it a "complete general fact," that is, "all nature now present as disclosed in [. . .]sense-awareness."²⁶ But his technical term for such a complete occurrence is "duration."

²³Concept of Nature, p. 5.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Idem, p. 14-15.

²⁶Idem, p. 52.

Our sense-awareness posits for immediate discernment a certain whole, here called a 'duration'; thus a duration is a definite natural entity.²⁷

The word "posits" is here not to be taken in its strong sense. It is clear from the complete text that Whitehead considers "durations" to be durations of nature. By calling these ultimate facts "durations," Whitehead is pointing out their temporal thickness. In his words, "a duration is a temporal slab of nature."²⁸ This is so because durations have taken their name from that most obvious instance of an ultimate natural fact: the content of an act of observation. But durations are not to be restricted to the speciously present contents of de facto acts of perception. Any concept of all nature as immediately known is always a concept of some duration though it may be enlarged in its temporal thickness beyond the possible specious present of any being known to us as existing within nature.²⁹ Just as Whitehead's realist convictions tell him that the contents of our acts of sense perception constitute "natural entities," so also he doesn't hesitate to extend the term "duration" to include units of nature of any temporal extent whatever. And our experience of the specious present is assumed to give immediate evidence of the reality of such temporal entities in nature.

²⁷Concept of Nature, p. 53.

²⁸"Time, Space, and Material," as reprinted in The Interpretation of Science: Selected Essays, A. H. Johnson (ed.), Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1961, p. 58.

²⁹Concept of Nature, p. 56.

Now a duration is not only a complete occurrence. It is also a complex event comprising within itself more limited events. And by understanding its composition, the sense in which a duration is a "complete fact" becomes clearer.

This whole event is discriminated by us into partial events. We are aware of an event which is our bodily life, of an event which is the course of nature within this room, and³⁰ of a vaguely perceived aggregate of other partial events.

In accord with the psychological doctrine of the specious present, the whole which is immediately perceived is a complex whole with its parts being more or less discerned. And as to the discernment of these partial events Whitehead proposes a general sort of classification:

This general fact [duration] at once yields for our apprehension two factors, which I will name, the 'discerned' and the 'discernable.' The discerned is comprised of those elements of the general fact which are discriminated with their own individual peculiarities. It is the field directly perceived. But the entities of this field have relations to other entities which are not particularly discriminated in this individual way. These other entities are known merely as the relata in relation to the entities of the discerned field.³¹

Discerned events within the duration are those parts which are immediately distinguished because their sensible characters are open to direct observation. This group of variously qualified events within the duration constitute the portion of the specious present directly known in sense-awareness. Thus is perceived the event which is a chair enduring through the present duration and maintaining spatial relations

³⁰Concept of Nature, p. 15.

³¹Idem, p. 49.

with the desk, the sounding typewriter, and the dimensions of the room, all of which are themselves discerned events within the same specious present.

But the factors in nature of which we have this peculiar sense-awareness are known as not comprising all the factors which together form the whole complex of related entities within the general fact there for discernment.³²

Beyond the small world directly sensed, there is a vast unbounded world of events in the specious present which are known because the events directly discriminated maintain spatial relationships to them. But since they are known only through such spatial relations of discriminated events, and not perceived in their own individual characters, they are classified as "discernable." In this way, the complex present duration is perceived to be a spatial continuum through a definite period of time. It is perceived in the present both as a whole and as a complex structure of spatially related events, among which some are immediately discriminated while an unbounded stretch of others is included only as a spatial relatum, although the boundary between the discerned and the discernable is always vaguely drawn.

The classification of events in nature as "discerned" and "discernable" is not restricted to the spatial relations of events within the same immediate present. Discriminated events disclose temporal relations as well. First of all, there is the element of simultaneity within the present duration. "The unity of this general present fact is expressed by the concept of simultaneity. The general fact is the

³²Concept of Nature, p. 50.

whole simultaneous occurrence of nature which is now for sense-awareness."³³ Simultaneity is a natural relation that limits the temporal thickness of a duration and of the events contained therein to the present. Simultaneity is therefore a factor disclosed in sense-awareness. Secondly, sense-awareness also perceives an unlimited temporal world extending backward and forward beyond the temporal bounds of the specious present. In other words, the discernable events related to present discerned events include "events in the remote past as well as events in the future. We are aware of these as the far off periods of unbounded time."³⁴

And so each event, as it is discriminated, is known to be embedded essentially in an unbounded spatio-temporal structure of events. This essential relatedness among events is called by Whitehead their "significance."

'Significance' is the relatedness of things. To say that significance is experience, is to affirm that perceptual knowledge is nothing else than an apprehension of the relatedness of things, namely of things in their relations and as related.³⁵

"Significance" is a general name for relatedness and it emphasizes one term as pointing to another term. Any event, whether complete or partial, is significant of every other event. We perceive nature in its inter-relatedness.

³³Concept of Nature, p. 53.

³⁴Idem, p. 52.

³⁵Principles of Natural Knowledge, p. 12.

Events are significant of one another in two fundamental ways, corresponding to two basic types of relation between events: "extension" and "cogredience." Extension is a property of events, both complete and partial, whereby one may include another. Event E extends over event E' when E is a whole of which E' is a part. The relation of extension holds mutually between the whole and the part. "This relation of extension is the common root from which extension in time and extension in space both spring. It is the essence of externality."³⁶ "Cogredience" is a more special property of events whereby a partial event is definitely located within the whole event which is its duration. This relation implies that of extension. Whitehead speaks of cogredience especially in connection with that partial event he terms the "percipient event," which is, "roughly speaking, the bodily life of the perceiver. Throughout a sufficiently small duration the percipient event is unequivocally 'here.'"³⁷ However, each event within the duration is cogredient with it and is thereby locally fixed. It is due to the property of cogredience that perception is perception "here" of other events which are "there." Both extension and cogredience, as properties of events, are immediately known in sense-awareness.

In addition to events, complete and partial, interrelated spatio-temporally, sense-awareness discloses another class of natural entities called "objects."

³⁶The Interpretation of Science, p. 59.

³⁷Idem, p. 62.

An object is an ingredient in the character of some event. In fact the character of an event is nothing but the objects which are ingredient in it and the ways in which those objects make their ingression into the event.³⁸

The basic distinction between events and objects is that the former pass whereas the latter are permanent. Their permanence is not necessarily the absolute permanence of always being in nature, but at least the relative permanence of persisting through passing events. The awareness of objects in nature, equally immediate as that of events, is called "recognition." "It is impossible to recognize an event, because an event is essentially distinct from every other event. Recognition is an awareness of sameness."³⁹ It is this awareness of objects in events which allows the discernment of particular events. "The discrimination of nature is the recognition of objects amid passing events."⁴⁰

Whitehead speaks of objects as the "characters of events" or as "qualifying events," but he prefers "to look on objects and events as fundamentally different sorts of entities disclosed in nature with certain determinate relations to each other."⁴¹ Thus their relation is essentially different from the traditional substance-accident structure. Both are equally basic types of natural entity. The general relation of objects to events is "ingression."

³⁸Concept of Nature, p. 143-44.

³⁹Idem, p. 143.

⁴⁰Idem, p. 144.

⁴¹The Interpretation of Science, p. 63.

The ingression of an object into an event is the way the character of the event shapes itself in virtue of the being of the object. Namely, the event is what it is, because the object is what it is; and when I am thinking of this modification of the event by the object, I call the relation between the two 'the ingression of the object into the event.'⁴²

Whitehead is quick to point out that an object never ingresses into one event alone. An object is ingredient in one event which is its "situation."⁴³ But situation is only a special form of ingression. An electron definitely situated modifies the entire electromagnetic field; the dinner on the table testified to the cook in the kitchen. The presence of an object anywhere in nature is registered "throughout its neighborhood, and its neighborhood is indefinite."⁴⁴ The ingression of an object is concentrated in its situation, but its situation is only the focal point of its influence throughout the whole of nature.

Although Whitehead believes there to be an indefinite number of kinds of objects, he expressly investigates three because of the special importance of their situations.⁴⁵ "Sense-objects" seem to be the traditional *sensa* perceived in sensation, such as shades of color, smells, touches, temperatures. "Perceptual-objects" are mainly the "things" in nature, the physical objects, such as trees, stars, chairs. They are known in the concurrence of sense-objects in the same situation

⁴²Concept of Nature, p. 144.

⁴³Idem, p. 147.

⁴⁴Idem, p. 145.

⁴⁵Idem, p. 149-60.

event. In fact, physical objects seem to be nothing else than such a concurrence in one situation. Finally, there are the "scientific objects" as electrons, atoms, molecules. These are a type of physical object which is not apparent, and so not known in sense-awareness, but which makes possible the ingression of sense-objects into nature.

This, then, is briefly the picture of physical nature as Whitehead sees it in the culminating years of his natural philosophy period. Nature is immediately known in sense-awareness as an interrelated system of events in which modifying objects are implicated. The whole spatio-temporal system of events with their objects is therefore essentially a process.

It is an exhibition of the process of nature that each duration happens and passes. The process of nature can also be termed the passage of nature.⁴⁶

This statement seems to hint that Whitehead considers the character of process or passage to underlie in some way even the ultimate physical entities of events and objects. In fact, passage is for Whitehead a metaphysical character.

In passage we reach a connexion of nature with the ultimate metaphysical reality. The quality of passage in durations is a particular exhibition in nature of a quality which extends beyond nature.⁴⁷

Although passage in general applies to mind as well as to nature, Whitehead, as a philosopher of science, is concerned with passage as it exhibits itself within nature--the passage of durations. This

⁴⁶Concept of Nature, p. 54.

⁴⁷Idem, p. 55.

restriction to nature is, of course, sufficient to secure his fundamental aim at this time of showing that geometry, the science of space, is an integral part of physical science. Whitehead considered himself to have laid the foundations of this position by showing space-time to be an essential function of durations and, so, of the passage of nature.

But upon this foundation the rest of his solution must be built, namely, to explain how the scientific concept of nature, including the principles of geometry, is derived from nature as known immediately in sense-awareness. This aspect of Whitehead's natural philosophy period revolves around his well known theory called "extensive abstraction." For present purposes, however, treatment of this theory need only be very brief, although its exposition covers the greater volume of Whitehead's published writing at this time.

Natural science has assumed as ultimate and self-evident a set of concepts having no obvious connection with nature as it is immediately known. Particles of matter, instants of time, points of space, all nature at an instant--these are the elements of the scientific picture of nature. For science to propose these theoretical elements in the structure of nature is referred to by Whitehead as "natural materialism."

The passing complex of factors which compose the fact which is the terminus of sense-awareness places before us nothing corresponding to the trinity of this natural materialism. This trinity is composed (i) of the temporal series of extensionless instants, (ii) of the aggregate of material entities, and (iii) of space which is the outcome of relations of matter.

There is a wide gap between these presuppositions of the intellectual theory of materialism and the immediate deliverances of sense-awareness. I do not question that this materialistic trinity embodies important characters

of nature. But it is necessary to express these characters in terms of the facts of experience.⁴⁸

The "wide gap" consists in the complexity of nature, on the one hand, and, on the other, the ideal simplicity of an instant of time, a point of space, and a particle at one instantaneous point. Whitehead does not desire to diminish the gap, but simply to insist that it is traversed, and, consequently, that our ideal simplifications are truly derived from, and relate to, nature as known in experience.

Whereas the relations between just two events "form an almost impenetrable maze,"⁴⁹ while at the same time knowledge must simplify nature if it is to be grasped, "the clue discovered by the common-sense of mankind and systematically utilized in science is what I have [. . .] called the law of convergence to simplicity by diminution of extent."⁵⁰ "Extent" here refers to the property of extension belonging to every event and which is expressed in spatio-temporal dimensions. It is precisely the complexity of this general class of relations which science is systematically trying to simplify. Whitehead believes that common as well as scientific thinking has long used the "law of convergence" to gain its exact, simple concepts about nature. But due to lack of awareness concerning the process of thought involved, man's thought constructions about nature were presumed to be natural elements themselves. This is the substitution of abstract simplifications for the

⁴⁸Concept of Nature, p. 71-72.

⁴⁹Idem, p. 78.

⁵⁰Idem, p. 78-79.

richness and complexity of nature as it truly is. Whitehead hopes to correct this distortion of nature, while at the same time presenting these concepts as based on our experience of nature. The result is a highly involved theory known as the "method of extensive abstraction."

Briefly, the method of extensive abstraction is grounded in the natural structure of physical reality. In accordance with his doctrine of events as basic natural spatio-temporal entities, Whitehead holds that "every event extends over other events, and every event is extended over by other events."⁵¹ Consequently there are no maximal or minimal events in nature. Nature is structured, therefore, as an "abstractive set," that is, a "set of events which possesses the two properties, (i) of any two members of the set one contains the other as a part, and (ii) there is no event which is a common part of every member of the set."⁵² An abstractive set is thus a natural entity the members of which form a certain route of spatio-temporally extensive events aligned in the asymmetrical and transitive order of container and contained. Further, since extension is a property of every event, there is no minimal event in an abstractive route, no minimally ultimate event common to all its containing events. An abstractive set does not converge to a limiting event. It is an infinite series of ever smaller events.

⁵¹Concept of Nature, p. 59.

⁵²Idem, p. 79.

The infinite character of an abstractive set toward its smaller end as postulated by Whitehead indicates that such a set is not, in its entirety, directly disclosed in sense-awareness. As was seen above in connection with discernment, directly disclosed events are those either immediately discerned or at least discernable through extensive relatedness with discerned events. But in neither case is sense-awareness presented with infinitely small events. Obviously, therefore, an abstractive set as Whitehead defines it is an extension in thought of the structure of nature as directly disclosed in sense-awareness. It is postulated by thought on the basis of sense experience.

As thought moves down the smaller reaches of such an abstractive set, and as the events considered progressively diminish in their spatio-temporal extent, there is suggested to thought a set of limit concepts, namely, the concepts of an instant of time, of a point of space, and of an event-particle, which is "the ideal of an event so restricted in its extension as to be without extension in space or extension in time."⁵³ But these concepts possess an ideal simplicity not existing in nature. Nature, in its abstractive sets, only approaches to such absolute simplicity. Thus Whitehead calls an abstractive set a "route of approximation" to such simplicity.

As a general result of this method, when one makes statements about points and instants and instantaneous event-particles, one is really talking about simplified sets of events in spatio-temporal

⁵³Concept of Nature, p. 172.

relations. Any such statement can be translated into a statement about elements of an abstractive set, which is a natural entity. A meaning can now be given to scientific concepts in terms of entities of the same general character as those which are directly disclosed in sense experience. "The difficulty is to express our meaning in terms of the immediate deliverances of sense-awareness, and I offer the above explanation as a complete solution of the problem."⁵⁴

This has merely been a general and much simplified account of a very intricate theory. The author has only undertaken the exposition at all because it represents Whitehead's effort in this period to integrate the ultimate concepts of physical science. It is of the highest significance to realize that he did this by reinstating this science on an empirical basis.

So far in the discussion of Whitehead's second period, the areas considered have chiefly brought out his rationalist and empiricist tendencies. A final aspect of Whitehead's thought during his natural philosophy years points up the element of subjectivity which, if anything, has become more pronounced than in his earlier period.

Although Whitehead laid great importance on restricting his consideration to nature apart from mind, still he breaches this restriction. It has already been seen that a "duration," though a natural entity, is nevertheless initially identified with the specious present of sense-awareness. "Our observational 'present' is what I call

⁵⁴Concept of Nature, p. 61-62.

a 'duration.'"⁵⁵ However, the wholeness of such a "present" is psychological rather than "natural" in Whitehead's sense. Again, in connection with his relativity theory, each event in nature can be considered a point of reference to the spatio-temporal system which is the whole of nature. When this focal event is that event through which a knowing subject has perceptive access to nature it is called a "percipient event." "Our 'percipient event' is that event included in our observational present which we distinguish as being in some peculiar way our standpoint for perception."⁵⁶ As a result, the percipient event is not merely the focus of natural perspective. It is also the focus of subjective consciousness.

As already stated, during this second period Whitehead was ultimately interested in elucidating the concept of space. This concern introduced him to the general reconstruction of the scientific concept of the physical world. He addressed himself to the ultimate data of physical science and to its basic concepts. In doing so, he was always aware of the limited nature of his task as compared with the whole of philosophy.

We are concerned only with Nature, that is, with the object of perceptual knowledge, and not with the synthesis of the knower with the known. This distinction is exactly that which separates natural philosophy from metaphysics.⁵⁷

And, again, Whitehead states that the ideal of philosophic research in

⁵⁵Concept of Nature, p. 186.

⁵⁶Idem, p. 187.

⁵⁷Principles of Natural Knowledge, p. vii.

general "is the attainment of some unifying concept which will set in assigned relationships within itself all that there is for knowledge, for feeling, and for emotion."⁵⁸ While these are not Whitehead's final words on the nature of philosophy, they already indicate his position that philosophy in its completely unqualified dimensions is characterized by its absolute generality of scope.

While reconstructing the basic concepts of physical science, Whitehead gradually became dissatisfied with the limitations he had imposed upon himself. He came to see that his concepts left more unsaid than they expressed and that, for want of a broader approach, he had failed to lay emphasis on the basic character of nature, namely, "process," a character it shares with the whole of reality. This dissatisfaction was expressed in the Preface to the second edition of The Principles of Natural Knowledge, dated August, 1924, and in the series of notes appended to the new edition. Looking back on his 1919 book from a 1924 standpoint, Whitehead remarks in Note II:

The book is dominated by the idea that the relation of extension has a unique preeminence and that everything can be got out of it. During the development of the theme, it gradually became evident that this is not the case, and cogredience had to be introduced. But the true doctrine, that 'process' is the fundamental idea, was not in my mind with sufficient emphasis.⁵⁹

Though he had spoken of the "passage of nature" and of the "creative force of existence," Whitehead tended to consider process in terms of the

⁵⁸Concept of Nature, p. 2.

⁵⁹Principles of Natural Knowledge, p. 202.

space-time continuum, which was for him a relational complex derivative from the basic character of events--their extensiveness. But, surely, process is more ultimate than this, since it envelops the knower as well as the known. "[T]here is a flux of things transcending that of nature - in the narrow sense in which nature is here construed."⁶⁰ He now saw that he could not adequately treat that part of reality called "nature" without expanding his investigations into the realm of metaphysics. The fundamental character of nature is "process," and process is coextensive with reality itself. From events as extensive to events as units of process--this is the shift in Whitehead's thinking that underlies his transition from the philosophy of science to metaphysics.

This transition, however, did not mean a rejection of his previous work. His dissatisfaction was not so much with what he had said (though he saw the need for some substantial recasting) as with what he had not said but would like very much to say. As Whitehead himself puts it: "I hope in the immediate future to embody the standpoint of these volumes in a more complete metaphysical study."⁶¹ This is the sort of thing to be expected from one who approaches everything from as broad a point of view as possible. This is the natural philosophical bent of one who progresses in his thought not by rejecting, nor even by opposing, but by expanding his point of view and assuming whatever is relevant from what went before.

⁶⁰Principles of Natural Knowledge, Note I, p. 201.

⁶¹Idem, Preface, 2nd. ed.. The volumes referred to are, in addition to Principles, The Concept of Nature and The Principle of Relativity.

Circumstances combined in Whitehead's life to spur this transition. Among them most notably was his acceptance of an invitation to a post in the Department of Philosophy of Harvard University. Upon informally being advised of the possible invitation, Whitehead wrote to a friend: "The post might give me a welcome opportunity of developing in systematic form my ideas on logic, the Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics, and some more general questions, half-philosophical and half practical, such as Education. [. . .] I should greatly value the opportunity of expressing in lectures and in less formal manner the philosophical ideas which have accumulated in my mind."⁶²

The Metaphysical Period

In this third period of Whitehead's intellectual career, he arrives at the full expansion of the three traits of mind whose expression has been followed through his first two periods. Approached from this point of view, Whitehead's final metaphysical period could hardly have been much otherwise than what it actually was: the time in which he developed in great detail a metaphysical vision embracing the whole of reality. Whitehead's published works of this period date from 1925 to 1941. During these years he was mainly concerned with the three basic procedures of philosophic method: 1) exploring the experiential basis of philosophic generalization; 2) elaborating a

⁶²From a letter to Mark Barr, quoted by W. E. Hocking in "Whitehead As I Knew Him," Journal of Philosophy, Vol. LVIII (Sept. 14, 1961), p. 508.

coherent and logical metaphysical scheme of general notions; 3) verifying the metaphysical scheme through its applications to widely diverse areas of human experience.⁶³ He engages in these three procedures with greater or less emphasis on one or another throughout the whole published work of this period.

In Science and the Modern World,⁶⁴ Whitehead continues his criticism of the traditional cosmology built upon the concepts of classical modern physical science. But at the same time he attempts to construct the general lines of a new world view on the basis of common experience. After reasserting the internal inter-connectedness of all things, Whitehead affirms that reality is process.

One all-pervasive fact, inherent in the very character of what is real is the transition of things, the passage one to another [sic].⁶⁵

The essential interrelatedness of things in the world is now seen to be a function of process. Immediate experience shows this. Using the common experience of someone seeing a landscape, the happening which is the act of seeing is really a dynamic process of unification of diverse factors in the world. "This unity [. . .] defines itself as a here and a now, and the things so gathered into the grasped unity have

⁶³Whitehead's philosophic method will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

⁶⁴New York, Macmillan Co., 1925.

⁶⁵Science and the Modern World, p. 135.

essential reference to other places and other times."⁶⁶ The "unity" of which Whitehead speaks is the prehensive event of his 1920 books. To its essential relatedness to other factors, he now adds an emphasis on its character of dynamic unification, or, in his expression, "prehensive unification" (SMW, p. 102). Events, or "actual occasions," are instances of prehensive unification. Interrelation is treated now in terms of "prehension," which is the taking account, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the essential character of a thing (SMW, p. 101).

The notion of an event as a prehensive unification of reality enables Whitehead to introduce the notion of value. Value is the aesthetic side of the passage of events. For this he has recourse to poetic experience. "Both Shelley and Wordsworth emphatically bear witness that nature cannot be divorced from its aesthetic values."⁶⁷ The value of an event is the shape of its prehensive unity, of its harmony. "'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. [. . .] Realization therefore is in itself the attainment of value."⁶⁸ This means that an event is an achievement for its own sake, and thus finality has a place in the process of reality.

In this connection, Whitehead introduced a substantial principle of activity. "Each individual activity [event, actual occasion] is nothing but the mode in which the general activity is individualized by

⁶⁶Science and the Modern World, p. 102.

⁶⁷Idem, p. 127.

⁶⁸Idem, p. 136.

the imposed conditions."⁶⁹ The "general" or "substantial" activity is nothing apart from actual events. Each event is an individual instance of the general activity, or rather, the general activity individualizes itself as the active character of every event.

Whitehead begins to develop the notion of possibility in the chapter entitled "Abstraction." Some account must be given of those qualifications of the process of nature, "such as colours, sounds, scents, geometrical characters, which are required for nature and are not emergent from it."⁷⁰ These qualifications of actual process are referred to a realm of essences called "eternal objects" (SMW, p. 227). "It is the foundation of the metaphysical position which I am maintaining that the understanding of actuality requires a reference to ideality. The two realms are intrinsically inherent in the total metaphysical situation."⁷¹ Eternal objects are possibilities for realization as qualifying characters of actual achievement.

Finally, Whitehead sketches his ideas on God. Experience shows that natural process generally exhibits a cosmic order. God takes a place in Whitehead's metaphysical scheme as the principle of cosmic order, or the "principle of limitation" (SMW, p. 256). Thus God is a general element in the metaphysical situation, the ultimate ground of all harmonious and ordered achievement in natural process. Whitehead

⁶⁹Science and the Modern World, p. 255.

⁷⁰Idem, p. 151.

⁷¹Idem, p. 228.

considers the fact of evil in process to be a deciding argument against God as the fullness of being. This notion would make God "the supreme author of the play, and to Him must therefore be ascribed its shortcomings as well as its success."⁷² Hence Whitehead's God is finite. At this point in his development, Whitehead does not see God as a concrete actuality since such a character is reserved to the occasions of temporal process. Further, his theory on the nature and activity of God is left entirely undeveloped.

Science and the Modern World was an essay into metaphysics on the basis of immediate sense experience, with a subsidiary concern being to seek confirmation of the metaphysical scheme in the new concepts of contemporary physical science. In Religion in the Making,⁷³ Whitehead continues to look for important exemplification of his speculative scheme by inviting its comparison with the basic data of religious experience (RM, pp. 88-89). In the process, he develops the metaphysical scheme in significant ways.

Although religious experience is limited as to scope, it does afford insights into the nature of things. "Religion insists that the world is a mutually adjusted disposition of things, issuing in value for its own sake."⁷⁴ Religious intuition reveals the two sides of the universe, its passage and its permanence.

⁷²Science and the Modern World, p. 258.

⁷³New York, Macmillan Co., 1926.

⁷⁴Religion in the Making, p. 143-44.

In Science and the Modern World, Whitehead spoke of the realm of eternal objects and of God as being attributes of the substantial activity. In Religion in the Making, he begins to speak simply of the "formative elements": creativity, the realm of ideal forms, and God (RM, p. 90).

As well, he expands on the character of temporal events, or "epochal occasions." An epochal occasion has two sides. "On one side it is a mode of creativity bringing together the universe.[. . .]

"On the other side, the occasion is the creature."⁷⁵ As an instance of the creativity an occasion is the cause of its own emergence into novel accomplishment. But at the same time, the accomplished novel unity is a created novel outcome. "There is only one entity which is the self-creating creature."⁷⁶ In addition, temporal occasions are now asserted to be "dipolar," consisting of a fundamental "physical" side and a derivative "mental" side (RM, pp. 102ff.; p. 118). With this important differentiation, Whitehead moves beyond his earlier unanalyzed "natural" event. It is on the basis of a dipolar temporal occasion that Whitehead analyses the body-mind duality in temporal process (RM, pp. 105-111), and explains the fact that temporal process is one of creative evolution, though not unmitigated (pp. 111-120). Thus in Religion in the Making, Whitehead first makes his metaphysical answer to the traditional body-mind dualism.

⁷⁵Religion in the Making, p. 101-02.

⁷⁶Idem, p. 102.

Again, Whitehead's theology undergoes considerable evolution. God remains the metaphysical principle of cosmic order, but he now appears as an actual entity. "The definite determination which imposes ordered balance on the world requires an actual entity imposing its own unchanged consistency of character on every phase. God is that non-temporal actuality which has to be taken account of in every creative phase."⁷⁷ Thus Whitehead begins to express his ideas on the nature of God. As a non-temporal actual entity, God is the primordial instance of creativity (RM, p. 152). As an actual entity, God must somehow constitute a determined synthesis of the total universe. In working out these requirements in the case of God, the realm of eternal objects is now asserted to be held in harmonious synthesis by God's eternal envisagement (RM, p. 153). The goodness of God consists in the harmonious pattern imposed upon the ideal forms, as his omniscience is their eternal synthesis (RM, p. 153). But God, as actual entity, cannot be merely the primordial ground of temporal process. His primordial vision is forever being applied to each phase of cosmic process according to changing conditions. (RM, p. 98; p. 154). There is thus an interplay between God's vision and temporal process. Process in God himself is thereby strongly suggested, though not explicitly asserted.

In the same year as were delivered the Lowell lectures, Religion in the Making, Whitehead also read a paper before the Sixth International

⁷⁷Religion in the Making, p. 94.

Congress of Philosophy entitled "Time."⁷⁸ The lecture is a general discussion of temporal process. In it several new points concerning the nature and activity of temporal occasions appear. Firstly, the notion of an occasion as a "concrescence" or growing together of diverse elements is put forward (IS, p. 241). Specifying the relation between the physical and mental poles of an occasion Whitehead notes that time primarily pertains to the physical pole and only derivatively to the mental pole and the organic linkage between the poles is "extratemporal" (IS, p. 241). In accordance with relativity theory, the "actual world" is the past, present and future of any particular present occasion (IS, p. 242). A theory of efficient causality is sketched and identified with "objective immortality," the objectification of the past by the present (IS, pp. 243-244). "Anticipation" is also an aspect of any present occasion whereby it holds already in itself its own future (IS, p. 243). Thus "Time" contains the first expression of many refinements which mark the great difference between Science and the Modern World and Process and Reality.

The following year is marked by the publication of Whitehead's Barbour-Page Lectures as Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect.⁷⁹ In this short work, he develops in a definitive way an epistemology which both reflects and grounds his metaphysical scheme. For the first time,

⁷⁸Proceedings of Sixth International Congress of Philosophy, Cambridge, Mass., 1926, Reprinted in The Interpretation of Science.

⁷⁹New York, Macmillan Co., 1927.

Whitehead enlarges the concept of immediate experience beyond mere sense-perception. Perceptive experience has two modes, "presentational immediacy" and "causal efficacy," the former whereby the present world is perceived according to clear-cut sense-data, the latter whereby the past is vaguely perceived as contributing to present individual experience (Sym., p. 17). Against classical empirical epistemology and especially against Humean scepticism, Whitehead asserts the more fundamental character of perception in the mode of causal efficacy and the derivative character of perception in the mode of presentational immediacy. In the third part of this work, Whitehead reveals the role that his reflections on human history and its institutions have played in convincing him of the basic importance of the past upon the present and of the interplay of bodily and mental perception.

This work accomplished, Whitehead now turns to the task of working out his speculative metaphysics in a fully systematic way. Process and Reality⁸⁰ is the result, representing the culmination of Whitehead's speculative effort at metaphysics. It consists in a summary statement of a coherent scheme of basic notions, followed by their gradual explanation, together with a recurrent effort to manifest the adequacy of this metaphysical scheme for the interpretation of diverse areas of human experience.

The "categoreal scheme" is the substance of Whitehead's philosophy and the fruit of his years of philosophical reflection. It contains

⁸⁰New York, Macmillan Co., 1929.

"the primary notions which constitute the philosophy of organism" (PR, p. 27).

In Process and Reality, Whitehead has fixed his terminology. It involves several new terms to express notions not introduced in earlier writings, or which had not been fully analyzed. "Prehension" whereby actual entities take account of their universe are now distinguished into "positive" and "negative" prehensions, the former being also called "feelings" (PR, p. 35). "Feelings" are then classified into several "types" to more adequately account for the wide variety of experiences involved in process (PR, pp. 353ff.). What is prehended is now called the "datum" (PR, p. 35). Furthermore, every prehension has a "subjective form," which is how the datum is prehended (PR, p. 35). An actual entity in its concrescence toward prehensive unity is guided by its own "subjective aim" (PR, pp. 130-131). The attainment of its goal is termed its "satisfaction" (PR, p. 38). These additions to Whitehead's technical vocabulary are the result of a greatly detailed analysis of the ultimate fact: an actual entity in process of concrescence.

In Science and the Modern World, the realm of eternal objects seemed only to be populated by the various sense qualities plus "geometrical characters." In Process and Reality, the range of abstract possibility is indefinitely expanded to include any entity whose concept involves no "necessary reference" to temporal occasions (PR, p. 70).

The detail which generally characterized Whitehead's speculation in Process and Reality is unfortunately somewhat lacking on the subject of God. Apart from a brief but concentrated final chapter, Whitehead

discussed God on scattered occasions only and, then, unsystematically. God's nature, as any actual entity, has two sides or poles. His "primordial nature" is the conceptual pole and his "consequent nature" is the physical pole (PR, pp. 46-47).

Due to the great detail in which Whitehead treats the basic philosophical questions as he sees them, that is, in the light of his all-embracing categoreal scheme, Process and Reality remains the main technical presentation of his mature metaphysics. However, the remainder is not mere aftermath. In fact, only after Process and Reality does one clearly see that side of Whitehead's approach to philosophical reflection which was probably the most influential in directing his metaphysical thinking. In Adventures of Ideas⁸¹ and Modes of Thought,⁸² Whitehead investigates the dominant ideas which have guided the emergence of civilization. Whitehead had long maintained that ideas govern human history: "Thoughts lie dormant for ages; and then, almost suddenly as it were, mankind finds that they have embodied themselves in institutions."⁸³ And the course of thought shaping human history is an important part of that experiential evidence which an adequate philosophy must satisfy: "Whatever thread of presupposition characterizes social expression throughout the various epochs or rational society, must find

⁸¹New York, Macmillan Co., 1933.

⁸²New York, Macmillan Co., 1938.

⁸³Science and the Modern World, p. x.

its place in philosophic theory."⁸⁴ The appeal of philosophy to history and the elucidation of history by philosophy is thus a basic aspect of Whitehead's philosophic adventure. With Adventures of Ideas, this concern with history is predominant.

The metaphysical thought of Whitehead is thus seen to be the embodiment and full expression of the characteristic traits of his mind. In this third period of his work, Whitehead's desire for rational structure and his empirical sense acquire a mature balance. Rational theory is the guide of mankind, and yet it must always begin in human experience and return to human experience if it is to carry any weight. This mature expression of the rationalist and empiricist sides of Whitehead's thinking was interwoven with the full growth of his subjectivist bias. Whitehead's subjectivism comes to be formulated in his "reformed subjectivist principle" which enshrines the experience of individual subjects: "The subjectivist principle is that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects. Process is the becoming of experience."⁸⁵ Apart from subjective experience there is nothing. The basis of this principle, and its prime example, is human experience, modified into a metaphysical generalization.

⁸⁴Process and Reality, p. 25.

⁸⁵Idem, p. 252.

Influences

In considering the influences on Whitehead's thought, it is his mature metaphysical thought that is intended. In this connection, an "influence" is considered to be any person, or idea, or experience which is responsible for either the general direction or the specific content of Whitehead's thinking. The range of interests which Whitehead cultivated during his intellectual career opens unusually broad possibilities of influence. This short sketch will mainly be concerned with the areas of literature, religion, science, and philosophy, which the author feels are most obviously significant for the course of Whitehead's thinking. First of all, however, there were certain general factors, especially in his early life, whose influence though vague was undeniable and lasting.

General Factors

In his "Autobiographical Notes,"⁸⁶ Whitehead remarks that his abiding interest in history and education was born through a childhood acquaintance with certain personalities among his elders as well as with the "archaeological remains" of the historic surrounding countryside (pp. 3-5). Later on, his classical education, begun at Sherborne and continued in an informal but lively fashion at Cambridge through student discussions, constituted a quite thorough formation in the humanities (pp. 5-7). A third factor was the influence of his wife.

⁸⁶The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, p. 3-14.

Whitehead attributes to "her vivid life" his realization of the importance in reality of moral and aesthetic beauty (p. 8).

The Poets

Whitehead found in the nineteenth century English nature-poetry of the romantic revival a moving criticism of scientific materialism and a vibrant assertion of the organic oneness and inherent value of nature. He speaks of Milton, Shelley, Pope, and especially of Wordsworth who, as Whitehead puts it, "felt that something had been left out [in the scientific picture of nature] and that what had been left out comprised everything that was most important."⁸⁷

There is no doubt that the message of the nature-poets was fully congenial to Whitehead's spirit, with the exception of their categorical rejection of physical science. But he regarded poetry, as indeed the whole of literature, to be a vivid witness of concrete experience. Literature expresses what we all know to be so concerning the ultimate character of things. In the face of his own constant appeal to immediate experience, however, there is no clear indication that Whitehead was led by the poets to recognize this character. In his written work, at least, he was appealing to a popular witness to corroborate his own interpretation of the facts. It is in this sense that one is to understand such statements as: "Thus we gain from the poets the doctrine that a philosophy of nature must concern itself at

⁸⁷Science and the Modern World, p. 112.

least with these six notions: change, value, eternal objects, endurance, organism, interfusion."⁸⁸ However, it is quite possible, indeed probable, given Whitehead's humanistic background, that his reading of the nature-poets was responsible to a considerable extent for his conviction that the ultimate character of natural fact is a pattern of aesthetic unity.

Religion

As will be seen in the next chapter, Whitehead considered religious experience, both ordinary and extraordinary, as important sectors of human experience, which speculative metaphysics must take into account. But the question now is, has Whitehead's own religious experience contributed significantly to his metaphysical thinking? There simply is no published evidence. However, Whitehead was a religious man. Moreover, religious practice and teaching were factors in his education, his father being an Anglican clergyman. Though Whitehead's God is not the Christian God, still, God has an important place in his view of reality, and all of temporal creation is held to be religious. It is not too much to suppose that his early religious training, and, more especially, his religious nature, positively shaped his metaphysical position in these respects.

⁸⁸Science and the Modern World, p. 127.

Science

The science of mathematics was Whitehead's initial field of achievement, and it would be impossible to maintain that his work in pure and applied mathematics had no influence on his metaphysical thought. On the other hand, it is quite possible to exaggerate this influence. Whitehead's mentality is far too empirical to allow him to approach the philosophical analysis of reality from the viewpoint of a mathematician. It seems that the greatest influence mathematical science exercised on Whitehead's mature thought was to serve as the prime example of abstract, rational thought. Whitehead once defined mathematics as "the science of the most complete abstractions to which the human mind can attain."⁸⁹ His conception of mathematics, generalized beyond the analysis of mere quantitative and numerical pattern, made of it the model of metaphysical thinking on its rational side. Mathematics, therefore, impressed Whitehead with the function and possibilities of rational generalization.

As he moved from pure mathematics to take up the philosophical questions of mathematical physics, Whitehead was greatly concerned with the birth and growth of the new physics, characterized by the field, quantum, and relativity theories. Thus it is legitimate to ask what influence, if any, did contemporary physical science have on Whitehead's metaphysics. Special aspects of the new scientific picture of the world which Whitehead heavily relies upon will be considered in the following

⁸⁹Science and the Modern World, p. 51.

chapter. It suffices now merely to identify them. In the nineteenth century the notion of matter as vibratory energy was completed by the vector theory of physical influence and by the field theory of energy propagation. Later came the quantum theory of energy. Thus contemporary physics presented nature as a dynamic community of individual entities linked together by all-pervasive mutual influences. This picture of physical reality effectively guided Whitehead's cosmological thinking.

It is equally possible to arrive at this organic conception of the world if we start from the fundamental notions of modern physics. [. . .] In fact by reason of my own studies in mathematics and mathematical physics, I did in fact arrive at my convictions in this way.⁹⁰

In addition to physical science, Whitehead takes account of the deliverances of physiology. The findings of neurologists are reflected not only in his theory of the two modes of perception, but in his more general theory of societies, subordinate and regnant.

Philosophy

Whitehead became acquainted with philosophy early in his life as a student at Cambridge ("Autobiographical Notes"). Beginning with his work in the philosophy of science, he manifests a certain familiarity with the whole range of Western philosophy. But here, as in other areas, one must bear in mind the difference between genuine influences on Whitehead's thought and his own appeals for confirmation. The assessment of influence from philosophy has been rendered more difficult by

⁹⁰Science and the Modern World, p. 219.

Whitehead himself, who tended to give credit for influence where credit was not due. As an instance of this, he has written in the Preface to Process and Reality: "The writer who most fully anticipated the main positions of the philosophy of organism is John Locke in his Essay."⁹¹ The fact is that the main positions of the philosophy of organism are so much broader than the restricted world of Lockean philosophy that the latter could hardly support the former. It would seem that in most cases of acknowledgement by Whitehead of influence from other philosophers, what he is really doing is simply calling upon the reader to confront his own scheme of thought with the philosophical tradition, which, as a whole is considered an authoritative witness to the nature of reality.

What is important is that the scheme of interpretation here adopted can claim for each of its main positions the express authority of one, or the other, of some supreme master of thought - Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant. But ultimately nothing rests on authority; the final court of appeal is intrinsic reasonableness.⁹²

This should be a sufficient warning against attributing similarity to influence.

Greek Philosophy. - Among the ancient philosophers, Whitehead refers mainly to Plato and Aristotle. He considers that the wealth of general ideas and intuitions to be found in Plato "have made his writing an inexhaustible

⁹¹Process and Reality, p. v.

⁹²Idem, p. 63.

mine of suggestion,"⁹³ which the Western philosophical tradition has been exploiting ever since. Certainly the similarities between Whitehead's thought and that of Plato are striking. When one begins to suggest instances of influence, however, the question becomes highly problematic. There is simply no evidence that any part of Plato's thought has been truly originaive with respect to Whitehead's thinking. Whitehead's notion of the realm of potentialities of definiteness poised over against temporal process is somewhat Platonic in nature, but not necessarily in origin. In the first place, Whitehead's theory of eternal objects differs in important ways from Plato's theory of forms. Thus it would be mistaken to speak of the former as simply 'Platonic'. Secondly, the origin of Whitehead's notion of 'objects', the predecessors of his 'eternal objects', is readily understandable in the context of his early event-physics. There are recognizable permanences in the temporal flow of events. And when the time came to give a metaphysical ground to these permanences, a timeless realm of eternal objects would easily come to mind. Possibly a more plausible case for Platonic influence can be made with regard to Whitehead's doctrine that aesthetic achievement is always the realization of mathematically analyzable patterns of relata. Whitehead thought it a great discovery of the Greeks to have discerned "the dependence of the qualitative elements in the world upon mathematical relations."⁹⁴ This conviction lies behind Whitehead's

⁹³Process and Reality, p. 63.

⁹⁴Adventures of Ideas, p. 153.

position on the importance of generalized mathematics in the exact analysis of pattern, either possible or realized.⁹⁵

Concerning Aristotle, it is questionable that there was any true influence. Whitehead, indeed, agreed with Aristotle's correction of Plato by reaffirming the full reality of changing things, and Whitehead's doctrine of the forms-in-the-facts is Aristotelian, not Platonic. But his empirical sense did not need Aristotle to assure him that apart from concrete actuality there is nothing.

Modern Philosophy. - Whitehead refers appreciatively to broadly diverse philosophers since the time of Descartes. In so doing, he has the habit of sometimes identifying his own notions with analogous positions of others.⁹⁶ Such instances are clearly exaggerations. Whitehead was no eclectic. However, it is possible to indicate a few instances of plausible influence upon Whitehead's metaphysics coming from modern philosophy.

Although there are certain similarities to be found between Whitehead's view of things and the views of some pre-Kantian thinkers (and again Whitehead tended to exaggerate the similarities), still, there is no evidence of real influence, even from Locke and Leibniz. In the case of Leibniz, one could possibly build an argument for derivation

⁹⁵A lecture, "Mathematics and the Good," is Whitehead's clearest statement of this position. Reprinted in The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.

⁹⁶For example, Whitehead states that Spinoza's One Substance is substantial activity (Science and the Modern World, p. 102).

regarding Whitehead's notion of the self-developing subject of experience. Whitehead does state that "it is obvious that the basing of philosophy upon the presupposition of organism must be traced back to Leibniz."⁹⁷ And in Adventures of Ideas he speaks of the idea of the self-development of an experiencing subject as a "Leibnizian notion."⁹⁸ But can it be shown that Whitehead owes this idea to Leibniz? After all, Whitehead's notion of self-development, as was seen above, is the biological concept of concrescence, not Leibniz' theory of pre-determined emergence.

Among contemporary philosophers, Whitehead says that he is "greatly indebted to Bergson, William James, and John Dewey."⁹⁹ In addition he expresses a debt to Bradley and Alexander.¹⁰⁰ Bertrand Russell maintains that "when [Whitehead] began to develop his own philosophy he was considerably influenced by Bergson."¹⁰¹ The point of influence most often mentioned is that of the primacy of process. It seems that one might even maintain that Whitehead's notion of the primacy of organic process is due to some extent to Bergson. While noting with approval that it was Bergson who has most completely moved away from static materialism, Whitehead remarks that "Bergson introduced

⁹⁷Science and the Modern World, p. 223.

⁹⁸Adventures of Ideas, p. 225.

⁹⁹Process and Reality, p. vii.

¹⁰⁰Idem, p. vii-viii; Science and the Modern World, p. xi, respectively.

¹⁰¹"Portraits from Memory," Harper's Magazine, Vol. CCV, n. 1231, p. 50.

into philosophy the organic conceptions of physiological science."¹⁰² However, it can hardly be claimed that Bergson was the only source of Whitehead's conviction of the primacy of organic process. Whitehead's own acquaintance with "physiological science" as well as his reading of the poets would have suggested this to him.

There is no evidence at hand of the influence of any other contemporary philosopher on Whitehead's metaphysical thought. Whitehead felt a closeness to many aspects of contemporary thought, in particular to the "process philosophies" of James and Alexander, in addition to Bergson. Like himself, they too were trying to break down the dualism of traditional European philosophy, and to work out some coherence between experience, science, and philosophy. Thus they offered Whitehead support and encouragement as a group of thinkers with whose general intentions he was very sympathetic. Beyond this it doesn't seem reasonable to go.

Whitehead's Originality

As was seen when considering the three phases of his intellectual development, Whitehead's personal qualities of mind are the underlying principles by which his entire work is to be understood. The full force of this fact appears at the culmination of his career in the mature exposition of his metaphysical scheme. It is in the elaboration of his metaphysic that Whitehead's empiricist, rationalist, and subjective

¹⁰²Science and the Modern World, p. 212.

tendencies completely fuse and balance one another. What is being suggested is that the peculiar formula of this balance provides the key for discerning the influences upon Whitehead's thinking, just as it is the key to understanding his originality. This means that his originality must explain why he allowed himself to be influenced by other philosophers, for example, and "to emphasize just those elements in these masters which subsequent systematizers have put aside."¹⁰³ It is this originality which reduces most of these "emphases" to mere acknowledgements of anticipation, but not of derivation. It is also this originality which prevents derivation, when it occurs, from being mere borrowing. These things, of course, are true of any original thinker. The point is that Whitehead is among these latter.

Whitehead's Notion of Philosophy

The Nature of Philosophy

While Whitehead recognizes that every rational person is in some sense a philosopher, habitually interpreting experience in terms of some general rational scheme, "philosophy" in the perfect sense is "the search for more adequate criticism, and for more adequate justification, of the interpretations which we perforce employ."¹⁰⁴ Philosophy is the search for a systematic interpretation of reality as experienced. And in all of man's philosophic endeavors, whether pre-systematic and

¹⁰³Process and Reality, p. v.

¹⁰⁴Idem, p. 22.

unreflected or consciously systematic, he has been moved by "curiosity," that is, by "the craving of reason that the facts discriminated in experience be understood."¹⁰⁵ Thus Whitehead concurs with Aristotle that "Philosophy is the product of wonder."¹⁰⁶

What Whitehead understands by "understanding" will be investigated more fully further on. For the moment it suffices to remark that understanding means roughly the same as "interpretation," and that they both involve subsuming the particular under general principles. It means to grasp that "every routine [event, experience] exemplifies a principle which is capable of statement in abstraction from its particular exemplifications."¹⁰⁷ Reason interprets reality by formulating principles which account for the similarities found in its rich variety. Corresponding to logical generality is pervasive similarity in the nature of things.

But in all this there is nothing to distinguish philosophy from science. Whitehead declares that both are "concerned with the understanding of individual facts as illustrations of general principles."¹⁰⁸ Whitehead conceives their distinction in terms of the scope of their respective fields of interest. Thus "the field of a special science is confined to one genus of facts, in the sense that no statements are made

¹⁰⁵Adventures of Ideas, p. 145.

¹⁰⁶Modes of Thought, p. 173.

¹⁰⁷Adventures of Ideas, p. 145.

¹⁰⁸Idem, p. 144.

respecting facts which lie outside that genus."¹⁰⁹ The special sciences are concerned therefore with limited aspects of reality, that is, with abstractions, since concrete reality is one infinite and interconnected whole. But philosophy "seeks those generalities which characterize the complete reality of fact, and apart from which any fact must sink into an abstraction."¹¹⁰ Philosophy is the effort to understand the real beyond any limitations of scope. It should "present an elucidation of concrete fact from which the sciences abstract."¹¹¹ "It follows that Philosophy is not a science."¹¹²

Whitehead makes his notion of philosophy much more explicit in his well-known definition: "Speculative Philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."¹¹³ This definition contains the three main aspects of philosophy as Whitehead conceives it.

"Speculative philosophy" has a rationalistic side and an empirical side. As a "system," a philosophical scheme must be "coherent," which is to say that the general ideas "presuppose each other so that in

¹⁰⁹Process and Reality, p. 14.

¹¹⁰Adventures of Ideas, p. 150.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, p. 681.

¹¹³Process and Reality, p. 4. (Cf. Adventures of Ideas, p. 223.)

isolation they are meaningless."¹¹⁴ This is required if philosophy is to elucidate concrete fact which is essentially coherent. Logical coherence in philosophy demands that its foundational notions be so interrelated that they cannot be understood in isolation, nor can any of them be arbitrarily introduced. Next, the scheme of general ideas must be "logical," that is, its basic notions and their development must not involve contradiction. A final quality of the philosophic scheme on its rational side is that of necessity. The scheme is "necessary" in the sense that its fundamental ideas are of such generality that they inevitably bear upon the whole of reality. As the quality of coherence presupposes that the whole of reality is ontologically coherent, so the quality of necessity presupposes that reality is ultimately uniform. "It means that the texture of observed experience [. . .] is such that all related experience must exhibit the same texture."¹¹⁵ Or, in other words, "the metaphysical first principles can never fail of exemplification."¹¹⁶

Philosophy on its empirical side must be characterized by "applicability" and "adequacy." These two qualities assure to a philosophic scheme the fulfillment of its sole justification: the interpretation of reality. And, as Whitehead specifies, "here 'interpretation' means that each element [of our experience] shall have

¹¹⁴Process and Reality, p. 5.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Idem, p. 7.

the character of a particular instance of the general scheme."¹¹⁷

Thus the applicability of a set of philosophic ideas assures to them the interpretation of at least some items of experience. The more critical factor of adequacy, however, "means that there are no items incapable of such interpretation."¹¹⁸ From this it follows that if a scheme is rationally necessary, it is also empirically adequate.

Experience, then, in all of its areas is what philosophy attempts to interpret on the level of supreme generality. Whitehead's empiricist position is that "philosophy is limited in its sources to the world as disclosed in human experience."¹¹⁹ Now "human experience," Whitehead recognizes, is broadly diversified as to content, corresponding in some measure to the diversity of reality itself. The philosophical scheme

must have its origin in the generalization of particular factors discerned in particular topics of human interest; for example, in physics, or in physiology, or in psychology, or in aesthetics, or in ethical beliefs, or in sociology, or in languages conceived as storehouses of human experience.¹²⁰

However, beyond the data provided by the experience of mankind in special fields, Whitehead insists that the evidence to which philosophy must ultimately appeal is the common immediate experience which everyone enjoys. "The ultimate test is always widespread, recurrent experience,"¹²¹

¹¹⁷Adventures of Ideas, p. 223.

¹¹⁸Process and Reality, p. 4.

¹¹⁹Modes of Thought, p. 97.

¹²⁰Process and Reality, p. 7.

¹²¹Idem, p. 25.

that is, "the general consciousness of what in practice we experience."¹²² It seems that Whitehead is here speaking mainly of what he calls intuitive or non-sensuous experience. This is a direct and primitive contact the experiencing subject enjoys with its actual world, vague but more concrete than clear sense-perception, grasping the underlying and all-pervasive character of reality. It is with this in mind that Whitehead states: "All knowledge is derived from, and verified by, direct intuitive observation,"¹²³ and that, "the sole appeal is to intuition."¹²⁴

So much for the general relation of experience to philosophy as Whitehead conceived it. The types of human experience he relies upon in the elaboration of his metaphysical scheme will be taken up in the next chapter.

In addition to its rationalist and empiricist dimension, philosophy as conceived by Whitehead is characterized as an "endeavor." The philosophic adventure is never definitive. Speaking of the first principles which constitute the metaphysical scheme, Whitehead says that "philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles."¹²⁵ Beyond the deficiency of language in expressing such all-inclusive generalities, the basic reason is found in the

¹²²Process and Reality, p. 25.

¹²³Adventures of Ideas, p. 179.

¹²⁴Process and Reality, p. 32.

¹²⁵Idem, p. 6.

empirical side of philosophy. "We are not conscious of any clear-cut complete analysis of immediate experience, in terms of the various details which comprise its definiteness."¹²⁶ In the absence of any definitive assessment of experience, no metaphysical scheme can claim absolute validity. But the philosophic tradition can grow. The partial systems that have marked the history of systematic philosophizing have each contributed to an expanding adequacy.

The discordance of system with system, and success of each system as a partial mode of illumination warns us of the limitations within which our intuitions are hedged. These undiscovered limitations are the topics for philosophic research.¹²⁷

Philosophy must constantly seek the more adequate expression in its endeavor to interpret all the facts, seeing these as a coordinated whole. Whitehead offers his own metaphysical interpretation in the hope it will be found adequate to the facts as now known. But due ultimately to the limitations of immediate intuition, no scheme can claim absolute adequacy. Thus Whitehead remarks

how shallow, puny, and imperfect are efforts to sound the depths in the nature of things. In philosophical discussion, the merest hint of dogmatic certainly as to finality of statement is an exhibition of folly.¹²⁸

¹²⁶Process and Reality, p. 6.

¹²⁷Adventures of Ideas, p. 149.

¹²⁸Process and Reality, p. x.

The Method of Philosophy

Concerning the procedure of the philosophical endeavor, Whitehead maintains that "the true method of philosophical construction is to frame a scheme of ideas, the best that one can, and unflinchingly to explore the interpretation of experience in terms of that scheme."¹²⁹ This is what one does when one philosophizes. Accordingly the construction of a scheme of general ideas is arrived at from experience and is in turn the viewpoint from which one attempts to understand experience. Whitehead puts it metaphorically.

The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation.¹³⁰

Thus philosophy begins with experience, the "particular observations" of mankind in the various fields of human interest and mainly with immediate experience. It is reason which attempts the understanding of experience through "imaginative generalization." This latter phase refers to that process of conceptualization by which reason hypothetically generalizes what seem to be the ultimate characteristics involved in the particular facts of experience. The generality beyond the facts evidences a certain liberty on the part of reason which Whitehead refers to as an imaginative function: "imaginative rationalization" making an "imaginative leap." But generalizations are not self-evident.

¹²⁹Process and Reality, p. x.

¹³⁰Idem, p. 7.

"Metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious; they are tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities."¹³¹ In other words, the rational generality is an hypothesis, suggested by experience, but which calls in its turn for verification against further facts. Thus, as mere tentative generality, the metaphysical scheme is what Whitehead calls a "working hypothesis."¹³²

The relative success of such a hypothetical generalization is determined by its fulfillment of two criteria. Firstly, the scheme, having taken its origin in one area of human experience, "is always to be tested by the applicability of its results beyond the restricted locus from which it originated."¹³³ Thus the first condition of a valid metaphysical scheme is its adequacy in broadly interpreting the facts of experience. Secondly, the scheme must, in its own elaboration, rigorously pursue "the two rationalistic ideals, coherence and logical perfection,"¹³⁴ that is, logical consistency.

Whitehead's Philosophical Aims

To bring this introductory chapter to a close, a brief acknowledgment of Whitehead's aims is in order. In the broadest terms, what was

¹³¹Process and Reality, p. 12.

¹³²Adventures of Ideas, p. 221-23.

¹³³Process and Reality, p. 8.

¹³⁴Ibid.

Whitehead trying to accomplish in his metaphysical endeavor? And the beginning of an answer is indicated in these words from the Preface of Science and the Modern World:

If my view of the function of philosophy is correct, it is the most effective of all the intellectual pursuits. It builds cathedrals before the workmen have moved a stone, and it destroys them before the elements have worn down their arches.¹³⁵

Whitehead has an activist notion of the social function of philosophy. The root of this lies in his view of the social function of an idea. "Thoughts lie dormant for ages; and then, almost suddenly as it were, mankind finds that they have embodied themselves in institutions."¹³⁶

Since ideas can direct the growth of civilization and change the course of history, the most general ideas are the most influential of all. "Human life is driven forward by its dim apprehension of notions too general for its existing language."¹³⁷ Generality of vision is required for the harmonization of human endeavors and the justification of restricted intuitions. Man's general grasp of the nature of things is the necessary context and ground of his everyday living if such living is to be carried on at any level higher than that of the beast. Thus the rise of civilization depends on the development of general vision. "But the growth of generality of apprehension is the slowest of

¹³⁵Science and the Modern World, p. x.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Adventures of Ideas, p. 32.

all evolutionary changes. It is the task of philosophy to promote this growth in mentality."¹³⁸ The philosopher is one who sets out to render explicit and to criticize the process of ultimate generalization, lest such a process remain unconsciously performed and without rational examination. Philosophic systems "are the way in which the human spirit cultivates its deeper intuitions."¹³⁹

Another way of stating the function of philosophy, as Whitehead saw it, is with respect to the evidences of experience.

It is the task of philosophy to work at the concordance of ideas conceived as illustrated in the concrete facts of the real world. It seeks those generalities which characterize the complete reality of fact, and apart from which any fact must sink into an abstraction.¹⁴⁰

Not being restricted to any special area of experience as such, neither is the philosopher directly concerned with the insights limited to such special areas. His concern is with the fully concrete and with those ultimate intuitions which form the background of the special sciences.

Thus only philosophy is in a position to effectively evaluate the limited generalizations of the specialized investigator.

I hold that philosophy is the critic of abstractions. Its function is the double one, first of harmonizing them by assigning to them their right relative status as abstractions, and secondly of completing them by direct comparison with more concrete intuitions of the universe, and thereby promoting the formation of more complete schemes of thought.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Adventures of Ideas, p. 32.

¹³⁹ Idem, p. 148.

¹⁴⁰ Idem, p. 150.

¹⁴¹ Science and the Modern World, p. 126.

As the investigator of the widest generalities, it is the philosopher who is the critical judge of the presuppositions and basic assumptions of science.¹⁴² And, of course, this critical function of philosophy is exercised as well upon the work of philosophers themselves. Giving an adequate interpretation of "the complete reality of fact" is not an easy task nor one without pitfalls.

Philosophy should be a guide and critic of man's reflection and activity. But the success of its endeavor rests with its ability to adequately interpret the whole of reality by maintaining itself at the highest level of generality the facts call for. Unfortunately the history of modern philosophy has largely been a history of partial interpretations. The modern dichotomy between spirit and matter has forced philosophy into artificial restrictions. "There are the dualists, who accept matter and mind as on an equal basis, and the two varieties of monists, those who put mind inside matter, and those who put matter inside mind."¹⁴³ Whitehead is convinced that such a state of affairs has arisen in philosophy because of a neglect or at least of a misreading of the facts of common experience. Modern philosophy has lost its adequacy--and therefore its relevance--because it has played cavalierly with commonsense.

¹⁴²In turn, Whitehead also recognizes the role of science to criticize the generalizations of philosophers on the basis of tested conclusions (Adventures of Ideas, p. 132-33; p. 150). Nor does the philosopher's scope allow him to enter with authority the detailed investigations of science (Process and Reality, p. 25-26, p. 30-31).

¹⁴³Science and the Modern World, p. 82.

More specifically, modern philosophy, whether dualistic or monistic, has been entrapped in the ancient categories of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics.

All modern philosophy hinges round the difficulty of describing the world in terms of subject and predicate, substance and quality, particular and universal. The result always does violence to that immediate experience which we express in our actions, our hopes, our sympathies, our purposes, and which we enjoy in spite of our lack of phrases for its verbal analysis. We find ourselves in a buzzing world, amid a democracy of fellow creatures; whereas, under some disguise or other, orthodox philosophy can only introduce us to solitary substances, each enjoying an illusory experience; "O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?"¹⁴⁴

The fundamental difficulty in philosophy, as Whitehead saw it, has not been that philosophers restricted themselves as agnostics or idealists or materialists. Underlying this has been a gross mistake as to the nature of ultimate fact. Independent and inert substances with their own private qualifications scarcely do justice to the deliverances of common experience concerning the ultimate nature of things, Whitehead insists. The substance-quality structure must certainly be limited to a derivative level ontologically speaking. For experience shows us to be living in a dynamically interrelated world of activities. Whitehead's answer to the theory of substance as ultimate reality is also his answer to all vicious dualisms and dissociations in human thought, which have not only set philosophers against themselves, but which have also set science against religion, religion against philosophy, and all three against commonsense. The basis of this answer is contained in the

¹⁴⁴Process and Reality, p. 78-79.

following statements. In them is embodied the central intuition of Whitehead.

Without doubt, if we are to go back to that ultimate, integral experience, unwarpd by the sophistications of theory, that experience whose elucidation is the final aim of philosophy, the flux of things is one ultimate generalization around which we must weave our philosophical system.¹⁴⁵

All relatedness has its foundation in the relatedness of actualities; and such relatedness is wholly concerned with the appropriation of the dead by the living--that is to say, with 'objective immortality' whereby what is divested of its own living immediacy becomes a real component in other living immediacies of becoming. This is the doctrine that the creative advance of the world is the becoming, the perishing, and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute stubborn fact.¹⁴⁶

The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵Process and Reality, p. 317.

¹⁴⁶Idem, p. ix.

¹⁴⁷Idem, p. 28.

CHAPTER TWO

METAPHYSICAL GENERALIZATION

Section One - The Facts

Whitehead implicitly or explicitly makes appeal to facts observable in different areas of human experience in support of his metaphysical scheme in general and of his theology in particular. This section will be a brief review of these appeals. It is to be noted that here the consideration is no longer that of the origin of Whitehead's metaphysical thought, but rather simply that of his appeal post factum to an empirical basis.

Common Experience

Fundamental Experience

As already noticed, Whitehead's first and last appeal to empirical evidence is to the pervasive facts common in the experience of everyone. And he is convinced that his philosophy of organism can mainly be supported by these facts. "But if you start from the immediate facts of our psychological experience, as surely an empiricist should begin, you are at once led to the organic conception of nature."¹ This statement is a forerunner of what Whitehead is later to call the "Subjectivist Principle." He states this principle variously, for example:

¹Science and the Modern World, p. 107.

The subjectivist principle is that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects;²

or again,

subjective experiencing is the primary metaphysical situation which is presented to metaphysics for analysis.³

These are not simple empiricist statements about all knowledge being grounded in experience. Whitehead accepts the empiricist position in this regard, and it is involved in his understanding of the subjectivist principle. But what is being asserted here is that the "primary metaphysical situation" is the psychological structure of man's experience. This principle maintains that an analysis of this structure reveals factors which exemplify the ultimate character of all actuality, that is, the metaphysical character of actuality. In other words, a unit of human experience furnishes the prime evidence as to the metaphysical nature of reality.

Whitehead credits Descartes for the discovery that the primary metaphysical situation is the experiencing subject. "This is the famous subjectivist bias which entered into modern philosophy through Descartes."⁴ However, Whitehead can not accept the usual understanding of this doctrine, which has traditionally involved a false dualism between experience and nature. As Whitehead understands it, this dualism was the inevitable result of accepting the Aristotelian substance-accident

²Process and Reality, p. 252.

³Idem, p. 243.

⁴Idem, p. 241.

structure as ontologically ultimate. Whitehead's attitude toward the metaphysical doctrine of substance will be reviewed in the following section of this chapter. It is sufficient now simply to point out that he considered this doctrine to lie at the base of the dualism which has characterized the rationalist and empiricist traditions of modern philosophy. It has established a dichotomy between a knowing substance whose independent existence is qualified by private experience and a supposedly known substance whose existence and qualifications are never immediately known. The doctrine of substance has thus vitiated the subjectivist bias of modern philosophy, and "it is only by the introduction of covert inconsistencies into the subjectivist principle [. . .] that there can be any escape from what Santayana calls, 'solipsism of the present moment.'"⁵

Direct Perception of Fact

If the subjectivist principle is to be properly honored, the traditional wall between nature and experience must be broken down. Experience must be affirmed as a fact within nature. "The world within experience is identical with the world beyond experience, the occasion of experience is within the world and the world is within the occasion."⁶ Thus experience involves the present and direct immanence of what is beyond it. "If experience be not based on an objective content, there

⁵Process and Reality, p. 240.

⁶Adventures of Ideas, p. 229.

can be no escape from a solipsist subjectivism."⁷ By "objective content," Whitehead means the inclusion in present experience of what is already there to be experienced. Thus an object is what is other insofar as it is immanently involved in present experience. What is there to be experienced, what is given, becomes an object by being experienced. Whitehead enunciates two obvious conditions for real otherness to be an object. These conditions constitute givenness.

Two conditions must be fulfilled in order that an entity may function as an object in a process of experience: (1) the entity must be antecedent, and (2) the entity must be experienced in virtue of its antecedence; it must be given.⁸

An entity becomes an object only as antecedent, because in virtue of its antecedence it is already there to be experienced, that is, according to the fourth categoreal obligation,⁹ it is a real potential for every emerging act of experience. This assertion of a transcendently real objective content in present experiencing is what Whitehead calls "the reformed subjectivist principle."¹⁰

By enunciating his corrected subjectivism, Whitehead believes himself to be satisfying the general facts of experience. Experience always arises from what is directly given, and even though our most

⁷Process and Reality, p. 230-31.

⁸Adventures of Ideas, p. 180.

⁹The nine Categoreal Obligations are general necessities which process embodies. The Obligations form part of Whitehead's Categoreal Scheme, which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

¹⁰Process and Reality, p. 243.

developed experiences go far beyond the initial stage of direct objectification, they always remain concerned in some way with what is given. And, yet, even our initial experience is not a purely passive reception of data. All experiencing is a spontaneous subjective fact with private dimensions proper to each experient. Thus the basic facts of experience involve subjects enjoying objective content.

That experience involves objective content stands forth most obviously in connection with that part of our experience which consists in a direct relation to other actualities. Whitehead distinguishes two types of such directness in ordinary experience. Firstly, there is sense-experience. Such experience is "perception which merely, by means of a sensum, rescues from vagueness a contemporary spatial region, in respect to its spatial shape and its spatial perspective from the percipient."¹¹ Thus our sense-perception presents a contemporary world laid out in geometrical order in which we have an integral location and perspective through our bodies and which is graced with sense-data in rich variety. However, the limitations of this type of direct experience are at once apparent. "It essentially exhibits percepta as here, now, immediate, and discrete."¹² That is to say, sense-perception discerns a merely present world, an unhistorical world, giving no indication of a past or a future, and in which the only connections are spatial, connections which separate as much as they connect. Thus, although such

¹¹Modes of Thought, p. 99.

¹²Adventures of Ideas, p. 182.

experience involves clear-cut sensa and accurate relationships, it reveals nothing of the present world other than as a contemporary spatial scheme illustrated by sense-data. Nothing of the intimate make-up of the present world is perceived in sense-experience. Such experience is clear, prominent, and superficial.

But this type of experience does not exhaust the scope of our direct experience. Sense-experience is prominent, but there is another kind of experience which is more pervasive. We experience our present selves in an environment in which the past is efficacious in the present, just as the present will be efficacious in shaping the future. Thus, we experience the influence of our bodies and, through them, of the external physical world. Likewise, we perceive the conformal identity of our present self with our antecedent self, along with the fact of memory concerning our previous experiences. Thus we grasp that present experience is big with possibilities for our future environment as well as for our future selves. We are aware that the future can not escape the present as the present does not escape the past. In such experience,

There are the sense of derivation from without, the sense of immediate enjoyment within, and the sense of transmission beyond . [. . .] It carries with it the placing of our immediate experience as a fact in history, derivative, actual, and effective.¹³

This experience, to be sure, is vague as to detail, but it is insistently pervasive and provides us with intimate links to the historical world in

¹³Modes of Thought, p. 98.

which we find ourselves. In it, we feel ourselves in the present as derived from the past and as anticipating the future.

This analysis of direct human experience into its two modes is a basic theme in Whitehead's thinking which first appears in Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect. He uses the general term "perception" in respect to both modes of direct experience, calling the first mode discussed above: "perception in the mode of presentational immediacy," and the second: "perception in the mode of causal efficacy."¹⁴ In Adventures of Ideas, Whitehead speaks of "sense-perception" and "non-sensuous perception,"¹⁵ meaning respectively the same modes of experience as his earlier terms designated. And, throughout, he insists on the specific distinction between these two modes of direct perception.

However, Whitehead's analysis of these two modes of perception is concerned as much with their relationship as with their distinction, and it is with this aspect of the question that he, in one and the same effort, develops the meaning of the reformed subjectivist principle and argues against the traditional doctrine of sensationalism. The "Sensationalist Principle," according to Whitehead, is the doctrine that all primitive experience consists in the entertainment of purely subjective sense-impressions from which all other experience is merely derivative reaction. Such a doctrine of experience establishes a dichotomy between appearance and reality. It is the empiricist version

¹⁴Symbolism, p. 17.

¹⁵Adventures of Ideas, p. 182.

of the Cartesian dualism. In criticizing sensationalism, however, Whitehead concentrates more upon its claim to be our most primitive form of experience and the foundation of all other experience.

Firstly, Whitehead cautions against assuming sense-perception to be primitive experience simply because sensations are most prominent in consciousness due to their innate clarity. The fact is that we always experience more than we are clearly conscious of, as the above analysis of direct perception indicates.

Consciousness flickers; and even at its brightest, there is a small focal region of experience which tells of intense experience in dim apprehension. The simplicity of clear consciousness is no measure of the complexity of complete experience.¹⁶

Thus, Whitehead is concerned to broaden the definition of direct experience beyond its empiricist confinement to the entertainment of sense-data. This concern lies at the heart of his reformed subjectivist principle and it leads to the ultimate empirical foundation of his entire metaphysical generalization.

Avoiding the confusion of clear simplicity with basic experience, Whitehead does not hesitate on the question as to which type of direct perception is the more fundamental. "The perception of conformation to realities in the environment is the primitive element in our external experience."¹⁷ This conclusion is demanded by several observations. Sense-perception is sometimes absent, and when present, it is still an

¹⁶Process and Reality, p. 408.

¹⁷Symbolism, p. 43.

activity which can be controlled. Perception in the mode of causal efficacy, however, is insistent and unmanageable. Secondly, the percepta of sense-perception are barren, telling no tales as to whence they arise, giving no indication as to how they are to be interpreted. The interpretation comes in terms of an antecedent environment of actualities external to our experience and yet which are effectively immanent in our experience, constituting the given objects without which there can be no experience. "The sense-data, required for immediate sense-perception, enter into experience in virtue of the efficacy of the environment."¹⁸ Thirdly, and mainly, there can be no object which is not first perceived in the mode of causal efficacy. For an object must be given, that is, it must not merely be "other" but must also be antecedently real. But, by definition, such conditions obtain only in perception in the mode of causal efficacy. It is in such perception that the antecedent world is given to present experience, and without such givenness experience does not arise.

In virtue of these facts, Whitehead considered it obvious that our sense-perception is a derivative form of direct experience, sometimes arising, sometimes not, from our pre-conscious management of the data derived from the primitive mode of causal efficacy. Thus Whitehead's reformed subjectivist principle and his rejection of traditional sensationalism combine to decisively broaden the scope of our direct experience. Whitehead's account of presentational immediacy already

¹⁸Symbolism, p. 52.

breaches the enclosed subjectivity of traditional sensationalism. It is the direct perception of an external world. But this enlargement of sense-perception is only rendered intelligible through the recognition that the mode of causal efficacy is the more fundamental. It is to this latter mode of perception that Whitehead mainly appeals in his effort to establish the objective content of subjective experience. The past is in the present, the present anticipates the future. This is primitive fact for the present.

Whitehead seems to regard perception in the mode of causal efficacy as a form of intuition. He refers to our "direct observation of the past" as "an instance of direct intuitive observation."¹⁹ Again, he declares that "we have direct intuition of inheritance and memory."²⁰ Intuitions with these characteristics belong to the mode of causal efficacy. This concords with Whitehead's intention of appealing to intuition, since it is to non-sensuous perception that he basically appeals.

Apprehension of Possibilities

In addition to perception, whereby facts are apprehended, there is also in our experience the apprehension of novel possibilities, of what is not yet but might be, and of what should be.

There are experiences of ideals - of ideals entertained, of ideals aimed at, of ideals achieved, of ideals defaced. [. . .]
Human experience explicitly relates itself to an external

¹⁹Adventures of Ideas, p. 185.

²⁰Process and Reality, p. 253.

standard. The universe is thus understood as including a source of ideals.²¹

The past is not the only basis of fundamental experience. We realize that we are not condemned simply to repeat previous fact, and that, though we are conditioned by it, "we are modifying it, deflecting it, changing its purposes, altering its tone, reconditioning its data with new elements."²² We use the past to our own purposes, though it remains true that present purpose is largely conditioned by previous accomplishment. This interweaving of change and permanence is a primary fact of experience. We acknowledge that our experience, insofar as it is conscious to us, consists in some intimate blend between the old and the new, and that the intensity of such experience corresponds to the degree of harmonious contrast between these two factors.

The Experienter

But Whitehead is not only concerned to assert the objective dimension of our experience. He is equally insistent about its subjective aspects. The facts relating to how the experiencing subject reacts in and to its objectifications are also quite important to metaphysical generalization. In each act of experience, our attitude to what we experience is as complex and varied as is the objective content. Thus,

all the emotions, and purposes, and enjoyments, proper to the individual existence of the soul are nothing other than

²¹Modes of Thought, p. 141-42.

²²Adventures of Ideas, p. 167.

the soul's reactions to this experienced world which lies at the base of the soul's existence.²³

We experience with joy or anger, with adversion or aversion, with consciousness. Thus not only our affectivity, but also the ways in which data are entertained at more sophisticated levels, are so many modes of our subjective response to the environment. This is the status of the sense of derivation one has upon inheriting the antecedent world and our own past life experience. We have a sense of unity with our bodies and with the whole physical world; we have a sense of identity with our own previous existence. Our sense of anticipation is similarly responsive to the objective reality of the future in the present. Likewise, through sense-perception, our sense of being part of a contemporary world has the status of a subjective response. And yet, just as with objective content, our experiencing brings about a harmonious unity among these various subjective reactions. We are mainly conscious of one complex response in organic harmony with one complex object.

Some Common Convictions

The facts of common individual experience hereto examined, especially the facts involved in perception in the mode of causal efficacy, give rise to certain common convictions. Firstly, there is the notion that experience involves fresh immediacy as well as repetition. "Tear 'repetition' out of 'experience,' and there is nothing left. On the other hand, 'immediacy', or 'first-handedness,' is another element in

²³Modes of Thought, p. 223-24.

experience."²⁴ An experience is a spontaneous event lived in the present. Secondly, the interweaving of change and permanence in the world is "a primary fact of experience."²⁵ Change or transition is an evident fact. "We are in the present; the present is always shifting; it is derived from the past; it is shaping the future; it is passing into the future."²⁶ But in the midst of transition there is the present durational act of experience, and furthermore, there is the persevering immanence of the antecedent environment in present experience, (v.g. there is the permanence of the rock and of one's body and of one's self). Finally, "at the base of our existence is the sense of 'worth.'"²⁷ The sense of worth is the conviction of the value of existence. "It is the sense of existence for its own sake, of existence which is its own justification, of existence with its own character."²⁸ Thus, as we catch ourselves in each moment of our career, we are convinced of our own uniqueness, and of our existence as a fact which stands by itself, beyond any consideration of our dependence, and which must be taken account of by the future. Further, we live our lives amid personal reactions of aversion and aversion toward our present selves, toward our environment. Everything

²⁴Process and Reality, p. 206.

²⁵Modes of Thought, p. 73.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Idem, p. 149.

²⁸Ibid.

has some value for itself, for others, and for the whole."²⁹

In summary, then, the pervasive facts of common experience witness to an essential togetherness. We live in an organic world in which actualities in themselves are mutually dependent. Indeed, the world is immanent in the unity of present experience and the unity of present experience becomes part of the world of its future. We have direct contact with a contemporary world, but it is rather our vague, persistent sense of derivation, of present enjoyment, and of anticipation which brings us closer to the true nature of things. The world is at the base of experience and, therefore, of our existence. These facts give rise to basic convictions: that repetition and immediate spontaneity, permanence and novelty are complementary aspects of reality; that actual existence is a basic value both individually and socially.

Social Experience

As was seen, experience begins with the enjoyment of otherness immanent in the unity of present activity, carrying with it the sense of value of what is experienced. Such fundamental experience is enjoyed simply by being in the world. But Whitehead also refers to facts observed in the study of human society, that is, to sociological and historical facts. In the first part of Adventures of Ideas, he undertakes to sketch how mankind's ideas of itself have influenced, and have been influenced by, the course of European history from its beginning in the

²⁹Modes of Thought, p. 151.

Near East. Such a survey reveals the structure of individual human experience to be paralleled on the social level by the growth and decline of civilizations. Social patterns are maintained by continued inheritance within the social group, while new institutions and epochs arise through novel reaction to the inherited past. Decline consists in the mere repetition of past social forms with no higher effort at originality to meet changing circumstances. Social order demands a wise balance between faithfulness to the past and novel origination aiming at higher achievement.

Religious Experience

For Whitehead, religion is a vital force. It lies deep in the human spirit and molds one's character and one's conduct. "You use arithmetic, but you are religious."³⁰ Whitehead appeals to a direct religious intuition. This is the apprehension of "a character of permanent rightness" in the world.³¹ The nature of things is perceived to embody an intimate harmony, the result of conformity to order, to "rightness." Thus there arises the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction accordingly as events are perceived to succeed or fail in particular instances to organically harmonize. This intuition of "a rightness in things, partially conformed to and partially disregarded,"³²

³⁰Religion in the Making, p. 15.

³¹Idem, p. 61.

³²Idem, p. 66.

constitutes "the ultimate religious evidence."³³

In describing more specifically the content of this religious intuition, Whitehead stresses the general point that the harmoniously ordered universe is perceived to be one of "individuality in community."³⁴ All realities of the actual universe form one community of essentially interdependent entities. But it is also grasped to be a "community of many diverse entities."³⁵ The experience of interdependence is balanced by an appreciation of the inherent value of the individual.

A basic aspect of the universe as interdependent is the contrast between the "natural world" in passage and the "kingdom of heaven" which is permanent, "a final fact."³⁶ Religious intuition recognizes that passing achievements are somehow preserved on a level of permanence and they are preserved in a manner which purifies them of their temporal imperfections. In addition, there is the vague insistence that such a higher permanent order avoids the empirical fact of the temporal order that process involves the loss of present immediacy as it passes into its future. There must be an order in which individual values are maintained.

The most general formulation of the religious problem is the question whether the process of the temporal world passes into the formation of other actualities, bound together in an

³³Religion in the Making, p. 67.

³⁴Idem, p. 88.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Idem, p. 87.

order in which novelty does not mean loss.³⁷

In this account of what Whitehead considers to be a natural religious intuition there is no mention of a unique entity, personal or impersonal, which might supposedly pass as God. It is the apprehension of a harmonious universe with no discrimination between the opposites: God and the World. Basically, religion, which is man's response to the vision of religious intuition, is a personal commitment to the "rightness" which is the outstanding character pervading the whole of reality. "Religion is world-loyalty."³⁸ It is only with the appearance of belief and rational dogma in the evolution of mankind's religious expression that God becomes a conscious concern on man's part.

Scientific Experience

In addition to the facts of experience open to everyone, Whitehead is well aware that there are areas of specialized experience whose facts are also relevant to philosophical generalization. Among these specialized fields, that of modern science is particularly important, especially physical science and physiology.

Physical Science

Whitehead thought that he witnessed the gradual downfall of classical Newtonian physics and, after initial disillusionment, he

³⁷Process and Reality, p. 517.

³⁸Religion in the Making, p. 60.

welcomed the rise of present-day physical science. Newtonian physics had been characterized by its theory of inert particles in empty space undergoing accidental adventures of locomotion according to definite laws. At any instant, a particle of matter was held to be in a here-now situation which could be completely understood without reference to the space-time situations of any other particles. Thus matter had the "property of simple location."³⁹ This theory, which was under the influence of the substance-accident concept of ultimate reality, Whitehead refers to as "scientific materialism."⁴⁰

However, this classical concept, Whitehead insists, has been gradually discarded as an ultimate scientific account. The notion of empty space was eliminated. The fact is that the whole physical universe is a field of force or activity. This led, in turn, to the elimination of matter in the form of unchanging particles undergoing accidental adventures. Instead matter and vibratory energy or activity are now conceived as in some sense equivalent. This entails that the concept of matter as simply located has, in turn, ceded to the modern concept of energy at focal points whose periodic agitations affect the entire universe. The environment is immediately relevant and it is co-extensive with the entire physical world.

Thus, according to Whitehead, modern physics has arrived at a concept concerning the transmission of energy completely analogous to

³⁹Science and the Modern World, p. 72.

⁴⁰V.g., Science and the Modern World, p. 25;
Process and Reality, p. 120.

the structure of human experience as disclosed in our perception in the mode of causal efficacy. The transmission of physical energy from one focal point to another involves the reception of a specific form of energy, directed from elsewhere with a vector character and with a definite intensive subjective response. In this way, nature is characterized as both atomic and interconnected, and the aspects of connectedness are constitutive of its atomic units. In addition, the Einsteinian theory of relativity corroborates a fact already observable in connection with presentational immediacy: contemporary events happen in causal independence of one another, that is, transmission of energy involves time so that two simultaneous events do not influence one another. It was seen that sense perception does not consist in receiving impressions directly from the contemporary world.

And, so, the world of modern physical science is one in which the ultimates are vibratory units of energy, whose internal interconnections result in a field of force.

The fundamental concepts are activity and process. [. . .] The notion of self-sufficient isolation is not exemplified in modern physics . [. . .] Nature is a theatre for the inter-relations of activities . [. . .] In the place of the Aristotelian notion of the procession of forms, [the new physics] has substituted the notion of the forms of process. It has thus swept away space and matter, and has substituted the study of the internal relations within a complex state of activity.⁴¹

⁴¹Modes of Thought, p. 191-92.

Physiology

Whitehead believes that the average modern man embraces two inconsistent attitudes: "A scientific realism, based on mechanism, is conjoined with an unwavering belief in a world of men and of the higher animals as being composed of self-determining organism."⁴² But the new physics, as was seen above, can be considered to be in the process of breaking away from the classical mechanism and moving toward a more organic concept of physical reality. Concomitantly, the science of biology has come into its own. As a result,

science is taking on a new aspect which is neither purely physical nor purely biological. It is becoming the study of organisms. Biology is the study of the larger organisms; whereas physics is the study of the smaller organisms.⁴³

Beginning with the cell theory, modern biology has discovered a large area of nature in which organic structure is clearly a fact. The cell, as the ultimate unit of living nature, is an organic unity within itself, and enters into cellular societies in which the whole and its parts are also in organic unity. Physiology has discovered the organic subordination of lesser societies to more complex ones in the animal body. Just as physics and physiology both have accentuated the intimate continuity between the living body and its physical environment, so also has physiology brought to light the continuity between human experience and the activity of the human body.

⁴²Science and the Modern World, p. 110.

⁴³Idem, p. 150.

Conclusion

This review of the facts of human experience, as Whitehead assessed them, leads to a very consistent picture. Experiences in the various areas of human interest tend to corroborate the basic facts of common experience. They all indicate the organic interconnection of activities, each of which has its own individuality in community. An individual event involves repetition and novelty. It arises from the inheritance of the past, but it responds to the past in a more or less novel way. The complete result is a novel fact unifying its various data and thereby becoming, in turn, part of the environment for future events.

These being the facts, events seem to have two complementary aspects. They are units of process and they are completed units of novel synthesis. Instances of process toward novel unity, therefore, appear as ultimate upon a proper assessment of the facts of experience. Likewise, repetition and novelty, permanence and change, and the inherent value of novel unity are fundamental characteristics. To complete this picture, basic religious insight reveals an underlying order in things, together, however, with disorder and evil. And it is something of a common religious conviction that passing fact is destined for everlasting salvation.

Section Two - Prolegomena

To the foregoing analysis of the facts of experience, Whitehead's metaphysical explanation is offered in the terms of his doctrine of

organism. This doctrine

is the attempt to describe the world as a process of generation of individual actual entities, each with its own absolute self-attainment. [. . .] [And] the process of generation is to be described in terms of actual entities.⁴⁴

It is this doctrine of generative, or creative, process, in which both absolute individuality and the solidarity of individuals are accounted for, which is the heart of Whitehead's speculative metaphysics. It exhibits such all-pervading factors as permanence and flux, order and novelty, value and fact, immanence and transcendence, efficient causation and teleological self-creation—it exhibits these ultimate opposites to be organically contrasting opposites when understood in the light of the doctrine of organism. Finally, this doctrine intends to do justice to the religious insight that passing achievement is destined for everlasting salvation and to the moral insight that good is stronger than evil. Because it is thus in terms of this doctrine of organism that Whitehead attempts to initiate a coherent and consistent interpretation of all the facts of experience, he prefers to call his entire metaphysical effort, "The Philosophy of Organism."

Criticism of the Metaphysical Doctrine of Substance

One of the dominant themes in Whitehead's philosophical thought is his acute criticism of the traditional substance-accident conception of the nature of real things. His insistence on this criticism reflects the fact that such a conception is basically irreconcilable with the

⁴⁴Process and Reality, p. 94.

philosophy of organism.

To view the world of experience as made up of independent entities distributed in space and underlying their own private qualities is admitted by Whitehead to be a natural and pragmatically necessary way of considering things.

Of course, substance and quality, as well as simple location, are the most natural ideas for the human mind. It is the way in which we think of things, and without these ways of thinking we could not get our ideas straight for daily use.⁴⁵

Such a conception, therefore, has an indispensably practical value. But the basic clue that such a manner of thinking tells nothing of the ultimate nature of things is found, Whitehead says, in the fact that such thinking is grounded on experience of sense-perception, and especially on vision. "It is from this experience [visual perception] that our conception of a spatial distribution of passive material substances arises."⁴⁶ For, as was seen above, perception in the mode of presentational immediacy presents spatial regions diversified by sense qualities. But it was also seen that such experience is derivative and gives no direct acquaintance with concrete things. It remains to conclude, therefore, that the elements of the substance-quality conception are "only to be justified as being elaborate logical constructions of a high degree of abstraction."⁴⁷

⁴⁵Science and the Modern World, p. 76.

⁴⁶Modes of Thought, p. 217.

⁴⁷Science and the Modern World, p. 77.

Whitehead explains how this everyday thought-structure has gradually issued into a definite metaphysical theory as to the ultimate nature of reality. The historical development pivots on the influence of Aristotle's logic. The substance-quality conception, as a metaphysical doctrine, "arises from the slow influence of Aristotle's Logic, during a period of two thousand years. Also Aristotle's Logic is founded upon an analysis of the simplest form of a verbal sentence."⁴⁸ The everyday manner of thinking found expression, of course, in everyday modes of speech, the most straightforward of which being the simple attribution of a predicate to a subject. Aristotle proceeded to erect a logic on the basis of such a language structure, in which the fundamental form of thinking is predication. The prevalence of Aristotle's logic in Western thought has inevitably left its print upon metaphysics. "The dominance of Aristotelian logic from the late classical period onwards has imposed on metaphysical thought the categories naturally derivative from its phraseology."⁴⁹ This transposition of a legitimate, though limited, logic of predication into a metaphysical doctrine about the ultimate nature of real things is already begun by Aristotle's own theory of primary substance.⁵⁰ Whitehead maintains, however, that even though Aristotle's metaphysics was much influenced by his logic, still there were important aspects of his thought inconsistent with a substance-quality

⁴⁸Adventures of Ideas, p. 136.

⁴⁹Process and Reality, p. 45.

⁵⁰Cf. Idem, p. 209.

metaphysics. This latter doctrine was thereby prevented from assuming exclusive dominance in his own metaphysical thought as a whole. However, Descartes' metaphysics is a clear instance of the exclusive triumph of the doctrine of substance-quality.

The 'particular' is [. . .] conceived as being just its individual self with no necessary relevance to any other particular. It answers to Descartes' definition of substance: 'And when we conceive of substance, we merely conceive an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist.'⁵¹

One has only to add to this Cartesian doctrine of substance Descartes' further doctrines that thought and extension constitute the natures of thinking and material substances respectively, and the substance-quality doctrine has received its metaphysical formulation. For Whitehead, Descartes' philosophy is the classical paradigm of a substance-quality metaphysics. This carries the implication that Whitehead's criticism in this regard is made with Descartes' doctrine primarily in mind. But the whole of modern philosophy has succumbed either overtly or covertly to this doctrine. Indeed Whitehead is convinced that this doctrine is orthodox philosophy's greatest stumbling block to the proper and adequate interpretation of the facts of experience. Let us turn to his criticism.

The substance-quality doctrine attempts to answer the question:
What is a real thing?

This answer is beautifully simple. But it entirely leaves out of account the interconnections between real things. Each substantial thing is thus conceived as complete in itself, without any reference to any other substantial thing. Such

⁵¹Process and Reality, p. 79. Descartes is quoted from Principles of Philosophy, Part I, 51.

an account of the ultimate atoms, or ultimate monads, or of the ultimate subjects enjoying experience, renders an interconnected world of real individuals unintelligible.⁵²

Whitehead's basic criticism of the substance-quality doctrine centers on the latter's assertion that one real thing has no significance for any other real thing because, by definition, a real thing requires nothing but itself in order to be what it is. This theory ignores thereby the most fundamental facts of ordinary experience. The essential interconnectedness of things, as was seen, is the overpowering deliverance of primitive experience. Things are present in other things, and "the philosophy of organism is mainly devoted to the task of making clear the notion of 'being present in another entity'."⁵³

As Whitehead sees it, therefore, the classical substance philosophies have attempted to account for real things in terms of static isolation. And it is because substances are conceived as static entities that they are also isolated entities. Whitehead refers to this orthodox conception of a real thing as "the notion of vacuous actuality, which haunts realistic philosophy. The term 'vacuous actuality' here means the notion of a res vera devoid of subjective immediacy."⁵⁴ A substance has been conceived as a passive substratum with no inner activity, no self-functioning of its own, and, consequently, with no possibility for a true relationship with other substances. Nor does the

⁵²Adventures of Ideas, p. 137.

⁵³Process and Reality, p. 79-80.

⁵⁴Idem, p. 43.

theory of inherent qualities remedy the situation. On the one hand, such qualities do not intrinsically qualify their underlying substances, while, on the other, they are private characters belonging to a substance and thereby sharing in its isolation. The only relativity which the substance-quality doctrine allows is the so-called "external relation," which, by definition, does not involve the inner privacy of the relata. And so,

The difficulty, which arises for such a conception, is to explain how the substances can be actually together in a sense derivative from that in which each individual substance is actual.⁵⁵

If one's metaphysics is to be a coherent account of reality, it can not only ignore the all-pervasive fact of interconnectedness, but it must further explain that interconnectedness in terms of its ultimate metaphysical description. Because of failure to do so, the philosophy of organism is forced to repudiate classical substance philosophy. For the basic tenet of the philosophy of organism is that every real thing is relational, requiring every other real thing in order to be what it is.⁵⁶

Because the organic interconnectedness of real things is so incompatible with the substance-quality doctrine, Whitehead observes that if such a substance philosophy does not simply ignore the fact of real togetherness, it must logically declare such a "fact" to be an illusion, and opt for metaphysical monism. "Accordingly--in defiance of the most

⁵⁵Symbolism, p. 26.

⁵⁶In this repudiation of substance metaphysics, Whitehead seems to notice no significant difference between the Aristotelian doctrine and that which Descartes maintained.

obvious deliverance of our intuitive 'prejudices'--every respectable philosophy of the subject-predicate type is monistic."⁵⁷ Presumably he has a Spinozistic type of metaphysics in mind here. The other alternative, of course, that Whitehead leaves open, is to abandon the classical substance-quality metaphysics in favor of the philosophy of organic pluralism. And it is to this alternative, in its general outline, that this section now turns.

Whitehead's Imaginative Generalization

In accordance with his philosophical method, Whitehead elaborates a metaphysical scheme whose matrix is an imaginative generalization from the facts of common human experience. It is this generalization, completed by its full speculative development, which becomes Whitehead's metaphysical alternative to the traditional substance-quality philosophies.

In Section One of this chapter, it was seen that Whitehead's subjectivist principle maintains that the psychological structure of human experience furnishes the primary evidence as to the metaphysical nature of reality. Here, the use of the word "evidence" can be misleading. It is not meant that the metaphysical nature of reality as such becomes obvious in itself. That would preclude the imaginative generalization implied by the very principle. Rather, what is meant is that the psychological elements of our experiencing, which are evident upon conscious reflection, are considered to involve factors and structures

⁵⁷Process and Reality, p. 208-209.

not unique to human experiencing, but equally basic to the whole of reality. It is only in the context of this "imaginative leap" that human experience is thought of as providing metaphysical evidence. The metaphysical investigator does not see that reality is basically of the same nature as human experiencing, but such experiencing suggests to him the generalization.

Such a generalization from our subjective experiencing is not purely gratuitous on Whitehead's part. He himself believes that he has done so on solid grounds, both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, Whitehead maintains that the coherence of any general explanation demands that no arbitrary dualisms be introduced into its relevant range of reality. After giving credit to philosophical materialism for adhering to this demand, Whitehead himself declares:

I accept this principle. But if you start from the immediate facts of our psychological experience [. . .] you are at once led to the organic conception of nature.⁵⁸

The philosophy of organism requires that the facts of immediate experience be expanded into the general character of reality, or else we pay the price of some sort of metaphysical incoherence such as Descartes' trinity of extended substances, thinking substances, and the divine substance. On the empirical side, Whitehead believes it is an observed fact that lower living things than man also enjoy perception in the mode of causal efficacy, and do so with some intensity. Thus, for example, there

⁵⁸Science and the Modern World, p. 107.

is "some direct reason for attributing dim, slow feelings of causal nexus,"⁵⁹ to the jellyfish and to the plant which exhibit modes of behavior toward the external world, that is, causal awareness and self-accomodation to the environment. Again, in the so-called inorganic world, "causation never for a moment seems to lose its grip."⁶⁰

If this seems rather to beg the point than to make it, in any case Whitehead considers these observations to constitute some empirical justification for his metaphysical generalization from human experience. Consequently,

the philosophy of organism attributes 'feeling' throughout the actual world. It bases this doctrine upon the directly observed fact that 'feeling' survives as a known element constitutive of the 'formal' existence of such actual entities as we can best observe.⁶¹

Thus Whitehead's generalization, resulting in a form of panpsychism, is the full meaning of the subjectivist principle. It issues in the metaphysical notion of a "real thing", that is, of a concrete existent, which abandons the traditional substance-quality doctrine in favor of the doctrine of organism.

By this I mean that every actual thing is something by reason of its activity; whereby its nature consists in its relevance to other things, and its individuality consists in its synthesis of other things so far as they are relevant to it.⁶²

Thus a real thing, or as Whitehead better says, an "actual thing" is

⁵⁹Process and Reality, p. 268.

⁶⁰Idem, p. 269.

⁶¹Idem, p. 268.

⁶²Symbolism, p. 26.

constituted in its individual nature by its activity. This is a key doctrine of the philosophy of organism. The agent is not prior to its activity, but rather activity is logically prior to the agent. This, in essence, is Whitehead's solution to the difficulty which has harassed all pluralistic philosophies of substance, that is, "how the substances can be actually together in a sense derivative from that in which each individual substance is actual."⁶³ If a thing is what it is through its experience, and if such experience is both prehensive and unifying, then the togetherness of actual things is achieved in the unity of the experience which is an individual actual thing. Individuality in community, individual experience in terms of togetherness and togetherness in terms of individual experience--this is the fundamental generalization on which Whitehead's panpsychistic philosophy of organism is built. There is no actual community or individuality except in and through experiential togetherness.

The consideration of experiential togetherness raises the final metaphysical question: whether there is any other meaning of 'togetherness'. The denial of any alternative meaning, that is to say, of any meaning not abstracted from the experiential meaning, is the 'subjectivist' doctrine.⁶⁴

These "actual things," whose individual existences are constituted by their prehensive and unifying experience, are termed "actual entities" in Whitehead's technical vocabulary.

'Actual entities'--also termed 'actual occasions'--are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is

⁶³Symbolism, p. 26, (emphasis mine).

⁶⁴Process and Reality, p. 238.

no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. They differ among themselves: God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But, though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level. The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.⁶⁵

Whitehead regularly restricts the term "actual occasion" to temporal actual entities, those real existents which arise and perish in time. God is thus not referred to as an "actual occasion," but by the general term "actual entity."

In this lengthy quotation, two points are of salient importance. Firstly, actual entities, individual, complex, and interdependent, are the concrete existents of the philosophy of organism. To that extent, they are the metaphysical equivalents of the real substances of traditional philosophy. "The notion of 'substance' is transformed into that of 'actual entity'."⁶⁶ These are the "final real things" whose reality metaphysical investigation must analyze and in terms of whose reality all experience is to be explained. Secondly, systematic coherence requires that a metaphysical analysis of these final realities not become involved in a radical dualism. The final facts must, all alike, be actual entities. There is no coherent analysis of ultimate reality unless all actual entities can be grasped through one set of interlocking principles. This point requires further development.

⁶⁵Process and Reality, p. 27-28.

⁶⁶Idem, p. 23.

There is no room in Whitehead's metaphysics for a transcendently absolute being. In a metaphysical scheme of organic relativity, an absolute being as the explanatory ground of everything would constitute a privileged entity entirely inconsistent with the general scheme. Experiential togetherness constitutes actual entities. Consequently their organic relativity must be universal with no exception, and they are mutually explanatory. It follows that a transcendent Absolute is excluded a fortiori. The notion of a being existing in a radically different way than everything else would introduce an intolerable dualism into metaphysical theory, a dualism Whitehead was convinced would go far beyond any suggestions of the facts themselves. And, so, the philosophic ideal of ultimate explanation is to enunciate and develop a coherent set of notions, concepts, and principles describing the generic character of actual entities, so that every actual entity appears as an instance despite specific differences among themselves. Whitehead embodies such a coherent set of categories in his "Categoreal Scheme."

The Categoreal Scheme

The development of a scheme of categories constitutes an interpretation of the facts of experience, and so an attempt at generalization. In accordance with Whitehead's theory of philosophical generalization, the validity of any categorial scheme hangs on the success with which it allows us to understand the full range of what we experience. Whitehead's categorial scheme considered as a theory consisting of ideas and propositions obviously has the reality of a mental theory. The

successfulness of such a theory as an interpretation of experience, then, would be confirmation that reality is something like the theoretical conception. In particular this would mean that there is actual reality (actual entities) and there is ideal reality (eternal possibilities), that there is the formal reality of character (possible and actual forms of definiteness), the determinable reality of what is characterized (creativity), and the actual reality of the process of characterization (actual entities).

Whitehead, therefore, understood his categoreal scheme as the core of an intellectual theory which hopes to be a successful interpretation of reality. For such an interpretation to be successful, even partially successful, would mean that the structure of reality itself is to some degree expressed in the categoreal scheme and in its elaboration. The very attempt to propose a theoretical interpretation of reality means the hope that the theory will have an ontological bearing. The scheme of categories which Whitehead suggests is hoped, then, to have an ontological status, to be an expression of the inherent intelligibility of reality itself.

It should be noticed, however, that the suggested ontological status of Whitehead's categoreal scheme is indicated by the content of the scheme itself and is thus significantly unique to Whitehead's basic philosophic position. For example, it differs importantly in this respect from that of Hegel, who proposed his system of categories as the logical structure of the Absolute Idea. Whitehead is not talking about the necessary logical structure of Absolute Being, but rather about the

factual structure of reality as we experience it. Whitehead arrived at his scheme not through a prior dialectic but through empirical generalization. Likewise, the ontological status of the Whiteheadian scheme is not at all the same as that of Kant. In the sense that Kant's system of categories does not have ontological status, it describes the native structure of the human mind, not the structure of reality as such. Whitehead rejected as subjectivism the proposition that the only thing we can understand is understanding. Finally, the ontological status of Whitehead's scheme is importantly different from that of Aristotle who proposed an ontologically limited system of categories, having relevance only to finite being. Whitehead considered as something less than metaphysical any categorial scheme which was not proposed as being universally relevant to reality. On the basis of the experiential picture of reality that was outlined above, Whitehead proposes that the universal structure of actuality is

the advance from disjunction to conjunction, creating a novel entity other than the entities given in disjunction.⁶⁷

Thus the ultimate character of reality is dynamic and the dynamism is operative within the context of the disjunctive many and conjunctive self-identity.

The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the 'many' which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive 'many' which it leaves; it is a novel entity disjunctively among the many entities which it synthesizes. The many become one and are increased by one.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Process and Reality, p. 32.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Here we have Whitehead's ultimate metaphysical statement of the facts of experience. It is in the context of this radical statement that his categoreal scheme and, consequently, his entire metaphysical development are to be approached. On the other hand, the scheme of categories and their elucidation interpret the meaning of his metaphysical statement of fact.

Whitehead's categoreal scheme consists of four kinds of category which, taken together, are meant to constitute a coherent, logical, necessary system adequately interpretative of reality in its entirety. At the base of such a system, Whitehead posits the "Category of the Ultimate," expressing a set of mutually cohesive notions presupposed in the less general categories. This category is simply the canonical expression of the basic factors involved in his metaphysical statement of fact.

'Creativity,' 'many,' 'one' are the ultimate notions involved in the meaning of the synonymous terms 'thing,' 'being,' 'entity.'⁶⁹

By "one" Whitehead means the singularity of a being, which seems to embrace not only self-identity, but also conjunctiveness of the many and uniqueness among the many. The one is characterized by unique conjunctive self-identity. The "many" denotes a disjunctive diversity of ones. The inclusion of this notion in the Category of the Ultimate is the declaration that a plurality of diverse ones is an ultimate metaphysical fact and necessity, as ultimate as oneness. In the last

⁶⁹Process and Reality, p. 31.

analysis, it is meaningless to ask, Why a plurality of ones? "The term 'many' presupposes the term 'one,' and the term 'one' presupposes the term 'many.'" ⁷⁰ The one is essentially conjunctive of the many. Finally, it is also a metaphysical necessity that the many become one. "It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complex unity." ⁷¹ This necessity is canonically expressed by the notion of "Creativity," which is the ultimate principle by which the many become conjoined into novel unity. Creativity, therefore, is both a unifying principle and a principle of novelty. It is a principle of synthesis which assures that the synthesis is diverse from any one among the disjunctive many which it unifies. Thus, creativity is originaive as well as unifying. It is the ultimate principle of novel synthesis, which makes it the "universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact." ⁷² It is important to note, however, that creativity, as a principle of novel synthesis, is nothing apart from the process in which novel synthesis arises. It is not itself an entity, but a principle of process in virtue of which the "one" and the "many" are organically cohesive.

The Categories of Existence, the Categories of Explanation, and the Categorical Obligations are simply schematic articulations of important factors already implied by the Category of the Ultimate. Only certain of the more fundamental of these kinds of category will be considered

⁷⁰ Process and Reality, p. 31.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

explicitly.

Whitehead lists eight categories of existence, among which "actual entities and eternal objects stand out with a certain extreme finality. The other types of existence have a certain intermediate character."⁷³ An actual entity, as a unit of process culminating in a novel synthesis, is an ultimate actuality, while an eternal object stands in extreme contrast as an ultimate potentiality. Involved here is the proposition that the actual and the potential adequately divide reality, and that the types of existence must be described in terms either of actuality or of potentiality. This assures that the categories of existence are coherent with the Category of the Ultimate, since disjunctive diversity and conjunctive unity are characterized as the potential and the actual respectively.

In reference to the becoming of many entities into one actuality, Whitehead states as the fourth category of explanation that "it belongs to the nature of a [category of existence] that it is a potential for every 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of relativity'."⁷⁴ That actual entities themselves are among these potentials for becoming indicates that there are two ways to regard the actualness of an actual entity.

Firstly, actual entities can be considered in their own internal immediacy, that is, as units of process functioning with respect to themselves. In such a consideration, the qualification "actual" possesses

⁷³Process and Reality, p. 33.

⁷⁴Ibid.

its first meaning. Thus, the twenty-first category of explanation proclaims that "an entity is actual when it has significance for itself. By this it is meant that an actual entity functions in respect to its own determination."⁷⁵ This theme of self-functioning will be returned to in the third section of this chapter. But Whitehead continues to speak of "actual" entities when referring to those final realities which have already achieved their completion as units of process and are no longer functioning in the immediacy of self-determination. They are no longer actual in the first sense. However, the actuality which is already constituted as an actual entity is still referred to as "actual" seemingly because it is concrete, definite matter of fact. While its self-functioning has ceased with its completion, the concrete definiteness of that completion is an abiding fact. To be concretely definite, therefore, seems to be an additional, though derived, sense of being "actual." This derived sense of being actual, however, must refer back to the original immediacy of self-functioning, of which concrete definiteness is the abiding outcome. For, matter of fact also looks forward to the future, in terms of which it functions as potentiality for future actual entities. Precisely as actuality, matter of fact is the concrete outcome of self-functioning.

It follows that, in contrasting actuality and potentiality as fully opposite poles respecting existence, Whitehead is speaking of those actual entities which, by their present immediacy, are actual in

⁷⁵Process and Reality, p. 38.

the primary sense, and, in radical contrast, of eternal objects which, as such, are purely potential. As instances of the fullness of actuality and potentiality, actual entities in present immediacy and eternal objects as pure potentials are the two ultimate types of existence.

But Whitehead is concerned to include in his categoreal scheme the affirmation of the primacy of "actual entity" in both its primary and derived meanings over the purely potential. This affirmation is the "ontological principle" which lays it down that "apart from things that are actual, there is nothing - nothing either in fact or in efficacy."⁷⁶ The meaning of this statement is a) that actual entities are the only entities which are self-existing, and b) that all other types of existence, including eternal objects, are types of existence only because they are involved somehow in actual entities.

Now, actual entities in the primary sense consist in process. This is already partially expressed in the first category of explanation:

That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities. Thus actual entities are creatures.⁷⁷

Here we simply have the statement that an actual entity is the outcome or "creature" of process. This category must be completed by categories of explanation twenty-one, twenty-two, and twenty-three, in which Whitehead affirms that an actual entity "is self-creative" and "that this self-functioning is the real internal constitution of an actual

⁷⁶Process and Reality, p. 64.

⁷⁷Idem, p. 33.

entity."⁷⁸ An actual entity, as a unit of process in transition from disjunctive diversity to novel synthesis, is that which creates itself. It is both the actor and the act. This is so because an actual entity is an embodiment of creativity, the eros of the universe.

Our purpose here has been to concisely review the most fundamental categoreal elements by way of immediately leading this investigation into Whitehead's general metaphysics. In closing, it should be kept in mind that Whitehead himself later acknowledged that his categoreal scheme laid down in Process and Reality was suffering from several omissions.⁷⁹ This merely points up a fact of which he was very much aware, namely, that philosophizing is a perennially unfinished endeavor in which no philosopher is worthy of the name who considers himself to have given a final statement on anything.

It now remains to briefly turn to Whitehead's account of temporal process and of the basic importance of eternal objects in the determination of such process. Such a discussion will lead us directly to the substance of this thesis.

Section Three - The Temporal World

In the philosophy of organic pluralism, creativity is the all-pervading principle of activity. The individuality of each actual entity in the universe consists in the unique embodiment of this principle in

⁷⁸Process and Reality, p. 38.

⁷⁹A. H. Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality, New York, Dover Publs., 1962, p. 177.

each unit of experience. But the universe is not a collection of individuals. It is an organic totality of individuals, ever open on its advancing edge to novel individuality, but always maintaining its total unity. And within this dynamic unity Whitehead has discerned four general cosmic phases of creativity which are necessarily involved in the overall advance toward novel synthesis.

There are [. . .] four creative phases in which the universe accomplishes its actuality. There is first the phase of conceptual origination, deficient in actuality, but infinite in its adjustment of valuation. Secondly, there is the temporal phase of physical origination, with its multiplicity of actualities. In this phase full actuality is attained; but there is deficiency in the solidarity of individuals with each other. This phase derives its determinate conditions from the first phase. Thirdly, there is the phase of perfected actuality, in which the many are one everlastingly, without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity. In everlastingness, immediacy is reconciled with objective immortality. This phase derives the conditions of its being from the two antecedent phases. In the fourth phase, the creative action completes itself. For the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world, and qualifies this world so that each temporal actuality includes it as an immediate fact of relevant experience. For the kingdom of heaven is with us today. The action of the fourth phase is the love of God for the world.⁸⁰

This long passage is included at this juncture because the main body of this dissertation is to be concerned especially with the first, third, and fourth phases as they are here described. But from the point of view of Whitehead's developing thought, the second phase received his first attention. This is the phase of temporal process. Reflection upon temporal process led Whitehead to elaborate a broader context. The

⁸⁰Process and Reality, p. 532.

becoming of temporal actual entities can only be understood in the context of the divine actual entity. But lest this should seem to smack of the transcendent diety of traditional theism, Whitehead is quick to point out that the divine actual entity is equally dependent upon temporal process for its own development.

In this third section we shall briefly consider Whitehead's doctrine of temporal process and the necessity of eternal objects for such process. This will lead us into the discussion of Whitehead's theology.

Temporal Actuality

Actual Occasions As Acts of Experiencing

We have already seen how Whitehead was led to conceive the temporal world as consisting of actual entities involving a temporal past and future. The term "actual occasion" refers exclusively to such temporal actual entities. We have also seen how he made the imaginative generalization from human experience. All actual entities are acts of experience. "Each actual entity is conceived as an act of experience arising out of data."⁸¹ As experients, actual occasions involve objective reference as well as subjective immediacy. But it is fundamental to understand that, as acts of experience, actual occasions are just experiencings. Which is to say that it is not a question of a substantial

⁸¹Process and Reality, p. 65.

subject being accidentally qualified by an experience. The occasion simply is its experiencing. As will be seen, an actual occasion becomes an individual experient through experiencing, and so, itself contributes to its own actuality. In fact, an essential characteristic of every actual entity is to be the cause of itself. "Thus an actual entity combines self-identity with self-diversity."⁸² The nature of this causality will be brought out in consequent discussion, but, in general, this "self-functioning" is the subjective immediacy of any actual entity.

To become more specific on Whitehead's doctrine of acts of experiencing, we must cast the discussion into more technical terms.

The tenth category of explanation states:

That the first analysis of an actual entity into its most concrete elements, discloses it to be a concrecence of prehensions, which have originated in its process of becoming. All further analysis is an analysis of prehensions.⁸³

We will turn to the theme of "concrecence" in a moment. But concrecence is of prehensions, and it is in terms of these latter that Whitehead's systematic treatment of experience is to be found. An act of experience in its completion is a complex of harmonized prehensions in the unity of one self-identical and individual experience. Thus, an actual occasion is essentially a prehending thing, and the analysis of prehensions reveals how they serve as the concrete mechanisms whereby the disjunctive many enter into conjunctive immediacy.

⁸²Process and Reality, p. 38.

⁸³Idem, p. 35 (emphasis mine).

I use the term 'prehension' for the general way in which the occasion of experience can include, as part of its own essence, any other entity, whether another occasion of experience or an entity of another type.⁸⁴

A prehension is thus a fragment of an act of experience with a vector character, that is, bringing what is other into present immediacy. Thereby the present occasion becomes related to other entities by involving them in its own experiencing. Since prehensive experiencing is the internal constitution of an actual occasion, occasions are related to others in and through the same activity by which they stand in being.

Now, "there are two species of prehensions, the 'positive species' and the 'negative species'."⁸⁵ Whitehead goes on to explain:

An actual entity has a perfectly definite bond with each item in the universe. This determinate bond is its prehension of that item. A negative prehension is the definite exclusion of that item from positive contribution to the subject's own real internal constitutions. [. . .] A positive prehension is the definite inclusion of that item into positive contribution to the subject's own real internal constitution.⁸⁶

Whitehead's theory of negative or excluding prehensions is dictated partially by his openly avowed position that each actual occasion is somehow related to every other entity of whatever type, without exception. This is a statement of the universal organic relativity with which Whitehead opposes the theory of ultimately isolated atomic substances. But there is another consideration that is just as important in leading

⁸⁴Adventures of Ideas, p. 235.

⁸⁵Process and Reality, p. 66.

⁸⁶Ibid.

him to his theory of negative prehensions, namely, all individuality consists in unique definiteness of character. Consequently, if actual entities are to be individuals, their internal constitutions must be positively determinate and, therefore, limited. "If the actual entity be this, then by the nature of the case it is not that or that."⁸⁷

The negative prehension is the concrete mechanism by which these two requirements are met.

Returning to the theory of prehension in general,

every prehension consists of three factors: (a) the 'subject' which is prehending, namely, the actual entity in which that prehension is a concrete element; (b) the 'datum' which is prehended; (c) the 'subjective form' which is how that subject prehends that datum.⁸⁸

When Whitehead speaks of "subjects prehending," he is not reverting back to a substance-accident ontology, although it is significant that he does employ the mode of expression characteristic of this latter tradition. For Whitehead, the prehending subject is simply the functional unity which is the total act of experiencing and in which the single prehensions are partial concrete facts. The subjective immediacy of experiencing is expressed in the subjective form. Herein lies the importance of subjective form among the categories of existence.

Whitehead mentions many species of subjective form, "such as emotions, valuations, purposes, adversions, aversions, consciousness,"⁸⁹ and in

⁸⁷Process and Reality, p. 367.

⁸⁸Idem, p. 35.

⁸⁹Ibid.

another place, "refreshment and companionship."⁹⁰ The list is not meant to be complete, since any manner in which a prehending subject reacts to its experienced datum is the subjective form of that prehension.

There is a fundamental differentiation among the data for prehension which corresponds to a basic diversity among prehensions and, consequently, to a basic duality of function within the structure of actual entities.

In each concrescence [of experience] there is a twofold aspect of the creative urge. In one aspect there is the origination of simple causal feelings [prehensions]; and in the other aspect there is the origination of conceptual feelings [prehensions]. These contrasted aspects will be called the physical and the mental poles of an actual entity. No actual entity is devoid of either pole; though their relative importance differs in different actual entities.⁹¹

Thus an actual occasion is dipolar. However, this duality consists in two "contrasted" functions, neither of which can be properly understood without reference to the other. The physical pole functions through physical prehension and the mental pole through conceptual prehension. "Prehensions of actual entities [. . .] are termed 'physical prehensions'; and prehensions of eternal objects are termed 'conceptual prehensions.'"⁹² Positive prehensions, whether physical or conceptual, are "feelings." Finally, mentality through conceptual prehension does not necessarily involve consciousness. This latter emerges only as the subjective form of a synthetic feeling having for its datum both physical and mental

⁹⁰Process and Reality, p. 47.

⁹¹Idem, p. 366.

⁹²Idem, p. 35.

operations.

An adequate discussion of the range and variety of prehending activity open to actual entities would lead into unnecessary detail relative to the scope of this thesis. The range of complexity of experiencing, which embraces, on the one hand, God and, on the other, the most trivial puff of existence, is accounted for by Whitehead in terms of a well developed theory of prehension. Some of this material will necessarily enter the discussion shortly, but for the moment it is sufficient to remark that

conceptual feelings and the simple causal feelings constitute the two main species of 'primary' feelings. All other feelings of whatever complexity arise out of a process of integration which starts with a phase of these primary feelings.⁹³

Here, "primary" means fundamental, original. The primary feelings of both poles of functioning provide the occasion with its first phase and with the material, so to speak, of its successive process. This brings us to consider how the actual occasion is not merely a prehending thing, but also a concrescence of prehensions.

Actual Occasions As Units of Process

An actual entity is a process in the course of which many operations with incomplete subjective unity terminate in a completed unity of operation, termed the 'satisfaction'.⁹⁴

⁹³ Process and Reality, p. 365-66.

⁹⁴ Idem, p. 335.

The process itself is the constitution of the actual entity.⁹⁵

The dynamism of actual occasions is only partially grasped by considering them merely as prehending. Their prehending operations must be understood in the context of the Category of the Ultimate. An actual occasion emerges in a creative urge from disjunctive multiplicity and proceeds to conjunctive unity, the unity of one completely integral experience, complex though it may be. This complete integral feeling is the immediate and immanent outcome of the process. It is called the "satisfaction." The process of operations culminating in this satisfaction is not merely the termination of the concrescence, it is the end of the concrescence. "The 'satisfaction' is the contentment of the creative urge by the fulfillment of its categoreal demands."⁹⁶ The process of concrescence is guided from its origination to its satisfaction, and thus is teleological. The teleology of concrescence is the key to its harmonious unity, a unity which must be understood in terms of the satisfying outcome somehow presiding over the process at every phase. "An actual entity feels as it does feel in order to be the actual entity it is. In this way an actual entity satisfies Spinoza's notion of substance: it is causa sui."⁹⁷

The creative urge for satisfaction is basically a drive for synthetic feeling with fully determinate unity. "The concrescence is the

⁹⁵Process and Reality, p. 335.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Idem, p. 399.

building up of a determinate 'satisfaction', which constitutes the completion of the actual togetherness of the discrete components."⁹⁸ The conjunctive unity of the components of the final integral feeling of a concrescence must unite prehensions, both positive and negative, by which the occasion takes a definite stance relative to every item in the universe. This determinateness in the satisfaction of an actual occasion is one element constituting its individuality. The satisfaction marks the overcoming of internal ambiguity. All decisions have been made and the outcome is a definite concentrated relatedness as to both objective datum and subjective form.

But, in addition to mere determinateness, the creative urge is for intensity of satisfaction. Intensity of satisfaction is realized to the degree that width of predominate feelings is harmoniously achieved in the final satisfaction, and "the 'intensity' achieved belongs to the subjective form of the satisfaction."⁹⁹ This quality of the subjective form of satisfaction is also the measure of the self-value of an actual occasion. The most concrete meaning of value refers to the harmonious contrast of diverse feelings achieved and enjoyed in satisfaction. The components of the satisfaction are valuable insofar as they are involved in the unity of this integral feeling.

Value is inherent in actuality itself. To be an actual entity is to have a self-interest. [. . .] This self-interest is the interest of what one's existence, as in that epochal occasion,

⁹⁸Process and Reality, p. 130.

⁹⁹Idem, p. 136.

comes to. It is the ultimate enjoyment of being actual.¹⁰⁰

In the satisfaction, this self-interest takes the form of enjoyment, that is, appreciation of present attainment, fused with anticipation of the importance of such attainment for the future. But, of course, there had to be an interest for the satisfaction in the concrescence if the satisfaction is truly an end. This brings us to the topic of subjective aim.

It has been mentioned that the process of concrescence is teleological. The outcome of the concrescence is first an ideal intrinsic to the concrescence. The guiding principle of this process of integration into final synthesis is the satisfaction as aimed at throughout the concrescence. Whitehead refers to the satisfaction as aimed at as the "subjective aim" of the concrescent actual occasion.

The 'subjective aim,' which controls the becoming of a subject, is that subject feeling a proposition with the subjective form of purpose to realize it in that process of self-creation.¹⁰¹

The "proposition" is simply the satisfaction as a potential ideal here and now. In the form of a proposition, the satisfaction is a datum which is felt purposefully. And since harmony of concrescence is a fundamental categoreal obligation, the process cannot even originate without the guidance of subjective aim. This is the reason why no single prehension within the process can be understood not only apart from the final satisfaction but also apart from the subjective aim at satisfaction.

¹⁰⁰Religion in the Making, p. 100.

¹⁰¹Process and Reality, p. 37.

This doctrine [. . .] requires that in the primary phase of the subjective process there be a conceptual feeling of subjective aim: the physical and other feelings originate as steps toward realizing this conceptual aim through their treatment of initial data.¹⁰²

This brings up the question as to the origination of the subjective aim itself.

Whitehead spoke of the datum of the subjective aim being a proposition. This is an indication that he is speaking of the aim as it is being developed in successive phases of the concrescence, since a proposition is a complex datum resulting from the integration of physical and conceptual feelings. The subjective aim of an actual occasion, in its origination, is not a proposition but simply a more or less complex eternal object. In this connection, Whitehead declares that each temporal actual entity

derives from God its basic conceptual aim, relevant to its actual world, yet with indeterminations awaiting its own decisions.¹⁰³

Thus Whitehead refers the origination of subjective aim to a derivation from God, who presents relevant possibilities for realization to the novel concrescence. This is a basically important question, and it deserves more detailed treatment. However, a later chapter will be a more proper place to develop this dynamic relation between God and temporal actuality.

¹⁰²Process and Reality, p. 342.

¹⁰³Idem, p. 343.

In concluding this discussion of concrescence, it only remains to notice more distinctly that the subjective aim requires greater determination as the process passes through its phases to satisfaction. It is the guiding aim at satisfaction, conditioned by each preceding phase of concrescence, which imposes further definite unity on each succeeding phase. Its own gradual determinations are referred to as its "decisions."

This basic conceptual feeling suffers simplifications in the successive phases of the concrescence. It starts with conditioned alternatives, and by successive decisions is reduced to coherence.¹⁰⁴

In this way, concrescence is the evolution of an actual entity through an interplay between its subjective aim and each succeeding phase. This does not prejudice the overall guidance of aim since the latter is conditioned at any successive stage only by the partial unity imposed by itself upon the preceding stage.

In each phase the corresponding conceptual feeling is the 'subjective end' characteristic of that phase. The many feelings, in any incomplete phase, are necessarily compatible with each other by reason of their individual conformity to the subjective end evolved for that phase.¹⁰⁵

Thus satisfaction is the intrinsically final phase of the concrescing actual occasion. The aim at satisfaction is the aim at intensity of final feeling. It is the aim at one, final, integral feeling which synthesizes the prehensions of the entire process, both positive and negative, into a determinate, complex, harmonious unit of experience with a datum and

¹⁰⁴ Process and Reality, p. 342.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

subjective form involving some contrast.

The Order and Novelty of Nature

From what has been said concerning the genetic structure of emerging actual occasions, it is clear that organic continuity in temporal reality is a basic position in Whitehead's metaphysics. It is in terms of such continuity that both permanence and order in the domain of temporal process are interpreted. On the other hand, temporal process just as importantly involves change and novelty. The emerging occasion aims at novel experiential unity. Novelty is the other factor, along with determinateness, which accounts for individuality among actual occasions. Without determinateness and novelty, there would be no unambiguous differentiation in the satisfaction of a given occasion with respect to other occasions. The theses of order and novelty in temporal process must now be briefly considered.

A fundamental notion in Whitehead's theory of order and novelty is that of nexus.¹⁰⁶ Nexūs, (the plural of "nexus") constitute one of the categories of existence. In the fourteenth category of explanation, Whitehead states:

That a nexus is a set of actual entities in the unity of the relatedness constituted by their prehensions of each other.¹⁰⁷

It is obvious that such prehensive relatedness occurs for an emerging occasion with respect to its antecedent occasions. Here the immanence

¹⁰⁶"Nexūs" in the plural.

¹⁰⁷Process and Reality, p. 35.

of one occasion in another is most strongly exemplified in temporal process. As was seen, this immanence is effected by physical prehension of the past by the present. Such prehensive relatedness constitutes the phenomenon of efficient causality. Such nexūs are constituted, that is, according to the mode of causal efficacy.

But there is a second area of prehensive relatedness, namely, the immanence in an actual occasion of occasions in its future. It has already been shown how Whitehead wants to take account of the fact that the present anticipates the future, just as it inherits from the past.

The difficulty lies in the explanation of this immanence in terms of the subject-object structure of experience. In the present, the future occasions, as individual realities with their measure of absolute completedness, are non-existent.¹⁰⁸

The answer to the difficulty comes in terms of propositions, involved in the complex datum of the satisfaction of present occasions, to which correspond varying degrees of appetition as components in the complex subjective form of the satisfaction. Thus the present in its own determinate constitution proposes to the future patterns for realization. "In this sense, the future is immanent in each present occasion, with its particular relations to the present settled in various degrees of dominance."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸Adventures of Ideas, p. 194.

¹⁰⁹Idem, p. 195.

Prehensive relatedness of this kind constitutes an anticipatory nexus, or, a nexus "according to the mode of anticipation."¹¹⁰ Anticipation is the device whereby the future is necessarily conditioned by the present. In fact, Whitehead goes so far as to say that present anticipating occasions are the reasons for there being any future at all.

The anticipatory propositions all concern the constitution of the present occasion and the necessities for the future inherent in it. This constitution necessitates that there be a future, and necessitates a quota of contribution for re-enaction in the primary phases of future occasions.¹¹¹

This necessity that there be a future and that the future be conditioned by present attainment is thus imposed upon the creative urge by the very structure of actuality. It is a necessity that is called for by the Category of the Ultimate, and which is more specifically pointed out in the fourth category of explanation and in the eighth categorial obligation.

Finally, there is a third sort of nexus, the set of contemporary actual occasions. Such a nexus is made up of those occasions which do not completely lie either in the past or in the future of a particular occasion.

Implied in this description of the general constitution of nexūs is Whitehead's doctrine that each actual occasion has a definite situation in the space-time continuum, and that this situation is an aspect of its own prehensive structure. "[The] unity of a prehension defines itself

¹¹⁰Adventures of Ideas, p. 199.

¹¹¹Idem, p. 195.

as a here and a now, and the things so gathered into the grasped unity have essential reference to other places and to other times."¹¹² As belonging to an occasion in its present immediacy, the here and the now of a prehension are identical with the here and now of the occasion to which it belongs. It is the occasion as a total unit which is situated in the space-time continuum. An essential aspect of its unity as an act of experience is its particular situation in space and time. And since the subjective aim is the internal ground assuring completed unity, it follows that the where and when of an occasion have their internal reason in its subjective aim.

By the space-time situation of an actual occasion, Whitehead is rejecting their existence at a point-instant. Occasions are spread out both spatially and temporally. An occasion has duration, and it has a spatial region. These constitute its extensiveness.

The notion of order is closely connected with the doctrine of actual occasions as they involve space-time situations and are connected in unities of occasions called "nexūs." The primary meaning of order has to do with the aim of an emerging occasion at a satisfaction involving some contrast and some intensity. Its success will be conditioned by the anticipations of its antecedent world. Thus, order is a function of subjective aim at intensity of feeling through harmonious contrast both in the immediate present and for the relevant future.

¹¹²Science and the Modern World, p. 102.

But the more usual meaning of order refers to the prehensive maintenance by emerging actuality of characteristics and patterns already achieved by past temporal process. This amounts to the maintenance of permanence in temporal process. Involved here is the notion of a nexus that is a society.

Thus a set of entities is a society (i) in virtue of a 'defining characteristic' shared by its members, and (ii) in virtue of the presence of the defining characteristic being due to the environment provided by the society itself.¹¹³

A nexus is a society if, among its members, there is a likeness which is due to the presence in each member of an analogous prehension, and if this likeness is found in the later members of the nexus due to prehensive derivation from the earlier members, the likeness is termed the "defining characteristic" of the society. This generic derivation of likeness among the members of a society is the concrete device constituting the permanences discoverable in nature.

This permanent likeness obtaining in a nexus through genetic inheritance constitutes "social order" in the nexus. "A society is a nexus with social order."¹¹⁴ If the social order is simply serial, that is, if the defining characteristic defines only one strand of temporally successive occasions, the social order is termed "personal order," and the serial society is termed an "enduring object."

An ordinary physical object, which has temporal endurance, is a society. In the ideally simple case, it has personal order and is an 'enduring object.' A society may (or may not) be

¹¹³Process and Reality, p. 137.

¹¹⁴Idem, p. 50.

analysable into many strands of 'enduring objects.' This will be the case for most ordinary physical objects. These enduring objects and 'societies,' analysable into strands of enduring objects, are the permanent entities which enjoy adventures of change throughout time and space.¹¹⁵

In this way, Whitehead explains the enduring permanences of everyday experience. They are realities derivative from the ultimate actualities: actual entities. As seen earlier, Whitehead considers the Aristotelian notion of substance to be derivative. It properly refers to societies of occasions and the notion of substantial form refers to the defining characteristics of societies. Neither is an ultimate notion, neither corresponds to ultimate ontological fact.

Thus Whitehead accounts for the phenomena of permanence and order as functions of the historical succession of actual occasions. The past is in the present through derivation. The past is cumulatively in the present, and, through social order, the past becomes massively in the present. This massive presence of the past, in turn, conditions present anticipation of the future and thereby conditions the future itself.

However, the permanence of social order is never so massive as to rule out novel achievement in historical process. Even when the character of present achievement is dominated by its past, still there is novelty in the manner in which the present accepts the past. This simply means that in all occasions there is novelty on the side of subjective form.

The essential novelty of a feeling attaches to its subjective form. The initial data, and even the nexus which is the

¹¹⁵Process and Reality, p. 52.

objective datum, may have served other feelings with other subjects. But the subjective form is the immediate novelty; it is how that subject is feeling that objective datum.¹¹⁶

The minimum degree of such novelty is simply the uniqueness involved in the spatio-temporal standpoint of an occasion. The unique standpoint of each occasion is the minimum of novel diversity required for individuality.

But such minimum novelty on the side of subjective form is not sufficient to explain all the changes that do occur in the historical process of occasions. There must be room for novelty on the side of data felt if the creative evolution of the world is to be taken seriously. Re-enaction of what has already been attained accounts for the permanence that essentially characterizes historical process. But the introduction and actualization of as yet unactualized data is necessary if there is not only permanence but also true evolutionary change in the world.

Whitehead's theory of "eternal objects" involves his answer to this necessity.

Any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world is called an 'eternal object'.¹¹⁷

This definition of an eternal object embodies Whitehead's notion of pure, unconditioned potentiality. As was seen, potentiality is to be understood in terms of the immediacy of present actuality. Pure potentiality refers to entities which are possibilities for actuality in general, but which of themselves do not have any reference to certain

¹¹⁶Process and Reality, p. 354.

¹¹⁷Idem, p. 70.

actual occasions in particular. Considered in itself, an eternal object is an entity which is merely apt to be actualized in temporal process. It is eternal because its reality as a possibility for actualization transcends the reality of any particular occasion of temporal process.

Eternal objects are thus, in their nature, abstract. [. . .]
To be abstract is to transcend particular concrete occasions
of actual happening.¹¹⁸

In themselves, eternal objects do not represent prehensive achievement, but only possibilities for such achievement. Of themselves, they are abstract with reference to actualities.

The distinction should be emphasized, however, between the abstractness of eternal objects with respect to "particular concrete occasions," and their relevance to temporal process in general. They are both abstract and potentials, and their abstractness means their unconditioned potentiality. Thus, their potentiality is universal, referent to any occasions.

From this it can be seen that eternal objects constitute the eternal possibilities for the definite characterization of actual occasions.

There is no character belonging to the actual apart from its exclusive determination by selected eternal objects. The definiteness of the actual arises from the exclusiveness of eternal objects in their function as determinants.¹¹⁹

The unconditioned potentiality of eternal objects means that they are possible forms of definiteness for temporal occasions. These eternal

¹¹⁸Science and the Modern World, p. 228.

¹¹⁹Process and Reality, p. 367.

entities, therefore, not only explain the possibility of novelty in temporal process, but more generally they explain the definiteness, new and old, which characterizes any actual occasion. "Pure potentials for the specific determination of fact or [Potential] Forms of definiteness"¹²⁰ are synonyms Whitehead offers of the term "Eternal Objects."

"Ingression" is the term Whitehead uses when speaking of eternal objects becoming forms of actual definiteness.

The term 'ingression' refers to the particular mode in which the potentiality of an eternal object is realized in a particular actual entity, contributing to the definiteness of that actual entity.¹²¹

The term is both ambiguous and general. Ingression should not be understood as the entrance of an eternal object into an actual occasion by way of terminating a journey. Ingression simply means actual definiteness. Insofar as actual definiteness is involved in prehensive relativity, ingression has a relational character. The term is general in that it is used to refer to the definiteness of both the data and the subjective forms of positive and negative prehensions as well as of physical and conceptual prehensions in all degrees of complexity.

¹²⁰Process and Reality, p. 32.

¹²¹Idem, p. 34.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NECESSITY OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

In the preceding chapter, the general lines of Whitehead's interpretation of reality have been sketched. Within such a context this dissertation now moves to its central theme: Whitehead's affirmation of God's existence (Chapter Three), and his description of the divine nature (Chapter Four), together with an evaluation of this theology constructed on the basis of a different analysis of the facts of common experience (Chapter Five).

The Empirical Basis

Whitehead's philosophical approach to the necessity of God's existence finds its starting point in certain basic facts of common experience. These facts were discussed in the first section of the preceding chapter. Expressed succinctly they come to this: the world involves the emergence of ordered and novel definiteness and value. In his metaphysical account of these facts, Whitehead proposes the theory of actual occasions. As a unit of experience, each occasion is the harmonious fusion of inheritance of the past, anticipation of the future, and some introduction of novelty according to the possibilities of its situation. The act which is this fusion of experience is a perfectly definite stance toward the universe and a unique achievement of value for itself and for its future. Further, the dimension of value, self-importance and future relevance, is one which requires both order and

novelty in the fusion of immediate achievement. And the fulfillment of this requirement results in the limited definiteness characteristic of actual achievement whereby every item in the universe is taken account of here and now.

In addition to, but in intimate harmony with, the facts of common experience thus metaphysically interpreted, Whitehead acknowledges a properly religious experience which understandably has an important bearing on his theological thought. Again, these empirical data have already been reviewed in the preceding chapter, and it only remains to recall them briefly. The intuitive recognition of a rightness which cosmic process is meant to have is our basic religious experience, according to Whitehead. There is a certain ideal fitness with regard to what is happening. Not that we can grasp at any given moment the full dimensions of this rightness, but we can perceive deficiency and failure when these occur, and, so, there is some recognition of ideal achievement. Such achievement is seen to honor the demands of order and novelty in cosmic process. Nor is this cosmic rightness something statically fixed, independent of the course of actual accomplishment. Rather, it is a particular fitness according to the given actual world relative to each new emergence. Such is the content of our basic religious intuition, as Whitehead estimates it. Another dimension of our religious experience is the hope, and even confidence, that what is achieved in the way of value in temporal process is somehow sacred, never to be lost, but to be preserved everlastingly. We carry this confident hope in the midst of a world in which self-value is constantly perishing and eventually even

obliterated. Our hope is for the domain of the everlastingly actual.

The perception of the order and the novelty involved in cosmic achievement is the ultimate empirical basis of Whitehead's approach to God. In the preceding chapter, the immediate meanings of order and novelty were considered. There it was seen what constitutes these two basically obvious factors of cosmic reality in terms of organically related actual occasions and the ingression of eternal objects. However, such interpretation concerns only the what, and to some extent the how, of temporal order and novelty. A full explanation of the how, and more importantly of the why, of order and novelty in cosmic process is still to be sought. Whitehead's rationalistic bent of mind convinces him spontaneously that there must be a reason for temporal order and novelty, and his metaphysics convinces him that this reason must ultimately be a non-temporal actual entity.

Whitehead's position in this matter involves accepting the reality of both order and novelty in the strong sense. Whether understood as the aim of an actual occasion at its satisfaction or as the maintenance of inherited permanence in societies, cosmic order does not just happen.

It is not the case that there is an actual world which happens to exhibit an order of nature. There is an actual world because there is an order in nature. If there were no order, there would be no world.¹

Temporal order is necessary to the very actuality of the world. In the philosophy of organism this is a demand that is made by the Category of the Ultimate, according to which the structure of actuality consists

¹Religion in the Making, p. 104.

in the creative advance from the disjunctive many to the definiteness of conjunctive unity. Without order such an advance would simply not occur. Likewise, Whitehead insists on taking novelty seriously. Experience presents us with real novelty and this factor can not be construed simply as the novel readjustment of what was already there. No true novelty can simply be a rearrangement of the past. We have seen how this perception has led Whitehead to assert the reality of eternal objects and their ingression into temporal process. And, yet, here again, ingression doesn't just happen. It is not an arbitrary phenomenon that simply occurs apart from any reason.

And, so, the basic facts of order and novelty which characterize temporal process are rational, not arbitrary, and the metaphysician must seek to discover their reason within the context of his systematic interpretation.

The Metaphysical Problem

Since Whitehead is committed to accepting order and novelty as factors of temporal process in their strong sense, and to accepting them as rational, not arbitrary, factors, the basic problem that leads him to the question of God's existence centers upon providing a philosophical explanation of the actuality of real order and novelty. His procedure in this problem is most explicitly and concisely presented in sections iii, iv and v of Chapter Three of Religion in the Making.

The explanation begins with the proposition that,

There are many ways of analyzing the universe, conceived as that which is comprehensive of all that there is. [. . .] First,

consider the analysis into 1) the actual world, passing in time; and 2) those elements which go into its formation.²

This is a short-hand way of saying that common experience presents us with a temporal (and spatial) world in which are discernable certain persistent factors, themselves not temporally passing. The world is both temporal and actual, but within the world there are factors present which of themselves do not share the temporality of the world. It may be the case, as well, that they are also non-actual, according to Whitehead's technical notion of being actual. "[T]hey are the factors which are either non-actual or non-temporal, disclosed in the analysis of what is both actual and temporal."³

Whitehead lays some stress on the point that these formative elements are "disclosed" in the analysis of the temporal world.

We know nothing beyond this temporal world and the formative elements which jointly constitute its character. The temporal world and its formative elements constitute for us the all-inclusive universe.⁴

There is ontological reality other than that of the temporal world. The distinction between the "universe" and the "temporal world" conveys this. By declaring that the "universe" comprises the temporal world and its formative elements, Whitehead is stating that the passing world is not the totality of what is real. But if these "non-actual or non-temporal" factors were not also formative elements of the temporal world, it would

²Religion in the Making, p. 89.

³Ibid.

⁴Idem, p. 90.

be impossible to discern their reality since they would never enter our temporal experience.

Investigating each of the formative elements in turn, the main concern will be the rational one of providing a philosophical explanation of order and novelty in the temporal world.

The Creativity

The first of these formative elements is creativity, "whereby the actual world has its character of temporal passage to novelty."⁵ In Chapter Two it was briefly noticed that creativity is an ultimate factor in reality according to Whitehead's metaphysics.⁶ A closer look at this ultimateness of creativity is called for now.

The elucidation of creativity presents a challenge since, "[i]t is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. It cannot be characterized, because all characters are more special than itself."⁷ Here, Whitehead is speaking of characterization in his technical sense, that is, the determination of fact, actual entities, by definite form in virtue of which actual entities have their own determinate identity. Creativity, as isolated in thought, is indeterminate, formless. But, of course, the notion does embody an intelligibility, which Whitehead even refers to as a "character," this

⁵Religion in the Making, p. 90.

⁶Chapter Two, p. 109-110.

⁷Process and Reality, p. 47.

term now being understood in a non-technical sense. "Creativity is a general metaphysical character which underlies all occasions, in a particular mode for each occasion. There is nothing with which to compare it; it is Spinoza's one infinite substance."⁸

Now, it is unfortunate that Whitehead chose to liken his notion of creativity to Spinoza's infinite substance. This was an early expression of his idea, and it is significant that he left such phrases behind almost as soon as he took them up.⁹ Whitehead's creativity is monistic--there is just one creativity, but it is not a being, but rather a principle.

Creativity is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively.¹⁰

It is because creativity is a principle and not an actuality, that, of itself, it has no definite characterization. And it is because creativity is the ultimate principle, that it is the principle "of highest generality at the base of actuality."¹¹

Actuality is process involving the emergence of order and novelty. The process can be thought of in two different ways.

⁸Science and the Modern World, p. 255.

⁹Thus, in Religion in the Making, embodying the Lowell Lectures of 1926, there is no mention of Spinoza's "one, infinite substance," or of modes and attributes in connection with the notion of creativity.

¹⁰Process and Reality, p. 31.

¹¹Idem, p. 47.

There are two species of process, macroscopic process, and microscopic process. The macroscopic process is the transition from attained actuality to actuality in attainment; while the microscopic process is the conversion of conditions which are merely real into determinate reality.¹²

These two "species" of process are not two different processes, but simply two aspects of one and the same process. "Macroscopic process" is process as transition from the settled actualities of the past to the anticipated actualities of the future. "Microscopic process" is process as concrecence of a present actuality from its inherited conditions to the final definiteness of its satisfaction. Process as transition emphasizes the continuity of actuality, while process as concrecence emphasizes the plurality of actuality.

Our point in all this is that creativity is the ultimate principle of process understood both as transition and as concrecence. Creativity is the principle whereby there is both ongoingness and the articulation of this ongoingness into units of actual fact--the actual entities. It is in virtue of creativity that the past surges forward. "The creativity of the world is the throbbing emotion of the past hurling itself into a new transcendent fact."¹³ The principle of creative activity, however, does not lead to Bergson's pure flux of becoming. The process is articulated into individually identifiable pulses of activity. The past doesn't merely surge forward; rather the macroscopic creative advance requires the microscopic emergence of order and novelty embodied in each

¹²Process and Reality, p. 326.

¹³Adventures of Ideas, p. 179.

actual entity.

Creativity, then, as "the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact,"¹⁴ is creative activity as such in abstraction from any characterization as this or that activity. Definite activity is always an actuality, a being. Creativity is not a being, but the universal principle of being. It is the creative factor in what is actual. Whitehead draws a helpful likeness. "Creativity is without a character of its own in exactly the same sense in which the Aristotelian 'matter' is without a character of its own."¹⁵ Aristotelian matter and Whiteheadian creativity are both indeterminate principles with respect to form. Likewise, they are both universal principles, although here there is an important difference, insofar as the universality of creativity is relevant to the whole range of actuality, whereas that of matter is limited to material reality. Finally, both are principles, and as such have no reality by themselves, but only as instantiated in individuals. As universal principles they transcend any given instantiation, but it is the transcendence of a principle of being, not of a being itself.

And, so, the ultimateness of creativity is to be understood in two senses. Firstly, it is one of the ultimate notions which, together with "many" and "one," is involved in Whitehead's notion of being. Together these notions form the Category of the Ultimate which "replaces

¹⁴Process and Reality, p. 31.

¹⁵Idem, p. 47.

Aristotle's category of 'primary substance.'¹⁶ Secondly, but as an application of the above meaning, creativity as instantiated in an actual entity renders that actuality self-creating--creatively underived. Precisely as activity, each actual entity is its own source for being.

But this ultimateness of creativity within actuality does not allow it to be a sufficient reason for the embodiment of order and novelty in an emerging actual entity. For creativity, as pure creative activity, is indifferent to this or that actualization. In virtue of creativity an actual entity emerges, but creativity alone cannot explain its emergence toward this or that definiteness of satisfaction. Thus creativity is too protean a principle to be a sufficiently explanatory principle grounding the emergence of order and novelty in the world.

The Eternal Objects

In Chapter Two, Whitehead's notion of eternal objects was initially described. In Chapter Four, more attention will be given to the status of these eternal possibilities in relation to God. For the moment, our consideration bears upon the question whether or not the eternal objects can supply a sufficient reason, either by themselves or in conjunction with creativity, for the order and novelty of cosmic process.

And, indeed, it might seem that the eternal objects do provide the complement to creativity that would sufficiently explain the reality of the actual world. The eternal objects constitute one of the formative

¹⁶Process and Reality, p. 32.

elements. In fact, they are formally formative, since they are the potential forms of definiteness according to which the actual occasions have each their defined character. To consider creativity concretely is to consider it in conjunction with the definiteness that is ultimately provided by the eternal objects. Thus it might seem that no other metaphysical elements beyond creativity and the eternal objects are required to adequately explain cosmic order and novelty.

However, such a solution would be seriously inadequate given Whitehead's own doctrine on eternal objects. For these eternal objects, understood merely as formal essences, that is, merely according to their own internal intelligibility, involve no principle of "givenness." Whitehead's notion of givenness is crucial at this point.

Briefly, then, "the meaning of 'givenness' is that what is 'given' might not have been 'given'; and what is not 'given' might have been 'given.'"¹⁷ What is given has the status of matter-of-fact. Thus the given has the positive dimension of being a definite factual situation. This, in turn, involves its finiteness and, so, the negative dimension of exclusiveness and limitation. It is important to notice this negative aspect of the 'given' situation. What is excluded is just as important in a matter-of-fact situation as what is positively provided. Only the manner of importance is different.

What is given, both positively and negatively, is the total universe disjunctively, that is, as the "many" of Whitehead's Category

¹⁷Process and Reality, p. 70.

of the Ultimate. The content of the given universe includes all antecedent actual entities and the boundless range of eternal objects. But the givenness of the universe involves a particular balance between the actual elements and the purely potential elements. More specifically, the unrealized possibilities which are positively offered to any emerging occasion are a selection from the boundless range of eternal possibilities according to the allowances of the actual world of that occasion.

But the infinite range of eternal objects cannot of itself become relevant to emerging occasions in a selective and limited way according to the allowances of a definite antecedent world.

The boundless wealth of possibility in the realm of abstract form would leave each creative phase still indeterminate, unable to synthesize under determinate conditions the creatures from which it springs.¹⁸

Whitehead is contrasting here the infinite but purely abstract variety of eternal objects on the one hand, and, on the other, the definite and limited pattern of real possibilities which must condition each concrete achievement of satisfaction in the world.

Attending to the second half of this contrast, it will be recalled that, for Whitehead, one meaning of being actual consists in the attainment of full prehensive determinateness, and that such determinateness necessarily involves limitation. And, yet, the full prehensive definiteness aimed at and achieved, that is, the final value of each actual occasion, cannot be simply decided upon by the occasion itself. An absolute autonomy on the part of each emerging occasion is inconceivable.

¹⁸Religion in the Making, p. 94.

There cannot be value without antecedent standards of value, to discriminate the acceptance or rejection of what is before the envisaging mode of activity. Thus there is an antecedent limitation among values, introducing contraries, grades, and oppositions.¹⁹

If values in terms of concrete prehensive definiteness are in fact attained, then there must be some standard of value which conditions the emergence of an actual occasion. Such a standard must be "antecedent" in the sense that it is not the product of the emerging occasion itself. Whatever the latitude enjoyed by an occasion for its own free decisions, still such a freedom is conditioned and limited and even made possible at all, by the imposition of a standard of value.

The very notion of a standard of value suggests more than objectiveness in the sense of being given. It is clear from the above passage that Whitehead is talking about a standard which is objective in this way. But a standard is not only given, it is also general, that is, it is self-consistently given to many. And Whitehead develops his doctrine of a standard of value by giving it the dimension of general, and even universal, relevance with respect to emerging occasions. Accordingly, eternal objects are given to temporal occasions in such a fashion that, i) ultimate metaphysical principles governing concrescent realization are invariably operative, ii) a structure of certain logical relations is compelling for all occasions, iii) a selection of cosmic relationships is given, inviting conformity from emerging occasions, and finally, iv) a further set of relevant possibilities is provided each

¹⁹Science and the Modern World, p. 256.

occasion according to the demands of its unique space-time situation.

Thus the possibility of order and novelty in the world is grounded in a principle which is discriminating and selective both in its general and in its particular dimensions. All this demands a prehensive activity operating both conceptually and physically and, therefore, it demands an actual entity, which the eternal objects in their "boundless wealth" are not. This negation is indicated by the first part of the above contrast. The negation implies that among eternal objects themselves there is no intrinsic and eternal order which would determine the actual course of cosmic evolution. Without givenness there are no definite conditions for emerging occasions. And without the definite activity of actuality there is no givenness.

Concluding Remarks Concerning Creativity and Eternal Objects

This rather brief treatment of two formative elements within Whitehead's metaphysical scheme has been undertaken to discover whether or not either one of them or both together could adequately explain the actual realization of order and novelty in the temporal world. It was pointed out that, as formative elements, they must somehow be immanent in temporal process. Because creativity is simply the activity as such within each actual entity, it is directly immanent to each actual entity which embodies it. Creativity is said to transcend actual entities insofar as it is the immanent activity of this actual entity and not of any other. On the other hand, eternal objects cannot be said to be directly immanent to all actual entities since of themselves they do not

involve any givenness to the actual occasions of temporal process. They must be given to actual occasions by some actual entity through the selective activity of which definite conditions of order and novelty are provided to particular occasions. Eternal objects are said to transcend actual entities insofar as their own intrinsic intelligibility involves no definite reference to any actual entity in particular.

But all this simply means that neither of these formative elements nor both together could constitute an explanatory ground for the reality of order and novelty within temporal process. Creativity as such is merely the abstract factor of pure activity which is discernable in any actual entity. Of itself it is protean with respect to any selected definiteness. But eternal objects, too, do not involve any selected definiteness. As such they are merely an infinite range of eternal possibilities for actual realization, but they do not indicate any determined plan according to which they are to be realized.

We have here the acknowledgement that creativity and eternal objects, as formative elements of temporal process, are inadequate of themselves to explain the actuality of temporal process, because they do not constitute a basis for the limitation of order and novelty.

"Unlimited possibility and abstract creativity can procure nothing."²⁰

²⁰Religion in the Making, p. 52.

The Existence of God as a Formative Element

The problem, therefore, is that, while temporal process necessarily involves the realization of definite order and novelty, the two formative elements already discerned, creativity and the eternal objects, do not of themselves constitute the sufficient ground of such temporal definiteness either singly or in conjunction. That there must be some adequate explanatory ground at all is, for Whitehead, the inevitable presumption of anyone who has faith in the reasonableness of the universe. In the context of Whitehead's own endeavor to decipher that reasonableness, that is, in the context of his fundamental metaphysical position, the affirmation of a third formative element is necessary if that position is to be coherent.

The Necessity of an "Ordering Entity"

There is an actual world because there is an order in nature. If there were no order, there would be no world. Also since there is a world, we know that there is an order. The ordering entity is a necessary element in the metaphysical situation presented by the actual world.²¹

It has already been seen that temporal order is a necessary factor in the actuality of the world. World process is the realization of value, and the quality of the values aimed at is a function of the prevalent order. And yet order just doesn't happen because it's realization presupposes a standard of values. This points up the necessity

²¹Religion in the Making, p. 104.

of an ordering entity which is relevant to the entire process of the world. Furthermore, such an entity must be actual.

The definite determination which imposes ordered balance on the world requires an actual entity imposing its own unchanged consistency of character on every phase.²²

The definite givenness which this ordering entity must provide requires that it must be definite and limited in its own constitution. But, in the context of the philosophy of organism, such definite limitation can only occur through the prehensive decisiveness of an actual entity.

And yet this actual entity must somehow enjoy a unique status, since its definiteness is given to each and every temporal "phase" or actual occasion without exception. The consequence of such givenness is the realization of temporal order. This unique actual entity, through its givenness, mediates on the temporal level between creativity and the eternal objects, allowing both of these formative elements to be truly formative, that is, constitutive elements of concrete temporal process. This means that the unique actual entity in question is itself among the formative elements with respect to temporal process. Thus the third member of Whitehead's list of formative elements is "the actual but non-temporal entity"²³ whereby eternal objects become decisively relevant for creativity, and creativity becomes determinately free relative to the world and to eternal objects.

²²Religion in the Making, p. 94.

²³Idem, p. 90.

The Necessity of a Novelty-Providing Entity

As was seen, the Category of the Ultimate involves the realization of novel achievement as well as of ordered achievement. Even the minimal degree of novel realization means the achievement of an experience which in some way was never before achieved nor will ever be exactly repeated in the future. Now it is true that the emerging occasion itself has a self-determining function. "The subject completes itself during the process of concrescence by a self-criticism of its own incomplete phases."²⁴ But there can only be such a self-determining subject if it is endowed with a unifying subjective aim in its very emergence. And it is this subjective aim as it is initially derived which involves an ideal that is not only ordered but also novel with respect to the past actual world of the emerging occasion. If the Category of the Ultimate demands novelty, then the subjective aim must involve a novel ideal from its very inception. Again, therefore, there must be some explanation of how such truly novel character is provided the emerging occasion.

Such provision must be the function of an agency that can present hitherto unrealized possibilities which are particularly relevant for realization in the context of a definite past actual world. This means the requirement of an entity that conceptually envisages the infinite range of eternal possibilities in their general relevance and is able to decide upon just that selection of possibilities which are really relevant, that is, whose realization is harmoniously possible in terms

²⁴Process and Reality, p. 373.

of a past given world. And since the activity of decision can only be a function of an actual entity, this deciding agency must be actual.

The actual entity in question, however, cannot be an actual occasion, that is, a temporal actual entity. This is clear, first of all, because no actual occasion envisages the infinite range of eternal possibilities. This would require a positive conceptual prehension of every eternal object, whereas an actual occasion positively prehends only those eternal possibilities which are in some degree really relevant. "Only a selection of eternal objects are 'felt' by a given subject."²⁵ Secondly, it is obvious that a contemporary or future occasion could not be such a deciding agency. Neither could a past actual occasion provide a novel ideal to its successor, since this would simply involve inheritance from the past, not the realization of a truly novel experience.

Once again Whitehead concludes to the necessity of an actual non-temporal entity as a formative element of temporal process.

Thus the whole process itself, viewed at any stage as a definite limited fact which has issued from the creativity, requires a definite entity, already actual among the formative elements, as an antecedent ground for the entry of the ideal forms into the definite process of the temporal world.²⁶

The Existence of God

Whitehead, then, argues for the necessity of acknowledging an actual non-temporal entity among the formative elements involved in

²⁵Process and Reality, p. 66.

²⁶Religion in the Making, p. 152.

temporal process. More precisely, he is arguing for the acknowledgement of an entity which actively mediates between the creativity of temporal occasions and the abstract definiteness of eternal objects. The result of this active mediation is the determinate characterization of temporal creativity by the eternal forms of definiteness and the concrete realization of the eternal forms in the unifying activity of temporal creativity. The creative advance of the world embodying order and novelty thus depends upon the activity of this mediating actual entity.

Whitehead proceeds to speak of this actual entity, presiding through mediation over the creative advance of the world, as "God." Thus the third member of his list of formative elements is

The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God - the supreme God of rationalized religion.²⁷

It is legitimate to ask why he calls this mediating actual entity, "God." It is also legitimate to ask how justified Whitehead is in identifying the God of his organic philosophy with "the supreme God of rationalized religion." This second question, however, must await treatment in the final chapter of this thesis. For the present, an attempt will be made to briefly answer the first question.

As a general remark, it must be kept in mind that Whitehead was a religious person. To be sure, he wasn't religious in the particular sense of taking part in congregational worship. This wasn't important to him. But he was religious in the broader sense of being able to

²⁷Religion in the Making, p. 90.

appreciate a unique being that is acknowledged to support in a basic way the creative advance toward the achievement of value. But Whitehead himself had an even broader notion of being religious. For him the religious spirit involves being attuned to this creative drive at value throughout temporal process. "Religion is world-loyalty."²⁸ And if speculative thought arrives at the discernment of a being at the base of things and upon which the whole of temporal process depends, then such a being centers the attention of the religious spirit. Such a being "is here termed 'God'; because the contemplation of our natures, as enjoying real feelings derived from the timeless source of all order, acquires that 'subjective form' of refreshment and companionship at which religions aim."²⁹ To Whitehead's way of thinking, the purest religious sense of God acknowledges a being with whom we can engage in the adventure of creative achievement. As will become clearer in the next chapter, such a being is this mediating actual entity which Whitehead is calling "God."

Conclusion

It was pointed out in the introductory remarks to Part Two that Whitehead considered his own argumentation for the existence of God to have some important parallels with the same phase of Aristotle's thinking. In Whitehead's view, not only were they both unburdened by the need to

²⁸Religion in the Making, p. 60.

²⁹Process and Reality, p. 47.

justify a particular religious belief concerning God, but they also agreed not merely on the possibility but on the necessity of grounding such argumentation on the structure of the world. It can now be understood better how Whitehead thought his own approach to be superior to that of Aristotle. In his view, Aristotle had argued on the basis of an inadequate physics and cosmology, while he himself was arguing on the basis of a hopefully less inadequate metaphysical theory of the structure of cosmic reality. By moving the argument to the level of metaphysics, its validity is considerably enhanced.

And, in fact, Whitehead's argumentation is quite metaphysical. It argues to the necessity of affirming the existence of an actual entity among the formative elements whose function is to ground temporal process in its creative advance to ordered novelty. More precisely, Whitehead argues for the necessity of acknowledging a unique actual entity upon which depends the subjective aim of each emerging occasion. If Whitehead's general metaphysical interpretation of the structure of reality is valid, then such an actual entity must also be acknowledged to exist. In the context of such an interpretation, the subjective aim of an emerging occasion must be initially derived from an actual entity which cannot be another occasion past, present or future. The affirmation of a unique actual entity is necessary to explain the derivation of a definite subjective aim at a satisfaction involving a definite measure of order and novelty. Such a unique actual entity is God.

In such argumentation, Whitehead is aware of the danger of introducing an actual entity which is importantly different from other

actual entities. Such a difference must be admitted in view of the fact that the divine actual entity has a unique function to fulfill. But the general coherence of the metaphysical interpretation must not be violated. That is to say, "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse."³⁰ If the affirmation of God devolves from within the system, then God is not a deus ex machina. He is not invoked to save the system, but to complete it. The general metaphysical interpretation supports this particular affirmation, not the inverse.

And if, indeed, Whitehead's general metaphysical interpretation supports and demands the affirmation of such a unique actual entity then,

the description of the generic character of an actual entity should include God, as well as the lowliest actual occasion, though there is a specific difference between the nature of God and that of any occasion.³¹

Whitehead's endeavor to theoretically discuss an actual entity which is different from all occasions and yet which exemplifies the metaphysical categories constitutes his theory of the nature of the unique and divine actual entity. The successful functioning of his metaphysical categories in a theory of the nature of the divine entity will be a test of the adequacy as well as the coherence of those categories. Whitehead's endeavor to do this will be the concern of Chapter Four.

³⁰Process and Reality, p. 521.

³¹Idem, p. 168.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIVINE NATURE

In the preceding chapter we have seen that Whitehead approached the existence of God in terms of a necessary, metaphysical function. That is to say, Whitehead was convinced of the existence of an actual entity he calls "God" because the general metaphysical situation requires the functioning of a unique sort of actual entity. In Whitehead's theology, God's importance is his function, his involvement throughout the full range of actuality.

Approaching the reality of God in terms of his function concentrates attention on the structure of God's own experience as an actual entity. His experience must be such as to constitute him in the function which is metaphysically required. Thus Whitehead's discernment of the necessity of God's existence was, in fact, the discernment of a necessarily functioning entity, the general structure of whose experience, or whose "nature," can be somewhat sketched in the light of broad metaphysical categories.

If indeed God is the "chief exemplification"¹ of the metaphysical categories, then the outlining of the structure of his experience must fit the metaphysical requirements of an actual entity, in addition to accounting for the unique function of the divine actual entity. This means that: a) God's actuality must involve both a physical and a

¹Process and Reality, p. 521.

mental pole; b) regardless of his unique function, this functioning must involve influencing and being influenced by other actual entities; and, c) God's functioning must be within the context of aiming at and achieving the unity of satisfaction. These requirements are implicitly contained in the Category of the Ultimate, and are made explicit in such canons as categories of explanation iv, xxii, xxv, and xxvii.²

In keeping with these categoreal requirements regarding the nature of any actual entity, this chapter will begin with some preliminary remarks about the nature of the divine actual entity in general. These will be followed by a discussion of God's primordial experience understood as the foundational reason of temporal order and novelty. The insufficiency of God's primordial experience alone, however, in explaining his concrete cosmic function, leads to the consideration of the other side of the divine nature, that is, God's consequent experience. In itself, such experience is the story of his immediate dependence upon temporal process. But in a further sense, it also is the story of the immediate dependence of temporal process upon God and it explains the concrete functioning of the divine actual entity.

²To mention the most important. Thus, the principle of universal relativity (iv) implying bipolarity for all actual entities, and the requirements of unifying self-creativity (xxii) and gradual integration of prehensions (xxvii), which is to be completed in final satisfaction (xxv) demand a fundamental and significant likeness between God and actual occasions.

The Divine Nature

To the extent that the general categories concerning actual entities are truly metaphysical, they apply to the divine actuality as well as to any actual occasion.

The presumption that there is only one genus of actual entities constitutes an ideal of cosmological theory to which the philosophy of organism endeavors to conform.³

Of course, the acceptance of a generic likeness common to God and actual occasions is something more than a simple "presumption"⁴ for Whitehead. The reality of the divine actual entity has been discerned in terms of a necessary function of mediation between eternal objects and particular emerging occasions. This strongly indicated to Whitehead that the structure of the divine experience must involve physical as well as conceptual prehensions. The clue to God's dependence upon, as well as to his independence from, the temporal world is contained in the kind of function he is required to perform.

Whitehead proceeds to apply the general categories to the divine actual entity. And such generic similarity basically demands the presence of conceptual and physical experience in God as well as in actual occasions.

Thus, analogously to all actual entities, the nature of God is dipolar. [. . .]

One side of God's nature is constituted by his conceptual experience. [. . .] The other side originates with physical

³Process and Reality, p. 168.

⁴This is a methodological presumption, given the philosopher's necessity to construct a generalization.

experience derived from the temporal world.⁵

As an actual entity, God's reality is the actuality of experiencing which involves the prehending of eternal objects conceptually and of other actual entities physically. Also, like all actual entities, these two dimensions of God's nature are not side by side in juxtaposition. Rather they are two aspects of one total fusion of experience which is the divine satisfaction. And this fusion of experience is directed by the divine subjective aim with its subjective form of valuation and appetition.

But if God's actuality is generically similar to other actualities, it is specifically dissimilar. Every actual entity, of course, is individually unique. But the very structure of the divine actuality, the structure of God's experiencing, is different from that of all actual occasions. God is specifically unique. In this context, Whitehead speaks of a "supreme being."⁶ The specific uniqueness of God is founded on the infinitude of his conceptual experience, an experience which "is not confined to the data of any special epoch in the historic field."⁷ It is this experience which constitutes God as eternal. It is also this experience which allows him to be the underived ground of every subjective aim in temporal process, thereby grounding temporal order and novelty. Finally, it is this experience which enables him to totally

⁵Process and Reality, p. 524.

⁶Modes of Thought, p. 128.

⁷Ibid.

objectify the positive achievements of the temporal world and maintain them in everlastingness.

Thus God's experiencing is partially underived and partially derived with respect to other actualities. Whitehead's technical name for the underived side of God's experience is "primordial nature," while his experience as derived is called "consequent nature." This distinction corresponds to God's conceptual and physical experience respectively. This means that, unlike the case for actual occasions, God's conceptual experience is to be understood as prior to his physical experience, not derived from the latter.

God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world.⁸

The process of completion is generically the same sort of process that constitutes any actual entity; it is a process culminating in satisfaction, the fusing of all prehensive activity into the unity of a total experience. And, although this is a specifically unique reality in God's case, the divine process in its satisfaction involves "the weaving of [his] physical feelings upon his primordial concepts."⁹ Which is simply to say that, to speak of God concretely, it is necessary to speak of him as the fusion into one experience of his conceptual and physical prehensive activity.

A final point among these general remarks is that Whitehead's language is misleading when he refers to God's "primordial nature" and

⁸Process and Reality, p. 524.

⁹Ibid.

to his "consequent nature." Concretely there are not two divine natures. The distinction is generically that between the mental and the physical poles of a processing actual entity. But the mental and physical poles are not two natures, but rather two functions which have their reality in terms of one another. Whitehead expresses himself more accurately when he speaks of the "primordial side" and the "consequent side" of God's nature. God's total experience is one life, not the conjunction of two lives. The "nature of God" is the totality of the divine experience which constitutes his life. Its composition by two generically different types of experience doesn't compromise its inner unity.

God's Primordial Experience

In virtue of the way in which the existence of the divine actuality was discerned,¹⁰ a necessary part of God's experience must be the conceptual valuation of the infinite range of eternal objects.

God, who is the ground antecedent to transition, must include all possibilities of physical value conceptually, thereby holding the ideal forms apart in equal, conceptual realization of knowledge. Thus, as concepts, they are grasped together in the synthesis of omniscience.¹¹

The metaphysical necessity of an antecedent ground for temporal process, constituting the foundational reason of cosmic order and novelty (and, thus, of temporal process itself), leads Whitehead to the affirmation of a pure conceptual experience on the part of the divine actual entity.

¹⁰Chapter Three, p. 146-51.

¹¹Religion in the Making, p. 153.

For God could not intelligibly perform the function of grounding the order and novelty of temporal process, infinite as it is in time, unless he enjoys, directly and independently, the experience of the eternal possibilities for temporal realization. Such an experience, of course, is conceptual since it has to do with possibilities, rather than with concrete actualities. As a kind of experience, the divine conceptual experience objectifies. Further, precisely as conceptual experience, it is an experience which valuates what it objectifies. To understand God's primordial experience, then, one must see it as objectifying and as valuational, and according to these two aspects (which might be called the "objective" and the "subjective", respectively) we will discuss this part of the divine nature. But let us first begin by simply understanding it as primordial.

The Primordial Fact

The divine conceptual valuation of eternal possibilities is an unconditional fact, unconditional both objectively and subjectively.

The primordial created fact is the unconditional conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. This is the "primordial nature" of God.¹²

As unconditional, God's conceptual valuation is absolute and universal. It is an experience which bears no trace of, nor reference to, any particular actuality within temporal infinity. Its absoluteness is simply this independence from the particularity of any given temporal

¹²Process and Reality, p. 46.

society. Particular temporal decisions do not affect in any way God's primordial experience as such. And, in its universality, it is an experience which is relevant to temporal process as such, and not restricted to any particularity within temporal process.

This character of being unconditioned is necessary if the order and novelty of concrete temporal process are to have any metaphysical ground. If God's conceptual experience of formal possibilities were affected by and restricted to any temporal particularity, it could not be the foundational reason of order and novelty throughout temporal process. If there truly is a foundational reason ultimately explaining such order and novelty, there must be an actual fact whose actuality is ontologically independent of any particularity. And the absoluteness of this primordial fact demands its universality, just as its universality demands its absoluteness.

And, so, when Whitehead refers to God's primordial experience as "the primordial created fact"¹³ (emphasis mine), he does not mean that such experience is brought about or affected in any way by temporal process. What is meant by calling this experience "created" is simply what is meant by referring to any actual fact as created. An actual fact is an instantiation of creativity and, as such, it conditions the creative advance. An actual fact is creativity characterized and characterization created. The difference between the primordial created fact and temporal created facts is that the former is an unconditioned condition for the

¹³Process and Reality, p. 46.

creative advance, whereas the latter are always conditioned conditions.

The true metaphysical position is that God is the aboriginal instance of this creativity, and is therefore the aboriginal condition which qualifies its action. It is the function of actuality to characterize the creativity, and God is the eternal primordial character.¹⁴

Thus, we have the essence of Whitehead's notion of God's conceptual valuation of the eternal objects as primordial. It is the fundamental fact, the fundamental actualization of creativity, fundamental, that is, to the entire creative advance.

[God's] unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things. It is deflected neither by love, nor by hatred, for what in fact comes to pass. The particularities of the actual world presuppose it; while it merely presupposes the general metaphysical character of creative advance, of which it is the primordial exemplification. The primordial nature of God is the acquirement by creativity of a primordial character.¹⁵

The Primordial Fact Objectively

To consider God's primordial experience objectively is meant here to consider it as it is a conceptual experience which objectifies what it conceptually prehends. What is objectified in this experience are the ideal forms of definiteness. Such experience conceptually prehends them,

thereby holding the ideal forms apart in equal, conceptual realization of knowledge. Thus, as concepts, they are

¹⁴Process and Reality, p. 344.

¹⁵Idem, p. 522.

grasped together in the synthesis of omniscience.¹⁶

The primordial fact, then, is a cognitional fact, and it is one which constitutes God as all-knowing with respect to the ideal forms. By the same token, it is a fact which conceptually realizes those ideal forms.

The question arises, does God's conceptual experience produce the ideal forms which it knows? Does God as the aboriginal instance of creativity create the ideal forms? Whitehead makes it clear that God

does not create eternal objects; for his nature requires them in the same degree that they require Him. This is an exemplification of the coherence of the categorical types of existence.¹⁷

Such coherence demands that there be no pre-eminent actuality depending upon nothing else, while everything else depends upon it. Coherence demands mutual dependence of metaphysical factors, a dependence embedded mutually in the very nature of those factors. God's primordial experience cannot be understood to create the ideal forms, because it would not be a primordial experience without those forms as its object. The ideal forms are equally as ultimate as the divine primordial experience of them. And, thus, God's primordial experience depends upon them as its object.

The ideal forms, in turn, depend upon God's primordial experience. How? The ideal forms require the divine conceptual realization simply to be ideal forms, that is, forms of definiteness.

¹⁶Religion in the Making, p. 153.

¹⁷Process and Reality, p. 392.

The general relationships of eternal objects to each other, relationships of diversity and pattern, are their relationships in God's conceptual realization. Apart from this realization, there is mere isolation indistinguishable from nonentity.¹⁸

Although God's conceptual experience is not productive of eternal objects, it is a realization of those ideal forms. Apart from such primordial realization in God's conceptual experience, there would be no ideal forms, just as there would be no primordial experience apart from the ideal forms. God's pure conceptual experience not only objectifies the eternal forms, in virtue of which they are called "eternal objects." Apart from this primordial experience, there just would not be any ideal forms. Neither God in his primordial experience nor the ideal forms in their essential intelligibility possesses an independent reality.

If we add to this Whitehead's theory of how the essential intelligibility of each ideal form is to be understood, it becomes clear why he maintains that "[t]he general relationships of eternal objects to each other [. . .] are their relationships in God's conceptual realization."¹⁹ That theory is simply that there is a systematic togetherness of the eternal forms, precisely as forms of definiteness, although such togetherness cannot be understood apart from their reality as eternal objects in God's conceptual realization of them. Each eternal form is constituted in its unique intelligibility as a form of definiteness or essence through its internal relatedness to every other

¹⁸Process and Reality, p. 392.

¹⁹Ibid. (emphasis mine).

eternal form.

An eternal object, considered as an abstract entity, cannot be divorced from its reference to other eternal objects. [. . .]

If A be an eternal object, then [. . .] [i]n the essence of A there stands a determinateness as to the relationships of A to other eternal objects. [. . .] Since the relationships of A to other eternal objects stand determinately in the essence of A, it follows that they are internal relations. I mean by this that these relationships are constitutive of A.²⁰

The eternal forms have each their own unique intelligibility in terms of their internal relatedness to one another. And this systematic togetherness is a togetherness only as objectified in God's primordial experience. It is in this sense that the primordial fact, objectively considered, is the conceptual realization of the ideal forms.

Of course, the ultimate metaphysical principle involved here is the Category of the Ultimate which states, in effect, that all synthesis, all unity, all togetherness, must be understood as an instance of creativity. In the present case, what is demanded if the eternal forms are to be real is that they be objectified in a conceptual act. Their reality as ideal forms is their mutual internal relatedness, and such togetherness can only be understood as togetherness in an act of creativity.

However, the Category of the Ultimate applies differently to this primordial instance of creativity than to ordinary temporal occasions. In the latter's case, the emerging creative act presupposes a diversity already given, and it aims at unifying that diversity in an ordered and novel way. With the primordial conceptual fact, though, no diversity is

²⁰Science and the Modern World, p. 229-30.

given and presupposed, properly speaking. Both the diversity and the unity of the ideal forms are realized in the conceptual act itself, although it is not correct to say that they are realized by the conceptual act.

To conclude, then, the reality of the infinite diversity of forms of definiteness is their unity as an object in the primordial experience of God. That primordial experience, objectively considered, is the constitution of forms of definiteness within the creative process. Without such a conceptual act, there would be no diversity of character available to temporal process. But this notion of availability suggests that our attention now turn to God's primordial experience subjectively considered. It is in this context that an understanding of the ideal forms as possibilities emerges.

The Primordial Fact Subjectively

To begin, let us remind ourselves that

[t]he primordial created fact is the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. This is the "primordial nature" of God.²¹

God's primordial experience is not simply an objective envisagement of ideal forms of definiteness. It is an experience with its subjective side as well. To adequately understand "the acquirement by creativity of a primordial character,"²² we must also see that it is an experience

²¹Process and Reality, p. 46.

²²Idem, p. 522.

with the subjective form of valuation, and that this valuation involves the same unconditioned character as that possessed by the objective side of the experience.

It is God's unconditioned conceptual valuation of the ideal forms which allows them to be understood as ideal possibilities.

The ideal forms are in God's vision as contributing to his complete experience, by reason of his conceptual realization of their possibilities as elements of value in any creature.²³

Ideal forms are possibilities insofar as they are valuable in terms of temporal process. They cannot be understood to possess such value simply as intelligible forms conceptually contemplated. For them to be values, their conceptual objectification must occur in such a manner that they are conceived as valuable. This is the importance of the subjective form of the divine primordial experience. In virtue of it, this experience is not merely a passive contemplation, but rather a cognitional urge to concretely realize the ideal forms.

If we say that God's primordial nature is "vision," we suggest a maimed view of the subjective form, divesting it of yearning after concrete fact--no particular facts, but after some actuality.²⁴

The first feature, then, of God's primordial valuation of the eternal forms is to conceive them as potentialities for actualization in the creative process. This is performed by the divine eternal "yearning" for their creative actualization in particular fact. Only by considering the primordial experience subjectively as well as objectively can

²³Religion in the Making, p. 54.

²⁴Process and Reality, p. 50.

Whitehead write:

Viewed as primordial, [God] is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality.²⁵

And it is ultimately in terms of God's primordial subjective form that there is any urge at all within the creative process to actualize possibilities. His eternal and primordial valuation is the actual root of cosmic appetite for value and achievement. And, of course, since it is an unconditioned valuation, the primordial appetite is relevant to temporal process universally.

This primordial valuation of the eternal forms, however, cannot be understood to occur in a purely indiscriminate fashion. The eternal forms are valued as possibilities, but a purely indiscriminate range of possibilities would not be sufficient to allow God to perform the function of grounding emergent order and novelty within temporal process. It was noticed in the preceding chapter²⁶ that some ultimate and universal standard of value is required if definite satisfaction is to be aimed at and achieved in particular instances. God's conceptual valuation must not simply conceive the ideal forms as values, it must value them in such a way that some valuational order is realized among them. There must be some adjustment of their relevance to one another beyond the systematic internal relatedness which is their objective intelligibility. In Whitehead's words,

²⁵Process and Reality, p. 521 (emphasis mine).

²⁶Chapter Three, p. 143-44.

such a primordial superject of creativity achieves, in its unity of satisfaction, the complete conceptual valuation of all eternal objects. This is the ultimate, basic adjustment of the togetherness of eternal objects on which creative order depends. It is the conceptual adjustment of all appetites in the form of aversions and adversions. It constitutes the meaning of relevance. Its status as an actual efficient fact is recognized by terming it the 'primordial nature of God'.²⁷

Two points stand out here. Whitehead is talking of an "adjustment" of the objective togetherness of eternal objects. And he is also talking of the adjustment of "all appetites in the form of aversions and adversions." The first point relates the primordial subjective valuation to the ideal forms objectively considered, while the second point relates that subjective adjustment of those ideal forms to the subjective aims of actual entities in a primordial, unconditioned fashion. These two "adjustments" are simply two aspects of the function of the divine primordial experience subjectively considered.

Firstly, the primordial evaluation adjusts the eternal objects. The eternal objects, considered as contemplated, are of themselves "a general systematic complex of mutual relatedness."²⁸ Such systematic relatedness (which constitutes each eternal form in its own proper intelligibility) consists in a pattern of similarity and dissimilarity among the eternal forms. But, again, such a pattern is of itself logically neutral, that is, it says nothing about the logical compatibility or incompatibility of those eternal forms precisely as

²⁷Process and Reality, p. 48.

²⁸Science and the Modern World, p. 231.

possible forms of definiteness in the constitution of actual entities. There is no reason, then, within the eternal forms themselves why some are compatible, others incompatible, with one another. The introduction of a fundamental compatibility and incompatibility among the eternal forms is just this "ultimate, basic adjustment of the togetherness of eternal objects on which creative order depends."²⁹

Creative order depends on this primordial subjective adjustment of ideal forms because

this ideal realization of potentialities in a primordial actual entity constitutes the metaphysical stability whereby the actual process exemplifies general principles of metaphysics, and attains the ends proper to specific types of emergent order.³⁰

The primordial valuation constitutes within actuality the metaphysical principles according to which creativity is to pass from disjunctive diversity to conjunctive unity, the principles, that is, which ultimately define the real possibilities and proprieties for such acts of creativity. Thus God in his "conceptual actuality at once exemplifies and establishes the categorical condition"³¹ for the creative advance.

The universality of this function, together with its absoluteness, assures the metaphysical character of this subjective adjustment of ideal possibilities. As a universal adjustment, it does not contain, nor does it dictate, the particular formula for each emerging occasion

²⁹ Process and Reality, p. 48.

³⁰ Idem, p. 64 (emphasis mine).

³¹ Idem, p. 522.

to follow, but rather establishes the universal laws governing the decisions of any actual occasion regardless of the latter's situation. As an absolute adjustment, it is independent of any particular situation. The eternal and universal adjustment of compatibility and incompatibility among ideal forms is a completely autonomous divine decision unaffected by any outside claims.

His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things.³²

Thus the subjective form of valuation constitutes the divine primordial experience as a free decision. It is a "decision" because it is the autonomous establishment of a limitation in reference to what, of itself, implies no such limitation. The limitation in the case of the primordial experience is precisely the subjective adjustment of the ideal forms in terms of compatibility and incompatibility. As a free decision, this adjustment is not to be grounded in any other actuality. It is a primordial subjective adjustment which

provides the limitation for which no reason can be given: for all reason flows from it. God is the ultimate limitation, and His existence is the ultimate irrationality. For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in his nature to impose. [. . .] No reason can be given for the nature of God, because that nature is the ground of rationality.³³

Finally, it is in terms of the primordial subjective form that God, as an actual entity, has a subjective aim. We are told that

³²Process and Reality, p. 522.

³³Science and the Modern World, p. 257.

[t]he purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world.³⁴

Temporal value comes in terms of the definite actualization of order and novelty. What the achievement of value throughout the entire temporal process demands is the ideal and primordial establishment of value and of standards of value. This is precisely the function of God's primordial subjective form of valuation. For God to value the ideal forms is to constitute them as possibilities for actualization. His valuation is a primordial appetite for actualized potentiality. But, of course, his subjective adjustment of the ideal forms as they are constituted ideal possibilities means that God's primordial purpose is not after the temporal actualization of potentiality in an indiscriminate fashion. The achievement of temporal value is to be gauged in terms of standards of value, and, therefore, it is the intensity of achievement that God seeks.

The primordial appetitions which jointly constitute God's purpose are seeking intensity,³⁵

and again,

Each occasion exhibits its measure of creative emphasis in proportion to its measure of subjective intensity. The absolute standard of such intensity is that of the primordial nature of God, which is neither great nor small because it arises out of no actual world.³⁶

God's subjective aim is the ultimate ground for the derived subjective

³⁴Religion in the Making, p. 100.

³⁵Process and Reality, p. 160.

³⁶Idem, p. 75.

aim of temporal occasions both insofar as those derived aims are finite yearnings for the actualization of value and insofar as they are conditioned by metaphysical standards of value.

To conclude this rather lengthy discussion of the divine primordial experience, it is an experience which is an actual fact consisting in the universal reservoir of potentiality for temporal process. But as an actual fact it is deficient, and as a reservoir of potentiality it merely realizes potentiality in a completely general way, not with the particular definiteness of concrete fact.

Taking this second point firstly,

we have always to consider two meanings of potentiality: (a) the 'general' potentiality, which is the bundle of possibilities, mutually consistent or alternative, provided by the multiplicity of eternal objects, and (b) the 'real' potentiality, which is conditioned by the data provided by the actual world.³⁷

"General potentiality" is merely the universal possibility of being a form of definiteness in concrete actuality, without involving any particular relevance to a particular actual fact, whereby a form of definiteness would be a "real potentiality." Of course, there can be no particular relevance unless, in a primordial way, there is some general availability of forms of definiteness. But, on the other hand, mere general availability cannot, of itself, explain the emergence of particular relevance to this or that occasion. The divine primordial experience, as such, is just the reservoir of general, pure, ideal potentiality. As a universal yearning, it requires that its general potentiality be

³⁷Process and Reality, p. 101-102.

transformed into real potentialities on the way to concrete actualization.

Since the divine primordial experience is yearning after concrete actualization, since it is the dynamic reservoir of general potentiality only, as a fact it is deficiently actual. It is an actual fact because it is a unified experience. It is a fact deficient in its actuality because it is merely a conceptual experience. Whitehead places some stress on this point, because he is consciously in opposition to traditional theism in its doctrine of an eminently supreme being. Whitehead insists that

as primordial, so far is [God] from "eminent reality" that in this abstraction he is "deficiently actual"--and this in two ways. His feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fulness of actuality. Secondly, conceptual feelings, apart from complex integration with physical feelings, are devoid of consciousness in their subjective forms.³⁸

This, then, is God in his primordial experience. Through God's primordial actuality, creativity is fundamentally characterized by a universal subjective aim at the concrete actualization of value, and eternal objects are constituted as general potential values for such actualization.

If, however, God is going to function as the mediator between the creativity of temporal occasions and general potentiality,³⁹ it is clear that his primordial experience alone cannot suffice. God's primordial experience is the reason why there is the aim within temporal process at concrete value involving order and novelty. But, of itself,

³⁸Process and Reality, p. 521.

³⁹Chapter Three, p. 149-50.

the divine primordial experience cannot explain how creativity and eternal possibility come together in the constitution of this occasion emerging from this actual world. Whitehead tells us that "in his primordial nature, [God] is unmoved by love of this particular, or that particular."⁴⁰ It is only in the context of particularity that God can concretely mediate between creativity and possibility. Whitehead speaks of the divine functioning in terms of the "Principle of Concretion."⁴¹ However, to understand the concrete functioning of the divine primordial experience, or, rather, the concrete aspect of the primordial functioning, it is necessary to take into account God's consequent experience. God functions as the principle of concretion in the concrete context of a particular and definite actual world and in the service of a particular emerging occasion. This requires that his primordial experience operate in and through his consequent experience. Metaphorically stated, the channel through which God's primordial experience flows and becomes transformed into a love of this particular or that particular is his consequent experience. Our discussion, then, of the divine function whose metaphysical necessity led Whitehead to affirm God's existence must be completed by a discussion of the divine consequent experience.

⁴⁰Process and Reality, p. 160.

⁴¹Science and the Modern World, Chapter IX, passim.

God's Consequent Experience

A discussion of the consequent nature of God holds the key to understanding how God is truly an actual entity. His primordial experiences as such makes it basically possible for him to play the cosmic role which he does. But without the integration of this foundational experience with his consequent experience, the divine role is not played. As this discussion will bring out, only a primordial experience which is an integrated aspect of the life of a true actual entity will be able to function cosmicly as the divine entity must do. As any actual entity, God's life must involve a dipolar experience, both physical and mental. Without physical experience, God simply does not relate concretely to other actual entities. And it is only through such concrete relatedness that God fulfills himself, fulfills the universe, and presents the creative advance beyond himself with any relevant aims.

Accordingly, under this general heading there will be discussion not only of God's consequent derivation from the temporal world and of the kind of "everlastingness" which the world thereby attains in God's life, but also the topic of God's pragmatic value for temporal advance beyond present divine growth will be treated. For this topic involves the concrete aspect of the divine primordial function.

God's Derivation from Temporal Process

Whitehead states the reason for a divine consequent experience in terms of the nature of all actual entities.

The non-temporal act of all-inclusive unfettered valuation is at once a creature of creativity and a condition for creativity. It shares this double character with all creatures. By reason of its character as a creature, always in concrescence and never in the past, it receives a reaction from the world; this reaction is its consequent nature.⁴²

As any actual entity, God, too, not only conditions the creative advance through his own definiteness, but is conditioned by that advance. The above passage, however, might be taken to mean that God is a condition in virtue of his primordial experience and conditioned in virtue of his consequence experience. But the matter is not that neatly compartmentalized. As will become clearer, what God becomes through his reaction to the world also conditions the creative advance, and the underived experience which is his eternal envisagement is still a "created fact."⁴³ But the divine actual entity is a creature not only in the unique sense in which his primordial experience is a created fact, but also in the general sense in which every actual entity is derivative from its actual world. In God there is a derivative experience simply because derivation is a metaphysical law for actual entities. It arises from the Category of the Ultimate declaring that what is actual is in process, and this law is stated expressly by category of explanation i, which is: "That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities. Thus actual entities are creatures."⁴⁴

⁴²Process and Reality, p. 47.

⁴³Idem, p. 46.

⁴⁴Idem, p. 33.

Whitehead gives a more specific reason for ascribing a derivative experience to God. The principle of universal relativity demands it.

But God, as well as being primordial, is also consequent. [. . .] He is the presupposed actuality of conceptual operation, in unison of becoming with every other creative act. Thus by reason of the relativity of all things, there is a reaction of the world on God.⁴⁵

The principle of universal relativity (category of explanation iv) can lead to this demand for divine consequent experience only on the supposition that God is an actual entity. Only actual entities relate to others in a derivative way, because only actual entities are in process of becoming. So the principle of relativity can lead to this conclusion only because it is clear that the formative entity whose function it is to provide emerging occasions with initial aims must be an experiencing entity, that is, an actual entity. If God is an actual entity, then he must relate derivatively to the world, because every actual entity so relates to its world.

Finally, Whitehead makes the point that the very nature of God's primordial experience requires his consequent experience.

We must conceive the Divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideals, with the urge to their finite realization, each in its due season. Thus a process must be inherent in God's nature, whereby his infinity is acquiring realization.⁴⁶

The "Divine Eros" is God in his primordial experience of envisaging the eternal objects with the subjective form of desiring their actualization with intensity of feeling. This is not simply the

⁴⁵Process and Reality, p. 523.

⁴⁶Adventures of Ideas, p. 276.

foundational urge at the base of cosmic process, but it is likewise the subjective aim with respect to God's own self-process as an actual entity. The divine eros is God's purpose as an actual entity, the attainment of which constitutes his fulfillment. "His aim for it [an immediate occasion] is depth of satisfaction [intensity] as an intermediate step towards the fulfillment of his own being."⁴⁷ This idea of God's interest in particular instances of temporal process as means toward his own satisfaction is just one half of the total story, and a discussion of this will be taken up further on. The point here is that God's aim for temporal process is at once the urge toward his own fulfillment. Since this is so, and since temporal actual occasions in their own immediacy possess their own really distinct identity from any other actual entity, their actualization could only mean God's fulfillment if such fulfillment came through his ongoing reaction to temporal process. This reaction is the divine consequent experience in whose growth the primordial subjective aim is satisfied.

What this divine reaction to the world consists in is stated quite simply by Whitehead: "The completion of God's nature into a fulness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God."⁴⁸ Again, physical feeling constitutes a certain fulness of actuality in Whitehead's metaphysics. For a physical feeling is the prehension of an actual entity, not simply of an abstract possibility

⁴⁷Process and Reality, p. 161.

⁴⁸Idem, p. 523.

as is the case with conceptual feeling. Consequently physical feeling is of a datum which is fully actual, not just a possibility for actualization. The completion of God's primordial conceptual envisagement can only come in the form of physical experience. The completion of his primordial experience cannot be by a fuller conceptual life, since that experience is eternally and absolutely complete in its range and depth. The only completion possible to such experience is the further experience of its data as fully actualized in actual entities, or, more precisely, the experience of actual entities characterized by the data of its purely conceptual prehensions. Such experiencing is physical.

Such divine physical experience has as its objective data the temporal actual entities which constitute the actual world. "Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception into God's nature."⁴⁹ Just as one temporal occasion objectifies another in its actual world, so also does God in his physical experience. And the mechanism is identical: "This element in God's nature inherits from the temporal counterpart according to the same principle as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past."⁵⁰ The divine physical prehensions are instances of prehension in the mode of causal efficacy just as are the derivations among actual occasions.

The divine fulfillment is attendant upon the temporal advance of the world. "God's conceptual nature is unchanged by reason of its

⁴⁹Process and Reality, p. 531.

⁵⁰Idem, p. 531-32.

final completeness. But his derivative nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world."⁵¹ It follows, then, that the divine consequent experiencing is an ongoing process. Necessarily his fulfillment is a process since the world is in process and the "completion" which his consequent experiencing brings cannot be understood as absolute at any given moment. The divine fulness of actuality is always relative. This idea will be enlarged upon in due course. It is enough now simply to note the continuing and open-ended aspect of the divine fulfillment due to this dependence upon temporal process. "This final phase of passage in God's nature is ever enlarging itself."⁵²

The question of how this consequent growth in God's experience takes place brings up again the idea of the divine primordial purpose. The primordial subjective aim is at the actualization with intensity of pure possibility. This purpose is realized in God himself through the divine consequent feeling of temporal actuality. And this consequent realization of divine purpose is always going to be only a limited and incomplete fulfillment of that primordial purpose. Temporal actualization is finite of its very nature and consequently so also is the divine derivative experience.

From this it begins to emerge that the process within God of actualizing his subjective aim through the mediation of temporal process involves selection. The absolute infinity of pure possibility can only

⁵¹Process and Reality, p. 523-24.

⁵²Idem, p. 530.

be actualized through a selective process. Such a selective process is obviously one that is embedded in particularity. It cannot simply be the function of pure primordial divine experience. The details of this selectivity will be discussed later under the heading of God's "superjective"⁵³ immanence in temporal process. The point now is just that God's pure primordial valuation must still be understood to be the foundational urge behind (and within) this process of selection and therefore behind his own ongoing derivative growth. In this vein, Whitehead declares:

This prehension into God of each creature is directed with the subjective aim, and clothed with the subjective form, wholly derivative from his all inclusive primordial valuation.⁵⁴

The particularity of each singular prehensive reaction to each temporal occasion is directed and clothed with God's absolutely universal purpose. Each moment of the divine consequent fulfillment is derivative from that primordial purpose. As will be seen more clearly further on, the derivation is mediated, but it is directed by its ultimate ground, the foundational divine purpose.

Finally in this discussion of God's derivation from temporal process the question of the unity of his experience must be clarified. Early in this chapter it was pointed out that Whitehead's language in speaking of God's "primordial nature" and of his "consequent nature" is

⁵³Whitehead's technical term for that aspect of the functioning of an actual entity whereby it affects emerging actual entities beyond itself.

⁵⁴Process and Reality, p. 523.

not to be taken literally to mean two really distinct natures in God, each with its own proper life. In a basic way there are two really different types of experience, conceptual and physical, which function in the divine life as in the life of any actual entity. But these different types of functioning operate together and they require one another. In God there is one coherent life, not a concurrent course of two lives. The consequent nature of God is

the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom.⁵⁵

The "transformation" of God's wisdom is the particular and gradual actualization of his primordial envisagement. This transformation is mediated through the actual world, finding its completion through the prehension of the world by the divine consequent experience. This prehensive derivation from the world is integrated into the full divine life which is a unity. The nature of this unity is the question now before us.

In Whitehead's general theory, the unity of an actual entity, in its achieved form, is the final synthesis of all its prehensive experience.⁵⁶ This is implied by the Category of the Ultimate. Final unity of concrescence is undoubtedly a universal metaphysical requirement for actual entities. God can be no exception. But Whitehead has little to say about how the divine satisfaction is to be understood. The

⁵⁵Process and Reality, p. 524 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁶Idem, p. 535. Cf. Categories of Explanation: ii), xxv), xxvii) (Idem, p. 33-39).

difficulty on this point lies in the fact that the divine life is a continuously ongoing process. God is always self-identically with each and every emerging occasion of temporal process. He is above time and the epochal law of temporal process. But, nevertheless, the divine life is a process, and it is guided by its own subjective aim, and there is a metaphysical demand for satisfaction.

Nor is this satisfaction to come with the final termination of temporal process, because temporal process will have no such termination, just as it had no beginning. It is temporally infinite. If there is satisfaction in the divine life, it must be a continuing satisfaction which spans the infinity of temporal process in its own self-identity. At the same time, if the divine satisfaction involves the derivative experience of the temporal world, then its enduring self-identity must allow for growth and enlargement. The satisfaction itself must be in continuing process of development. Here is the basic point of difference with respect to the satisfaction of an actual occasion, whose satisfaction culminates its own concrescence and by the very fact of its complete unity ceases to exist. There is no possibility of its ongoing concrescence.

It seems, then, that the reason for this special nature of the divine satisfaction is at root the infiniteness of God's primordial aim. Its datum is infinite, and also its subjective form--the urge to absolute intensity of feeling. Such a subjective aim cannot be realized through the mediation of any given moment of time simply because any given temporal occasion is finite. The divine satisfaction is in

process, and this process is everlasting because finitude can never exhaust the infinite.

The finality of the divine satisfaction is therefore never absolute, but always relative. The subjective aim is never completely satisfied, but it is always being transformed into satisfaction. The satisfaction achieved is a relative fulfillment, though the gap between satisfied aim and what remains to be satisfied is always infinite.

These few preceding paragraphs have largely been surmise on the author's part in the absence of any explicit treatment of this question by Whitehead himself. The surmising, however, has been done on the basis of Whitehead's general theory, and it is the present author's belief that nothing in these general remarks could meet with any serious exception from anyone on the basis of Whitehead's text.

It is possible, however, and necessary, to become somewhat more specific about the unity of God's life. What is involved in this unity? Whitehead remarks that "the primordial nature [of God] is conceptual, the consequent nature is the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts."⁵⁷ What the divine consequent experience adds to God's life are his feelings of the world, and these physical prehensions are integrated into his purely primordial experience. This "weaving" of two different types of experience gives rise to a single all-embracing feeling:

The wisdom of subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system—its sufferings, its

⁵⁷ Process and Reality, p. 524.

sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy--woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling.⁵⁸

Concentrating for the moment simply on the divine unifying process, this "universal feeling" is God's satisfaction. As in any actual entity, the divine satisfaction is a complex feeling integrating the mental and physical poles of his experience and fulfilling his subjective aim.

What is unified in the divine satisfaction are his primordial and consequent experiences, his prehensions of potentialities for actualization and his prehensions of actual accomplishment. As in the satisfaction of any actual entity, there is the fusion of present enjoyment and anticipation for the future on the side of the subjective form of the divine satisfaction. There is enjoyment in the feeling of actuality as the fulfillment of potentiality, and there is anticipation in the feeling of potentialities not yet actualized. The divine anticipation has a unique dimension in that it integrates the finite anticipations of the prehended occasions into the infinite urge at intensity of actualization which is God's primordial experience. This serves to recast those finite anticipations in the light of infinite wisdom.

The divine satisfaction is a "universal feeling." In its unity there is an all-inclusiveness. Of course, a certain universality characterizes the satisfaction of any actual entity.

The final phase in the process of concrescence, constituting an actual entity, is one complex, fully determinate feeling.

⁵⁸Process and Reality, p. 525.

[. . .] It is fully determinate [. . .] as to its prehension--positive or negative--of every item in its universe.⁵⁹

It was seen in Chapter Two that the "universe" of a temporal occasion is composed of every actual entity from which it somehow originates, and each emerging occasion originates somehow from every actual entity already completed at the time of its origination. But such a temporal occasion does not feel its contemporary occasions, because its prehensive process is sealed from the moment of its initial phase. Nor does it completely feel its own actual world. Firstly, "in the temporal world, it is the empirical fact that process entails loss: the past is in the present under an abstraction."⁶⁰ Negative prehension is always involved in an emerging occasion's relations to the actual entities of its world. Secondly, negative prehension also figures in any occasion's prehension of pure potentiality simply because the infinite range of eternal objects could not possibly be effectively relevant to any given occasion due to the latter's finiteness.

The universality of the divine satisfaction does not suffer any of these limitations. It possesses a truly unrestricted comprehensiveness from which nothing is eliminated from feeling. Since God is above time, no actual occasions are his contemporaries. Since his primordial experience is eternally complete, there is no elimination in his prehension of potentiality. The question of negative prehension figuring in God's prehension of actual occasions and thereby limiting

⁵⁹Category of Explanation xxv) (Idem, p. 38).

⁶⁰Idem, p. 517.

the universality of his satisfaction just as it is limited in those actual occasions themselves is one on which Whitehead's own position is much more difficult to decide. However, it seems that the textual evidence at least weighs against affirming negative prehension in God's derivation from the world, even though a final decision on the question may never be forthcoming.

This matter of the presence or absence of negative prehension in God's consequent experience of the temporal world has considerable importance. What is at stake is the answer to the question: Are the past accomplishments of temporal process destined to gradually disappear and be lost in the creative advance, or is each moment of temporal achievement destined to everlasting significance? It will be recalled that Whitehead considered the latter alternative to be a basic religious intuition.⁶¹ We experience the preciousness of our lives not only in those outstanding moments of stimulating insight or achievement, but more commonly as an ever-present tonality attaching to each and every moment, even though this sentiment may only lie in background vagueness. And we have this feeling not only about ourselves but also with regard to the world at large, namely, that each moment is somehow its own justification for being, that it is not just a means to an end. From this abiding sentiment, it is just a step to the hope that nothing in all this will be lost.

But, just as physical feelings are haunted by the vague insistence of causality, so the higher intellectual feelings

⁶¹Chapter Three, p. 132-33.

are haunted by the vague insistence of another order, where there is no unrest, no travel, no shipwreck: 'There shall be no more sea.'⁶²

This seems to be the hope to escape from time whose law is advance at the price of perishing, the hope of everlasting life and peace. Whether or not this hope is being fulfilled is, for Whitehead, a religious problem.

This is the problem which gradually shapes itself as religion reaches its higher phases in civilized communities. The most general formulation of the religious problem is the question whether the process of the temporal world passes into the formation of other actualities, bound together in an order in which novelty does not mean loss.⁶³

And he declares that there is no metaphysical reason why this rational and religious hope cannot be fulfilled.

In the temporal world, it is the empirical fact that process entails loss: the past is present under an abstraction. But there is no reason, of any ultimate metaphysical generality, why this should be the whole story.⁶⁴

The salient point in these few remarks of Whitehead is that he considers it a religious hope and a religious problem. Whether or not there is a mode of being in which the momentary achievements of temporal process can escape the inexorable law of time is a question about the relation of "God and the World."⁶⁵ The consequent experience of God derivatively prehending the world is, of course, Whitehead's basic

⁶²Process and Reality, p. 516.

⁶³Idem, p. 517.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Idem, p. 518.

theory by way of a positive response to this problem. But it is a theory called for at the same time by his metaphysical principles.

Now, the original question about negative prehensions figuring in God's derivative experience must be handled to a large extent by having recourse to Whitehead's remarks concerning the temporal world passing into an everlasting mode of being without loss. This will not only involve a discussion of negative prehension, but also an analysis of cosmic evil and of the idea of everlastingness.

God and Negative Prehensions

It will be recalled from the brief treatment of negative prehension in Chapter Two⁶⁶ that Whitehead considered such prehensions to figure in the experience of an actual entity in virtue of its aim at definite unity. Definiteness involves limitation, and limitation requires elimination. Elimination is effected by "negative prehension" whereby a certain initial datum is rejected. But definiteness only requires limitation when the subjective aim governing the concrescence is finite. On the supposition of an infinite subjective aim, no elimination of initial data would be necessary. And the divine subjective aim is infinite: the full actualization of pure possibility with absolute intensity of feeling. Negative prehension is required if the perspective of a concrescence is limited. Where no such limitation occurs, there is no categorical reason for negative prehension. The

⁶⁶Chapter Two, p. 113-14.

divine primordial experience, which constitutes God's subjective aim, "arises out of no actual world."⁶⁷ The special intimacy between God and every actual occasion is rooted in the eternal fact that God's subjective aim does not have a limited perspective. In virtue of this, he is "in unison of becoming with every other creative act."⁶⁸ He is with every emerging occasion because his own perspective infinitely transcends that of any occasion.

Each and every occasion in its actual satisfaction represents some temporal realization of the divine aim. Each limited satisfaction in its totality represents this. It might be that the realization is not as great as that initially urged by the divine proposal. Each occasion retains freedom of decision within its own internal process. But every occasion realizes God's proposal to it to some extent. Deficiency of achievement on the part of any occasion with respect to the divine proposal to it is no ground for God, in turn, toprehend that occasion with some elimination through negative prehension. To the extent of its achieved value, it represents some temporal realization of the divine aim. It is in this context, I submit, that some ambiguous passages are to be interpreted:

[. . .] each novel actuality in the temporal world contributes such elements as it can to a realization in God.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Process and Reality, p. 75.

⁶⁸Idem, p. 523.

⁶⁹Idem, p. 134 (emphasis mine).

The consequent nature of God is his judgement on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgement of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved.⁷⁰

[An occasion prehended by God] is not a total loss, but on its finer side is an element to be woven immortally into the rhythm of mortal things.⁷¹

The "finer side" which "can be saved" is the temporal occasion, not in its deficiency, but in its achievement, and the achievement of an actual entity is constituted by its satisfaction. God finds every occasion acceptable and valuable to the full extent of its satisfaction. The interests of God's own satisfaction are never in competition with those of actual occasions. "God's role is not the combat of productive force with productive force, of destructive force with destructive force; it lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization."⁷²

God and the Reality of Evil

We must now turn the discussion to the topic of evil, since the "patient operation" of God's "overpowering rationality" has to do with the overcoming of temporal evil. The divine activity of overcoming evil cannot be adequately handled at this point, since it involves very importantly God's superjective immanence in the world--a matter which has still to be taken up. But the idea of cosmic evil is relevant

⁷⁰Process and Reality, p. 525 (emphasis mine).

⁷¹Religion in the Making, p. 155 (emphasis mine).

⁷²Process and Reality, p. 525-26.

here, since it has just been submitted that God experiences completely and with no exclusions every actual occasion of the temporal world. At the same time, Whitehead considers evil to be real in the temporal world. Does this mean that evil becomes derivatively a part of God's life? Is God evil because the world is evil? If not, then it would seem God must eliminate something real in his consequent derivation from the world. But the only mechanism for this is the negative prehension.

Whitehead tells us that evil has both a positive and a negative aspect about it. "The nature of evil is that the characters of things are mutually obstructive."⁷³ There is mutual obstruction within the experience of an actual entity when its component feelings (positive prehensions) involve subjective forms of which one or more fails to attain proper strength because of its inhibition by others. It is possible for this inhibition to work only one way and need not be strictly speaking "mutual." The point is that in the process of mutual adjustment among the feelings of a concrescing actuality, one or more feelings may be prevented from making its full potential contribution to the final satisfaction of enjoyment and anticipation. There are basically two ways for this to come about: a) one or more feelings can be downgraded in their importance in virtue of the upgrading of a contrasting feeling or feelings; b) both sides of the contrast can mutually inhibit each other from attaining proper importance. In either case the fact of evil consists in the active presence of feelings within

⁷³Process and Reality, p. 517.

the experience of an actual entity among which there is inhibition of feeling or, in Whitehead's phrase, among which there is "aesthetic destruction."⁷⁴ The positive side of evil is the inhibition which the process of mutual adjustment brings to bear on one or more of the component feelings. The negative side is the derogation from perfection which such inhibition involves. "Aesthetic destruction is a positive component in subjective form, and is inconsistent with perfection."⁷⁵ The perfection in question is not, of course, absolute perfection, but rather the perfection proper to the concrescing actual entity.

Aesthetic destruction is felt by the actual entity itself. "The subjective experience of aesthetic destruction will be termed a 'discordant feeling.' [. . .] The more intense the discordant feeling, the further the retreat from perfection."⁷⁶ The evil of one actual entity can also be felt by another, not only in the latter's initial conformal phase, but also according to its own valuation of that evil. And the feeling of evil constitutes either physical or mental suffering, "namely physical pain or mental evil, such as sorrow, horror, dislike."⁷⁷

If this brief analysis is basically accurate, it is understandable how evil is inseparable from the good. It can make no sense to speak of an actual entity as thoroughly evil, because evil is

⁷⁴Adventures of Ideas, p. 256.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Idem, p. 255-56.

unsatisfactory accomplishment, not the lack of all accomplishment. If there is a lack, there must be some actuality which lacks, and if there is an actuality, there must be some accomplishment, however imperfect it may be. But Whitehead also wants to say that evil itself has its positive side. There is accomplishment in aesthetic destruction itself. Not only is the inhibited feeling still a positive component of experience, but the inhibiting feeling inhibits in virtue of the strength of its contribution. In addition, the feeling of evil--the discordant feeling--is positive.

The metaphysical conditions which make evil possible are the finiteness of actual satisfaction and the freedom of an actual entity for decisions of adjustment within its own concrescing process. The first condition not only demands the exercise of negative prehension, but also adjustment among positive prehensions in the name of final harmonious unity. The second condition, however, allows for the possibility that a proper adjustment will not be completely effected, and renders groundless any assurance that it will. From this it becomes clear that the perpetration of evil can never be ascribed to God. Firstly, the divine subjective aim is directed unchangingly at absolute satisfaction. Secondly, his proposal of initial aim to each emerging occasion is simply a translation of his own divine aim into a particular historical context. His proposals, therefore, are for the greatest possible satisfaction in that historical condition. As will be seen, his proposals constitute the standard of proper harmony of achievement for each occasion. If such harmony is incompletely achieved, this evil

can only be attributed to the actual occasion in question. Evil, then, can never be in God as perpetrated by himself.

On the other hand, Whitehead invokes the image of God as tender and patient. God experiences the evil in the world. He prehends every actuality in "its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, [as well as in] its triumphs, its immediacies of joy."⁷⁸ It is true that the evil of the world which God derivatively experiences in his own life is already muted, so to speak, by its integration with an absolute subjective aim. "The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts."⁷⁹ Still evil is a fact. And if God is involved in overcoming it by good,⁸⁰ then he must experience it as a fact. God's consequent derivation from the world does not eliminate its evil through negative prehensions.

God and Everlastingness

This discussion of the divine consequent experience has now led to the idea of everlastingness.

The theme of Cosmology, which is the basis of all religions, is the story of the dynamic effort of the World passing into everlasting unity, and of the static majesty of God's vision accomplishing its purpose of completion by absorption of the World's multiplicity of effort.⁸¹

⁷⁸Process and Reality, p. 525.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Religion in the Making, p. 155.

⁸¹Process and Reality, p. 529-30.

Through the divine consequent experience, not only is God fulfilling his eternal subjective aim, but every temporal actuality is being received "into everlasting unity." The accomplishment of God's vision and the attainment of everlastingness by temporal actuality coincide in the process of God's consequent growth. Everlastingness involves the opposites of unity and multiplicity. Temporal actualities retain their own self-identity as they are received into the unity of the divine life.

The basic way to understand the idea of everlastingness is to contrast it to the idea of the temporal creative advance moving on to novel achievement as past accomplishment perishes. The past perishes on the level of temporal process because the achievement of temporal satisfaction marks the demise of an actual occasion in its own subjective immediacy. The perishing of subjective actuality is, in a sense, a defeat for the individual occasion since it ends the enjoyment of present immediacy and its feeling of present value. It is this enjoyment of present satisfaction which gives rise to the hope of overcoming the inexorable law of creative advance.

Of course, the perishing of an actual occasion always commands some measure of immortality, since it is constituted as a distinct element in the over-all matter-of-fact situation for every newly emerging occasion. But it was seen that no occasion in the actual world of any emerging occasion is completely prehended. The laws of finite mutual adjustment not only demand elimination, but they also demand modification, so that what is not eliminated is at least altered according to the particular aim of the novel occasion. Such elimination and alteration

severely qualify an actual occasion's anticipation of its influence on the future. And in any case, this temporal immortality is an objective one. An occasion makes its mark on the future through being prehensively objectified by emerging occasions, not through the continuation of its own subjective immediacy. And yet the hope is for immortality without perishing. This is the religious intuition and

objective immortality within the temporal world does not solve the problem. [. . .] 'Everlastingness' has been lost; and 'everlastingness' is the content of that vision upon which the finer religions are built--the 'many' absorbed everlastingly in the final unity.⁸²

Everlastingness is a character of God's consequent experience.⁸³

"The property of combining creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy is what [. . .] is meant by the term 'everlasting.'"⁸⁴ The "creative advance" in this case is the consequent development of the divine satisfaction in response to the temporal creative advance. This development is not epochal, but continuous, that is, it is not a development carried through by successive units of experience, but the ongoing experience of one self-identical actual entity. This ongoing development within the divine life assures the continuous immediacy of all his derivative experience of the world, as well as its development and enlargement through novel experience. What God feels with respect to one moment or period of time he continues to feel in his ongoing

⁸²Process and Reality, p. 527.

⁸³Idem, p. 524.

⁸⁴Idem, p. 524-25.

subjective immediacy. Within God there is no perishing of subjective immediacy.

The ongoing subjective immediacy of God's entire and concreting experience is the answer to the persistent hope that immediacy of feeling can be reconciled with the creative advance. It does fulfill the hope for complete immortality in the sense that nothing will be lost of an actual occasion's accomplishment. The divine openness to all temporal achievement in virtue of an infinite subjective aim enables God to experience the world without any elimination or modification. The world is experienced by God as it is and completely as it is. This is "the patience of God, tenderly saving the turmoil of the intermediate world by the completion of his own nature."⁸⁵ This is "the judgement of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved."⁸⁶

However the answer has a serious restriction about it. While the entire experience of an actual occasion is "saved" in this way, nevertheless the saving process involves objectification of the occasion by God. The complete immortality which an occasion attains in God's life is still an objective immortality. The occasion's own subjective immediacy does not survive its temporal satisfaction. There is still perishing on the part of an actual occasion. Its objective immortality in God assures that the fulness of its accomplishment will be everlastingly saved and nothing will be lost. This means that an

⁸⁵Process and Reality, p. 525.

⁸⁶Ibid.

occasion retains its own formal self-identity as objectified in God's life. "Thus the consequent nature of God is composed of a multiplicity of elements with individual self-realization."⁸⁷ It is a situation "in which the many are one everlastingly, without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity. In everlastingness, immediacy is reconciled with objective immortality."⁸⁸ The immediacy is the unified immediacy of God's own subjective experience; the individual identity is the formal self-identity of each actual occasion preserved through the full hospitality of God's consequent experience.

God's Unity - Conclusion

This brings us back, then, to the unity of God's experience. The complex unity of the divine satisfaction is also a multiplicity where "the many actualities are one actuality, and the one actuality is many actualities."⁸⁹ The unity is the unity of one subject in the synthesis of satisfaction. The multiplicity is that of many objects which retain the full identity of actual occasions even though those occasions have perished in their own immediacy as subjects. Through the consequent experience of God, therefore, an occasion of temporal

⁸⁷Process and Reality, p. 531.

⁸⁸Idem, p. 532.

⁸⁹Idem, p. 530.

process becomes an everlasting achievement, "its passage is not its death."⁹⁰ It passes in time, but it has an everlasting destiny.

"Creation achieves the reconciliation of permanence and flux when it has reached its final term which is everlastingness - the Apotheosis of the World."⁹¹

God's Immanence in Temporal Process

We come now to the final aspect of the divine experience: God as superject. This is the topic of God as immanent and influential in the world. Of course, one half of this story is that of the emerging actual occasions themselves, for it is Whitehead's basic doctrine that actual entity A is immanent in actual entity B through B's prehension of A. This doctrine of immanence and influence applies to God's immanence in the temporal world. In this discussion, however, we are not concerned so much with an emerging occasion's prehension of God, as with the divine experience which that occasion objectifies, which is the other part of the story of God's superjective function.

The first point to be established is that God, in his divine satisfaction, is part of the actual world of an emerging occasion. And this is true for any occasion, since God's satisfaction is everlastingly ongoing and thus God is "in unison of becoming with every other creative

⁹⁰Process and Reality, p. 530.

⁹¹Idem, p. 529.

act."⁹² Here the fact that God's actuality transcends time joins force with the demand of the principle of relativity ("it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.'"⁹³). Not only is every actual occasion a "potential" for God's developing experience, but

the principle of universal relativity is not to be stopped at the consequent nature of God. This nature itself passes into the temporal world according to its gradation of relevance to the various concrescent occasions.⁹⁴

As will become clear, Whitehead doesn't mean that God's influence in the world is restrictively a function of his consequent experience. For example: "God's immanence in the world in respect to his primordial nature is an urge towards the future based upon an appetite in the present."⁹⁵ This only points up the truth that the two aspects of the divine experience constitute the one unified life of God. This life in its unity is the ongoing divine satisfaction. It is within the context of this satisfaction that God is objectified by emerging occasions and becomes immanent in the world. "Thus God has objective immortality in respect to his primordial nature and his consequent nature."⁹⁶

The divine influence is by way of providing the emerging occasions of the temporal world each with their own proper subjective aims. It

⁹²Process and Reality, p. 523.

⁹³Idem, p. 33.

⁹⁴Idem, p. 532.

⁹⁵Idem, p. 47.

⁹⁶Ibid.

was the necessity for such a provision which led Whitehead to affirm the existence of the divine actual entity. This divine function could not be carried out if the emerging instances of creativity in the temporal world did notprehend the divine experience. But such prehension takes place because God's experience is part of the total factual situation for any emerging occasion.

That aspect of the divine experience which is immediately relevant to this function is his selection and grading of eternal objects with the view of providing each occasion with a unique aim. "Those of God's feelings which are positively prehended are those with some compatibility of contrast, or of identity, with physical feelings transmitted from the temporal world."⁹⁷ An aspect of the divine satisfaction is the selection of eternal objects and the grading of their importance with a view to novel actualization. This graded feeling of eternal objects is, of course, a conceptual experience within God's life. It is such experience which is objectified by each emerging occasion. More precisely, God is objectified by his conceptual feelings which select and grade novel possibilities of achievement.

This divine conceptual experience is obviously not simply an aspect of God's primordial experience as such. His primordial experience is not selective of eternal objects, but all-inclusive. This is so, because as primordial it abstracts from all particularity. Nor can it be an aspect of God's consequent experience, since that is his feeling

⁹⁷Process and Reality, p. 377.

of actual occasions, and those feelings are physical, not conceptual. The conceptual experience according to which God is objectified and becomes immanent in temporal process is a particular expression of his primordial experience, which comes about through the conditioning of his consequent experience. This is the "canalization of relevance arising from the primordial nature of God," of which Whitehead speaks.⁹⁸ The particularized expression of the divine primordial envisagement proposes certain eternal objects as real possibilities. Pure possibility becomes real possibility by becoming relevant to an emerging occasion in the context of the achievement of the past actual world. God's feeling of the actual world through his consequent experience is integrated with his primordial envisagement. This integration evokes a particular expression of the divine primordial experience, an expression which is suited to a particular moment of the temporal process.

This particularized canalization of the divine primordial experience is a limited translation of God's eternal subjective aim. That aim is at the full actualization of infinite potentiality with absolute intensity of feeling. With every actual occasion, God is seeking the fulfillment of that eternal aim within the limits of finite achievement. The limitation stems not only from the finite unity at which any emerging occasion must aim, but also from the finite conditioning of past temporal achievement.

⁹⁸Process and Reality, p. 164.

But even within such limitation there is room for God's own definite decision which further determines what each and every particular subjective aim is to be. The definite and limited proposals presented by God to each occasion are not simply dictated by the past temporal world of each occasion. The divine direction is at novel achievement, as well as at ordered achievement. Both novelty and order are assured to cosmic advance through God's particularized conceptual experience. "Apart from the intervention of God, there could be nothing new in the world, and no order in the world."⁹⁹ God is always seeking novelty in the world, because his eternal aim is at the actualization of infinite potentiality, which can never be achieved by any number of temporal occasions. Past temporal accomplishment conditions his choice of novelty with respect to each emerging occasion, but past achievement does not determine the aims proposed to emerging occasions. Such determination is due to the spontaneous originality of God, drawing upon the reservoir of potentiality which is his primordial experience. But novelty is reconciled with order in the divine proposals, because his originality is conditioned by the past temporal world. Thus God is the source of order as well as of novelty in temporal process in opposition to both sterile repetition and anarchy.

This is Whitehead's equivalent of the traditional doctrine of creation. It is "in this sense [that] God can be termed the creator

⁹⁹Process and Reality, p. 377.

of each temporal actual entity."¹⁰⁰ It was pointed out earlier, however, that this expression must be used cautiously in the context of Whitehead's metaphysics. It is true that God is partly responsible for the particular aims he proposes to emerging occasions. And it is true that partly in virtue of these proposals is there an emerging occasion at all. But God is influential only in conjunction with the past temporal world. "If we prefer the phraseology, we can say that God and the actual world jointly constitute the character of the creativity for the initial phase of the novel concrescence."¹⁰¹ God is not completely free in his proposals of temporal subjective aim since what is concretely possible at any moment depends on past temporal accomplishment. Again, the divine proposal does not assure that the aim will be fulfilled as God proposes it. For the emerging occasion "derives from God its basic conceptual aim, relevant to its actual world, yet with indeterminations awaiting its own decisions."¹⁰² The inherent spontaneity of every actual occasion forbids that God's initial proposal completely determines their experience.

But notwithstanding these limitations upon the divine influence, God's role is crucial in the creative advance. He is influential in a far more fundamental way than any past occasion. Occasions can only influence what is already in existence. Only God, through the particular expression of his primordial experience, can evoke the emergence of a

¹⁰⁰Process and Reality, p. 343.

¹⁰¹Idem, p. 374.

¹⁰²Idem, p. 343.

novel actual occasion. And in doing so, God is "the ground of all order and of all originality."¹⁰³ This originating influence of God upon the creative advance earns him the title of "the principle of concretion."¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

God's nature is a complex experience which is of key importance within the creative advance. Whitehead lists "four creative phases in which the universe accomplishes its actuality."¹⁰⁵ Two of them are constituted completely by God's own experience and a third is immediately dependent upon God's experience.

"There is the first phase of conceptual origination, deficient in actuality, but infinite in its adjustment of valuation."¹⁰⁶ This creative phase is the divine primordial experience in which the eternal objects are conceptually realized as pure possibilities for actualization and creativity acquires its primordial conditioning. This realization is brought about because the eternal objects are envisaged with an urge for their actualization with absolute intensity of feeling. This aspect of God's experience is deficiently actual simply because conceptual experience is the feeling of potentialities for actualization. As experience, it is actual; as experience of potentialities, it is unfulfilled.

¹⁰³Process and Reality, p. 164.

¹⁰⁴Idem, p. 374.

¹⁰⁵Idem, p. 532.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

The second phase of the creative process is constituted by the occasions of temporal process. This is the phase of finite temporal derivation of the present from the past with anticipation of the future, which was discussed in Chapter Two.

"Thirdly, there is the phase of perfected actuality, in which the many are one everlastingly, without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity. [. . .] This phase derives the conditions of its being from the two antecedent phases."¹⁰⁷ This is the phase of God's consequent derivation from the world and the resultant partial, but ongoing, fulfillment of his primordial aim. It is the phase of "perfected actuality" not only with respect to the divine primordial experience, but also with respect to temporal actuality. On the level of temporal process, transition means loss. Prehended by God, however, temporal occasions are saved in the fulness of their identity and unified within the context of God's infinite experience. And this is done everlastingly.

"In the fourth phase, the creative action completes itself. For the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world. [. . .] For the kingdom of heaven is with us today. The action of the fourth phase is the love of God for the world. It is the particular providence for particular occasions. What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the

¹⁰⁷ Process and Reality, p. 532.

world. [. . .] In this sense, God is the great companion."¹⁰⁸ Through the fourth phase, the divine primordial envisagement is mediated by his consequent experience of the temporal world and given a particular expression: this aim here and now for this occasion. The working of divine providence and love is a persuasive proposal to aim at definite satisfaction with some definite intensity of feeling. As this proposal evokes the emergence of a novel occasion, the creative action is set upon a new cycle.

¹⁰⁸Process and Reality, p. 532.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WHITEHEAD'S PHILOSOPHY OF GOD

Introduction

The preceding exposition of Whitehead's philosophy has centered on his philosophic treatment of the divine actual entity. Whitehead's ideas about the function of such an entity and the nature implied by that function have been surveyed. The remaining task of this dissertation, now, is the critical evaluation of Whitehead's theology.

A thoroughgoing critical evaluation of Whitehead's theology can take one of two shapes, depending on the extent of one's agreement with Whitehead. If one finds himself in basic agreement with Whitehead's general metaphysical position, one might then inquire whether Whitehead's theology is consistent with his general metaphysics. On the other hand, if such agreement with Whitehead's general metaphysical position is importantly restricted (or none at all), Whitehead's theology can only be properly evaluated in terms of what one considers to be his unsatisfactory metaphysics. And if one finds himself in this latter situation, then his critical evaluation of Whitehead's theology can only be thoroughgoing and intellectually respectable if he addresses himself to the experiential foundations of Whitehead's general philosophy. For a philosophy does not stand of itself. Neither does a philosophy fall simply on the grounds of another philosophy. By the nature of the endeavor, every authentic attempt at philosophy takes its point of

departure in common experience. And, in the final analysis, the only hope for an adequate and satisfactory evaluation of a philosophic position is to take it back to the empirical facts. Whitehead himself readily acknowledges this.

Philosophy destroys its usefulness when it indulges in brilliant feats of explaining away. [. . .] Its ultimate appeal is to the general consciousness of what in practice we experience.[. . .]

The ultimate test is always widespread, recurrent experience; and the more general the rationalistic scheme, the more important is this final appeal.¹

Of course, some would say that any attempt to criticize thought on the basis of experience is grossly naive because what we experience is dictated by the way we think. The pattern of our experiencing reflects the pattern of our thinking. There is a very important sense in which this proposition is undoubtedly true. Categories of thought do read themselves spontaneously into the way we experience and into our experiential view of reality. However, the basic issue remains: are patterns of thought possessed natively by the mind or are they themselves acquired through experience? And, by extension, can an articulated philosophic position developed apart from experience be respectable (or even possible), or must philosophic investigation be mothered by experience, just as thought in general?

Needless to say, this dissertation is not obliged to investigate the issue. Suffice it to declare my conviction that thought emerges from experience. Philosophy has traditionally claimed to have this sort

¹Process and Reality, p. 25.

of origin. Fundamental experience seeking to be fundamentally explained by reason--this, I take it, is the essential nature of the philosophic enterprise. And this is the reason why one's reading of the empirical facts is the finally crucial element in any philosophic endeavor. Acquired thought may direct experience (just as it may lead to a narrow or inadequate reading of experience), but, in a prior sense, thought emerges upon experience, and the facts of experience provide both the primary evidence and the last tribunal for the exercise of thought.

The present author does indeed find himself to be only in partial agreement with Whitehead's general metaphysical doctrine, and to have serious difficulties with it on a number of basic issues. If this dissertation intends to evaluate Whitehead's theology, then, it must get back to these fundamentals. More precisely, it must get back to the empirical evidence, to the facts of common experience. The ensuing critique operates on this conviction, a conviction shared by the one whose theological position is being evaluated.

The intent of this critical evaluation, therefore, is not to show that Whitehead failed to be faithful to his own principles when he turned to the existence and nature of God. Rather, the intent is to offer a criticism of one philosophic endeavor on the basis of a different (and hopefully more adequate) empirical point of departure, namely, an alternative reading of the fundamental facts of common experience.

To lead us into this matter of a hopefully more adequate analysis of experience, and the resulting evaluation of Whitehead's theology, allow me first to present the range of my agreement with Whitehead's

views, and to mention some fundamental difficulties I find among those views as well, difficulties having their roots, I believe, in his reading of the facts of experience.

Critical Agreement with Whitehead

To begin, it would seem that one must simply agree with Whitehead on the general proposition that if God's actuality is not somehow immanent in the world which we do experience, then God is absolutely beyond our apprehension. In such a case, thought and language about God would be sheer emptiness. In fact, there would be no possibility for any thought or language to arise having to do with God.

We know nothing beyond this temporal world and the formative elements which jointly constitute its character.²

If one leaves open the issue of the mode of God's immanence within reality as we do experience it, then it is difficult to see how assent could be withheld from this general position. Regardless of how strong the sense in which God's actuality may transcend what we do experience, the divine transcendence can never rule out his immanence without it being impossible and unintelligible to think and speak of him at all.

And, then, Whitehead is on very solid footing when he insists that the notion of God must not be introduced arbitrarily into the metaphysical discussion. Rational coherence is the criterion of the reasonableness of introducing the affirmation of God into a systematic interpretation of reality. And Whitehead is speaking of coherence in

²Religion in the Making, p. 90.

the strong sense, that is, not just the absence of conflict with other elements of the interpretation, but the requirement of such an affirmation by general metaphysical principles. Far from being an exception to metaphysical principles, the affirmation of God must be demanded by them.

God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification.³

This is the only respectable position, I believe, and, of course, it is not to be understood in the rationalistic sense. It is not, in other words, to be understood as if pure reasoning were able to arrive at an affirmation of God apart from any endeavor to interpret experience. It is only insofar as general metaphysical principles emerge upon an analysis of experience, that coherence with them is an acceptable criterion. In effect, what this implies is that the affirmation of God must be required by the facts of experience themselves. Rational coherence only becomes important in this context. And, thus, the demand of rational coherence is valid only insofar as God is somehow immanent in the world which we do experience.

A further point of agreement of some importance is that, metaphysically speaking, and, therefore, in principle, God's actuality exceeds the ability of any simply finite being to comprehend it. It is, in other words, infinite. Of course, Whitehead understands the divine infiniteness in a very specialized and mitigated fashion (if such is not contradictory), but God must be infinite in his primordial experience.

³Process and Reality, p. 521.

No other actual entity thus metaphysically exceeds the capacity of a finite being. In virtue, then, of his primordial experience, God is transcendent in an altogether unique way, in a fashion that is significantly different from the mutual transcendence which Whitehead maintains is the individuality of each actual entity. In Whitehead's view, God is transcendent as an individual, of course, but he is also specifically transcendent, and this by metaphysical necessity. This specific transcendence is one that involves the incomprehensibility of the divine actual entity by any simply finite actuality. I also consider it necessary to affirm a being whose actuality in some sense simply exceeds the comprehension of finite beings.

A final point of agreement with Whitehead's views is the general conviction that God and the World must be understood in such a way that what happens in the World is important to God, that he cares. I do not consider any philosophic view of God which does not understand him to be involved in the world through his love as adequately accounting for the possibility of religious experience. Other reasons could be mentioned for considering the affirmation of a God who loves the World to be a necessary part of any adequate understanding of God and the World. Its necessity, however, in accounting for the possibility of religious experience is a reason which I would acknowledge in common with Whitehead.

Some Internal Difficulties

To note a general range of agreement, however, is only part of the enterprise of critical evaluation. Are there any difficulties that arise within the development of Whitehead's philosophic view of reality? More precisely, are there any important ideas or propositions which Whitehead comes to in keeping with his reading of the facts of experience which constitute difficulties either conceptually or in terms of the facts of experience themselves? In the view of the present author, there are several such difficulties.

Whitehead's essential idea of actualness constitutes a considerable intellectual difficulty. In his view, what primarily and of themselves exist are acts of becoming, those realities he terms "actual entities."

An actual entity is a process in the course of which many operations with incomplete subjective unity terminate in a completed unity of operation, termed the 'satisfaction.' [. . .]

The process itself is the constitution of the actual entity.⁴

Whitehead is asking us to think of an act of becoming as existing in and of itself, without it being referred to anything else as to its subject. Acts of becoming are themselves final realities. But surely the notion of becoming implies the notion of that which becomes, understood as the subject of the process of becoming and logically presupposed to it. And act of becoming which is actual in and of itself is an unintelligible notion. The difficulty here is not merely a habit of mind which makes such a notion appear strange, but rather it seems

⁴Process and Reality, p. 335.

to be a law of thought which makes such a notion intellectually impossible. Nor does experience provide any help, for experience does not present us with mere acts of becoming, but always with something in process of becoming. It is obvious that experience presents becoming as a fact, but it is also obvious that becoming is not presented as a self-existing fact.

A further difficulty presents itself in connection with Whitehead's contention that an act of becoming--an actual entity--emerges by itself. For, not only does a unit of process exist in and of itself, but it becomes by itself, that is, it is self-creative. Whitehead's doctrine of self-creativity derives from the Category of the Ultimate and from his notion of an actual entity as a unit of creativity. In its emergence, an actual entity is conditioned, not absolute, but its conditions are effective through the prehensive activity of the emerging actuality itself. Thus, an emerging actual entity becomes by itself in a radical sense. It is self-creative, not simply in terms of what, in its ensuing concrescence, it does with its original datum, but it is self-creative in the radical sense of originating its own origination. Such a conception, I suggest, is no consistent conception at all, but merely the juxtaposition of the notions "originator" and "originated." It is intellectually impossible to fuse the two into the notion of a self-identified being.

And, then, there is Whitehead's basic generalization that actuality is to be understood in terms of life, and especially of psychic life.

The doctrine that I am maintaining is that neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of 'really real' things whose inter-connections and individual characters constitute the universe.⁵

And, then,

The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.⁶

And again,

Each actual entity is conceived as an act of experience arising out of data. It is a process of 'feeling' the many data, so as to absorb them into the unity of one individual 'satisfaction.'⁷

Now, even acknowledging the fact that the words "life" and "experience" do not appear in Whitehead's categoreal scheme and, therefore, might be considered non-technical terms, nevertheless, such terms as "prehension," "feeling," and "satisfaction" are technical terms. Whitehead is attempting to dissolve the dichotomy between body and mind, and in so doing he insists that the above-mentioned technical terms are to be understood in a general and neutral fashion. However, it is extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that Whitehead's basic notion of actuality is panpsychistic. And, thus, the question arises: What experiential justification is there for adopting such an essentialist idea of actuality? Does actuality present itself in the basic terms of any one kind?

⁵Modes of Thought, p. 205.

⁶Process and Reality, p. 28.

⁷Idem, p. 65.

These, then, are some of the difficulties in which the present writer discovers some of Whitehead's important notions to be involved. It is also the author's view that these difficulties fundamentally have a common reason. It is to Whitehead's analysis of the facts of experience that these difficulties must ultimately be ascribed. By way of completing this critical evaluation of Whitehead's theology, then, I would propose a more adequate point of departure. This will, in turn, make it possible to reconsider certain important aspects of Whitehead's position in general and of his theology in particular.

A More Adequate Point of Departure

The task of elucidating the facts of our basic experience is both possible and difficult. It is possible to a significant extent simply because we are considering the fundamental dimensions of our everyday living as subjects. It is difficult, however, because we are not accustomed to take notice of such fundamentals. For experience is that part of our existing which we live as conscious subjects. At least, such is experience in the wide sense of the term. It is necessary to designate the term more narrowly, however, in the present context, since previous discussion has already drawn the distinction between "experience" and "thought about experience," between "the empirical foundation for the philosophic enterprise" and "the interpretation of reality" which emerges from that foundation. Obviously "experience" in the wide sense would include all of this and much more, since it all involves the consciously living subject. But how do we designate

"experience" as to distinguish it from "thought about experience"? How do we characterize it in this more narrow, technical sense?

First of all, the terms of the distinction must not be taken to mean that the narrower, technical sense of "experience" excludes thought as such. It merely excludes thought about experience, that is, thought which attends to either the objective or the subjective aspects of our experiencing. Such thought presupposes experience in the narrower sense. In principle, the technical meaning of "experience" includes the entire range of our basic modes of psychic living: sentient, emotional, imaginative, recollective, intellectual, voluntary. Thus the designation of experience in its narrower meaning cannot be as sparse as that of classical empiricism--the mere entertainment of sense data. Even in its narrower sense, human experience involves the higher spiritual levels of intellectual and voluntary living, which not only emerge upon sensation and emotion, but also impregnate and direct them as well as imagination and memory. We're talking about a highly complex and dynamically unified psychic life, which is our living as conscious subjects, yet which is pre-scientific and pre-philosophic, in fact, pre-investigative in any explicit sense whatever. Experience, in this narrower and technical sense, is simply our living contact with reality as conscious subjects prior to any explicit investigation. To explicitly ask a question presupposes experience in the narrower sense.

This characterization of experience involves the notion of consciousness, about which something should be said before the analysis of experience is taken up. Here, the term "conscious subject" refers to

any being who can in principle utter the personal pronoun "I." By consciousness I understand that presence of self to self in virtue of which one can say "I." It is a type of awareness; not the awareness of an object, but of a subject. Consciousness is not constituted as a subject-object relationship, but simply as the immediate presence of the subject to oneself. Being conscious and knowing an object other than oneself are not the same thing. But more than this, being conscious and knowing oneself through reflexion are not the same thing. Reflexion is the turning of one's attention upon oneself, thus it always involves a subject-object structure. Consciousness is that simple awareness of oneself as a subject, in virtue of which one can say, "I am thinking about myself," as well as, "I know the sun is shining." Consciousness is a component of every living act which allows one to spontaneously say "I"---"I hear," "I fear," "I remember," "I choose," "I question," "I understand."

When we begin to analyse our experience, understood now in this technical sense, we not only notice that it is a flow, but also that it is structured. By "structure" here I am not referring to the various general patterns our experiencing can take. Experiencing does assume patterns according to various purposes. Thus one seeks the well with the purpose of satisfying thirst, and so a certain pattern of experience emerges. Or one wonders at the stars, reveling in their awesomeness, and another pattern emerges. Thales wasn't aware of the well into which he tumbled, while the milkmaid was oblivious of the heavens which she took for granted. Thus the world of the sailor and the world of the farmer,

that of the banker and that of the explorer, are all different because they are constituted by different patterns of experience.

But beyond these different patterns which directing interests give to our experiencing, there is a common structure to the experience of everyone. Common experience involves such a structure simply because experience is the meeting of mind with reality. For there is the difference between fundamental experience on the one hand, and detailed experience on the other. Fundamental experience provides that basic acquaintance with reality which is the meaning-giving context for detailed experience, and which detailed experience fills out. The details of two people's experience may differ either by intent or by chance, giving rise to the differing patterns of experience referred to above, but the commonness now under discussion is not one of content but of structure. As may readily be surmised, the differences of detailed experience are of less or no philosophic value, and the real concern of this analysis of our pre-investigative experience is with our fundamental or primary experience. What acquaintance with reality does our fundamental experience provide us? And what basic experiential view of reality spontaneously results?

It must be noticed that this analysis of our fundamental common experience is in reality simply a search for basic phenomena. Thus it might be called a phenomenological analysis. As such, we are concerned merely to discover, or, more precisely, to take notice of the basic facts of reality insofar as reality is present in experience. In this context, a phenomenon is simply an instance of the direct experiential

presence of reality. In the last analysis, at the level of fundamental experience, such a presence must be direct, else there would be no way of distinguishing between direct and indirect experience. What we are concerned with, then, is the explicit noticing of fundamental, pervading evidences about reality, experiences which carry with them their own mark of certainty, and which form the foundation for the buildup of our entire everyday experience of reality.

The complete fundamental unit of experience which I am able to bring out through phenomenological analysis is that experience in which something other than myself is directly present to me cognitively and affectively. This complete unit of experience which lies at the very foundation of our day-to-day experience is obviously a complex one already. No attempt is going to be made to analyze the total complexity of such an experience. But some aspects of it must be taken notice of in terms of our present project.

Firstly, the experience is a bipolar event comprising a subjective and an objective pole. The event in which these two poles occur is the act of experience—the experiencing. In ultimate terms, experiencing is the presence of subject and object, not a construction. Fundamentally experiencing has this character of being the compresence of realities in a special way, in a fashion which is irreducible to any other kind of event.

Secondly, the act of experiencing is an event in which, in primary terms, both the subject and the object are existing realities. The realities which are experientially linked are actualities, that is,

realities which each involve their own existing. This is simply to notice that the experiencing necessarily involves more than just itself considered as an event. Within the event there are evidently an existing subject which experiences and an existing object which is experienced. And because the event is not constructive, but simply presentational, the reality which is the subject and the reality which is the object exist with at least a logical priority to the event in which they become subject and object. In other words, the essential proposition of realism is already embedded in the basic fact of experience. Experience involves self-existing realities whose existing is independent of the fact of experience.

What is important to notice in all this is that inference plays no part. The evidences involved are not established by reasoning, but are simply present through their own actuality. The intuition of directly present actuality is what occurs. In the primordial instance of experiencing we are considering, the actualities involved are the experiencing subject and the experienced object, which is something in the present world of the subject. (Intuitive memory is only possible in the context of intuiting the present world.) And within this single intuitive experience there is a twofold intuition. There is not only the intuitive presence of the object to the subject, but also the intuitive presence of the subject to itself as subject, which is consciousness. Not only am I aware that something exists, but I am also aware in the very same act that I am aware of something existing. In virtue of this double intuitive awareness, my experiencing is an event

which is grounded beyond itself, that is, in self-existing reality: the actuality of myself who am a subject and the actuality of something other than myself which is an object. The actualities involved are evidentially present as actual and the experience emerges through the concourse of both.

At this point in our reflection something crucial comes to the fore. The intuitive awareness I have of myself as a self-existing subject and of something other than myself as a self-existing object is the initial experience of reality as that which exists in itself. To be real is not to be a subject; to be real is not to be an object; to be real is to be self-existing. Furthermore, to be self-existing is to be dynamic, since it is in virtue of the actuality of both that they become subject and object in the unity of one act of experience. I know myself insofar as I manifest myself in experience. I know other realities insofar as they become manifest to me in my experience of them. What is manifested are the two actualities which are immanent in and yet which always transcend individual experiences which are their manifestations. They are involved in experience, and yet, as self-existing realities, they lie beyond experience. Again, experience is not the ultimate mode of being.

The instance of fundamental experience we have been considering was one of awareness. As already mentioned, however, our pre-investigative experience does not consist solely of cognitional acts, that is, acts in which we are simply aware of an object. We spontaneously adopt an affective stance in response to our awareness. But if such affectivity

is conscious experience, then it must also involve a cognitive component, since consciousness is direct self-awareness. We are aware of ourselves not only as subjects of awareness of objects, but also as subjects of affective attitudes regarding the objects of our awareness, such as fear, desire, joy. When such is the case, subjective awareness (consciousness) is always an element of the affective act.

In general, then, experience shows that the fundamental experiential situation is an event of which I am the self-existing subject and through which I am cognitively and affectively linked with a self-existing object. It is on the basis of such direct presentational experience of concrete actuality that asking questions, abstract thinking, awareness of possibility, and even reflexive awareness of oneself emerge within our mental life. It is also on the basis of such repeated and varied experiences of concrete actuality (coupled with vicarious experience through others) that we gradually form our conceptual and imaginative picture of "the world," understood as the total range of physical actuality.

It is this context of experiencing concrete actualities, of being aware of myself as an existing being who is a subject and of an existing something other than myself which is an object, that the radical difference between self and thing becomes manifest. My primordial awareness of otherness presents me with the physical. Through my embodiment, I encounter other bodies, and the actuality of body is probably the most readily obvious dimension of my experiential view of reality. However, there is another basic dimension within reality

which also presents itself, if only in a vague fashion. It is the acknowledgement of existing, as a conscious self, in a radically different way from simply being a body. The way this difference seems to present itself at the pre-investigative level of common experience is in the vague awareness that I, as a conscious subject, enjoy an existing which is not bounded by the limits of bodily reality. The bodily world is indeed my habitat at which I may wonder in awe, which stimulates my inner life, in which I express that inner life, through which I satisfy my needs, and with which I feel a sense of belonging. But there are indications that this is not the complete story about myself. Experience reveals that I am not simply a part of the physical universe.

In my consciousness as a subject I acknowledge myself to stand within a wider horizon than the limited one of physical reality. In fact, I find myself open to indefinite horizons. Possibly the first indication of this peculiar openness of my inner life as a self is the fact that I can consider in thought the totality of physical reality in a purely objective way, leaving out of account myself as the considering subject. The conceptual object necessarily includes everything physical precisely as physical. I therefore seem to be something other than simply a bodily item in the physical universe. Another aspect of our experience emerges to corroborate this sense of our own otherness with respect to the total physical universe and to render it somewhat more specific. In our valuing, there is a certain level of value commitment which carries with it at least the vague awareness of the supraspatial meaning of what is valued; the friendship of another, truthfulness, the

courage of one's convictions, the act of kindness. Such valuing reveals more clearly that, although we live in the physical, we are not bounded by it; that in our living we are open to what has meaning and validity beyond the limitations of space, and of time as well. It is this new dimension of reality, this radically different dimension of reality, manifesting itself in the context of our everyday experiencing, which is what philosophers have come to call the spiritual. But simply at the level of common experience there is an implicit acknowledgement at least of two radically different ways of existing within reality--being physical and being spiritual. Our primordial acquaintance with actuality in conscious experience imperceptibly leads us to this radical discrimination with respect to the mode in which actuality is exercised.

Thusfar the general picture of reality which common experience presents is discernable in terms of self-existing realities involving a radical difference in the way they exercise their existing, namely, the radical difference between being a thing (physical) and being a self (spiritual). Moreover it has been noticed that these actualities are dynamic in virtue of their actualness. It is in the context of this intrinsic dynamism of actuality, it seems, that the awareness of interrelationship first emerges. The fundamental instance of experience discussed above was one involving dynamic interrelationship among actualities. Reality is primarily the fact of self-existing realities. Such actualities are by that very fact dynamic. Such dynamism relates and integrates. This seems to be the experiential order of awareness. Although self-existing realities manifest themselves through dynamic

interrelatedness, such relatedness has its empirical intelligibility in the context of self-existing realities, and not the converse.

A comparison of Whitehead's reading of the basic facts of experience with the one just presented can very well begin at this last point. To Whitehead, experience shows that actuality is to be understood in terms of particular relationships. Relationships generate and constitute actualities. The ultimate factual ground for such a generalization is any present moment of one's experience, because in any such moment one discovers oneself experientially relating to other entities, actual and possible. Who one discovers oneself to be is one's relational stance within reality, and what other entities are discovered to be is their relational stance to oneself. To be actual (or possible), therefore, is to be relational.

This certainly seems to be overlooking something rather important in the fabric of our experience. I not only find myself as relating, but I find myself as one who relates, and I, as a subject, cannot simply be identified with my relating. Even though my primordial experience is a relational event (and even though a relational element constitutes even the possibility of an experience), still I, as one who relates, must be acknowledged as an actuality irreducible to the relating itself. Even though primordial experience is a relational event, and even though I discover actuality in such an event, the event itself is not presented as ontologically ultimate, but rather the actualities involved in the event.

This remark also applies to another, but closely related, aspect of Whitehead's experiential view of reality. Repeating the subjectivist principle, discussed earlier,⁸ namely

that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects,⁹

we have a principle of philosophic methodology which Whitehead regarded as crucial. Whitehead was convinced that, properly understood, this axiom would not only generate a realist philosophy, but would do so by grounding such a philosophy in empirical fact. Now one might agree with Whitehead on this and yet apply the principle in a significantly different fashion than did Whitehead himself.

As was seen, Whitehead's application results in the proposition that experience manifests that what is finally real is simply experience itself, or, more precisely, complex units of experience. It is obvious that such a proposition is not required by the terms of the methodological principle itself. One can hold to the principle without subscribing to the proposition. In fact, it must be submitted that such a proposition is gratuitous if one holds to the subjectivist principle. For the "elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects" are realities which are ontologically prior to experience itself. Experience shows that what is ontologically ultimate are the self-existing realities involved in the experiencing, actualities which have an ontological priority to the fact that they are subjects and objects in an

⁸Chapter Two, p. 69-72.

⁹Process and Reality, p. 252.

experiential event.

The point of the two previous critical remarks is that experience, which is a relational and unifying event, does not present itself as ontologically ultimate. More precisely, experience does not present itself at all. What is presented, rather, are the actualities as they are involved in experiencing. In any experiential event they are manifested under limited perspectives, but it is obvious that what is manifested are actualities which transcend the passing and limited perspectives of any given moment of experience. In other words, the central point of criticism regarding Whitehead's reading of experience is that he wasn't empirical enough. In failing to notice the actualities as distinct from the experiential event itself, he overlooked the total fabric of an instance of fundamental experience.

The Notion of What Is Finally Real

We take up now the discussion of the basic idea in Whitehead's theoretical generalization. We turn from the analysis of experience to the philosophic interpretation of experience. Whitehead's notion of what is finally real is his ultimate and central generalization. As such, he considered it to be grounded in experience, especially common experience, and it also plays a key role in fashioning his doctrine about God.

As in any metaphysical position, this is the notion of that which is real in the primary sense of being real, so that whatever is not real in this sense must be real in virtue of some ontological

implication with what is in itself primarily real. To speak of the primary meaning of being real is not necessarily to speak of a supremely eminent being whose reality absolutely exceeds that of any other being. In a monistic philosophy, such as that of Spinoza, the notion of what is primarily real would be the notion of an absolute being. But in a pluralistic interpretation of reality, of which Whitehead's is one, the notion of the primarily real is simply the notion of the complete unit of reality in relation to which every other entity is intelligibly real.

Now in presenting his own idea of what is primarily real, Whitehead is convinced that he stands in the tradition which affirms that what is primarily real is the concrete existent, the individual actuality, as opposed to universal potentiality. This conviction is expressed in his Ontological Principle "that apart from things that are actual, there is nothing--nothing either in fact or in efficacy."¹⁰ And in this he considers himself to be siding with Aristotle against Plato.

But the crucial question still remains: How conceive that which stands in its own actuality as an existent? And here it must be noticed that, in general, there are basically two metaphysical alternatives open to the philosopher. One is to emphasize the factor of existing in one's notion of an existent. The other is to emphasize the mode of existing as the formal factor determining the manner in which an existent exists. It is a difference in emphasis, but in this case the emphasis makes all the difference. To understand reality in terms

¹⁰Process and Reality, p. 64.

of existing is to say that being is ultimately constituted by the act of existing. Thus it is an existential view of reality which demands an analogical way of thinking about reality. Every existent is a being in virtue of its own existing, but the way an existent exists means something irreducibly different in the case of each individual existent because each individual exercises its existing uniquely. On the other hand, to understand reality in terms of mode of existing is to say that being is ultimately constituted by a definite way of existing, a definite kind of existing. This is an essential view of reality which, in its turn, demands a univocal way of thinking about reality. Every existent is a being in virtue of the fact that it exists in a way fundamentally of the same sort as every other being, and to be means something reducibly identical in the case of every individual existent, since to be means to be basically one kind of being.

Whitehead's view of being is univocal, and it is his basically univocal habit of viewing reality which leads him to conceive philosophic method as he does. The method of metaphysical generalization primarily based on an analysis of the psychological structure of one's own experiencing inevitably results in the conclusion that the general sort of event which our experiencing is discovered to be is a probable clue to the traits that constitute every actuality. It only remains to tentatively assume the probability to be a fact, develop a metaphysical description of reality according to those terms, and then check as to whether such a philosophic generalization is contradicted either by further experience or by other types of theoretical investigation which

may already carry their own experimental verification. It is clear that such a philosophic procedure is essentially the adoption of the method of the experimental sciences. The concern of the philosopher with reality then becomes the search after the most generic traits which constitute the way every actuality exists.

Such a fundamentally generic notion is, of course, Whitehead's notion of an actual entity. It is defined in terms of "prehension," "subjective aim," "relatedness," "physical" and "conceptual" polarity, "harmony," "satisfaction," "process." Every actuality is a unit of process constituted as multiple relatedness in aesthetic unity. Whatever is not such a unit of process is an element either factually or possibly therein. Thus, according to Whitehead, the primary meaning of reality can be given a generic definition or, at least, it is the reasonable task of philosophy to seek after such a definition. The attempt to formulate this definition of what is primarily real, Whitehead believes, is simply the philosopher's refusal to allow any incoherent dualism into his interpretation of reality.

Do the facts of experience indicate such a notion of being? Do those facts indicate any univocal definition of being? It must be submitted that, on the contrary, experience insists on the existential view of reality. I am, and through my actuality I relate to what is other than I. The actuality of the beings involved is ultimately constituted, not by the way they exist, but by their acts of existing. Experience does not suggest the generalization that the ultimate feature of what is is experiencing or any other mode of existing. What experience

does present is actualities, sometimes radically different in their modes of being actual, but all actualities in virtue of the fact that they exist. To exist in some way is, admittedly, the general law that experience reveals to us, but the "way" of existing is radically diversified; it is not a variable. Existing is not channeled in any single generic way, but seems open to an indefinite diversity of modes. Experience simply suggests that to be is primarily to be an existent, and such a notion is obviously an analogous one.

Properly understood, such a notion is likewise a dynamic understanding of being. Experience manifests the dynamism of being. Thought grasps that the intrinsic ground and source of this dynamism is the act of existing in virtue of which each being is. The way in which a being exists is not an independent principle, but rather the channel through which existing flows, the form existing takes. Thus, existing is not met with as such in experience, but always in one or more of its innumerable possibilities. In each actuality, existing is formalized in this mode or that, and to describe the formal character of an existent is simply to describe its existing. Formal nature is dynamic, but formal nature means nothing unless it means the mode in which a being exists.

Furthermore, the concrete individuality of what is primarily real can not be expressed through generic traits, can never be given a univocal definition. To be is to exist as an individual. Of course, Whitehead understood this. But his notion of what is primarily real, as a generic notion, necessarily misses individuality. If to be is to

be an individual, then individualness is not going to be expressed in terms of any mode of existing, that is, in terms of any set of traits either generic or specific. Every univocal notion of being must necessarily fail. Since to be is, by that fact, to be an individual, individualness can only be expressed existentially. A being is individual, not because it is this or that kind of being, but simply because it is. To attempt to explain individuality in terms of formal definiteness is to miss the individual altogether and be left only with generality.

Whitehead was concerned to avoid an incoherent dualism within his metaphysical interpretation of reality, as Descartes had failed to do. His equally essentialist approach to metaphysics, however, inevitably involved him in a dualism of far greater dimensions than the Cartesian distinction between extended substances and thinking substances. Whitehead's generic definition of being states what is primarily real in terms of abstract generality, leaving concrete individuality as an untouched residue. Of course, concreteness only requires an account in the context of a univocal metaphysic, but it is precisely such a metaphysic which can not account for it. The result is that Whitehead involves himself in an ontological dualism of the same nature and degree as that of Plato. His essentialism, in the final analysis, makes it effectively impossible for him to side with Aristotle and in favor of the concrete existent against abstract generality. Aristotle may not have been among the most explicit of existence philosophers, but his notion of primary substance is not an essentialist notion.

Whitehead's Rejection of An Eminently
Actual Being

A passage from Adventures of Ideas might well be taken as Whitehead's essential view of the task of metaphysics in general and of rational theology in particular:

What metaphysics requires is a solution exhibiting the plurality of individuals as consistent with the unity of the Universe, and a solution which exhibits the World as requiring its union with God, and God as requiring his union with the World. Sound doctrine also requires an understanding how the Ideals in God's nature, by reason of their status in his nature, are thereby persuasive elements in the creative advance. Plato grounded these derivations from God upon his will; whereas metaphysics requires that the relationship of God to the World should lie beyond the accidents of will, and that they be founded upon the necessities of the nature of God and the nature of the World.¹¹

Coherence in one's metaphysical interpretation of reality prevents the arbitrary introduction of an entity, and especially of an actual entity, in order to solve a difficulty, while not being accounted for by general metaphysical principles. In particular, if a divine being is called for, he must be called for by the metaphysical nature of the situation, and his nature, in turn, must be such as to fulfill the need. In the context of Whitehead's general metaphysic, this means a divine being who, by virtue of his nature, is essentially related to, and who essentially requires, the world of temporal actualities. This is the notion of a divine being which is not eminently real, which is finite along with every temporal being, which requires temporal actualities as

¹¹Adventures of Ideas, p. 171-72.

much as they require him. Whitehead was convinced that only such a being could be consistent with metaphysical principles constructed on the basis of an analysis of our everyday experience.

And, indeed, here is the crux of the matter. How do metaphysical principles emerge in the course of one's philosophic reflexion? If by the method of hypothetical generalization, after the manner of the positive sciences (as Whitehead himself believed), then they can only have to do with the same general kind of reality which particular experience present, and the principles are univocal. It is in such a univocal context that Whitehead understood his own admonition:

In the first place, God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification.¹²

Understood in this way, metaphysical principles do not impose the affirmation of a God who is eminently real. To the contrary, metaphysical principles can only suggest a divine being who is generically the same kind of actuality as the actualities we intuitively experience.

To the univocal mentality, the notion of an eminently real being is simply an unintelligible notion because it claims to be the idea of a being which is of a transcendently different kind from any encountered in experience. The mind simply cannot conceive what has not somehow entered one's experience. "The worst of a gulf is, that it is very difficult to know what is happening on the farther side of it. This

¹²Process and Reality, p. 521.

has been the fate of the God of traditional theology."¹³ The affirmation of a divine being makes sense only if it affirms a being one can think of. Such a being must, therefore, be akin to what we do intuitively experience. And this means, furthermore, that such a being must be essentially relative to temporal actuality, since essential relativity is a generic feature of temporal actuality.

This seems to be the main rationale behind Whitehead's rejection of an eminently real divine being. It is worth noting that it is not an argument against the existence of such a being, but rather against the meaningfulness of talking about such a being. What we cannot conceive, we cannot meaningfully discuss. Indeed, what is beyond conception is even beyond meaningful belief. Metaphysical principles must guide our thinking about the divine being, and such principles cannot lead us absolutely beyond the reality of our everyday experience. This rationale is also Whitehead's main argument for the affirmation of a God who is finite and in process of self-actualization, although his primordial experience is infinite. Such a conception of God is not that of the omnipotent creator upon whose will everything else radically depends, but rather that of the persuasive companion who necessarily seeks his own actualization through the cooperation of temporal process.

But is the human mind restricted to univocal thought, and is univocal thinking an adequate vehicle for the understanding of reality? Every essentialist philosophy says "yes" to these questions either

¹³Adventures of Ideas, p. 173.

explicitly or implicitly. The point was made above, however, that an analogous view of reality is not only possible, but clearly demanded by fundamental experience itself. For experience manifests the act of existing as exercised in different ways, even generically different ways. Experience itself leads the mind to the analogous view of reality. And it is in the context of this view that the human mind can discern the necessity of an absolutely eminent being. Once it is acknowledged that the notion of finite being is an existential notion, then the necessity of an infinite being, existing in an absolutely eminent way, imposes itself upon the mind in virtue of the principle of sufficient reason.

And, indeed, the notion of finite being must be understood in the existential context. To be finite is to be limited. But the crucial insight in this issue lies in discerning that what is limited in finite being is the actuality of the being, and to be actual is to exist. Limited existing is the intrinsic meaning of being finite. This notion is meaningful in the existential context, since to exist as such is a notion which a) does not imply limitation, but b) does not exclude the possibility of limitation. The idea of existing as such is simply that of being actual, not of being actual in this way or that. Admittedly, therefore, it is a notion which is indefinable, since all real definition comes in terms of some definite mode of existing. It is not a meaningless term, however, since it is an intelligibility which lies above definition, rather than below it. Definitions themselves would lose their meaning apart from the notion of existing. A real definition expresses the way

something exists either factually or possibly. True enough, definition differentiates; but that is its negative function, while its positive function is to express mode of existing. Essence and its definition can only be understood in the existential context, which acknowledges act of existing to be the ultimate intrinsic factor constituting a being, and in which context the notion of finite being can be properly understood.

Now, the fact of finite being presents the mind with a question. If existing as such does not imply a limitation of any sort, why is it that there are beings whose existing is limited? This question, obviously, cannot be answered by replying that there are beings whose natures are definite, since that is merely to acknowledge the fact that finite beings exist. To grasp the notion of finite being is one thing; to grasp why finite beings exist is another. And the question of "Why?" arises in the existential view of reality because the fact of limited existing is not self-explanatory. There is no sufficient reason within the notion itself of finite being to explain the fact that such beings exist.

But, of course, the human mind is prone to miss this lack of metaphysical self-sufficiency on the part of finite being. It is all too easy to confuse a fundamental reality of experience with a metaphysically ultimate reality. What experientially presents itself in fundamental terms is thus taken as "brute fact," requiring only to be acknowledged but not explained. And yet to accept the basic realities of experience as metaphysically ultimate is surely a gratuitous assumption.

Further, it is an assumption that inquiring intelligence cannot maintain. If the basic evidences of experience lead to an existential view of reality, then, by that very fact, they lead the mind to ask the question: why is there finite being at all? The mind turns from the acknowledgement of finite being as a fact to the question about the existential ground of finite being, and the pivotal point is the analogous notion of being with its insight that existing as such simply means: to be actual.

The fact of limited existing, then, must be accounted for, since the fact cannot be understood in terms of finite being itself. That there is a being whose actuality is exercised in a definite way is not a necessary fact requiring no explanation, because the act of existing is the ultimate intrinsic factor constituting a finite being and, yet, to exist does not imply to exist in a definite, limiting way. An existential fact requiring an explanation which it is unable to provide of itself is precisely an effect. But effects indicate causes. The fact of finite being indicates a cause which is a free agent, since limited existing is not necessary in ultimate metaphysical terms. The fact of finite being indicates a free agent which is creative in the fullest sense, because it is the causal principle of existing, and not simply of the modification of an existent. Finally, the existential notion of being manifests that such a free, creative agent which grounds the actuality of finite being could only be the fulness of existing, a being whose existing is unlimited. This is the notion of a positively infinite being, a being whose affirmation the mind is led to make in the existential view of reality on the basis of the fact of

finite being.

It has been pointed out that Whitehead's central objection to the affirmation of an absolutely infinite being is that such a being would stand at an infinite remove from any kind of being we might experience, and thus be unthinkable. The affirmation would have no content and, so, be meaningless. But such an objection is bounded by the deficiencies of the essentialist viewpoint. An absolutely infinite being is only thinkable in the existential context,¹⁴ and it is this same context which moves the mind from thought to affirmation. The being whose actuality is affirmed is not affirmed as a radically different kind of being from any known by experience. Rather the analogy of being allows the affirmation of a being which infinitely transcends all generic differences. Infinite existing is not a different kind of existing from finite existing. The distinction is existential, not essential. The distinction is between that which is Existing and that which exercises existing in a restricted way.

Again, Whitehead declares that the introduction of an absolute being into any scheme of philosophic interpretation would be arbitrary and gratuitous. If absolute, then not necessarily related to what we do experience; and if not necessarily related, then without any logical place in a rational scheme of reality. The deficiencies of the essentialist viewpoint reappear, according to which the fundamental metaphysical situation is imbued with necessity simply because it is

¹⁴While remaining, of course, incomprehensible to finite human intelligence.

determined by essential nature. Whitehead was certainly not a thoroughgoing determinist, which is the logical outcome of essentialism, because his conviction in spontaneity and self-determination was too visceral. Nevertheless, a certain mark of determinism pervades his position due to his essentialist approach to philosophy. God necessarily provides a tailored ideal directly to each emerging occasion. Moreover, the content of the proposed ideals in each particular instance is necessarily determined by the primordial side of God's nature in conjunction with his necessary derivation from the world. Far from perceiving the touch of a loving person in all this, it is difficult to recognize anything other than the operation of an impersonal determinism.

But, apart from this difficulty, the affirmation of an absolutely eminent being could only be considered as arbitrary in the essentialist context. The affirmation of an infinitely existing being in the existential approach is not only not gratuitous, but it is demanded by the metaphysics of finite being. The affirmation is not the arbitrary introduction of an "unthinkable something" in a desperate move to save a particular scheme from collapse. Rather, such an affirmation organically emerges when the mind works within the existential context, a context which itself grows out of an adequate analysis of basic experience.

Whitehead's God-in-Process

An important implication of Whitehead's essentialist and univocal perspective is seen in his notion of a divine being in process. In Whitehead's view, it is of the essence of actuality to be in process of becoming. The special nature of the divine actuality demands an infinite becoming, one without beginning or terminal completion, since the divine self-actualization is a process whose subjective aim is constituted by his infinite primordial envisagement and yet whose accomplishment depends upon the finite achievements of temporal actualities. Thus, in Whitehead's theology, we have not merely the notion of a God in process of becoming, but also the notion of a God whose becoming is derivative from the finite temporal world. God's self-actualization is an always incomplete, ever ongoing process, because it is essentially derivative from the world.

Such a notion of the divine being, admittedly, is one which makes a certain appeal to the religious mind. In opposition to the idea of an infinitely remote and immutable divinity who cannot be affected by any finite reality, here we have a God who literally shares our destiny and that of the world at large. God's self-actualization allows him to be the one "great companion"¹⁵ with every temporal occasion. This is clearly a God to whom what happens in the world truly makes a difference. Yet it is a God who does not stand passively by while the world takes its own course, but rather who continually persuades the

¹⁵Process and Reality, p. 532.

world from the depths of his own wisdom and who patiently saves whatever the world accomplishes. Such a God must surely inspire allegiance and devotion, confidence and hope. On the other hand, how can belief in an infinitely perfect God who needs nothing beyond himself be the support of a satisfying religious experience?

Religious belief, however, as well as religious experience, presuppose the rational affirmation of a being which religion calls "God," if such religion is to be authentically human and intellectually respectable. This affirmation must at least emerge implicitly within the mental life of the authentically religious person, and its rationality guarantees that it is made in full accord with empirical evidence and the canons of logic. Without the presupposition of such rationality, religious belief is reduced to gratuitous opinion and religious experience to individual fancy. For the religious attitude presupposes the acknowledgement of a divine being, and such a being is not an immediate deliverance of experience. If this is so, then the phenomenon of human religion can and must be supported by critical philosophy, that is, by an evaluation of the reasonableness of religion in terms of metaphysical evidence. It may very well be that what appeals to us religiously is hardly reasonable intellectually. And if metaphysical evidence demands a divine being who is the fulness of actuality, then any form of anthropomorphism in our thinking about such a being is highly unreasonable.

The metaphysical evidence for an infinite being, a being who is the fulness of actuality, is the same evidence that rules out the

possibility of a process of divine self-actualization. The notion of infinite actuality contradicts the notion of a God-in-the-making. The existential perspective demands an existential ultimate, a being who requires no explanation and no self-fulfillment. Not to be all that one might be is to be non-self-explanatory. A "God" in process of concrescence is just another being, not the Being who grounds every being.

However, some would still wish to state the matter in an extenuated form. The contemporary religious mind certainly is having difficulty with the notion of a God who cannot be affected by the world, by human history, and especially by the adventure, joy, and pathos of an individual human being's life. If God's life is not somehow different because I am alive, then what contact is there between God and me? And, then, what becomes of religion? Perhaps God is not in process of self-development exactly as Whitehead says, but nevertheless he can't simply remain unchanged except at the cost of being irrelevant to human living.

This difficulty, however, is precisely one of those that arise out of unreasonableness, the unreasonableness, namely, of requiring God to live with us after the manner of a sensitive and compassionate neighbor--an anthropomorphism which the religious mind should be delivered from by philosophic scrutiny. For God is with us in a far more intimate way than by sensitive and sympathetic reaction to our life situations and adventures. The God who is the fulness of actuality is nothing less than the giver of the actuality of our everyday living. And since he is the intelligent and free giver of our being, he is with

us through knowing love. Thus it is quite misleading even to speak of God's "companionship," since, in reality, God is much more than a companion could possibly be. God is not with us as a concerned wayfarer, but as the source of our very being. And because he is the giver of our actuality, God also gives us our possibilities, since possibility is embedded in actuality. It is in response to the giver of actuality that basic religion emerges in our lives, a response which is urged by our acknowledgement of the knowing love of the giver.

God, as Infinite Actuality and giver of our actuality, doesn't proceed with us in time, but stands beyond temporal passage. God does not await what happens temporally, no more than he "foresees" what will occur, because infinite actuality is eternal being. Even God's creative act, through which he brings about finite actuality, is not an adventitious event in the divine life, but is simply the divine infinite existing under the aspect of actual source and ground of finite existing. Existentially speaking, the eternally infinite must ground the temporally finite as the source of such finite being. This obviously presents the human mind with an idea which escapes our comprehension--the idea of an eternally infinite being. But it is not an unintelligible idea, since the mind is led to think such a being in the very act of affirming its actuality.

It is the affirmation of a being who is knowingly and lovingly present in universal creation from within. The source of created actuality and possibility is ultimately immanent as well as ultimately transcendent: transcendent in his being, immanent in his effects. The

divine transcendence cannot be thought of apart from his immanence, and the inverse is also true. The phrase "an absolutely transcendent being" must, then, be understood properly. The transcendence is absolute in virtue of the infinite incomensurableness between the infinite and the finite. But the notion of transcendence itself can only be understood in a relational context, implying as it does that which is transcended. And when that which transcends is infinite being, then the relational context necessarily involves the notion of immanence.

The affirmation of an infinitely perfect being, therefore, is not the affirmation of an impossibly removed and meaningless abstraction in terms of our everyday living. The religious mind must not stray from the basic metaphysical affirmation of an infinite being and its implications. To do so is only to satisfy a misguided religious sentiment at the expense of both human rationality and respectable religion. To disregard divine infinite transcendence in favor of a divine companion is to turn around and reenter Plato's cave.

Everlastingness

A further issue of serious concern has to do with Whitehead's notion of "everlastingness." In his theology, it was seen that God functions not only as a necessarily required formative element accounted for in terms of metaphysical principles, but also God functions as a response to the "religious problem." It is well to recall what that problem essentially is according to Whitehead.

The most general formulation of the religious problem is the question whether the process of the temporal world passes

into the formation of other actualities, bound together in an order in which novelty does not mean loss.¹⁶

Whitehead is assuming that the central difficulty for the religious mind has to do with whether or not worthwhile accomplishment on the temporal level is destined to be somehow preserved. The hope of immortality is certainly an aspect of religious consciousness, and in Whitehead's cosmic perspective this hope naturally reaches out to include the entire temporal order of reality.

What Whitehead is suggesting in this connection is that the consequent growth of the divine life constitutes the everlasting destiny of temporal actualities.

The consequent nature of God is the fulfillment of his experience by his reception of the multiple freedom of [temporal] actuality into the harmony of his own actualization.¹⁷

It was seen that God's derivative experience exhaustively prehends the achievement of each actual occasion, allowing no value, however unimportant, to be lost. Upon such derivative prehension on God's part, temporal actuality is transmuted. The metaphysical nature of positive prehension is that it is an objectification. God's consequent derivation from temporal actuality cannot preserve actual occasions in their own subjective immediacy. What it is able to do, however, is to objectify without elimination, that is, without negative prehension.

¹⁶ Process and Reality, p. 517.

¹⁷ Idem, p. 530.

At the temporal level, "objectification involves elimination."¹⁸ Whitehead considers this gradual elimination of past achievement which occurs in the course of temporal process to be "the ultimate evil in the temporal world."¹⁹ One fundamental way in which God overcomes evil, then, is through his unique ability to objectify without the need to eliminate.

Through God's consequent derivation, therefore, process and permanence are reconciled. Temporal actualities, through their objectification by God, are preserved as elements of his own ongoing actuality. Of them it can be said that they have gained "everlastingness." This is Whitehead's response to the religious concern for immortality.

Whitehead's scant remarks about everlastingness as a state of existing hardly convey any clear idea. The point has just been made that everlastingness does not mean that actual occasions retain their own subjective immediacy. Their entry into this status is through an objectification. This much seems clear enough. And, yet, being objectified, even granting there is no elimination through negative prehension, could scarcely satisfy this hope for immortality which Whitehead is concerned to reassure. What he, in effect, proposes is a purely formal permanence, one which is constituted by God's prehension of the subjective and objective characteristics of actual occasions, not of the actual occasions themselves. When Whitehead distinguishes

¹⁸Process and Reality, p. 517.

¹⁹Ibid.

physical prehension from conceptual prehension by stating that the former is the prehension of actuality, while the latter is the prehension of potentiality, he must be well understood. In the final analysis, what we have here are simply two types of formal prehension. The first is prehensive of formal characteristics of concrete togetherness, the second of formal possibilities for concrete togetherness.

With this in mind, when Whitehead speaks of an everlasting destiny for temporal actualities, it is only what one would expect from an essentialist thinker. But it is precisely the essentialist point of view which seems to miss the point on the issue of immortality. For the hope of everlastingness, whether justified or not, is the hope in the continuity of one's own actuality, not simply of one's own characteristics.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has been centrally concerned with the exposition and evaluation of the philosophic theology of Alfred North Whitehead. The philosopher himself managed to give only the most general sketch of his theological views. This lack on his part of any developed statement necessarily makes any attempt at analysis and assessment a difficult and uncertain enterprise.

The procedure has been to seek an understanding and evaluation of Whitehead's theology in the context of his general metaphysic and against the background of those abiding features of his intellectual personality which have helped to shape his philosophy.

In coming to terms with Whitehead's philosophic position, and especially with his theological views, the expert literature on the subject has, of course, been invaluable in the author's own private study. In turning to the exposition of Whitehead's philosophy, however, the author has chosen to deal directly and exclusively with the philosopher's writings, endeavoring simply to present his own (the author's) interpretation.

The contribution the author hopes to make through this thesis is not so much in the area of exposition, however, as in that of evaluation. For it is an evaluation which begins with a phenomenology of experience proposed as a more adequate reading of the empirical facts and, so, a more adequate point of departure for the philosophic enterprise. With respect to Whitehead's views about God, there is certainly much of value. After all, Whitehead was in the deepest sense a religious person, and much of what he maintains is philosophically valid and religiously precious. In particular, his notion of the tender, loving, saving God who, in his love and from his eternal life, patiently cares for the world is a conviction which clearly has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. If he, in turn, criticizes that tradition, it is only because he believes it has not always been faithful to its highest moments.

The crucial contention of this thesis, however, has been that Whitehead has developed his rational theology out of an essentialist metaphysic and that his essentialism rests upon an inadequate reading of the facts of experience. Experiential evidence manifests the

distinction between the act of existing and the mode of existing in the structure of every experienced actuality. The same evidence likewise manifests the primacy of the act of existing in the structure of actuality. An existential notion of being, therefore, is what the empirical evidence reveals, a notion of being which is analogously relevant to whatever is. Whitehead's essentialist interpretation of experience led him to settle on a univocal concept of being. According to such a concept, neither the structure of actuality in general nor the actuality of a divine being in particular can be understood.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

The Theology of A. N. Whitehead: A Critical Evaluation¹

This dissertation has been a study of A. N. Whitehead's rational theology asking: 1) How does it emerge in the context of his general metaphysic? and 2) How is it supported by the facts of experience?

The intellectual career of Whitehead has first been investigated, with emphasis upon discovering the continuity throughout an intellectual life which gradually expanded its concern from the philosophy of mathematics, to the philosophy of physical nature, to the metaphysics of reality. It has been suggested that the continuity is to be seen in terms of certain abiding features of Whitehead's mind--his empirical sense, his rationalist bent, and his valuing of the experiencing subject.

Whitehead's general metaphysical position was then studied to the extent necessary to understand his rational theology. The facts of common and special experience have led Whitehead to his rejection of a substance-quality metaphysic, to his theory of actual entities, and to his interpretation of the temporal world as an organic process of actual occasions presenting the cosmic features of order and novelty.

¹Paul B. Daly, doctoral thesis presented to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, May 1972, ix-263 p.

On this basis, it has been noticed that the empirical facts of cosmic order and novelty led Whitehead to the metaphysical problem of their rational explanation and, thus, to his philosophy about the divine being as the necessary ordering and novelty providing actual entity among the formative entities of cosmic process. The existence of a being which rational religion calls "God" was necessarily affirmed in the context of a rational interpretation of empirical fact.

Whitehead's theory of the divine nature has been studied in terms of the metaphysical function of such a being. God's nature required the fusion of primordial and consequent experiencing so that his special immanence and transcendence regarding the temporal world might be understood. The divine satisfaction was seen to be eternally ongoing as the finite but everlasting actualization of God's infinite subjective aim.

This study has concluded with remarking some general points of agreement with Whitehead, some fundamental difficulties which his interpretation involves, and the suggestion that these difficulties are rooted in Whitehead's inadequate reading of the common facts of experience. It was suggested that a more adequate reading of those facts would lead one to apprehend the primacy of existing over essence, and to an existential metaphysic in contrast to an essentialism. This would mean an analogous notion of being, as opposed to Whitehead's univocal notion, and a metaphysical perspective which would apprehend the necessity of an eminently actual being as the existential ground of finite actuality.