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Alfred North Whitehead and the Quest for Political Vision.

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ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD AND THE QUEST FOR POLITICAL VISION

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col. Ph.D. 1981

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ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD AND THE QUEST FOR POLITICAL VISION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Larry W. Chappell
B.A., The University of Alabama, 1973
M.A., The University of Alabama, 1976
December 1981
WITH LOVE AND RESPECT TO CARLE
Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.
The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going
A wave, interminably flowing.

Wallace Stevens

All this here and now, so fleeting, seems to require us
and strangely concerns us.

Rilke

The creativity of the world is the throbbing emotion of
the past hurling itself into a new transcendent fact. It
is the flying dart... hurled beyond the bounds of the
world.

Alfred North Whitehead
Acknowledgments

The standard scholarly procedure is to thank all the people who have in some way contributed to the outcome of study while absolving them of all blame for its shortcomings. I firmly share Whitehead's belief that we are not beings who require nothing but ourselves in order to exist. Our "selves" are constituted in ways we can barely grasp. Thus, it is exceedingly difficult to apportion fairly, praise or blame for what we have become. Nevertheless, there are a number of people whose contributions to my life and thought are almost wholly commendable. These people do indeed deserve absolution for shortcomings and praise for merits in the study.

The members of my committee—E. Ramon Arango, John R. Baker, James J. Bolner, Cecil L. Eubanks, Edward H. Henderson and G. Ellis Sandoz, Jr.—were extremely helpful and patient. Special thanks are extended to Cecil Eubanks whose friendship and encouragement extend well beyond the duration of this project. Gratitude is also in order for Clara G. Leach and Carle L. Jackson who read and commented on portions of the draft. Terry Haney provided much needed friendship through some difficult times. Sue Larisey and Karen Cox blended expert typing with extraordinary patience.
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ABSTRACT

This study explores Alfred North Whitehead's relevance for political philosophy by attempting to locate his work within the tradition of "classical political philosophy." Classical political philosophy is understood to involve a determined quest for "vision" in all matters, including politics. The quest is constituted by several interlocking inquiries which are schematically represented as

1) The quest for comprehensiveness: speculation
2) The quest for God: theology
3) The quest for wholeness: ethics
4) The quest for man: philosophical anthropology

Each of these inquiries is embodied in the key works of classical political philosophy such as Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, and the inquiries coalesce to form an architec tonic mode of interrogation.

The schematic representation of classical political philosophy is explained and illustrated. The scheme is applied to Whitehead's writings by exploring the elements of speculation, theology, ethics and philosophical anthropology in them. Additionally, an attempt is made to map out a roughly Whiteheadian position on some contemporary and perennial issues in political philosophy. This discussion includes the topics of order, freedom, utopia, crisis and humanism.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: WHITEHEAD AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Wisdom is the faculty which commands all the disciplines by which we acquire all the sciences and arts that make up humanity.

Giambattista Vico

Philosophy is concerned with elucidating and comparing the ways in which the world is made intelligible in different intellectual disciplines; and how this leads on to the elucidation and comparison of different forms of life.

Peter Winch

Whitehead's Relevance to Political Philosophy

Alfred North Whitehead is widely regarded as one of the leading philosophers of the twentieth century. He endeavored to develop an "interpretive scheme" capable of application to all elements of experience, but his importance for political philosophy is not altogether clear.

John W. Danford, in a footnote to his study of Wittgenstein's relationship to political philosophy, makes an observation which identifies the issue to which the present study is addressed. Danford includes Whitehead among "the major twentieth century philosophers ... who wrote almost nothing directly about politics." 1 Whitehead did write a number

of essays on political issues, and *Adventures of Ideas* contains some
important contributions to social and political theory. Nonetheless,
Danford's comment is substantially correct. Generally, Whitehead's essays
on politics are neither strikingly profound and original nor particularly
well integrated into his comprehensive philosophical speculations; therefore, his relevance to political philosophy is not immediately apparent.

The question which this study addresses is simple to state and
difficult to answer: Why should a student of political philosophy subject
himself to the arduous task of deciphering Whitehead's elaborate philo-
osophical scheme? The research for the study began with a rather vague

The relevant sections of AI are discussed in Chapter VI. Most of
Whitehead's essays on social and political issues are contained in AESP.
All citations of primary sources use abbreviations which are listed on
p.189 For a good overview of the essays see A. H. Johnson, *Whitehead's
Philosophy of Civilization* (Toronto: The University of Western Ontario

3 The literature dealing with the political applications of White-
head's philosophy is not extensive. So far as I know, Samuel Beer
is the only professional political scientist to have written a book
on Whitehead. See Samuel Beer, *The City of Reason* (Cambridge, Massachu-
setts: Harvard University Press, 1949); Delwin Brown, "Hope for the
Human Future: Niebuhr, Whitehead and Utopian Expectation," *Iliff
Review*, 32, 1975, 3-18; David L. Hall, *The Civilization of Experience:
A Whiteheadian Theory of Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press,
Foundation for Democracy," *Ethics*, 68, 1958, 281-85; A. H. Johnson,
40, 1943, 47-55; Johnson, Whitehead's Philosophy of Civilization; Francisco
Malecek, An Application of Alfred North Whitehead's Principles of
Metaphysics as a Possible Theory of Civil Society (Rome: Pontificia Uni-
versitas, Gregoriana, 1966); William Oliver Martin, "Whitehead's
Philosophy as the Ideology of Consensus Theory," *Educational Theory*,
8, 1958, 1-7, 64.
intuition of Whitehead's importance for political philosophy, but the basis for recommending his work remained clouded for some time. Eventually, I concluded that his relevance derived from his effort to preserve and extend the traditional context within which political philosophy originally appeared. The tradition in which his effort falls is that of "classical political philosophy"—here understood as a continuing quest for "vision" in all matters, including politics. Thus, notwithstanding the "a-political" character of Whitehead's philosophical writings, his work has significant bearing upon many of the central concerns of political theory, and his interpretive scheme provides a meaningful and important setting for those concerns.

The central purpose of this essay is to explain and document the reasons, just adumbrated, for commending a study of Whitehead's writings to political philosophers. The study also serves as an introductory exposition and interpretive analysis of Whitehead's work for political theorists.

Structure of the Study

Chapter II endeavors to identify the tradition which Whitehead seeks to preserve and extend—classical political philosophy. The chapter begins by considering the generic nature of political philosophy sans the differentiating adjective "classical." This is accomplished via an analysis of an important work in political theory, Sheldon Wolin's Politics and Vision. Wolin's book also serves to introduce the central theme of "vision" with which the present study is concerned. An analysis of Wolin's stress on "continuity" in the "western tradition" of political thought leads to the interpretation of the "classical" tradition as a distinctive mode of inquiry. The chapter concludes with a schematic
presentation of my conception of classical political philosophy as:

1) The quest for comprehensiveness—speculation
2) The quest for God—theology
3) The quest for wholeness—ethics
4) The quest for man—philosophical anthropology

This schema provides a basic context for a discussion of Whitehead and is applied to Whitehead's writings in chapters III-V.

Chapters III and IV attempt to show how Whitehead participates in the classical search for comprehensive understanding through speculative inquiry. Chapter III considers Whitehead's conception of philosophy while Chapter IV discusses the cosmology that resulted from that conception.

Chapter V considers the role of theology, ethics and philosophical anthropology in Whitehead's thought. This chapter is largely interpretive insofar as Whitehead never wrote systematic treatises on the topics mentioned. His "views" on these subjects had to be pieced together from scattered references and abstracted for the systematic context in which they occur.

Chapter VI rounds out the analysis of Whitehead's relevance for political theory by discussing some applications and extensions of his thought to perennial and contemporary issues in political philosophy.

**Limitations and Difficulties**

The basic limitation of the study involves one of its central theoretical units—"classical political philosophy." To establish the "nature" of this unit, about which there is considerable controversy, would require nothing less than a tome buttressed by a weighty apparatus of scholarly citation. All that can be claimed in the present study is
that the theoretical unit (and the schematic representation of it) constitutes one defensible interpretation of an extraordinarily complex body of literature. The schematic summary provides no more than an angle of vision on the classical position and a fruitful way of organizing and presenting the material on Whitehead. The authors to whom my interpretation is most indebted, such as Josef Pieper, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, are cited and discussed in Chapter II.

Another way of viewing the theoretical unit is to consider it in light of Whitehead's conception of his mission as a philosopher. As Chapter III indicates, his understanding of the Greeks (Plato and Aristotle) conforms well to the model introduced in Chapter II. Whitehead consciously sought to preserve a tradition which he thought had been submerged in the modern era. Thus, he thought it imperative to revert to "pre-Kantian modes of thought" in order to restore philosophy to its rightful place (PR, pp. xi-xii). Viewed from this perspective, Whitehead's relevance for political philosophy is established with reference to his conception of the aims of classical philosophical inquiry. Whether or not those aims are idiosyncratic could remain in doubt, however. A bit of reassurance on this score is provided by Bertrand Russell who attests to Whitehead's remarkable grasp of the history of philosophy.4

Aside from the question of theoretical units, Whitehead's writings (and writings on Whitehead) pose basic difficulties that need to be noted from the outset. Whitehead is a very difficult writer, and the effort to wrest the jewels from his crown is an epic struggle. This is

true primarily because of the incredible complexity of his cosmology. Complexity provides no bar to recommending his work, however. We need only recall Spinoza's famous conclusion to the Ethics to dismiss this consideration as an objection: "All noble things are as difficult as they are rare." Nevertheless, a possible objection could rest with the type of language Whitehead uses in constructing his cosmology. Whitehead employs a technical vocabulary that is forbidding, to say the least. Kenneth Merrill somewhat harshly judges that Whitehead's philosophy "bristles with jargon and, more treacherously, with peculiar uses of ordinary words." In any event, Whitehead's terminology insures that his works and works on him will be difficult to read.

The problem of technical terminology is real enough, but not insurmountable. Basically, what is required is acclimatization; the more one reads Whitehead and works on Whitehead, the easier he is to understand. Furthermore, the reader is aided by the existence of an excellent glossary of Whiteheadian terms compiled by Donald Sherburne. There is a temptation for a commentator to attempt to translate Whitehead's terms into ordinary language. This would be a mistake. Whitehead has good reasons for generating his unusual verbal arsenal.


Whitehead notes that "language" arises for limited practical purposes. No language is adequate to capture the entire texture of experience, but the language of common sense arises "with a dominating reference to an immediate situation," as "this reaction to that situation in this environment" (MT, p. 38). The language of theory, however, must seek "to obtain explicit expression of general ideas presupposed by the facts of experience" (PR, p. 12). Consequently, philosophy employs technical terms which "stretch" the meanings of ordinary words beyond their customary applications (MT, p. 12).

Every science must devise its own instruments. The tool required for philosophy is language. Thus philosophy redesigns language in the same way that, in a physical science, pre-existing appliances are redesigned. (PR, p. 11)

In any event, the language Whitehead uses provides an initial barrier to understanding his work and patience is required. Ultimately, each reader must decide whether the advance in understanding is sufficient to compensate the headaches in comprehending.

Source Material

Concerning the source material for the study, the basic focus of my research is upon the mature "metaphysical" writings of Whitehead. I make no use of his mathematical treatises and little use of the early writings on the philosophy of science (CN, R and PNK). The mathematical writings are avoided because they extend beyond my competence, and they have little bearing upon the nature and role of politics as here conceived. The writings on the philosophy of science are not used extensively because the basic insights expressed therein are incorporated and transformed in Whitehead's later writings. It was my intention to review the most comprehensive and the most consistent version of Whitehead's philosophy, and
that, by common agreement, is contained in his later writings. Much of
the focus is on Process and Reality which Whitehead felt to be the most
complete and most systematic statement of his philosophy, but the themes
of this work are amplified and supplemented in his other writings.
CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS OF VISION

Man's deepest and most reliable knowledge of the world around him—in particular of himself and others—is attained not through detachment but attachment, not by reductive analysis but constructive synthesis, not in a state of estranged aloofness but in something like an act of love.

Floyd Matson

Politician ordained
Imagination as the fateful sin
Grandmother and her basketful of pears
Must be the crux for our compendia.

Wallace Stevens

If we desire a record of uninterpreted experience, we must ask a stone to record its autobiography.

Alfred North Whitehead

Political Philosophy

One of the most curious and enduring features of political philosophy is its reflexivity. In the course of philosophizing about politics, political philosophers frequently inquire into the "nature" of the enterprise in which they are presumably engaged.¹ The reflexive question is not confined to political philosophy, but rather seems to characterize the philosophical enterprise as a whole. As Josef Pieper observes:

When a physicist sets out to define his science and asks
what physics is, he is posing a preliminary question; in
asking it he is plainly not at the experimental stage—
not yet, or perhaps, no longer. But for anyone to ask,
what does philosophizing mean? is quite certainly philoso-

The attempts of political philosophers to present a satisfying account
of their vocation have been anything but conclusive. The depth of per-
plexity and disagreement over the nature of political philosophy calls
to mind St. Augustine's poignant plea arising from his attempt to answer
the anthropological question; i.e., what is the nature of man?

But I beg you, O Lord my God, to look upon me
and heal me, for you see that I have become a problem 

to myself and this is the ailment from which I suffer.

The ailment from which political philosophy suffers is occasioned, if for
no other reason, by the mere variety of answers to its reflexive question.
The answers range from assertions of the apodictic truth of this or that
political thinker's theories to dismissal of political philosophizing as
empty rhetoric and metaphysical nonsense. This is not the place to at-
tempt a resolution of these controversies. As noted in the introductory
chapter, the present discussion simply offers an angle of vision on the
"nature" of political philosophy and an analytical schema upon which the
exploration of Whitehead's writings can be based. Nevertheless, the reflex-
ive question begs for some sort of answer. A point of entry to the ques-
tion is provided in a book by Sheldon Wolin from whom the central meta-
phor of the present study is borrowed.

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3St. Augustine, Confessions, X. 33, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin
Wolin begins his study of political philosophy by refusing to define his subject matter. The reasons for this procedure are stated concisely:

Political philosophy is not an essence with an eternal nature. It is, instead a complex activity which is best understood by analyzing the many ways that the acknowledged masters have practiced it. No single philosopher and no one historical age can be said to have defined it conclusively, any more than any one painter or school has practiced all that we mean by painting.

According to Wolin, an adequate grasp of this "complex activity" requires that we employ "an historical approach" which "represents the best method for understanding the preoccupations of political philosophy and its character as an intellectual enterprise."

Apparently, political philosophy, though lacking an "eternal essence," has a "character" which may be abstracted from the highly variegated phenomenal field constituting "history."

Wolin confirms this when he remarks:

Although it may not be possible to reduce political philosophy to a brief definition, it is possible to elucidate the characteristics that distinguish it from, as well as connect it with, other forms of inquiry.

Wolin does not tell us how this feat of abstraction is to be accomplished, nor does he tell us why "this" complex activity is to be conceived as a unit.

Although the terminology is not clearly elaborated, Wolin's reference to political philosophy as a "form of inquiry" seems to reintroduce the question of "essence." In any event, further comment seems required to save the "characterization" of the "form" from the appearance of

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5 Ibid., p. v. 6 Ibid., p. 2.
arbitrariness and subjective bias. Perhaps the thesis concerning "eternal essences" which led Wolin to eschew definitions can be reformulated to save the historical inquiry the embarrassment of being an investigation with no identifiable subject matter.

We need not deny to political philosophy an "essence" (whether "eternal" or not is initially beside the point) in order to avoid overly simple definitions or to recognize the importance of historical inquiry. Let "essence" be understood as the way a "thing" would appear if it were known by a perfect or infinite knower. Let it further be understood that an essence may be "complex" either actually or aspectually. An actually complex essence would be "composed" of "simple" essences. An aspectually complex essence would be "viewed" from different and incomplete perspectives by an imperfect or finite knower. Finally, let it be understood that an essence may characterize or predicate an "act" or a complex activity. These, admittedly elliptical, formulations suggest several theses concerning political philosophy.

The essence of political philosophy is not instantiated by a single individual or during a single epoch. Its "being" has a temporal spread which, at least for a finite knower, extends through an unknown future and a hazy past. The finite knower brings to bear, during temporally variable applications, limited perspectives from his horizon of experience upon the essence of political philosophy. When an imperfect knower encounters an aspect of the essence (a "part"), he can intuit it as an aspect of the partially known essence (as a part of the "whole"). The more aspects we "see" and the more interrelationships among the parts we explore, the closer we come to understanding the essence as such, i.e. as a perfect knower or epistemic saint would "see" it. The effort to "see" the essence
justifies an exploration of a wide variety of historical materials that partially instantiate the whole. Additionally, since political philosophy is a complex activity, knowledge of the subject matter involves participation in the activity itself.

These adumbrations, if they have any merit, serve to establish Wolin's credentials as a commentator upon the "characteristics" of political philosophy. Wolin has examined a wide variety of historical materials presumed to constitute the activity of political philosophizing, and his erudition is supplemented by a serious attempt to grapple with the issues which pose themselves within the horizon of the activity. Thus, we may assume his capacity to identify some of the salient features of the genuinely complex activity.

Of cardinal importance for the present study is Wolin's identification of "vision" as a central feature of political philosophy. The notion of vision elaborated by Wolin is rather similar to the account of knowing an essence rendered here.

Wolin begins by noting that each political theorist views problems "from a different perspective, a particular angle of vision." 7

This suggests that political philosophy constitutes a form of 'seeing' political phenomena and that the way in which the phenomena will be visualized depends in large measure on where the viewer stands. 8

Wolin uses the term vision in two separate but related senses. In one sense, vision functions as an act of perception; it generates a "descriptive report about an object or event." 9 The descriptive element assumes major importance, but it does not exhaust the role of political vision. The second sense of vision relates to "imagination." According to Wolin,

7Ibid., p. 17.  8Ibid.  9Ibid., p. 18.
the imaginative element has played a role in political philosophy similar to that Coleridge assigned to imagination in poetry, an 'esemplastic' power that 'forms all into one graceful intelligent whole.'

 Apparently, the descriptive vision exists in tension with the imaginative vision. Imagination represents a "corrected fullness" by comparison with any portrait of historical realities. The portraits of the imagination embody "an architectonic vision" which attempts to weld the phenomena described with "some vision of the good that lies outside the political order." Wolin distinguishes the imaginative vision from "utopian" thinking with reference to "possibilities." In a footnote, he observes that the imaginative element is not the same as utopianism in that it is less an attempt to soar above present realities than an attempt to view existing realities as transformed possibilities.

The meaning of "possibility" in this context is not explicated; therefore, the nexus between the facts discovered by the descriptive vision and the possibilities discovered in the imaginative vision is unclear. Apparently, the brute facts of "history" are both a constraint on the theorist and a challenge to be transformed. Be that as it may, the transformative role of the imaginative vision complicates the relationship between theory and practice. The political philosopher not only "understands" the political world, but also creates and transforms it. The "essential element" in political philosophy is "the ideal of an order subject to human control and one that [can] be transfigured through a combination of thought and action." An activity of this sort is complex indeed.

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If vision is central to political philosophy, poetry and other endeavors alike, what distinguishes one from the other? It would seem that vision designates what is "common" to various enterprises while other features distinguish them. Wolin's approach to the problem of demarcation involves a refusal to draw the lines of distinction too sharply lest the view of political philosophy become too constrictive. This refusal is especially marked in his discussion of the distinction between "philosophy" and "political philosophy." Wolin notes that there is a deep association between the "two" pursuits. The great philosophers have "contributed generously to the main stock of our political ideas," and they have provided the political theorist with "many of his methods of analysis and criteria of judgment." Furthermore, the interests of philosophy and political philosophy converge with the search for "public" knowledge. Both seek "to deal with truths publicly arrived at and publicly demonstrable." The search for that which is "common" leads to an analysis of public life. Thus, political philosophy, with its roots in comprehensive philosophical inquiry, leads to "reflection upon matters that concern the community as a whole." Consequently, the difference has been more a matter of specialization and emphasis than a fundamental breach. Political theorists accept "as their own the basic quest of the philosopher for systematic knowledge." 

Nevertheless, there are features, themes and problems which set political philosophy apart as a "specialization." Perhaps foremost is the political philosopher's concern with "the good life." According to Wolin, the terms of this concern are set with Plato who

\[15\text{Ibid., p. 2. 16Ibid. 17Ibid., p. 3. 18Ibid., p. 2.}\]
first perceived that the inquiry into the nature of the good life of the individual was necessarily associated with a converging (and not parallel) inquiry into the nature of the good community.19

The inquiry into the good life has persisted so that the majority of political theorists have adhered to "the Aristotelian dictum that men living a life of association desire not only life but the attainment of the good life."20

The quest for the good life converges with another major feature of political philosophy. Political philosophers seek to understand the nature of "the political." Wolin contends that the idea of "politics" includes at least three major features. Politics is

a) a form of activity centering around the quest for competitive advantage between [sic] groups, individuals, or societies;
b) a form of activity conditioned by the fact that it occurs within a situation of change and relative scarcity; c) a form of activity in which the pursuit of advantage produces consequences of such a magnitude that they affect in a significant way the whole society or a substantial portion of it.21

Wolin has undoubtedly identified some basic features of political life, but his initial contention—that political philosophy inquires into the meaning of politics—is less controversial than his definition. For instance, a Marxist would be unlikely to accept "relative scarcity" and "the quest for competitive advantage" as permanent features of the human condition or indispensable conditions for politics. The point to be noted is that the meaning of "politics" expands or contracts depending upon the thinker's vision of "the good life" and his estimation of "possibilities."22

19 Ibid. 20 Ibid., p. 9. 21 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
22 Indeed, the contest over the meaning of "political" terms is a part of the political process. This theme is developed in William E. Connolly, The Terms of Political Discourse (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath, 1974).
Unfortunately, Wolin's definition—unlike his analysis—seems to pre-judge the inquiry into the meaning of politics in favor of "necessity" to the detriment of "possibility." The definition conforms rather well with the view that politics involves nothing more than the changing configurations resulting from competition for power, but this view is widely contested in the history of political thought.

The two characteristics discussed so far suggest a third. The nature of the good life and the meaning of politics are philosophical questions to be explored. According to Wolin, political philosophy is characterized more by its questions that by its answers. The enterprise is marked by the continuity of its subject matter, "the continual reappearance of certain problem topics" such as

- power relationships between ruler and ruled,
- the nature of authority,
- the problems posed by social conflict,
- the status of certain goals or purposes as objectives of political action,
- and the character of political knowledge.  

Wolin notes that "what is important is the continuity of preoccupations, not the unanimity of response." This allows him to gather quite diverse thinkers under the same umbrella, underplaying the notorious disagreements among the political philosophers. Consequently, he identifies political philosophy and "a tradition of discourse"—"the perennial dialogue" within western civilization.

Wolin is justified in de-emphasizing doctrine as the defining characteristic of political philosophy. The enterprise cannot be reduced to doctrinal positions, and questions can provide continuity independent of answers. Nevertheless, the manner of asking questions can set writers

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23 Wolin, p. 3.  24 Ibid.  25 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
apart as sharply as doctrinal positions. For instance, T. D. Weldon is quite convinced that his "analytical" political philosophy provides a marked contrast with, and a superior alternative to, what he understands to be Plato's "essentialist" version of political thought. Weldon is apparently uninterested in entering into a "dialogue" with Plato, "perennial" or otherwise. He is interested in rejecting Plato's manner of asking questions. More germane to the present study is the contention, by a variety of scholars from a variety of perspectives, that there is a fundamental break between "classical" and "modern" versions of political philosophy. The work of these scholars provides a fundamental challenge to Wolin's stress on continuity in western political thought.

This is not the place to enter into an involved discussion of these hermeneutical disputes. I merely wish to set forth the assumptions from which I shall proceed. This study accepts the contention that there is a tradition of inquiry, established primarily in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, which may be denoted as "classical" political philosophy, contrasted with "modern" political philosophy as represented, for example, by Thomas Hobbes. Insofar as the present study seeks to locate Whitehead within the classical tradition, an outline of my understanding of classical political philosophy is imperative. The outline will provide the schematic


for the remainder of the study.

Classical Political Philosophy

The classical tradition, like all forms of political philosophy, is characterized by the quest for vision. Its quest is constituted by several interlocking inquiries which may be schematically represented as

1) The quest for comprehensiveness: speculation
2) The quest for God: theology
3) The quest for wholeness: ethics
4) The quest for man: philosophical anthropology

Each of these inquiries is embodied in the key works of classical political philosophy such as Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, and the inquiries coalesce to form an architectonic mode of interrogation. Obviously, the bare schematic requires elaboration and illustration which demands a point by point explication.

The Quest for Comprehensiveness

Classical political philosophy exhibits deep awareness of man's finitude. It seeks to elucidate and understand the not so clearly defined limits of our knowledge and being. The awareness of finitude engenders and requires a speculative attitude toward reality. As Josef Pieper explains,

> to philosophize is the purest form of speculare, of theorein, it means to look at reality purely receptively—in such a way that things are the measure and the soul is exclusively receptive.\(^{28}\)

This receptivity to what lies beyond the horizons of the mere "I" is initiated and controlled by a sense of "wonder." Pieper urges that wonder is both the initium and principium of philosophy.\(^{29}\) From the sense of wonder, philosophy derives its restless, searching quality. It inevitably

\(^{28}\text{Pieper, p. 80.}\) \(^{29}\text{Ibid., p. 103.}\)
has the form of a search.

Nevertheless, the philosophical search is selectively receptive. Not all experiences are received on an equal footing; philosophy seeks the archetype. This point can be illustrated with reference to Eric Voegelin's discussion of the Zetema (inquiry) in Plato's Republic. According to Voegelin, "the inquiry, the Zetema, is the conceptual illumination of the way up from the depth of existence."\(^{30}\) The search is governed by awareness of the depths of experience, but a "sense of alternative" is required to face the "misery, danger, and evil" one encounters. The alternative is discovered in "the experience of direction," for "the soul grows" in the course of the inquiry.\(^{31}\) Thus, the philosopher's search is both receptive to the plenum of experience available for human inspection and active in seeking the order governing existence.

Voegelin insists that "conceptual illumination" is not a matter of generating doctrines. Concepts are developed in order to symbolize the unique experiences of the inquiry. When the symbols are separated from the search from which they are generated they become opaque.\(^{32}\) The "topics" of political philosophy arise within the comprehensive inquiry; they are neither incidental to nor separable from the search for the whole.

The quest for comprehensiveness in classical political philosophy was marked by its uncertainty and unendingness. Socratic ignorance lay at the heart of the enterprise. Modern political philosophy, on the other hand, seeks to eliminate speculation by securing an apodictic base from


\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 84.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., pp. 62-70.
which we may proceed. Typical of this attitude is Hobbes' attempt to build moral science or philosophy on the "rules and infallibility of reason" by putting

such principles down for a foundation as passion not mistrusting, may not seek to displace; and afterward to build thereon the truth of cases in the law of nature (which hitherto have been built in the air) by degrees, till the whole by inexpugnable.33

The attempt to make philosophy a science grounded in certitude has alternated with the seemingly more modest hope that philosophy can be of service to the "exact" sciences which are themselves presumed to be built upon unshakable foundations. This attitude is captured by Locke who, not desiring to be a Boyle or a Newton, chooses to work "as an under-laborer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way of knowledge."34 The end result of Locke's position may not differ that sharply from that of Hobbes. The discoveries of philosophy relate to and depend upon the truths of science which are presumed to be certain. Furthermore, while philosophy may not proceed by degrees to an inexpugnable whole, its aim is still possession of undeniable truths. As Locke asserts, philosophy "is nothing but the true knowledge of things."35 Thus, the


"true knowledge of things" supplants the speculative quest for wisdom of the ancients.

The Quest for God

In classical political philosophy, God is the center and terminus of inquiry. To borrow a term from Jacques Maritain, the classical outlook is decidedly "theocentric." Theocentricity is, at least in part, the outcome of the terms by which the classical exegesis of experience was undertaken. For instance, the contrast between "knowledge" and "ignorance" leads quite naturally, in the Platonic inquiry, to consideration of God, for knowledge in the highest degree can be possessed by God alone. For Plato, the very meaning of "philosophy" centers in the quest for God. Socrates explains to Phaedrus that the man who searches for wisdom cannot be called wise.

To call him wise ... would, I think, be excessive; God alone deserves to be so described. But to call him a lover of wisdom or something of the sort would be more appropriate and at the same time more modest. Thus, the philosopher sets his eyes on God because the nature of his calling demands it.

Theocentricity runs like a thread through many of Plato's dialogues. Nowhere is it more evident than in The Laws which begins with a reference to God. The divine measure provides the leitmotif for the entire work. The Athenian stranger, contrary to Protagoras, affirms that


"it is God who is pre-eminently the 'measure of all things' much more so than any 'man.'"\textsuperscript{38} Unlike the Protagorean homo mensura, the Platonic philosophical anthropology views man as a "theomorph" who owes his dignity --indeed, his very being--to the God whom he seeks.\textsuperscript{39} The theory of politics found in the \textit{Laws} is squarely centered in the Divine Milieu that pervades the work.

God does not disappear as an object of concern in all modern political philosophy, but his presence is less pervasive, less ultimate. For Hobbes, God is credited as the "first cause" of reality, but his role as the \textit{teleios} of existence virtually vanishes.\textsuperscript{40} God is retained as the symbol of "the beginning" but lost as the symbol of "the beyond."\textsuperscript{41} The consequences of this emphasis are illustrated with reference to Hobbes' theory of "natural law." In the classical interpretation of natural law posited by the Stoics and refined by St. Thomas Aquinas, "true law" is understood as "right reason," meaning man's participation in the eternal logos of God. Natural law stems from the will of God and cannot be altered or abolished by man. It enjoins and prohibits and legislates for all men,


\textsuperscript{39} Germino, \textit{Beyond Ideology}, pp. 168-74.

\textsuperscript{40} See, for examples, Thomas Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan} I, 11; III, 34.

\textsuperscript{41} The symbols of "beginning" and "beyond" are explored in Eric Voegelin, "The Beginning and the Beyond," unpublished manuscript, Spring 1975. Voegelin delimits the two symbols by asserting that "divine reality is being revealed to man in two fundamental modes of experience: In the experience of divine creativity in the cosmos; and in the experience of divine ordering presence in the soul." (p. 1)
Hobbes radically transmutes the meaning of natural law. In his theory, there is a dramatic shift from the will of God to the will of man both in "the right of nature" and "the law of nature." The right of nature, which exists only in a "state of nature" lacking governmental authority, includes the right to whatever one desires and is able to take. The law of nature enjoins us to "seek peace and follow it," and derives from the desire for self-preservation. Natural law is reduced to the laws of psychology which are presumed to enjoin us to seek the most effective means to live with our fundamental and overriding fear of death. Man's participation in the eternal reason of God is replaced by the mechanical revulsion to death which we share with the beasts. There is clearly no room for the injunction to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" or the instruction "to become immortal as far as that is possible and [to] do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us."

The Quest for Wholeness

Earlier, Sheldon Wolin was quoted on the centrality of the search for "the good life" in the literature of political philosophy. This concern is not exclusive to classical political philosophy. Hobbes, no less than Aristotle, seeks to discover the principles upon which the best

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44 Matt. 5:48.

practicable society may be founded. Thus, ethical thinking is not an exclusive or defining feature of the classical project. Nevertheless, there are differences between the classical and modern approaches to the good life.

The most important difference already has been intimated: The classical quest for wholeness is theocentric. This can be illustrated with reference to Aristotle's model for virtue, the spoudaios or mature man. The spoudaios is supremely virtuous because he cultivates in himself the highest capacity to which a man may attain. The mature man is guided by and devoted to contemplation. The contemplative man attunes himself to the most divine element within him; he cultivates his intelligence (nous), a faculty which belongs preeminently to Divinity. Consequently, the teleios of virtue is God. This contrasts sharply with Hobbes for whom "reason" is an instrument in the service of the passions—primarily lust for power counterpoised against the fear of death. Here, man's reason is conceived more in the image of the fox that in the image of God.

The Quest for Man

Political ethics is intimately related to the vision of man. An assessment of the nature of man will reflect itself in an estimation of human possibilities for attaining the good life. Philosophical anthropology is the attempt to discover the unchanging nature of all men. It asks two questions: 1) What is unchanging about man? 2) What distinguishes men from other animals (or from higher beings)? The classic answer

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46 Ibid., X, 7-8.
47 Hobbes, Leviathan I, 5.
to the question of philosophical anthropology is that reason is the distinguishing feature belonging to all men.

Hobbes, no less than Aristotle, the Stoics and Aquinas, would emphasize man's reason as a distinguishing characteristic. But in Hobbes, reason is reduced to its instrumental or calculative qualities. Reason in man is the faculty that enables us to calculate the best (most efficient and efficacious) means to attain desired ends. Classical political philosophers recognized this capacity, but they also insisted upon man's enjoyment of substantive rationality—the capacity to discern the nature of Being and to separate right from wrong. In Hobbes, substantive rationality can, at best, tell us that fear of death is a passion which overrides our desire for power. Hobbes' naturalization of reason reflects the decisive break between classical and modern interpretations of political life. The shift from divine to human reason and will constitutes a great divide over the issue of natural law. The division has consequences for the entire range of issues addressed by political philosophers.

The Meaning of Vision: A Reconsideration

At this point, it is both possible and desirable to reconsider the meaning of "vision." The classical quest was accompanied by a conception of vision with greater richness and grandeur than that of Wolin (which is intended to apply to the entire history of political philosophy). In Wolin's conception, vision is understood as an act of "perception" combined with "imagination" of "transformed possibilities." This is a

vision of vision which lacks wings. In the classical conception, the elements Wolin mentions are recognized as being important but not exhaustive.

In Plato's understanding, vision is an ascent to realities that lie beyond the immediate grasp of our finite perceptions and images. In the Phaedrus, Plato introduces the myth of winged steeds and their winged charioteer to depict the "immortality of the soul." An image of this sort is needed because the story of the soul's immortality would require a long exposition of which only a god is capable; but it is within the power of man to say in shorter compass what it resembles.49

The story told is the tale of the philosopher's ascent to "the vision of reality" which is his proper food; he is "nourished and made happy by the contemplation of truth."50

The aim of the philosopher is to "contemplate what lies outside the heavens,"51 but the quest for vision is not without ethical and aesthetic significance. The loving search for truth aims to discover the Good and the Beautiful. The Beautiful is what calls forth the search as an act of love. Diotima explains to Socrates that he who is initiated into the mysteries of love will be drawn to a "final revelation"—"that wondrous vision which is the very soul of the beauty he has toiled so long for."52

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49 Plato, Phaedrus, 246, in Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII, p. 50.
50 Ibid., 247, p. 53.
51 Ibid., p. 52.
But the vision of Beauty is also the brilliant beam of the Good which engenders order in the soul and in society. Those trained in dialectic will be compelled to look toward that which provides light for everything. Once they see the good itself, they must be compelled, each in his turn, to use it as a pattern for ordering city, private men, and themselves for the rest of their lives.  

The vision of Plato is, as Wolin would have it, a "corrected fullness" in comparison to any transient order, but it is corrected only in the search for God who provides the supreme measure whereby corrections are judged. It is this sort of vision, described with sublime poetic power by Plato, to which Whitehead directs his efforts.

Summary and Prospect

This chapter has attempted to suggest two broad theses concerning political philosophy:

1) that political philosophizing occurs as a part of the comprehensive quest for "vision" concerning man's place in the universe;

2) that there are significant differences between "classical" and "modern" approaches to political philosophy.

The remainder of the study will be devoted to illustrating how Alfred North Whitehead supports and continues the classical tradition.

The ideal types—classical, modern—with which I have been working are, no doubt, too simple to summarize our rich heritage in political thought. Nevertheless, the schema I have proposed does capture some of the flavor and substance of the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns—a dispute which, in many ways, recapitulates the argument between Socrates and Protagoras. In any event, the schematic presentation should at least clarify my claim that Whitehead's philosophy represents a revival of the classical tradition.

Chapters Three and Four will emphasize the speculative aspects of Whitehead's thought—his quest for comprehensiveness through the medium of a cosmological scheme of interpretation. The third chapter will provide a discussion of Whitehead's conception of philosophy. This discussion will serve to introduce a brief exposition of his cosmology in Chapter Four. What should emerge from these chapters is a portrait of a thinker who fits squarely into the speculative tradition that initiated and provided the context for political philosophy. The remaining items of the schema—theology, ethics and philosophical anthropology—will be considered in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER III

WHITEHEAD'S CONCEPTION OF
SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Creation is the dance of Shiva of which the Hindus speak, not the
drawing of a conclusion.

Charles Hartshorne

Three towns and an abstract universal are not three connected
towns.

Alfred North Whitehead

If men cannot live on bread alone, still less can they do so on
disinfectants.

Alfred North Whitehead

Introduction

The attempt to locate Whitehead in the classical tradition naturally
involves an overview of his philosophy. Unfortunately, a "summary" of his
philosophic outlook is a rather mad undertaking. His philosophy is informed
by a keen understanding of mathematics, physics and the history of most
western and some eastern philosophy. Furthermore, Whitehead exhibits a deep
knowledge of and appreciation for poetry, religion and the dilemmas of man
in society.

More importantly, he insists that philosophical discourse involves
an awareness of the "connectedness" of things. "Connectedness is the essence
of all things of all types" (MT, p. 9). Consequently, he insists that all of
the terms of a philosophical scheme are mutually implicated and mutually pre-
supposed. "It is the ideal of speculative philosophy that its fundamental
notions shall not seem capable of abstraction from each other" (PR, p. 3). As a result, "every proposition proposing a fact must, in its complete analysis, propose the general character of the universe required for that fact" (PR, p. 11). This does not mean that "everything" about the universe must be known before anything can be known.

A proposition can embody partial truth because it only demands a certain type of systematic environment, which is presupposed in its meaning. It does not refer to the universe in all its detail. (PR, p. 11)

Nevertheless, the postulate of connectedness does seem to require that all of Whitehead's philosophical scheme be understood before any of it is understood. If this be the case--leaving aside the hermeneutical problems it poses--the commentator can only "summarize" Whitehead's scheme by repeating it!

The answer to this problem, which has been explored in general terms by Dilthey, must rely upon an appeal to experience. In reading books, we often fail to understand the importance of a particular sentence, paragraph or chapter until we have read the entire book, to see how the whole work hangs together. Upon rereading the book, the sentence, paragraph or chapter acquires a new luminosity that comes from seeing it in context. Furthermore, the entire work assumes a new resonance with the comprehension of the part. Whitehead, like any first rate writer, must be read with the hope for progressive clarification.

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1 The problem under consideration gave rise to Dilthey's famous "hermeneutic circle" for which the present comments are a rough paraphrase. See Wilhelm Dilthey, Selected Writings, trans. and ed. H. P. Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 203; 259; 262.
A secondary source can convey a more or less coherent image of the corpus (either a single writing or a well integrated body of writings) while explicating some of the details supporting the whole. Of course, no secondary source can substitute for the original.

As the preceding comments indicate, Whitehead's philosophy is developed in the form of a "speculative scheme." The purpose of this chapter is to introduce Whitehead's conception of philosophical method suggesting the reasons why Whitehead felt compelled to develop his scheme of interpretation. His approach to philosophy will be briefly compared with the classical approach surveyed in the second chapter. The following chapter will provide a brief overview of Whitehead's cosmological scheme.

**Philosophical Method**

The nature and purpose of philosophy is a recurrent theme in Whitehead's writings. Generally, he concludes that philosophy should be presented as a speculative interpretation of the most enduring features of "reality." He expounds the ideal requirements of a scheme of interpretation succinctly:

Speculative Philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. Thus the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, in respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate. (PR, p. 3)

Whitehead explains that "applicable" means that some items of experience are interpretable in terms of the scheme, and "adequate" means that no items of experience are incapable of such interpretation. "Coherence" means that the fundamental ideas of the scheme are presupposed by each
other so that in isolation they are meaningless, and "logical" is used in "its ordinary meaning" (PR, p. 3). Whitehead notes that these criteria for a speculative scheme presuppose a "rational" and an "empirical" side. The rational side is reflected in the requirements that the scheme be coherent and logical. The empirical side is represented by the requirement that the scheme be applicable and adequate (PR, p. 3).

Whitehead's criteria for speculative philosophy tell us what philosophers should attempt. They do not tell us why the ideal is adopted nor what the limits of inquiry are. Whitehead's philosophical ideal can be clarified with reference to four issues:

1) the role of reason in philosophical speculation;
2) the problem of philosophical systems;
3) the criticism of abstractions;
4) the place of cosmology in philosophical interpretation.

Reason and Faith

Whitehead's criteria for speculative inquiry are grounded in a philosophical faith in "reason." Reason, for Whitehead, involves faith in the "connectedness" of the universe allowing for the intelligibility of "reality." Whitehead readily admits that his belief in the revelatory power of reason is based on an undemonstrable faith.

That we fail to find in experience any elements intrinsically incapable of exhibition as examples of a general theory is the hope of rationalism. This hope is not a metaphysical premise. It is the faith which forms the motive for the pursuit of all sciences alike, including metaphysics. (PR, p. 42)

Reason presupposes, rather than demonstrates, a harmonious cosmos subject to human investigation. "Faith in reason is the trust that things lie together in a harmony which excludes mere arbitrariness" (SMW, p. 18).

Reason is not patient of any content we choose to assign it. In our experience there are elements of "giveness" and "stubborn fact" which
refuse to be argued away. Reality is "there" no matter what we think about it. According to Whitehead,

There must . . . be limits to the claim that all elements in the universe are explicable by 'theory.' For 'theory' itself requires that there be 'given' elements so as to form the material for theorizing. (PR, p. 42)

Rational theory must confront a reality that is in some sense "given."
It cannot simply begin with "premises" and illustrate logical connectedness. The task of speculative reconstruction is to seek coherence in the factors that are there to be found. "Philosophy is the search for premises. It is not deduction" (MT, p. 105).

Whitehead's comments should not be interpreted as sanctioning a version of "barefoot empiricism." Theory must begin with what is "given," but what is given is not transparent to human understanding. Fact and theory interpenetrate through interpretation. Theory must be tested through the crucible of experience, and experience must be interpreted in light of coherent theory. Faith in the connectedness of reality precludes an understanding of "facts" in isolation; "there are no self-sustained facts floating in non-entity" (PR, p. 11). Thus, the basic demand of rationalism is that a scheme of interpretation exhibit the connectedness of all items of experience. The great sins against rationalism lie in accepting incoherence and ignoring evidence. Of the two sins, the latter is perhaps the greater. "Narrowness in the selection of evidence" arises from many sources and results in the dogmatic holding of "ultimate ideals" (PR, p. 337). Discussion of the "evils" which result from the "dogmatic fallacy" (AI, p. 145 and passim) of holding to ultimate ideals with bellicose certainty will have to be postponed, but the sin derives from the refusal to recognize the variegated character of the reality we experience.

"Philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world--the fairies
dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross" (PR, p. 338).

Whitehead is well aware of the limitations of the human intellect. The attempt to frame an adequate interpretive scheme is required by a faith in reason, yet doomed to failure.

Philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles. Weakness of insight and deficiencies of language stand in the way inexorably. Words and phrases must be stretched toward a generality foreign to their ordinary usage; and however such elements of language be stabilized as technicalities they remain metaphors mutely appealing for an imaginative leap.

There is no first principle which is itself unknowable, not to be captured by a flash of insight. But, putting aside the difficulties of language, deficiency in imaginative penetration forbids progress in any form other than an asymptotic approach to a scheme of principles, only definable in terms of the ideal which they should satisfy. (PR, p. 4)

The limits reason inevitably encounters cannot be specified in advance. In Whitehead's view, we must respect the integrity of whatever evidence presents itself. "The rejection of any source of evidence is always treason to that ultimate rationality which urges forward science and philosophy alike" (FR, p. 61). The capacity of experience to surprise us mandates a respect for speculative freedom. "To set limits to speculation is treason to the future" (FR, p. 76). Whitehead firmly insists that we should be open to experience, refusing to close off inquiry with dogma.

Notwithstanding the open-ended character of speculative reason, speculation will set limits—empirical and rational—as those limits are found. Indeed, Whitehead understands rationalism to be an attempt to push reason to its limits. The discovery of rational speculation he attributes to the Greeks.

Reason appeals to the orderliness of what is reasonable while "speculation" expresses the transcendence of any particular method. The Greek secret is, how to be bounded by method even
in its transcendence. They hardly understood their own discovery. But we have the advantage of having watched it in operation for twenty centuries. (PR, pp. 66-67)

Reason can never speak the final word about reality, for reality is an infinity, but we can attempt to sound "the utmost depths of reality" (SMW, p. 20). "The task of reason is to fathom the deeper depths of the many-sidedness of things" (PR, p. 342). In the final analysis the truth of philosophy lies in its ability to touch upon the vague, ill understood dimensions of our experience in evocative ways.

Philosophy is akin to poetry, and both of them seek to express that ultimate good sense we term civilization. In each case there is a reference to form beyond the direct meanings of words. Poetry allies itself to metre, philosophy to mathematic pattern. (MT, p. 174)

From Whitehead's point of view, to ask greater exactness from speculative philosophy is to ask it to forsake its calling, to transform itself into barren technique. He consistently holds that the demand for unqualified precision--clarity and distinctness--in matters of ultimate concern is an invitation to fakery.

Philosophical Systems

As noted, Whitehead's philosophy takes the form of an "interpretive scheme" that attempts to present a comprehensive, rational interpretation of the generic features of "reality." An issue suggests itself for treatment. Does Whitehead give us yet another dubious "system" of philosophy, destined to take its place among other discarded systems of the past?

The attempt to construct systems capable of comprehending the whole of reality perhaps reached its high water mark in the writings of the "continental rationalists"--Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza. And the role of systems in political thought is attested by the
controversies surrounding political thinkers ranging from Marx to David Easton. The twentieth century has witnessed a philosophical revolt against the system which is both presaged and epigrammatically summarized in Nietzsche's succinct formulation: "I mistrust all systematizers and I avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity." Whitehead is well aware of the charges that have been levied against philosophical systems. One criticism centers around the inconclusiveness of metaphysical inquiry. "European thought is represented as littered with metaphysical systems, abandoned and unreconciled" (PR, p. 14). Whitehead replies that this argument is equally effective against "science."

Whitehead indicates that the major weakness of philosophical systems is "overstatement." "The aim of generalization is sound, but the estimate of success is exaggerated" (PR, p. 7). Nevertheless, the critic of a system should not substitute counter-dogma for dogma; the task is to determine what range of applicability--what grain of truth--the interpretation has.

Apart from the argument from inconclusiveness, Whitehead is well aware of another complaint that can be brought against philosophical systems. A system, insofar as it claims to be conclusive, may divert our

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attention from genuine experiences that do not fit into the scheme.

Whitehead notes of William James that "his intellectual life was one protest against the dismissal of experience in the interest of system" (MT, p. 3). Nevertheless, Whitehead does not believe that systematic interpretations are dispensable. "System is important. It is necessary for the handling, for the utilization, and for the criticism of the thoughts which throng into our experience" (MT, p. 2). Both the functions of "assemblage" and systematization are necessary for the interpretation of reality. Assemblage has priority as the "primary stage" of philosophical inquiry, but "the entertainment of notions of large, adequate generality" is "the very essence of civilization" (MT, pp. 2-3).

Whitehead's basic conclusion is that

We must be systematic; but we should keep our systems open.
In other words, we should be sensitive to their limitations.
There is always a vague beyond, waiting for penetration in respect to its detail. (MT, p. 6)

Whitehead always prefaced his statements about the function of an interpretive scheme with words like "endeavor," "attempt," "effort."

Theoretical thought has no final resting place, and claims of finality in intellectual life await almost certain refutation. This does not mean that the effort has no value. As Whitehead observes,

in its turn every philosophy will suffer a deposition.
But the bundle of philosophic systems expresses a variety of general truths about the universe, awaiting coordination and assignment of their various spheres of validity. (PR, p. 7)

Whitehead's immense respect for great system builders such as Spinoza is tempered by his refusal to subordinate experience or speculative freedom to the exigencies of a system. Whitehead links his attitude to Plato.
Systematization is entirely alien . . . to Plato . . . . He is careful, as he says in one of his letters, that he does not give us a "system" of Platonic philosophy. He says there is none, yet in the nineteenth century how the German classical scholars laboured to construct a Platonic system of philosophy! "Now exactly what did Plato mean?" He was at pains never to mean anything exactly. He gave every side of a question its due. I have often done the same, advancing some aspect which I thought deserved attention, and then in some later work, presenting its opposite. In consequence I am accused of inconsistency and self-contradiction." (Dial, p. 306)

In Whitehead's understanding, western philosophy is a series of "footnotes to Plato," (PR, p. 39). Consequently, he judges the "open system" to reflect the best features of the classical tradition.

The Criticism of Abstractions

Whitehead's attitude toward abstractions is somewhat ambivalent. Whitehead remarks that "almost any idea which jogs you out of your current abstractions may be better than nothing" (SMW, p. 62). Nevertheless, he does not hold with those thinkers who believe that we can simply dispense with abstractions and base our thought exclusively on "concrete" or "immediate" experience. He recognizes the necessity and value of abstractions for civilized thought. The danger of abstract thought lies in the tendency to assign to our conceptualizations dogmatic finality. Abstractions that are appropriate for the special sciences are often assumed to possess unqualified validity; therefore, the mission of philosophy involves "the criticism of abstractions which govern special modes of thought" (MT, p. 49). Whitehead tersely captures the conception of philosophy as critic of the special sciences' abstractions: "Philosophy is the welding of imagination and common sense into a restraint upon specialists, and also into an enlargement of their imaginations" (PR, p. 17). Critical reason exposes the unconsciously held presuppositions
of a specialized discipline and holds forth more comprehensive perspectives.

The critical attitude of philosophy toward the prevailing abstractions is not a matter of idle pedantry. Whitehead insists that the kinds of abstractions we entertain bear moral and political consequences.

The disadvantage of exclusive attention to a group of abstractions however well-founded, is that, by the nature of the case, you have abstracted from the remainder of things. In so far as the excluded things are important in your experience, your modes of thought are not fitted to deal with them. You cannot think without abstractions; accordingly, it is of utmost importance to be vigilant in critically revising your modes of abstraction. It is here that philosophy finds its niche as essential to the healthy progress of society. It is the critic of abstractions. A civilization which cannot burst through its current abstractions is doomed to sterility after a very limited period of progress. (SMW, p. 59)

Whitehead indicates that the criticism of abstractions must appeal to experience and reason, but the effort is fraught with pitfalls (SMW, p. 18). He assumes that an analysis of the generic features constituting "reality" is conceivable and that attempting the analysis is desirable. Nevertheless, philosophical theory will normally fall well short of complete adequacy. Indeed, what is revealed in the attempt to develop comprehensive theories is the deep limitation of our cherished abstractions rather than their unqualified validity. We cannot expect maximum clarity, distinctness and validity in our theories.

One of the most serious barriers to total understanding is our reliance upon language. (However, Whitehead is well aware that "language" is itself a very abstract and ill understood notion.) Whitehead views language as a truly remarkable and quite fortunate evolution. Valuable purposes are met through its use that could not be met otherwise. Nonetheless, the origin and development of language has been largely directed
toward meeting practical ends. Language is not ideally suited for theoretical purposes. The language of predicatable subjects and passive objects is useful for survival and aesthetic satisfaction, but this language cannot speak the final word in metaphysics and cosmology.

Language arose with a dominating reference to an immediate situation. Whether it was signal or expression, above all things it was this reaction to that situation in this environment. (MT, p. 38. The italics are in the original.)

Thus, language, if it is to rise to the highest level of understanding and expression, must transcend the particularity in which it is grounded. Consequently, we develop philosophy and poetry which must appeal to "vivid feeling of what lies beyond words" (MT, pp. 5; 174 and passim).

Whitehead consistently rejects the criteria of clarity and distinctness as the standards for the truth and rightness of concepts. Serious errors derive from exclusively focusing upon the clearest and most distinct features of our conscious experience. Whitehead develops some cogent examples of how our most clear (and presumably most adequate) abstractions shade off into monumental vagaries. In Whitehead's understanding of abstractions, our most "simple" and direct concepts shade off into a vast penumbra of unclear relations, parameters and specifications. Whitehead even attempts to dissolve the crystal clarity of staple abstractions such as "Caesar" and "one and one makes two" (PR, pp. 195-199).

Whitehead's basically concludes that high gauge thought can never completely transcend poetry and myth. He agrees with Plato that

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3Cf. Plato, Seventh Letter 342-343; Plato Cratylus 438. The similarity of these passages to Whitehead's outlook and procedure was called to my attention by Ellis Sandoz.
"the deeper truths must be adumbrated by myths" (MT, p. 10). But this does not mean that just any myth will do. All of our ideas and formulae must be tested by the crucible of reason and experience.

Cosmology

Whitehead's approach to philosophy involves the view that speculation should culminate in a "cosmology." Indeed, his magnum opus, Process and Reality is subtitled An Essay in Cosmology. The obvious question is: What is cosmology? Elsewhere, Whitehead defines cosmology as

the effort to frame a scheme of the general character of the present stage of the universe. The cosmological scheme should present the genus, for which the special schemes of the sciences are the species. (FR, p. 76)

At least two questions seem natural: Why is there emphasis on "the present stage of the universe"? And why is cosmology presumed to be more comprehensive than "the special schemes of the sciences"?

The answer to the first question will be clarified at length in the sections on "natural law" in the next chapter, but a preliminary answer can be given by distinguishing "cosmology" from "metaphysics."

From the various formulations of the meaning of metaphysics in Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne has abstracted what I consider to be a fair summary statement. "By 'metaphysics' I mean the study of necessary, eternal, completely universal aspects of reality." He counterposes metaphysics to cosmology which is defined as "the attempt, combining metaphysics and scientific knowledge, to discern the large, comparatively universal

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features of nature as now constituted." On several occasions Hartshorne illustrates the distinction by noting that it is a metaphysical truth that there must be a "world." The character of this world is explicable in terms of features that may not apply to any world that may have or may yet exist. Thus, Whitehead's philosophy is concerned primarily with describing the features of the present "cosmic epoch" which "is dominated by a society of electromagnetic occasions" (PR, p. 98). The "nature" of these "electromagnetic occasions" constitutes the center of the account in Chapter Four. At this point, suffice it to note that the distinction between "metaphysics" and "cosmology" is not always clear. For instance, the fact that there is now a plurality of "actual entities" may or may not imply that there always was and always will be a plurality. Whitehead would insist on the necessity of there being a plurality. The interesting question centers around the presence of these entities in the "world" we happen to experience.

The second question can be answered with reference to the requirement that a cosmological scheme be logical, coherent, applicable and adequate. A scheme of the special sciences which ignores evidence of experience cannot be adequate. And if its assumptions contradict one another, it is neither logical nor coherent. The banishment of "mentality" from certain scientific schemes falls on the count of adequacy. For instance, an adequate cosmology, in Whitehead's view, would not ignore the common experiences which may be, in some sense, denoted as "mental." Nor should cosmology fall into the trap of incoherence by positing a radically disjointed mind-body dualism. Every element of experience must receive its

\[5\text{Ibid.}\]
proper notice, and the togetherness of experience must not be under-
mined.

In formulating his cosmology, Whitehead found himself at odds
with many significant philosophical doctrines. Whitehead provides us
with a handy "list of prevalent habits of thought, which are repudiated,
insofar as concerns their influence on philosophy" (PR, p. xiii). The
list will derive greater clarity as the exposition proceeds, but it can
be seen readily that Whitehead's critical eye ranges wide--from Aristotle
to positivism and beyond. The list includes:

(i) The distrust of speculative philosophy.
(ii) The trust in language as an adequate expression of
    propositions.
(iii) The mode of philosophical thought which implies,
     and is implied by the faculty-psychology.
(iv) The subject-predicate form of expression.
(v) The sensationalist doctrine of perception.
(vi) The doctrine of vacuous actuality.
(vii) The Kantian doctrine of the objective world as a
      theoretical construct from subjective experience.
(viii) Arbitrary deductions in ex absurdo arguments.
(ix) Belief that logical inconsistencies can indicate
     anything else than some antecedent errors.
     (PR, p. xiii)

Whitehead indicates that the great culprit in promoting these "myths"
was nineteenth-century philosophy, but the myths have surfaced throughout
the history of western philosophy. Whitehead's sharp criticisms of impor-
tant philosophical doctrines does not place him in opposition to western
philosophy. His philosophy, no less than other western philosophies, can
be properly construed as a "footnote to Plato." Whitehead attempts to
take those, often unconscious, elements of the western tradition which
he feels can be profitably retained to develop his own synthesis--perhaps
the most magnificent synthesis the twentieth-century has seen or will see.
Whitehead and Classical Speculation

The preceding comments should serve to illustrate the degree to which Whitehead shares in the classical quest for comprehensive understanding. Further indication is provided by Whitehead's remarks on the Greeks (referring primarily to Plato and Aristotle).

In the first place, they were unboundedly curious. They probed into everything, questioned everything, and sought to understand everything. This is merely to say that they were speculative to a superlative degree. In the second place, they were rigidly systematic both in their aim at clear definition and at logical consistency. In fact, they invented logic in order to be consistent. Thirdly, they were omnivorous in their interests—natural science, ethics, mathematics, political philosophy, metaphysics, theology, aesthetics, and all alike attracted their curiosity. Nor did they keep these subjects rigidly apart. They very deliberately strove to combine them into one coherent system of ideas. Fourthly, they sought truths of the highest generality. Also, in seeking these truths, they paid attention to the whole body of their varied interests. Fifthly, they were men with active practical interests. (FR, pp. 82-83)

This passage serves as an admirable summary of Whitehead's understanding of Greek philosophy, his conception of the mission of philosophy and his understanding of his own life's work. Whitehead consciously sought to pursue a mode of thought he felt had disappeared. With the triumph of Newtonian materialism in the sciences, there resulted a division between "natural science," concerned with "matter," and "moral science," concerned with "mind." Consequently, "the whole conception of philosophy as concerned with the discipline of speculative Reason, to which nothing is alien, has vanished" (FR, pp. 50-51; cf. SMW, p. 55). Whitehead took it as his task to preserve this lost mode of philosophical discourse.

The reference to Newtonian materialism points to an issue requiring further elaboration: the role of cosmology in classical philosophical speculation. In Whitehead's view, cosmology is an integral part of classical philosophy. In his comments on Plato and Aristotle, he notes
that speculative Reason "seeks to build a cosmology expressing the general nature of the world as disclosed in human interests" (FR, pp. 85). Cosmology is the "culmination" of a philosophy which expresses "universality" of interests (FR, pp. 84-86). Whitehead stresses metaphysical and cosmological speculation as the indispensible context for other philosophical inquiries. For instance, he urges that our controversies on sociological theory are superficial "apart from some more fundamental determination of what we are talking about" (SMW, p. 39). Context is the key for Whitehead. Politics, like cosmology, is an integral, not an incidental, concern for philosophy. Plato does not decide to put aside his philosophical quest in order to write a few lines on politics; political questions arise naturally in the search for the whole.

Whitehead's views on the relevance of cosmology are paralleled and clarified in some comments by Leo Strauss. Strauss attempts to address the charge that classical political philosophy is "bound up with an antiquated cosmology." He replies that classical philosophy was originated in a "knowledge of the elusive character of the truth, of the whole." A philosophy that strives diligently to discover "what is human in man" will be open to "the fundamental and permanent problems."

For to articulate the situation of man means to articulate man's openness to the whole. This understanding of the situation of man which includes, then, the quest for cosmology rather than a solution to the cosmological problem, was the foundation of classical political philosophy.

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
9 Ibid., p. 39.
Strauss and Whitehead agree that classical philosophy concerns all the uniquely philosophical questions such as cosmology, political philosophy and philosophical anthropology. These questions are bound together in a singular quest for the whole. Why they are united remains to be intimated. Whitehead does not provide a summary argument for linking cosmology with political philosophy and philosophical anthropology. Indeed, the postulate of connectedness is assumed as an article of faith. But the following considerations seem to me to reflect his general outlook.

Recall the references to "possibility" in the discussion of Sheldon Wolin in Chapter Two. If politics concerns possibility, some attention to cosmological questions seems inevitable. The substance of politics is human action, and human action is limited by and occurs in the context of "the world." How one understands the world will affect one's judgment of political possibilities. Rival conceptions of the world amount to rival conceptions of man. As R. L. Franklin contends, our views on the determinism/free will debate invariably reflect our assessment of the nature of man and his possibilities. Our deepest hopes derive from our understanding of the world in which we live. If politics is "the art of the possible," some sort of cosmological judgment will enter into our consideration of politics at some point.

Whitehead, as we have seen, extends these considerations to cover our expectations concerning philosophy itself. Unqualified satisfaction

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with the finality of a certain cosmological scheme, such as that of Newton, dampens the quest for the mysterious whole. The self-understanding of the philosopher is transformed. In Whitehead's view, the uncritical acceptance of the Newtonian cosmology resulted in an unwarranted elevation of the dogmatic fallacy in modern philosophy.

In any event, Whitehead's approach to philosophy precludes the rigid separation of issues, and cosmology stands at the center of his speculation. Thus, an evaluation of his contribution to moral and political philosophy entails an understanding of his cosmological scheme.

Summary and Prospect

This chapter has attempted to outline Whitehead's approach to philosophy, stressing the similarity of his inquiry to the classical enterprise. Whitehead's philosophical method was illustrated by discussing the role of reason in philosophical speculation, the problem of philosophical systems, the criticism of abstractions and the place of cosmology in philosophical interpretation. The affinity of Whitehead's approach to that of the classics can be summarized by reviewing Whitehead's characterization of the Greeks. He says that they were

1) "unboundedly curious" or "speculative to a superlative degree";
2) "rigidly systematic";
3) "omnivorous in their interests";
4) in pursuit of "truths of the highest generality"; and
5) "men with active practical interests."

This constitutes both an interpretation of classical philosophy and a statement of purpose for Whitehead's work. Characteristic number three, in particular, requires further discussion. It remains to be considered how "omnivorous" was Whitehead's concern with the questions of ethics
and political philosophy— a prominent concern for Chapter Five.

However, Whitehead's contention that the various concerns of philosophy cannot be kept rigidly apart (for him or for classical philosophy) is a key element in his thought of which we should not lose sight. In his view, the natural context for political philosophy is philosophy, with philosophy understood as a search for comprehensive understanding.

This chapter has stressed the foundation for Whitehead's quest for comprehensiveness. The following chapter attempts an overview of the medium whereby he conducts his search—his cosmology. The chapter will provide essential background for the ethical and political issues discussed later.
CHAPTER IV

WHITEHEAD'S COSMOLOGY

Does the cosmic space we dissolve into taste of us then? Do the angels really only catch up what is theirs, what has streamed from them, or at times, as though through an oversight, is our existence in it as well?

Rilke

What is a man in the infinite?

Pascal

Introduction

The difficulties in "summarizing" Whitehead's cosmological scheme already have been noted. Nevertheless, the centrality of cosmology to his philosophy dictates an overview of his scheme. A rough and ready account of key elements of Whitehead's theory can serve to introduce the context and indispensable background for his moral and political concerns. This is the intent and the apologia for what follows. The purpose of the account is to provide a précis illustrating the main outlines of the vision and the connexity of its constituent elements.

The overview is divided into two parts. The first part renders a brief summary of Whitehead's interpretive scheme. The second part attempts to expand and clarify the summary by discussing an issue crucial to Whitehead's thought—the uniformity of nature. By focusing on this issue, an additional advantage will accrue. The discussion should
reveal Whitehead's unique slant on an issue perennially debated among political thinkers.

Whitehead's Cosmological Scheme

As noted, Whitehead stakes his theoretical effort on a faith in "Reason." Consequently, his cosmological scheme should flow consistently from his rational faith. Reason must begin its appeal somewhere. The ground for reasonable judgments Whitehead finds in a principle he attributes to Aristotle. He dubs it "the ontological principle" which requires that "reasons" be given with reference to "actual entities." "Actual entities are the only reasons; so that to search for a reason is to search for one or more actual entities" (PR, p. 24). Actual entities are the "logical subjects" for propositions, but they are more than that. They constitute the ground for "reality" the condition which allows abstractions such as "reality" to be made. The notion of an "actual entity" is traced to Aristotle who, according to Whitehead, formulated the general principle that "apart from things that are actual, there is nothing--nothing either in fact or in efficacy" (PR, p. 40). Aristotle was right, Whitehead thinks, in emphasizing the primacy of entities as the constitutive elements of reality; he was wrong in conceiving them as "primary substances" undergoing accidents. Actual entities are, in Whitehead's interpretation, properly construed as units of process which become, enjoy the world, achieve "satisfaction" and "perish." By perishing, actual entities become objects for other actual entities and form the basis for a never ending "creative advance" of the universe.

By conceiving the "world" as constituted by distinct moments of experience, Whitehead exhibits deep opposition to "materialism." His opposition is centered around his rejection of the notion of "vacuous
actuality" which he describes as "the notion of a res vera devoid of subjective immediacy" (PR, p. 29). Materialism combines the notion of vacuous entities with the Aristotelean notion of unchanging substances --bits of matter floating in time and space. The classic notions of Newtonian materialism have been partially supplanted by developments within contemporary physics.

What has vanished from the field of ultimate scientific conceptions is the notion of a vacuous material existence with passive endurance, with primary individual attributes, and with accidental adventures. Some features of the physical world can be expressed in that way. But the concept is useless as an ultimate notion in science, and in cosmology. (PR, p. 309)

Modern science conceives the world as composed of units of activity. Whitehead feels that cosmology can be advanced by conceiving these atomic units of becoming as experient. A natural misconception needs to be vitiated. Whitehead is contending that all the constituent units of "the world" are sentient; he is not contending that all the units are conscious. Every actual entity feels and perceives; not all actual entities think. "Consciousness" is confined to the higher phases of experience.

Whitehead's central cosmological vision is similar to that of William James. Whitehead quotes James' statement that "reality grows literally by buds or drops of perception" (PR, p. 68). Unlike James, Whitehead feels that this vision can be defended against charges of incoherency. James was bothered by the apparent applicability of Zeno's paradoxes to the vision of the world as successive and plural. Apparently, the growth of the buds or drops of perception implies change, and change seemingly requires an infinite chain of befores and afters. It would seem that each unit of becoming is divisible into a half unit which is itself divisible into a half unit and so on ad infinitum. To establish
a beginning requires traversing an intraversable series.

According to Whitehead, the problem is soluble. In order to understand his solution it will be necessary briefly to consider his "epochal theory of time." Basically, Whitehead attempts to develop what Justus Hartnack considers to be impossible—an abstractive theory of time.¹ The Newtonian notion of absolute time (and, for that matter, absolute space) is denied by Whitehead. Actual entities do not succeed one another "in" time; time is constituted by the succession of actual entities. In denying the reality of absolute time, Whitehead is led to accept relativity physics. His theory views time as an abstraction from the activity of actual entities, denying an absolute coordinate sequence along which "reality" flows. The theory accords with the ontological principle. The abstractions "time" and "space" are referent to actual entities and the perceptual relationships among them; they are not themselves actual entities (PR, pp. 68-69; 70-73; 113; 136-37).

Whitehead's refutation of Zeno involves a distinction between analytical divisibility and actual division. Each actual entity is divisible into a before and after. We can conceive its becoming in separable phases, allowing for analysis of its constitution. However, the actual entity is in fact undivided. The actual entity becomes and perishes, but it does not change. It is exactly what it is. Thus, no infinite regress applies to an actual entity. The "becoming" of an actual entity requires traversing an intraversable series.

entity or the "micro-cosmic" process is one undivided moment of experience. When the entity perishes; i.e., loses its "subjective immediacy," it becomes an "objectively immortal" object available for perception by other entities. It is what it is and nothing more. The entity does not change because change involves the progression from one state to another. The subjective immediacy or bare existence of an actual entity is confined to its moment of becoming.

"Change" refers to the "macro-cosmic" process. The perception of change involves the notion of self-identical enduring objects, e.g. horses, undergoing accidental variations. The perception is, in Whitehead's theory, a derivative abstraction. The experience of change derives from the "transmutation" of a plurality of data or objects into one object which is construed to be a single "essence" or "substance" undergoing variation. The abstraction is drawn from undivided entities that succeed one another. In actuality, the creative advance of the world simply involves arithmetic progression. Therefore, no infinite regress applies to change. This solution is allowable because "we cannot, in the absence of some additional premise, infer that every act of becoming must have an immediate predecessor" (PR, p. 69). This means that at least one actual entity, specifically God, can be conceived as becoming without reference to an antecedent actual entity. Consequently, no further "reason" is required to explain the macro-cosmic process.

2 "Objective immortality" refers to the availability of an actual entity for perception by other actual entities. Thus, when an actual entity "perishes" it does not cease to "exist." It is immortal because it can always be "prehended" (a term explained below) by other entities. It continues to exist, but it does not continue to perceive or feel. To cease to feel is what is meant by "perishing." PR, pp. 29-32.
involving the succession of actual entities. With his solution, Whitehead feels he has salvaged theoretical coherence and faithfulness to the obvious experience of change.

Once Zeno's objections are met the generic analysis of experience can resume with some hope of rational coherence. This leads straightway to a consideration of "perception." If reality consists of drops or buds of perception, an analysis of perception is required. Whitehead analyzes perceptual experience in terms of "prehensions." In coining the term "prehension," Whitehead follows the lead of Leibniz. Leibniz had coined the term "apperception" to designate the higher mode of knowledge by which Monads transcend mere "perception."

Whitehead rejects Leibniz' theories of consciousness and "representative perception" while adopting his procedure for producing technical terminology. If "apprehension" is assigned the meaning "thorough understanding," it can be contrasted with a different, more basic, mode of knowing—prehension. Whitehead relates the origins of his terminology:

On the Leibnizian model, I use the term 'prehension' for the general way in which the occasion of experience can include, as part of its own essence, another entity, whether another occasion of experience or an entity of another type. This term is devoid of suggestion either of consciousness or of representative perception. (AI, p. 234)

An actual entity prehends another entity by "feeling" that entity as an "object" or "datum." Such "feelings" may have a strictly objective tone of otherness or the datum may directly enter into the constitution of the subject by the vector transmission of "conformal feelings." Whitehead insists that entities may enter into the constitution of actual entities by this "vector" transmission of "feeling tones." Thus, Whitehead adds to the theory of vectors in physics a theory of feelings which refuses to separate the "physical" from the sentient.
Actual entities prehend two types of objects. First, they feel other actual entities which amounts to feeling feelings. Second, they prehend what are variously called conceptual objects, eternal objects or forms of definiteness. Eternal objects are basically Platonic forms and include such objects as "red," "one" and "triangle." These objects are non-actual, they have no reality apart from their "ingression" in an actual entity or grouping of actual entities.

Prehensions occur in accordance with "the principle of relativity" which states that "it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming'" (PR, p. 22). Rational theory requires that nothing be conceived as existing in disconnection from the rest of the universe. Real relations must be considered applicable to all constituent elements. Thus, "every item in its [an actual entity's] universe is involved in each concresence" (PR, p. 22). "Concresence" is the "growing together" of actual entities (AI, p. 236). Growing together requires real relatedness to explain "the solidarity of the universe."

Since the relatedness of the elements of the universe depends upon the act of prehending, the principle of relativity requires that all antecedent actualities be prehended by current actualities. Finite actual entities are imperfect mirrors of the universe.

The prehension of all antecedent actual entities is a requirement of the principle of relativity. The requirement can be met because prehensions are of two basic types: positive and negative (PR, p. 41). In negatively prehending an object, an actual entity "decides" to reject inclusion of an entity in its own constitution. This rejection is not necessarily conscious, but it is necessary. All possibilities are not simultaneously possible, i.e., compossible. A decision excludes
alternatives. Exclusion is not confined to excluding "evil" or unfavorable alternatives. Charles Hartshorne, following Whitehead's cue, explains the principle of exclusion succinctly.

There are incompossible values so that the notion of all possible value, fully actualized is contradictory . . . . Leibniz argued . . . that there can be contradiction only between positive and negative predicates, and perfections are wholly positive. But in truth (as Kant points out) there can be contradiction between equally positive predicates. Thus "red here now" contradicts "green here now."³

Negative prehensions assume a very real importance for Whitehead's scheme. The "decision" to exclude some possibility or feeling from inclusion in its constitution is important for an actual entity. It allows the entity to be what it is rather than indefinite potentiality.

Negative prehensions involve the perception of elements of the antecedent world at the lowest grade of intensity ("intensive relevance"). In a negative prehension, the relevance of a particular feeling for an actual entity is "negligible," approaching zero intensity. Negligible feelings form a vague, penumbral background for the activity of entities — feelings of a world "out there" which is not an integral part of the constitution of the entity (PR, pp. 23-24; 41-42; 220-21).

The other species of prehension, positive prehension, has a much higher grade of intensity. At the highest grade of intensity along the continuum there are feelings which form the basis for our standard abstractions concerning emotion—love, hatred, fear, envy, etc. Positive prehensions may translate as "aversions" or "adversions" (PR, pp. 247-48

and passim). The "conceptual valuation", or feelings toward other entities, forms the basis for the "grouping of occasions" to which I shall turn momentarily.

The analytic division of a positive feeling is summarized by Whitehead as follows.

A feeling—i.e., a positive prehension—is essentially a transition effecting a concresence. Its complex constitution is analysable into five factors which express what that transition consists of, and effects. The factors are: (i) the "subject" which feels, (ii) the "initial data" which are to be felt, (iii) the "elimination" in virtue of negative prehensions, (iv) the "objective datum" which is felt, (v) the "subjective form" which is how that subject feels the objective datum. (PR, p. 220. The italics are Whitehead's.)

The issues raised in this highly compressed description will receive a great deal of attention as the study proceeds. Nevertheless, some preliminary observations need to be made.

First, the analytic divisions Whitehead employs should not lead one to conclude that the generic description identifies separable "components" with an independent status—entity status, as it were—of their own. If for no other reason, Whitehead's refutation of Zeno presupposes an arithmetic minimum which precludes indefinite division in actuality. An actual entity is an undivided act of prehending and nothing else. The analytic divisions are necessary to describe the constitution of an activity in its relatedness, but there must be discrete units of activity not subject to infinite division.

Second, the term "subject," while necessary to indicate the numerical discreteness of isolable acts of enjoyment, is inadequate to express the relativity of experience. Thus, Whitehead invents a new analytic term to express the character of relationships among actual entities. Subjects, insofar as we are speaking of a specific acts of becoming as
self-enjoying, are properly described as subjects. But subjectivity is not confined to enjoyment. "Subjective form" is complemented by "subjective aim" or the "intention" of a subject toward the world—actual or potential. A subject not only enjoys the objects which are its world; it aims to become the object of other subjects. To express the intentional or teleological aspect of subjectivity, Whitehead coins the word "superject" (PR, pp. 221-22). Every actual entity is a "subject/superject"; it prehends objects and is prehended by subjects.

Thus, the transmission of feelings is not simply "conformal." By objectifying other entities, the actual entity receives them into its constitution. But the actual entity is causa sui. It determines the final form of its own constitution and adds to its inheritance, so to speak. There are genuine degrees of freedom in self constitution—men are more free than rocks—but in the final analysis Whitehead insists that all actual entities are "externally free and internally determined" (PR, p. 27). As will be demonstrated later, the assertion of freedom has ontological, epistemological and moral implications which contribute to the uniqueness of Whitehead's position.

Whitehead develops an "atomic theory of becoming," but the atoms which compose nature do not exist in splendid isolation. Whitehead calls

4 The requirement that entities be free to contribute to their constitution leads to some fascinating theoretical developments. The requirement for internal determination is one of the reasons Whitehead insists that actual entities cannot prehend contemporaries. The other reason involves rejection of the theory of absolute time. See AI, pp. 191-200; PR, pp. 61; 316-18.
his theory the "philosophy of organism." Relations among actual entities are "internal," and together, actual entities constitute the never completed "creative advance of the universe" which is the "whole" for which they are "parts." Reality is infinite, but the relations among actual entities—the organs of the infinite organism, as it were—are definite.

Actual entities group themselves into "societies" (PR, pp. 34; 89 and passim; AI, pp. 201-208). An actual entity belongs to a society to the extent that it shares the prehensions of other members of the society. When it feels the feelings of other members, it feels the "physical" world. But the transmission of feelings within a society along an historical route also gives rise to the prehension of "eternal objects." Both form and feeling are shared by the members of a society, and their togetherness is defined by their shared objects.

Whitehead's stunningly complex theory attempts to account for elements of experience that he feels are disjointed and incoherent in other theories. For instance, Whitehead is eager to avoid mind/body, mind/matter and mind/nature dualisms. He insists that each actual entity has a "physical pole" involving the prehension of actual entities and a "mental pole" involving the prehension of non-actual or conceptual entities. Non-actual entities are "eternal objects" which are variously described as "forms of definiteness," "pure potentials" and "forms of process."

To a great extent, Whitehead's theory of the "ingression" of eternal objects into groupings of occasions (societies) represents his peculiar slant on the traditional "problem of universals." In a letter to Charles Hartshorne, Whitehead asserts that "the simple minded way in
which traditional philosophy—e.g. Hume, Bradley, etc.—have treated
universals is the root of all evils. In his doctrine of eternal objects Whitehead seeks to avoid the assertion of an independent realm of subsistent universals—ruled out by the ontological principle—and also a radical nominalism which regards form as a subjective bias of an isolated observer.

An eternal object is "any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world" (PR, p. 44). Eternal objects are "Pure Potentials for the Specific Determination of Fact" (PR, p. 22). Red as a conceptual object, is red independent of its ingress into the temporal world and may be ingressed into a variety of contexts.

Whitehead sometimes refers to eternal objects as "Platonic forms," but he does not accept the notion of an eminent reality for a self-subsistent realm of pure forms. He holds with Aristotle in insisting upon the involvement of form in an actual world which is not reducible simply to forms. The ontological principle requires that everything must be somewhere, and "somewhere" means some actual entity. An eternal object has reality only when it is entertained (i.e., conceptually apprehended) by some actual entity.

To retain the definiteness that eternal objects lend to the process of the temporal world, it is necessary that not all potentials be entertained within a given society. It is also necessary that the eternal

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objects be available for ingression. Since eternal objects are what they are eternally, there can be no novel eternal objects. Consequently, God, functioning as "the principle of limitation,"prehends the plenum of eternal objects and sets the limits to the range of forms which may be entertained within a given society. Some freedom is possible in the selection of eternal objects by finite entities, but this freedom is limited to selection of those eternal objects that are available for prehension consequent to God's "initial aim."

The fundamental principle informing the doctrine of eternal objects insists upon form as ingredient to occasions and as a mode of relating them in "societies." Eternal objects cannot be construed in terms of simple location. (The "fallacy of simple location" is the centerpiece of Whitehead's critique in Science and the Modern World.) The "ingredience" of objects will vary as event structures and relations vary, but the eternal objects have an objective status. They are pure potentials which may be ingredient in a variety of contexts. "Red"--which is a "simple" eternal object, as opposed to "horse" which is a "complex" eternal object--may be ingredient to a variety of "societies," but it is always red and can be seen to be so by the method of comparison. However, pure potentials apart from ingestion have no "being," and their ingestion entails varieties of interrelationships and feeling tones.

What we normally think of as "objects" are mixtures of physical and conceptual prehensions. The results of these "abstractions" from feeling are useful simplifications of the reality we experience. The nature of these simplifications can be illustrated by recurrence to an example adapted from Whitehead (PR, pp. 195-96). When we think of "Caesar," we think of a man who crossed the Rubicon on a specific date. But the reality to which
the abstraction "Caesar" refers is far more complex. The range of eternal objects which constitute the conceptual object known as "Caesar" are as much "here" as they were "there." The relevance of the eternal objects and physical feelings properly associated with the abstraction extend well beyond the immediate feelings involved in crossing the Rubicon. The concept and the feelings extend through a play by Shakespeare and into a course on Roman history. The range of relevant feelings concerning Caesar is virtually infinite. Thus, the "boundaries" separating one society from another are difficult to identify.

In and of themselves, conceptual and physical feelings can brook no error. Error arises from "hybrid" prehensions or the "mixed mode of perception." Interestingly enough, Whitehead links the capacity for error to the general capacity to engender novelty and, in turn, links novelty to "creativity" which he dubs "the ultimate," i.e., the most basic metaphysical abstraction one can make about "reality" (PR, pp. 7; 20; 21; 342). This leads to a philosophical denigration of the importance of "truth" and also poses some serious questions concerning the basis for an ethic of responsibility. Whitehead's ethical position will be discussed later.

The issue of "truth" deserves immediate treatment.

Whitehead's theory of truth involves a distinction between "judgments" and "propositions." A judgment is, roughly, the way an actual entity entertains a proposition. A proposition is a physical datum (or more appropriately, set of data) prehended by a group of actual entities.

A proposition, in abstraction from any particular actual entity which may be realizing it in feeling, is a manner of germaneness of a certain set of eternal objects to a certain set of actual entities. (PR, p. 188)

A proposition is true to the extent that it achieves "correspondence."
It exhibits a "predicative pattern" which has an indicative function of pointing to a particular location. The actual entities that are presumed to inhabit that location are the "logical subjects" for the proposition. Generally, a proposition is true if it indicates a set of actual entities in a location exhibiting relationships to a set of eternal objects in accordance with the predicative pattern (consisting of the eternal objects prehended by the proposition) indicated by the proposition. The actual entities which entertain the proposition may judge it to be correct, or incorrect, or judgment may be suspended.  

A proposition does not have to be consciously entertained, nor does it have to be verbally expressed. When verbally expressed, propositions are of a rather ordinary sort: The broom is brown; Jones is in town; I am rich. Very few propositions are unqualifiedly true, but the fact that a proposition is false does not lessen its importance. Donald Sherburne provides an excellent illustration of this point.

Many people in a given town may be aware of the existence of an empty lot in the center of town, but only one enterprising businessman may positively prehend the proposition indicated by the words restaurant on that corner. At the moment he first prehends the proposition it is false. But this is not the important fact about the proposition. As a lure for feeling the proposition may lead the businessman to buy the

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6 Whitehead holds to different standards of "truth" depending upon whether we are talking about truth in propositions or truth in judgments. "We shall say that a proposition can be true or false, and that a judgment can be correct, or incorrect, or suspended. With this distinction we see that there is a 'correspondence' theory of the truth and falsehood of propositions and a 'coherence' theory of the correctness, incorrectness, and suspension of judgments." PR, p. 191. (The italics are in the original.)
lot and build the restaurant. This is the important function of propositions; they pave the way for the advance into novelty.

Sherburne's example illustrates two important points. First, the significance of a proposition extends indefinitely with reference to actual entities. As Whitehead observes, "the proposition itself awaits its logical subjects" (PR, p. 188). Second, propositions are "lures for feelings" and, therefore, their significance extends well beyond their truth or falsity. Whitehead states the moral bluntly:

It is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true. This statement is almost a tautology. For the energy of operation of a proposition in an occasion of experience is its interest, and is its importance. But of course a true proposition is more apt to be interesting than a false one. Also action in accordance with the emotional lure of a proposition is more apt to be successful if the proposition be true. (AI, p. 244)

The last two sentences of the quotation should probably be amended to read "largely true," for Whitehead's analysis leads to the inevitable conclusion that there are very few wholly true propositions. Nevertheless, the central insight is relatively clear—we cannot divorce our entertainment of propositions from their creative significance.

Propositions, as lures for feeling, contribute to the creative advance of the world; they lead to inclusions and exclusions. "Prehension" is not, as in some theories of "perception," merely a passive affair. The actual entity not only perceives its "world"; it helps to create the world that is there to be perceived. Whitehead's active epistemology leads to the unique view of "nature" discussed in the following section and entails

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significant moral consequences which will be considered in the next two chapters.

One further issue requires brief elaboration in order to round out the overview and to forestall misconceptions of Whitehead’s work. The notion that the "world" is composed of experiencing subjects easily could be misinterpreted to mean that the world consists of "minds." In Whitehead’s view, this confuses "consciousness," which is the crowning aspect of experience, with experience itself. Robert C. Whittemore correctly summarizes Whitehead’s basic view of reality when he remarks that, for Whitehead, "EXPERIENCE IS ALL."8 But this does not mean that "consciousness is all." Whitehead aphoristically captures the essence of his theory of consciousness: "The principle that I am adopting is that consciousness presupposes experience and not experience consciousness" (PR, p. 53). Much experience is simply "received" or "given." We feel the feelings that come to us with no addition. Consciousness belongs to the higher phases of experience and essentially involves the capacity to make affirmative and negative judgments. "Consciousness is how we feel the affirmation-negation contrast" (PR, p. 243). This involves holding diverse feelings (various physical and conceptual feelings) together and treating a multiplicity as if it were a unity which may be compared and contrasted with another unity. Logically, conscious judgments entail the capacity to assert of X (a multiplicity of data) that it is Y (a substantial unity) which is not Z (a different unity). Furthermore, conscious judgments may be referent to "possibility," i.e. Y is possible in situation N, but it is not

Some examples of conscious judgments may help to clarify the doctrine. "My house is red. It is not green. If I get a raise, I can paint it green." Or, "The Soviet System is Communist. If we are to preserve freedom, we must be willing to fight the red menace." These are examples of high grade abstractions consciously entertained. Insofar as they refer to enduring objects undergoing accidental changes, they are inaccurate. But they do reflect the ingress of eternal objects and the transmission of physical feelings as they are transmuted into a feeling of unity comparable with other such feelings. The comparisons consciously made only belong to higher "organisms." Men decide to build red or green houses or to vote for socialist candidates; rocks do not.

"Experience" is the key to Whitehead's thought, but experience is not, for Whitehead, confined to the passive contemplation of dead matter in motion or the eternally completed Idea in the mind of God. The world is felt as an active presence, a reality that is as much a part of us as we are a part of it. The "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" involves treating derivative abstractions as if they were concrete entities (PR, pp. 7; 18; 93; 94; SMW, pp. 51-60). What is concrete is the world we feel; everything else we know is abstracted from feelings. Whitehead seeks to restore to thought respect for the richness, variety and awesomeness of experience. For Whitehead, the "world" is known as the range of feelings it includes. To forget our feelings is to forget everything.

The Uniformity of Nature

In his essay on uniformity and contingency, Whitehead identifies an issue which animates much of his philosophy of organism. He asks
whether "on the ground of experience, we can deduce any systematic uniformity, extending throughout any types of entities or throughout the relations between [sic] them" (ESP, p. 100). The postulate of connectedness is a linchpin for Whitehead's theory; consequently, a demonstration that there are no uniform connections discoverable within experience would be devastating for his theory. Whitehead indicates that a discussion of uniformity and contingency must begin with Hume. Hume provides the "classic locus" for the denial of uniformity in experience; therefore, his writings are submitted to substantial critical attention (ESP, p. 100; PR, pp. 130-144).

Hume denied that experience could reveal causal connection. If we rely on the perceptions of the senses—which, for Hume, is the basis for all experience—no justification for asserting the reality of causes and effects can be found. What the senses reveal are distinct impressions "constantly conjoined." Belief in causality is a product of "custom" (the "habit" of observing "exactly similar" cases constantly conjoined). Hume's doctrine depends on the conviction that sense impressions are separate and that all relations are external. Thus, he concludes with remarkable confidence that "the effect is totally different from the cause and consequently can never be discovered in it." He does not contend that belief in causes is without value. Science and common life are presumed to depend upon asserting the existence of causes. Nevertheless, reasoning upon experience cannot reveal their existence, and Hume explains their assertion with rather vague appeals

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11 Ibid., p. 50.
The relevance of Hume's critique is not confined to the issue of causality. His skeptical conclusions, if accepted, damage any thesis asserting the uniformity of nature. Karl Popper has argued that Hume's denial of causation entails the denial of reliable induction.

Hume's logical problem of induction is the problem of whether we are entitled to infer unobserved cases from observed cases; or 'unknown' (unaccepted) statements from 'known' (accepted) statements, however many. Hume's answer to the problem is clearly negative; and as he points out, it remains negative even if our inference is merely to the probability of a connexion that has not been observed rather than to its necessity.12

Popper's conclusion is based on two principles upon which Hume firmly insisted. Popper cites a characteristic passage in which the principles are asserted.

Let men be once fully persuaded of these two principles,
That there is nothing in any object, consider'd in itself,
which can afford us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it; and, That even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience.13

Popper contends that these premises lend no assurance that our inductions will be reliable, but the implications are perhaps even more radical. Whitehead is convinced that Hume's principles provide no basis for asserting any connectedness within experience. Inference concerning past states is no more permissible, on Hume's theory, than induction.


13 Ibid., pp. 88-89. The italics are Popper's.
Whitehead believes that Santayana has drawn the proper inference from Hume's doctrines; the doctrines require assent to the "solipsism of the present moment" (PR, pp. 48-49; 81). Santayana's phrase means that valid assertions, on Humean principles, may be made only concerning perceptibles perceived at a single moment. No assertions are legitimate that refer to presumed perceptibles that may be or have been perceived. According to Santayana, this results from Hume's "attempt to conceive experience divorced from its physical ground and from its natural objects, as a dream going on in vacuo." Whitehead is in firm agreement with this conclusion.

From Whitehead's point of view, accepting Hume's theory of experience is tantamount to denying a range of concepts commonly thought to belong to the province of science. Notions such as physical "natural laws," "causation," "induction" and "prediction" collapse under the weight of Hume's critical assault.

Whitehead attempts to demonstrate that Hume's conclusions are parasitic on principles overtly denied. For instance, Hume repeatedly appeals to memory in establishing his theses when, on principle, the existence of past states cannot be validated. The sensa of a past state cannot be inferred because an object allows no inference beyond itself, and they cannot be sensed because they are not present to the senses. A sensa that is not sensed can tell no tales, and there is no warrant for believing in "that" sensa while attending "this" sensa.

In any event, Whitehead is convinced that Hume's tacit appeals are more illuminating than his overt doctrines. Indeed, Whitehead appeals

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to Hume's authority in testifying to the vague, penumbral elements of reality which receive insufficient critical attention. Whitehead generally insists that the best method for reading modern philosophy is to look to those elements of a philosophers' writings not chosen for explicit defense. The philosophy of organism is based on these elements (PR, pp. xi-xii).

Hume's authority is not accepted on all questions. Like many other modern philosophers, Hume accepts the truth and necessity of the cosmology of scientific materialism. Furthermore, he follows the lead of Locke in grounding his philosophy on an implied dualism between the subject who entertains sense data and the object that produces them. Whitehead rejects both scientific materialism and psycho-physical dualism, and his rejection of these doctrines significantly clarifies the background of his theory.

Thomas N. Hart correctly contends that much of Whitehead's thought is directed toward a "critique of scientific materialism." Whitehead has concisely identified the major elements of the cosmology against which he contends. He describes it as

the fixed scientific cosmology which presupposes the ultimate fact of an irreducible brute matter, or material spread through space in a flux of configurations. In itself such a material is senseless, valueless, purposeless. It does just what it does do, following a fixed routine imposed by external relations which do not spring from the nature of its being. (SMW, p. 17)

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Whitehead notes that the Newtonian cosmology is valuable, indeed indispensible, within a limited range of observations, but it "breaks down at once" when applied outside its proper range. The scheme cannot account for "more subtle employment of our senses, or . . . the request of meanings and for coherence of thoughts" (SMW, p. 17).

Materialism can be infused into a variety of philosophical contexts. It can be combined with a metaphysical dualism, as in Descartes, or it can be asserted on postulational grounds, e.g., as a "requirement of science." Regardless of the context, Whitehead is convinced that its acceptance leads to philosophical incoherency and inadequacy. The most elemental form of philosophic materialism involves the total acceptance of the cosmology. Matter in motion is all, and nothing more can be found.

From Whitehead's point of view, the problem with straightforward metaphysical materialism is that something more than matter in motion can be found. What can be found is experience itself. Materialism involves a grand abstraction from our feelings of the world. In the process, the experiences from which the abstraction was made are denied.

Whitehead is no more inclined to accept psycho-physical dualism. Dualism receives its classical statement and defense in the writings of Rene Descartes. He distinguishes two kinds of "substance"—extended substance and thinking substance. The "laws" governing extended substance are no less applicable than in metaphysical materialists such as Hobbes. Bodies are construed to behave like machines, and the Creator's will is immutably imprinted on extended substance. From Whitehead's perspective, a gain is made in recognizing an entity, thinking substance, who can observe the laws of motion; experience is restored to
reality. Nevertheless, Whitehead and other critics contend that Descartes fails to maintain the coherence between the two realms of being. How can an unextended, immaterial substance interact with a totally different sort of substance?

More importantly, Whitehead is convinced that dualism denies man's place in nature. Dualism results in an unwarranted "bifurcation of nature." Whitehead expresses his concern forcefully:

What I am essentially protesting against is the bifurcation of nature into two systems of reality, which, insofar as they are real, are real in different senses. One reality would be the entities such as electrons which are the study of speculative physics. This would be the reality which is there for knowledge; although on this theory it is never known. For what is known is the other sort of reality, which is the by play of the mind. Thus, there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream. (CN, p. 30)

In Descartes' interpretation the unity of reality is guaranteed by God. Whitehead does not accept the reliance upon God's goodness and veracity as surety for the coherence of reality. He feels that both Descartes and Leibniz introduce God as an ad hoc principle to salvage coherence. This deus ex machina Whitehead rejects.

The Leibnizian solution [windowless monads] can mitigate the illusoriness [of the phenomenal world] only by recourse to a pious dependence upon God. This principle was invoked by Descartes and by Leibniz, in order to help out their epistemology. It is a device very repugnant to a consistent rationality. The very possibility of knowledge should not be an accident of God's goodness; it should depend upon the interwoven nature of things. After all God's knowledge has equally to be explained. (PR, p. 190)

In accordance with his commitment to rationality, Whitehead makes a concerted effort to avoid the "bifurcation of nature." Nature must be conceived as a piece. Whitehead adopts a pluralist scheme which posits intrinsic relations among a variety of entities not fundamentally different in kind. His specific doctrines concerning natural law,
causation, induction and prediction are subjected to the general re­
requirement that they conform to experience without denying the intelli­
gible unity of nature.

Whitehead's attempt to understand the uniformity of nature
naturally leads to consideration of the laws of nature. Many of his
observations on "natural law" were occasioned less by philosophical
controversies per se than by developments in scientific cosmology.
In his dialogues with Lucien Price, he tells of the effects of the
breakdown in the Newtonian cosmology on his philosophical development.

There is not a single concept of the Newtonian physics
which was taught as a whole truth, that has not now been
displaced. The Newtonian ideas are still useful, as useful
as they ever were, but they are no longer true in the
sense in which I was taught that they were true. This experi­
ence has profoundly affected my thinking. To have supposed
you had certitude once, and certitude about the solidest­
looking thing in the universe, and then to have had it blow
up on your hands into inconceivable infinities has affected
everything else in the universe for me. (Dial, p. 238)

Among the abandoned certainties that accompanied the Newtonian cosmol­
ogy was the belief in immutable laws of nature. The belief permeated
all departments of thought in the nineteenth century. Whitehead believes
that the nineteenth century faith in Deistic laws of nature is a dispen­
sable "half-truth." "People make the mistake of talking about 'natural
laws.' There are no natural laws. There are only temporary habits of
nature" (Dial, p. 367). Here, in a highly compressed and rather intemper­
ate form, we have Whitehead's epochal theory of natural law.

Whitehead is convinced of the importance of belief in law for the
civilization of thought.

The notion of Law, that is to say, of some measure of regular­
ity or of persistence or of recurrence, is an essential ele­
ment in the urge towards technology, methodology, scholarship
and speculation. Apart from a certain smoothness in the nature of things, there can be no knowledge, no useful method, no intelligent purpose. Lacking an element of Law, there remains a mere welter of details with no foothold for comparison with any other such welter, in the past, in the future, or circumambient in the present. (AI, p. 109)

Nevertheless, there are several versions of the role of Law in human understanding, and these seemingly incompatible alternatives need to receive some mediation. Whitehead identifies four doctrines of natural law that have achieved some currency at one time or another in the history of western thought. The four schools of thought he terms the school of immanence, the school of imposition, the positivist school of observation and the school of conventional interpretation. He indicates that all four schools have advantages, and he attempts a synthesis of the theories purging them of incompatibilities.

The school of immanence, which is closest to Whitehead's theory, holds that "the order of nature expresses the characters of the real things which jointly compose the existences to be found in nature" (AI, pp. 111-112). Whitehead draws several implications from the doctrine. First, the relations that hold in an immanent system of laws are "internal." Relations that inhere are found within the system of existences and follow from their specific characters. Second, if the things that are found within the system of nature change, the laws of nature change too. There are other implications as well, but these can be profitably reserved for discussion later. The problem with the immanent theory is that it provides no guarantee for the persistence of regularities. To avoid chaos a "principle of limitation" and "principle of concretion" (God) is required.

The doctrine of imposed law "adopts the alternative metaphysical
doctrine of External Relations between the existences which are the ultimate constituents of nature" (AI, p. 113). Laws are not held to follow from the character of activity of existences, but are seen to be imposed by a superior force transcendent to the existences composing nature. Whitehead contends, as Newton readily admitted, that the doctrine of imposed law entails a commitment to Deism. Either a transcendent force (God) guarantees the immutable workings of imposed laws or there can be no guarantee for the continuation of observed regularities. The Deist is open, in Whitehead's view, to the charge of deus ex machina in so far as the God who imposes Law is radically different in kind from the creature who receives His commands. Law is strictly external to the system of nature.

The advantage of the doctrine of imposition lies in its pragmatic success; its assumptions have guided the greatest scientific advances in the history of mankind. Its main disadvantage involves the necessity to explain away numerous details. "These grand regularities are shot through and through with details apparently capricious" (AI, p. 114). Conversely, the doctrine of immanence has had less success as a presupposition of scientific research, but it has interpretive advantages which lead Whitehead to reconsider Plato's cosmology, seeking modifications of it. "The Platonic 'persuasion' is required" (AI, p. 115).

The positivist school of observation and the School of conventional interpretation share common features. According to Whitehead, the positivists seek to reduce statements about the "smoothness in the nature of things" to observed regularities, avoiding speculative conclusions beyond data presented for observation. Conventionalists attempt to reduce theories to the status of customary ways of looking at the world. The
objective validity of scientific statements, on this view, is accidental if there is any validity at all. According to Whitehead, positivism derives its strength from the fact that the range of potential and actual observations is limited. Regularities which could be observed outside our range of observation—construed spatially or temporally—may differ from those actually observed. The strength of conventionalism derives from the fact that variant theoretical and observational tools may be "successfully" applied to the interpretation of nature—e.g. various Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries.

The weakness of positivism lies in its restriction of the speculative impulse. Whitehead cites the example of the discovery of a new planet by the Lowell Observatory in Arizona. He notes that the use of positivist criteria, requiring that we stick to observed regularities, would have precluded the discovery. Simple mathematical formulae would have effectively described the deviations in the orbits of Uranus and Neptune, but the theoretical commitments of the astronomers prevented adoption of this strategy. At all stages the commitment was speculative.

The new explanation is now involved in a speculative extension of a welter of physical laws, concerning telescopes, light, and photography, laws which merely claim to register observed facts. It is involved in the speculative application of such laws to particular circumstances within the observatories, for which circumstances these laws are not concurrently verified. The result of this maze of speculative extensions is to connect the deviations of Uranus and Neptune with the dots on the photographic plates. (AI, pp. 127-28)

Additionally, positivism suffers from an inability to claim a likelihood for the recurrence of regularities or to account for a recurrence when it happens. Whitehead relates the positivist doctrine to Hume. Hume's
belief that we ground our explanations upon the expectation that recurrences in the past will recur in the future is open to objection. "At this stage Hotspur's question arises in our mind. 'But will they come when you do call for them?" (AI, p. 125). The positivist attempt to purge thought of speculative and metaphysical commitments often encourages attention to the least stable regularities or reliance upon metaphysical presuppositions that are dogmatically or covertly held. Positivist thought tends to "canalize thought and observation within predetermined limits, based upon inadequate metaphysical assumptions dogmatically assumed" (AI, p. 118).

The weakness of conventionalism involves its confusion between a variety of theoretical approaches and an infinity of theoretical approaches. Whitehead notes that the various geometries employ discrepant definitions of distance and congruence, but he contends that the geometries are abstracted from and applied to a perceptual background that is in some respects invariant.

It is fairly obvious that, apart from minor inaccuracies of perception, we do all in fact adopt the same system. It is a fact of nature that a distance of thirty miles is a long walk for anyone. There is no convention about that. Thus the appeal of geometry can be dismissed when we are discussing the question of the conventionality of the Laws of Nature. (AI, p. 137)

Whitehead admits that an indefinite number of purely abstract sciences may be applied to nature but argues that this should not be twisted to imply that any laws we might conceive apply. Basically, the conventionalist argument trades on the obvious and trivial fact that we can direct our attention to a variety of selected facts (AI, pp. 136-39).

Whitehead seeks to retain the advantages of the various theories of natural law while avoiding the pitfalls associated with them. He
describes his theory as an "epochal" theory of natural law. On the whole, he accepts the implications of the immanent theory, though he does make some modifications. Therefore, the implications of the theory need to be drawn out.

The implication, mentioned earlier, that laws may change is accepted. The large scale aggregate tendencies of a given epoch need not be construed as metaphysically binding for all epochs. Whitehead also accepts the implication that relations are internal, but he does not view external and internal relations as strictly dichotomous.

Laws follow from the activity of actual entities, but God is the persuasive agent who co-ordinates those activities. God is the "principle of limitation" and the "principle of concretion." Without God's persuasion all potentials (eternal objects) would be possible (ingressed or ingressible) in any context. Chaos would result. Thus God establishes the range of potentials ingressible into a social nexus without preventing genuine decisions on the part of the lesser actual entities. As Whitehead puts it,

transcendent decision includes God's decision. He is the actual entity in virtue of which the entire multiplicity of eternal objects obtains its graded relevance to each stage of concrescence. Apart from God, there can be no relevant novelty. Whatever arises in actual entities from God's decision arises first conceptually, and is transmuted into the physical world. (PR, p. 164)

In Whitehead's view, relations are both external and internal. Laws vary as the activities of actual entities vary, but the range of possibilities in an epoch are limited. In his "primordial nature," God transcends the

18"Possible" here refers to what can happen in a given context; "potential" refers to eternal objects which may be "ingressed" into a variety of contexts. Thus, red is a potential for the society "tree," but it is not possible that "this green tree" be red "now."
world and sets the limits for the possible. In his "consequent nature," God is a persuasive agent in the world who feels the feelings of the world. Law is not imposed by a wholly transcendent God—a divine despot, as it were—but develops from God's loving persuasion in communion with his creatures. In short, dichotomies such as external relations/internal relations, transcendent/immanent and absolute/relative do not exhaust the alternatives (PR, pp. 342-5).

Other consequences are drawn from the school of immanence which Whitehead accepts more fully. First, scientists seek explanations and not merely simplified descriptions; Nature exhibits intelligible relations (AI, pp. 112-13). Second, exact conformation to laws is not to be expected.

If all things concerned have the requisite common character, then the pattern of mutual relevance which expresses that character will be exactly illustrated. But in general we may expect that a large proportion of things do possess the requisite character and minority do not possess it. In such a case, the mutual relations of these things will exhibit lapses when the law fails to obtain illustration. In so far as we are merely interested in a confused result of many instances, then the law can be said to have a statistical character. It is now the opinion of physicists that most of the laws of physics, as known in the nineteenth century, are of this character. (AI, p. 112)

Third, we may place some limited trust in induction when we assume an environment largely dominated by existences, partly understood, which conform to the laws of nature dominating that environment. Apart from these premises our knowledge of the future is nil. Fourth, a plausible metaphysical theory is required to illustrate that "the characters of the relevant things in nature are the outcome of their interconnections, and their interconnections are the outcome of their characters" (AI, p. 113). This requires that some relations be internal. Finally, the doctrine of
immanence is rational and explains the possibility of understanding nature.

The most salient of these consequences is the fourth. Indeed, the natural question arises, how can we conceive the nature of existences so that regularities follow from their interconnection? This brings us to Whitehead's theory of causality.

Whitehead's theory of causation steers a course between two extreme positions. Whitehead rejects Hume's critique of causation which leaves no basis for asserting the reality of causes on the reliability of induction. He also rejects the mechanistic/deterministic interpretation of causation which leaves no room for novelty.

As noted earlier, Whitehead bases his theory on the principles to which Hume tacitly appeals; specifically, Hume's constant appeals to "memory" testify to our ability to access thoughts and feelings that are not present to the senses.

The point of the criticisms of Hume's procedure is that we have direct intuition of inheritance and memory: thus the only problem is so to describe the general character of experiences so that these intuitions may be included. It is here that Hume fails. Also those modern empiricists who substitute "law" for "causation" fail even worse than Hume. For "law" no more satisfies Hume's tests than does "causation." There is no "impression" of law, or of lawfulness. Even allowing memory, according to Humean principles what has happened in experience has happened in experience, and that is all that can be said. Everything else is bluff, combined with fraudulent insertion of "probability" into a conclusion which demands "blank ignorance." (PR, p. 167)

Why was Hume unable to integrate intuitions of order in nature into his theory? Why was he reduced to an illicit appeal to "practice" in order to justify his faith in science?

According to Whitehead, Hume's theory suffers from undue attention to some aspects of experience at the expense of others. Hume's
theory of sensations was drawn with reference to the most clear and
distinct elements of conscious experience. Whitehead contends that these
elements are also the most superficial. "Sensa," such as a patch of red,
appear to the entertaining subject in "the mode of presentational imme­
diacy." (Whitehead occasionally used James' phrase, the "specious present,"
to refer to this mode of perception.) In the mode of presentational in­
demiacy,"the contemporary world is consciously prehended as a continuum
of extensive relations" (PR, p. 61. cf. PR, pp. 61-63; 123-27; 171-73; 311-33).
In other words, enduring objects appear simultaneously and their
only relations are those of extension. In regard to the specious present,
Hume is correct; there are no apparent causal connections. Hume's mistake
lay in assuming that the mode of presentational immediacy is the only mode
of perception.

Whitehead identifies another, more fundamental, mode of perception
which he terms "causal efficacy." In this mode, there is

a direct perception of those antecedent actual occasions which
are causally efficacious both for the percipient and for the
relevant events in the presented locus. The percipient there­
fore, under the limitation of its own perspective,prehends the
causal influences to which the presented locus in its important
regions is subjected. (PR, p. 169)

In other words, causal efficacy involves the effective transmission of a
feeling by one subject to another. A prehending subject inherits the
feelings of other subject/superjects and adopts their attitudes or "sub­
jective aim" toward physical feelings and conceptual objects prehended.

The feeling tone of the feelings transmitted are the same through­
out an historical route. The subjects who inherit these definite feelings
are not the same. They are separate occasions of enjoyment. The "form"
of a feeling is "subjective" and, therefore, privately enjoyed. The
transmission of a feeling is "objective"; a subject enjoys just this feeling and not another. The "vector" transmission of feelings requires that the feelings be felt as they are. The character or tone of the feeling is not a subjective addition. Whitehead's theory precludes any doctrine of "representative perception."

Transference of feeling effects a partial identification of cause with effect, and not a mere representation of the cause. It is the culmination of the universe and not a stageplay about it. (PR, p. 237)

Thus, a subject is not confined to observing a reality alien to it; it actively participates in feeling the world in process.

Whitehead does not abandon Hume's subjectivism. He rejects his sensationalism, producing a "reformed subjectivist principle."

The subjectivist principle is that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experience of subjects. Process is the becoming of experience. It follows that the philosophy of organism entirely accepts the subjectivist bias of modern philosophy. It also accepts Hume's doctrine that nothing is to be received into the philosophical scheme which is not discoverable as an element in subjective experience. This is the ontological principle. Thus Hume's demand that causation be describable as an element in experience is, on these principles, entirely justified. (PR, pp. 166-69)

Whitehead parts company with Hume because he feels that causal elements in experience are describable. Hume's failure to describe these elements derives from his failure to analyze the most commonplace, commonsensical experiences to which we have access.

Whitehead's evidence for the existence of causally efficacious experiences might be described as "phenomenological" evidence. He analyses the experience of a man standing in the dark who suddenly blinks when an electric light is turned on. In the mode of presentational immediacy, a sequence of virtually simultaneous percepts occur; a flash of light, feeling of eye closure, instant darkness (PR, pp. 174-75).
According to Whitehead, the man experiences an additional percept in the mode of causal efficacy.

He feels that the experiences of the eye in the matter of the flash are causal of the blink. The man himself will have no doubt of it. In fact, it is the feeling of causality which enables the man to distinguish the priority of the flash; and the inversion of the argument, whereby the temporal sequence "flash to blink" is made the premise for the "causality" belief, has its origin in pure theory. The man will explain his experience by saying, "The flash made me blink"; and if his statement be doubted, he will reply, "I know it because I felt it."

The philosophy of organism accepts the man’s statement, that the flash made him blink. (PR, p. 175)

Hume’s rarefied theory of habit provides no better testimony concerning such common experiences. Hume is reduced to claiming that the man feels his habit of blinking after flashes.

The word "association" explains it all according to Hume. But how can a "habit" be felt when a "cause" cannot be felt? Is there presentational immediacy in the feeling of a "habit"? Hume by a sleight of hand confuses a "habit of feeling blinks after flashes" with a "feeling of the habit of feeling blinks after flashes." (PR, p. 175. The italics are in the original.)

Against Hume’s theory of habit, Whitehead counterposes the experience of "felt transitions" of bodily feelings.

Whitehead describes the togetherness of bodily feelings as the "withness of the body." Hume, himself, provides ample testimony for these experiences. Whitehead quotes statements in Hume's writings which assert that "the eye sees" and that "the eye is sensible." He insists that these phrases are not merely lapses or concessions to common forms of expression. Rather, they are intelligible because they express "the ultimate truth of animal perception" (PR, p. 118).

Whitehead readily admits that the experience of the withness of the body is seldom conscious. We tend to identify localized feelings
only when the body is not functioning smoothly. We have no trouble
identifying an ache in the stomach which is also an element of our
conscious experience. We realize the importance of seeing with the
eyes only when the eyes are somehow impaired. When the body functions
smoothly, bodily feelings are dimly felt as a penumbral reality not
brought to conscious reflection.

Whitehead also admits that he has made a speculative extension
from localized regions of experience to regions not subject to intro-
spective analysis. He nevertheless contends that the attribution of
"feeling" throughout the actual world is based plausibly upon directly
observed facts. The theory of feelings receives some confirmation when
we speculate beyond our own high grade experiences and "descend the
scale of organic being" (PR, p. 176). For lower animals, and even vege-
tables,

there is every indication of a vague feeling of causal relation-
ships with the external world of some intensity vaguely defined
as to quality, and with some vague definition as to locality.
A jellyfish advances and withdraws, and in so doing exhibits
some perception of a causal relationship with the world beyond
itself; a plant grows downwards toward the damp earth, and up-
wards towards the light. Thus there is some direct reason for
attributing dim, slow feelings of a causal nexus, although
we have no reason for any ascription of the definite percepts
in the mode of presentational immediacy. (PR, pp. 176-77)

Of course, the attribution of feelings to "inorganic" entities is even
more hazardous. Essentially, Whitehead concludes that every actual entity
must prehend at least one antecedent actual entity and one eternal object.
At the lowest grade of being the clarity, distinctness and intensity of a
feeling will approach zero.

The alternative to a speculative attribution of feelings through-
out nature is to accept a radical disjunction between the experiences
to which we have greatest access and the circumambient world. Dualism may be accepted as a provisional doctrine, but we are left to wonder how disjointed realms of being cohere.

Any doctrine which refuses to place human experience outside nature, must find in descriptions of human experience factors which also enter into the descriptions of less specialized natural occurrences. If there be no such factors, then the doctrine of human experience as a fact within nature is a mere bluff, founded upon vague phrases whose sole merit is a comforting familiarity. (AI, pp. 184-85)

Whitehead's theory of the causal transmission of feelings rules out mechanist materialism. The world is not constituted by dead matter in motion. But does the theory rule out determinism? Has Whitehead substituted a theory of organic or panpsychist determinism for the Newtonian cosmology? Whitehead seeks to avoid determinism, believing that novelty and freshness of experience in the "creative advance" of the universe are fundamental realities. Reality does not involve the endless repetition of the same song; the music of the spheres is played to a new tune each day. A determinist view commits us to the view that what is, is strictly prefigured by what was. There can be nothing new under the sun. Whitehead finds nothing in experience to justify this view.

According to Whitehead, causation is graded. Some actual entities conform to antecedent feelings almost perfectly. Others, such as those comprising human beings, conform erratically engendering novelty. Human behavior, for instance, is intelligibly and predictably less predictable than the motions of heavenly bodies. Nevertheless, at no stage of concreteness is pure conformity with law achieved. The Laplacian ideal of perfect predictability is conceived, in Whitehead's philosophy, as a mere fairy tale. Novelty is endemic to reality.
The degree of novelty in experience varies because reality is graded. Whitehead identifies four grades of actual entities. These grades are not sharply distinguished from each other, because they are abstractions intended to reflect crudely a real continuum. The continuum corresponds to our commonsensical distinctions between organic and inorganic objects. At the lowest grade are the actual occasions constituting so-called empty space. At a higher stage, we find the actual entities that are "moments" in the life-history of enduring, non-living objects. These occasions of experience constitute electrons or other "primitive organisms." The next grade includes actual entities that are moments in the life-history of enduring living objects. At the highest phase of concrecence, we find moments in the life-histories of enduring objects with conscious knowledge (PR, p. 177).

The "phases of experience" may be clarified with reference to Whitehead's theory of "life." Every actual entity exists within an environment. The range of entities, actual and non-actual, which have "intensive relevance" for an actual entity constitute the society to which it belongs. But each society has a larger environment to which it belongs. Thus a heart is a relatively high grade society which, when grouped with other societies, belongs to a larger society known as the human body. This society in turn belongs to a larger environment to which it is related in definite ways. There is no single, inclusive environment because there is no final state for the universe. Even God is not exempt from the principle that every entity and every society requires a wider social environment.

Not all environments are equally stable. Living societies exhibit a tendency toward intensified experiences involving novelty and
contrast which results in a "destabilized" environment. A man's experience is more contrasted and intense than that of a mountain, but his environment is, consequently, less stable and orderly. The experience of high grade societies is also unspecialized when compared to low grade societies. There is not much variation in the behavior of rocks. There is much more variation in the behavior of amoeba and even more in the behavior of men.

According to Whitehead, a specialized society does not secure a high level of intensity in experience among its members, while a complex society, rich in the variety of its experiences, tends to be deficient in survival value.

Thus the problem for nature is the production of societies which are "structured" with a high complexity, and which are at the same time "unspecialized." In this way, intensity is mated with survival. (PR, p. 101)

Whitehead believes that nature provides two primary means for mating intensity with survival. "Both ways depend on . . . enhancement of the mental pole, which is a factor in the intensity of experience" (PR, p. 101). One way involves ignoring detail by abstracting some objectified characteristics from an inexhaustible environment. The other way involves "solving the problem . . . by an initiative in conceptual prehensions, i.e., in appetite" (PR, p. 102). Roughly, this means that novel elements in the environment are matched by novel conceptualizations brought into explicit feeling. In short, we think about our environment and adjust our aims, values and expectations accordingly. If our conceptual modifications work, the capacity for self-preservation is enhanced. If the "deflection" in thought and purpose fails persistently, "we are in the province of pathology" (PR, p. 102). An organism is more or less
"alive" to the extent that the second strategy (novel adaptations) is adopted over the first (ignoring details).

Novelty is the central feature of life. All grades of societies exhibit some novelty; therefore, the distinction between "living" and "non-living" societies is not absolute. But the higher the degree of novelty within a society the greater the warrant for calling the society "living." Whitehead states his position succinctly: "The primary meaning of 'life' is the origination of conceptual novelty--novelty of appetition" (PR, p. 102). Even more succinct is his statement that "life is a bid for freedom" (PR, p. 104).  

Novelty is possible because efficient causes are not the only causes. Whitehead includes "final causes" in his interpretive scheme.

An organism is "alive" when in some measure its reactions are inexplicable by any tradition of pure physical inheritance. Explanation by "tradition" is merely another phraseology for explanation by "efficient cause." We require explanation by "final cause." Thus a single occasion is alive when the subjective aim which determines its process of concrescence has introduced a novelty of definiteness not to be found in the inherited data of its primary phase. (PR, p. 104)

The constitution of an actual entity begins with its prehension of data --actual entities and eternal objects. Actual entities, when they are data, are "objectively immortal"; they are forever more what they are and nothing else. But a subject prehending data does not necessarily prehend

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19 Whitehead cites an additional defining characteristic for "life." Living societies eat. "A living society . . . requires food . . . . The societies which it destroys are its food. The food is destroyed by dissolving into somewhat simpler social elements. Thus, all societies require interaction with their environment; and in the case of living societies this interplay takes the form of robbery. The living society may or may not, be a higher type of organism than the food which it disintegrates. But whether or not it be for the general good, life is robbery. It is at this point that with life morals become acute. The robber requires justification." PR, p. 105.
them as they are. A process of "transmutation" occurs which originates in received data which is transformed to meet the aims of the receiving entity (PR, pp. 27; 249; 269). Transmutation occurs because some prehensions are "pure" while others are "hybrid." Pure feelings are "conformal" and free from error. To the extent that prehensions are conformal, causal relations are perfectly regular and predictable. Error and novelty arise when a subject transmutes the datum of a conceptual feeling "into a characteristic of some nexus containing those prehended actual entities among its members, or some part of that nexus" (PR, p. 27). This is Whitehead's famous "fallacy of misplaced concreteness"--the fallacy of treating an abstraction as if it were a concrete entity (PR, pp. 7; 18; 93; 94; SMW, pp. 51-60). Nevertheless, the diversity of an erroneous prehension from the "facts" is a "relevant diversity." The diversity is required for survival, required for freshness of feeling and required for aesthetic satisfaction. Error and freedom, on this view, are the parents to all beauty, and "beauty," for Whitehead, is virtually equivalent to "good." Of course, there are limits to the tolerance an environment allows to error and freedom. A totally truthless view of the world is, in Whitehead's opinion, both "evil" and decidedly un conducive to survival.

The causal relations among actual entities are not reducible to a stimulus-response model. The adaptations that an organism makes to its environment are construed by Whitehead to be purposive. An actual entity is "teleologically self-determined." Actual entities not only have feelings of the antecedent world (subjective form) but also have expectations concerning the as yet, indefinite future (subjective aim). They exhibit definite aims toward the society to which they belong. Both novel and conformal feelings are felt to be relevant to a society when these feelings
are prehended by subsequent actual entities. Thus, both final and efficient causes have important roles to play. The process by which novel and conformal feelings are transmitted is illustrated, in a highly simplified form, in Figure 1. It should be noted that the divisions between "before" and "after" within the actual entity are rather arbitrary. Particularly, subjective form and subjective aim belong to the entire concrescence of the entity. 20

The diagram is designed to illustrate the pattern for the causal inheritance of feelings in an actual entity. It also functions as a brief overview of the elements of Whitehead's cosmology discussed in this chapter. (I) The left hand side of the diagram represents those antecedent actual entities which are a) objectively immortal and b) enter, in an intensive way, into the constitution of the actual entity enjoying subjective immediacy. All antecedent actual entities are objectively immortal, but only some will have intensive relevance for a finite actual entity. (II) When a group of data are accepted as a part of an actual entity via positive prehensions, many of them will be felt objectively. When feelings are felt objectively, the feelings are "conformal," and the subjective form of the actual entity matches the feelings being transmitted. When a feeling is felt conformally, it is an efficient cause, and its prehension results in the repetition of definite feelings giving rise to the prehension of eternal objects as they were antecedently felt. (III) Many feelings are not felt conformally. Novel feelings involve a synthesis of conceptual prehensions and physical prehensions. Diverse data are felt as a unity, and novel feelings result. The capacity to transmute data allows for both novelty and error, avoiding the

20 For a group of useful diagrams explaining many of Whitehead's more complex doctrines see Sherburne's Key.
Figure 1. The Causal Inheritance of Feelings
endless repetition of the same feelings. (IV) Transmutations occur in accordance with the subjective aim of the prehending entity. The entity is free to contribute to its own constitution in accordance with its own purposes. (Purpose, however, originates in the subjective aim of God. Thus, one of the "decisions" facing an actual occasion is whether or not to conform its subjective aim with the "initial aim" provided by God.) (V) When the entity feels feelings or "enjoys" itself, it may be spoken of as a "subject." Nevertheless, the feelings it feels are passed into "the world" in its capacity as "superject." When the entity "perishes," its feelings are objectively immortal—it is a datum for prehension by other actual entities. Thus, it continues indefinitely as a part of the causal relationships in which it participates.

The account of Whitehead's cosmology could be drawn out in much greater detail, but it is more important at this point to assay the range of his vision. Whitehead attempts a comprehensive interpretation which synthesizes views that have been thought to be exhaustive and exclusive. For example, biologists have endlessly debated the question of whether mechanistic explanations are more adequate for the interpretation of biological phenomena than teleological or "vitalistic" explanations. Similarly, the question of whether "biological" and "psychological" explanations may be "reduced" to "physical" explanations has been hotly contested. 21

These debates also occur in political science. One of the stock criticisms of systems analysis charges that its assumptions are "teleological," and political scientists have debated the possibility of reducing the "laws of political behavior" to derivations from the laws of physics.

Whitehead's theory attempts to mediate standard dichotomies between mechanism and teleology and between reductionism and wholism (SMW, pp. 77-79; 107-112). Mechanists are correct in observing that nature follows patterns that are highly regular for which we need not attribute purposes. Teleologists are correct in observing that the process of nature is, in many respects, purposive. The "ends" of activities are ingredient to the activities themselves. From Whitehead's perspective, we do not have to choose between efficient causes and final causes. Both can be concurrently effective. Where causes are primarily conformal, mechanistic explanations will do quite well. In high grade organisms, mechanistic explanations almost invariably will be inadequate--too much genuine experience will be left out of the account.

Reductionism is correct in its desire for a "unified science." The principles governing one realm of being should not be radically disjoined from those governing another realm. Reductionism's mistake lies in attempting to interpret the "higher" in terms of the "lower." Whitehead insists that the lower should be interpreted in terms of the higher. Low grade organisms exhibit the same features as high grade organisms at a lower level of intensity and complexity. Whitehead accepts the reductionist's insistence upon the uniformity of natural occurrences and the need for systematic interpretation of them. He argues, however, that the reductionist sword cuts both ways. We not only expect features of lower grades of being to persist in higher grade, we
also should expect some form of the higher experiences to be present throughout nature.

Whitehead also accepts some of the tenets of wholism. He agrees that mechanist reductionism is inadequate to account for "psychological" and "biological" occurrences. He also agrees that final causes and purposes are part of the process of nature. But Whitehead does not accept the principle that biological results follow from an undifferentiated "vitalist principle." Nor would he agree with those theorists who believe that the laws of biology, sociology or psychology are sui generis and incongruent with the laws of physics.22

In at least one respect, Whitehead's views correspond to those of "behavioralists" in political science. Behavioralists, unlike "institutionalists," believe that all lawful or law-like statements are derivative from the "behavior" of "individuals."23 Whitehead agrees with the general principle but denies that human beings are "individuals." The acts of experience that constitute the "occasional thinker" within the bodily nexus of any "man" are too complex to be reduced to an abstract "individual." From Whitehead's point of view, the behavioralists' individuals are as vague, abstract and inadequate as the vitalists' life principle.

Summary and Prospect

This chapter has attempted to examine Whitehead's cosmology by means of a brief summary and a discussion of an illustrative issue.

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The examination was designed to provide the contextual background for the remaining chapters and to illustrate the nature of Whitehead's determined quest for comprehensiveness.

Once grasped, the vision of reality that emerges is rather strange. The strangeness derives from Whitehead's resistance to images of reality that have captured the western imagination for some time. Of particular importance is the image that Whitehead believes to have reigned supreme since the seventeenth century—reality as the great machine (SMW, p. 50). Whitehead does not doubt the tremendous pragmatic value of the mechanistic mode of thought as a goad to scientific discovery; he questions the reduction of reality to this limited mode of thought.

Whitehead's primary complaint against the mechanist mode of thought involves its deracinated conception of experience where the subject appears as a spectator to a play in which he has no part or who, in the behaviorist's denouement, disappears altogether. At the center stage of Whitehead's drama is the experiencing subject who is intimately involved in the reality he experiences. But the subject of experience in Whitehead's scheme of interpretation is not the "person" discerned in the higher phases of conscious experience. For Whitehead, the "world" itself is composed of moments of experience with varying levels of intensity and insight. "Prehensions" are the cement that holds the world together.

By conceiving the world as moments of experience, Whitehead is able to provide a fresh, unique interpretation of the uniformity of nature. Whitehead will not settle for a radical disjunction between man and nature. The togetherness of man and nature is explained by way of experience. The cosmos is a texture of experiences. Man does not stand as an alien subject over and against a hostile or indifferent world of "matter." Man is
at home in the world as a part of the purposive world of experience composing the creative advance of the universe.

Whitehead's attempt to place purposive, experiencing subjects at the heart of the cosmic drama, leads him to rethink the meaning of causality and "natural laws," concepts deeply entwined in the mechanist mode of thought. His understanding of experience as purposive and free, leads him to reject the immutability of natural laws and efficient causes. Causes are the persuasive influence of past subjects upon present subjects, and natural laws refer to the degree to which influence is stable and persistent. The order of the world is not fixed, in Whitehead's understanding. Our decisions matter. Whatever order arises, arises freely from the decisions of God and finite subjects.

Creative freedom spurred by the persuasive force of love—this is the center of Whitehead's cosmological vision and the foundation for his comprehensive quest.

The following chapter seeks to illustrate just how much the quest comprehends. The chapter attempts to lay bare the theological, ethical and anthropological aspects of Whitehead's thinking. The interpretation examines both the structural and substantive features of his concerns.
CHAPTER V

GOD, MAN AND THE MORAL ORDER

The contention--almost axiomatic in the modern climate of thought--that something like an "ought" can issue only from man and is alien to everything outside him, is more than a descriptive statement: it is part of a metaphysical position that has never given full account of itself.

Hans Jonas

No one except an envious man is delighted by my impotence or disadvantage, for the greater the joy with which we are affected, the greater the perfection to which we pass, and consequently the more do we participate in the divine nature; nor can joy ever be evil which is controlled by a true consideration for our own profit.

Spinoza

Verily, verily, I say unto you that you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

John 16:20

The devil is not conspicuous for his talents; in fact he is a bore.

Nicolas Berdyaev

Introduction

From Whitehead's perspective, philosophy should attempt to grasp the whole of experience. Furthermore, his devotion to rational inquiry requires that all spheres of interest and experience be brought into harmonious relation in a philosophical interpretation. Whitehead is a
confirmed synthesizer. Consequently, he rejects such alleged antipathies as those among philosophy, science and religion.

Philosophy frees itself from the taint of ineffectiveness by its close relations with religion and with science, natural and sociological. It attains its chief importance by fusing . . . religion and science into one rational scheme of thought. (PR, p. 15)

In Whitehead's view, man's institutions, including his academic disciplines, reflect deep and abiding experiences and concerns. A philosophical interpretation must respect and assay the relative importance of all human endeavors. Thus, Whitehead firmly rejects the rigid compartmentalization of thought. This explains why he was not prone to write independent treatises on politics, theology, ethics and philosophical anthropology notwithstanding his abiding concern with all these areas.

Whitehead's treatment of "topical" issues is seldom neatly abstracted from his overall synthesis. Whitehead insists that the "fundamental notions" of a speculative philosophy should "not seem capable of abstraction from each other" (PR, p. 3). The context lends the topics their meaning. Thus, the task is to show how theological, moral and anthropological issues derive from and are integrated into the total quest for vision. The various spheres of interest must be understood in harmony. "There can be no active interest that puts aside all hope of a vision of the harmony of truth" (SMW, p. 185).

The present chapter discusses the quests for God, wholeness and man seriatim, but the aim is to illustrate their role in one comprehensive search for understanding. The chapter's analytical or topical divisions are important only insofar as they serve to indicate the "omnivorous" character of Whitehead's concerns. The exploration will follow the analytical schema introduced in Chapter Two, discussing, in order,
theology, ethics and philosophical anthropology.

Religion and God

Whitehead's interpretation of Man's "religious experiences" culminates in a vision of "God." Whitehead is well aware, however, that not all "religions" are theistic. Consequently, the present section profitably can be divided into considerations of Whitehead's understanding of religion and his vision of God.

The Religious Animal

Whitehead agrees with those theologians and secular critics who deny that we have any "special religious sense" (RM, pp. 119-27). But this does not mean that religions are fanciful inventions or "primitive" superstitions. Religion is grounded in experience. Religious insight is derived from "the supernormal experience of mankind in its moments of finest insight" (RM, p. 31). These insights are stabilized as religious dogma. Dogmas are necessary because religious life is valuational and communal religion has as its purpose "the coherent ordering of life" both in thought and ethical conduct (RM, p. 30). But the dogmas become dangerous when they are divorced from their roots in religious and ethical experience.

Religions commit suicide when they find their inspirations in their dogmas. The inspiration of religion lies in the history of religion. By this I mean that it is to be found in the primary expressions of the intuitions of the finest types of religious lives. (RM, p. 138)

When religion develops into ossified dogma, it is properly subject to criticism, and reason is a valuable tool for conducting a critique. "Reason is the safeguard of the objectivity of religion; it secures for it the general coherence denied to hysteria" (RM, p. 63). Whitehead
vigorously denies that religion is always good; it can be a positive evil. "Religion is the last refuge of human savagery. The uncritical association of religion with goodness is directly negativized by plain facts" (RM, p. 36).

If religion is to be "the main instrument for progress" it must be subjected to rational criticism (RM, p. 36). This is where philosophy acquires its role. The philosopher attempts to reflect dispassionately and rationally understand the experiences underlying the often-times fanatical excesses of the creeds.

The desire to understand, rather than promote some particular emotional or institutional interest, precludes the easy identification of religious experience with God. Whitehead observes that

there is a large concurrence in the negative doctrine that... religious experience does not include any direct intuision of a definite person or individual. It is a character of permanent rightness, whose inherence in the nature of things modifies both efficient and final cause, so that one conforms to harmonious conditions, and the other contrasts itself with a harmonious ideal. The harmony in the actual world is in conformity with the character. (RM, p. 60)

A cosmology is required to interpret the "character of permanent rightness" inhering in "the nature of things," but the outcome of this cosmology need not be theistic. Nevertheless, dispassionate thought does not preclude a theistic outcome.

Whitehead notes that "Aristotle found it necessary to complete his metaphysics by the introduction of a Prime Mover--God" (SMW, p. 173). Whitehead considers this significant because Aristotle, a towering genius in the history of philosophy, "was entirely dispassionate; and he is the last European metaphysician of first-rate importance for whom this claim can be made" (SMW, p. 173). Whitehead also attempts to complete his understanding of man's basic experiences with reference to a supreme
actual entity—God.

The Culminating Vision of God

Whitehead consistently insists upon two principles, relevant to the present discussion, governing the introduction of a category into a philosophical scheme:

1) The category should be consistent with the remainder of the scheme;
2) The category should not be introduced ad hoc merely to save the collapse of all or part of the scheme. (See, for examples, PR, pp. 3; 4.)

Whitehead feels that "God" meets both these criteria in his scheme.

God is an actual entity who bears necessary and intelligible relations to all other actual entities. He is conceived to fulfill crucial metaphysical functions incapable of fulfillment by temporal actual entities.

As noted in the preceding chapter, God functions, in Whitehead's scheme, as a "principle of concretion" and as a "principle of limitation." The necessity for God to fulfill these roles can be indicated with reference to eternal objects. Eternal objects are "pure potentials." They are indifferent to the type of "ingression" they receive. But only some eternal objects may beprehended by finite actual entities. If this were not the case, there could be no definite actual world. All that would be felt would be the plenum of conceptual objects. Only God is able to perform this role. Even if finite actual entities were to entertain eternal objects selectively, there would be "chaos" without a principle guiding the selection. The principle of selection (concretion; limitation) is provided in God's "initial aim."

What is inexorable in God, is valuation as an aim towards "order;" and "order" means "society permissive of actualities with patterned intensity of feeling arising from
adjusted contrasts." In this sense God is the principle of concretion; namely, he is that actual entity from which each temporal concrescence receives that initial aim from which its self-causation starts. (PR, p. 244. Cf. PR, p. 164, SMW, pp. 173-79.)

In short, God's initial aim begins the process of concresence or growing together, and sets the limits for possibility within a given situation. God establishes the boundaries within which novel responses may occur.

God is the ultimate guarantor for order in the world. God is the only necessary and eternal actual entity. The ontological principle requires that all "reasons" be referent to one or more actual entities. The ultimate rationality of the universe only can be attributed to God; that the universe will exhibit some order can be guaranteed by none other than God. Thus Whitehead describes God as "the ultimate irrationality." God is 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. (SMW, p. 178)

To find a "reason" superior to God would be tantamount to asserting that the superior reason is God. There can be no rational, metaphysical determinations prior to God; "there is a metaphysical need for a principle of determination, but there can be no metaphysical reason for what is determined" (SMW, p. 178).

This brief summary indicates why Whitehead felt compelled toward the dispassionate introduction of "God" into his interpretive scheme. It remains to consider how Whitehead's God relates to religious experience. Is "God" no more than a function in a philosophical scheme? Does
Whitehead's conception fulfill his hope that the deity contemplated by the philosopher should be available for religious purposes? Do we have the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or the God of the philosophers? Stephen Ely has charged that Whitehead's God is not available for religious purposes. Indeed, Ely considers Whitehead's God to be an evil deity who simply "uses" finite entities for His own satisfaction. This is not the place to review Ely's criticisms. In the present context, all that can be attempted is a broad overview of Whitehead's vision of God and leave it to the reader to assay its religious significance.²

Whitehead insists that a philosophical conception of God be rooted in religious experience. He emphasizes "the deep connection of the speculative Reason with religious intuitions" (FR, p. 66). He even goes so far as to assert that "the essence of education is that it be religious" (AI, p. 14). And what is "religion" for the speculative thinker? "Religion is the reaction of human nature to its search for God" (SMW, p. 191).

For Whitehead, the understanding of God is not reflected easily in any of the formulations whereby we attempt to communicate our search.


Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest. (SMW, pp. 191-92. cf. PR, pp. 347-48.)

This ultimate ideal and hopeless quest results in "worship." "The immediate reaction of human nature to the religious vision is worship" (SMW, p. 192). But religious experience can express itself in "the crudest fancies of barbaric imagination" mixed with genuine insight (SMW, p. 192). Thus, Whitehead takes pains to criticize the infusion of a "divine despot" image of God into medieval theology. The attention to God's overpowering will and omnipotence was, Whitehead thinks, bought at the price of terminating the search for coherent theory (AI, pp. 168-72). For instance, the stress on the total efficacy of God's will led, in Whitehead's view to the impasse of theodicy. 3

If the theory of complete determinism, by reason of the necessity of conformation with the nature of God, holds true, then the evil in the world is in conformity with the nature of God. (RM, p. 92)

Whitehead feels that gains in value and coherence are made when we associate God with the more "tender," less "despotic," aspects of reality emphasizing divine persuasion.

Whitehead contrasts his image of divine persuasion with other theological images. According to him three envisagements have prevailed in the history of theistic philosophy: the Divine Caesar, the ruthless

moralist and the unmoved mover.

There is, however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion which does not fit very well with any of the three main strands of thought. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present. (PR, p. 343)

In Whitehead's vision of God, God enters into a loving relationship with all finite entities. He desires the growth of His own experience but He does not simply "use" finite entities for His own satisfaction. The intrinsic good of each finite entity is an intrinsic good for God. But God does not accept the lowest grades of goodness as a final state. He persuade finite entities to seek higher perfection. In this regard, God makes use of evil to produce good, though the evil is no less evil for its usefulness.

God suffers for the evil of the world, and his suffering is greater than that of finite entities because God always is, while finite entities pass. Yet, the finiteness of actual occasions is no bar to satisfaction in transcendent experience. Because actual entities are objectively immortal the good they seek beyond themselves is not unrewarded. The satisfaction of finitude is not confined to momentary enjoyment. We can, through hope, faith and love, seek the Good beyond ourselves, and the Good we seek is "saved" in God's experience and in the experience of other finite beings who follow.

The consequent nature of God is his judgment on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved. It is also the judgment of a
wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage . . . . 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. He does not create the world, he saves it; or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty and goodness. (PR, p. 346)

Whitehead feels that such a God—a God motivated by persuasive love for finite creatures—is the proper object of worship.

God transcends all finite experience by including all actual and potential experience in His experience, yet He is efficaciously present as a factor in all finite experiences whether receptive or intentional. Thus, God is both the transcendent and immanent source of our experience and aim of our valuations. Failure to recognize the transcendent source and aim of our valuations reduces life to momentary flashes of enjoyment.

Whitehead believes that the desire to escape the apparent transience of finite experience lies at the core of religious intuition. The contribution of religion lies in

the recognition that our existence is more than a succession of bare facts. We live in a common world of mutual adjustment, of intelligible relations, of valuations, of zest after purposes, of joy and grief, of interest directed beyond self, of short-time and long-time failures or successes of different layers of feeling, of life weariness and of life zest. (RM, p. 77)

Our greatest perfection lies beyond, and our deepest desires are directed to the beyond. "Happiness" in its highest, most self-realized perfection can have no goal other than pursuit of the Good in accordance with God's aim.

On the other hand, there is no alternative to the recognition of the tragedy which attends the quest for the Good. There is no metaphysical necessity for the evil and diminishment which accompanies our experience, but there can be no honest denial of the experiences. Existence is a passing tragedy for finite beings; the heights of beauty are accompanied by
the remorseless working of things. But the divine risk is greater than our risk, and God's suffering is the suffering of us all. At the heart of Whitehead's vision of God lies the intuition of a being who is "the great companion—the fellow sufferer who understands" (PR, p. 351).

The Moral Order

Many concepts and terms related to ethics and value theory were introduced in the preceding section. This was no accident. Whitehead's vision of "the Good" and "the good life" are intimately connected with his religious vision. Whitehead makes the connection between "religion" and ethical and social theory explicit. Religion cannot be, in Whitehead's view, an incidental concern for a thriving civilization.

The fact of the religious vision, and its history of persistent expansion, is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience. (SMW, p. 192)

The ground for hope is found in the religious vision; the foundation for "the Good" is God's vision. Thus, Whitehead's "ethics" cannot be neatly divorced from his theology.

The following topics have been abstracted for consideration in the present section. The sense of the context in which the topics function should be borne in mind throughout:

1) The relationship between ethics and the speculative endeavor: theory and practice;

2) The cosmological background for Whitehead's ethical thought: value;

3) The structure of Whitehead's ethical thought: universality and teleology;

4) The substance of Whitehead's ethical thought: aesthetics and God.
Each of these schematic divisions is explained in turn.

Theory and Practice

For Whitehead, there is no disjunction between the aims of theoretical and practical reason. Quite simply, "the function of Reason is to promote the art of life." (FR, p. 4. The italics are in the original.) The life of reason is based on "a threefold urge: (i) to live, (ii) to live well, (iii) to live better" (FR, p. 8 and passim). Nevertheless, the distinction between theoretical and practical reason is not unfounded. The distinction is symbolized by Whitehead in the persons of Plato and Ulysses. "The one shares Reason with the Gods, the other shares it with the foxes" (FR, p. 10).

Practical reason involves the application of successful methods to satisfy immediate interests. Speculative reason "is the urge of disinterested curiosity. In this function reason serves only itself" (FR, p. 38). In Whitehead's understanding, the man who pursues the speculative life is, like Aristotle's spoudaios who leads the bios theoretikos, instantiating the good life by attuning himself to the best that life has to offer. Nevertheless, the attempt "to live better" allows no hard and fast separation between the practical and theoretical lives.

The whole story of Solomon's dream suggests that the antithesis between the two functions of Reason is not so sharp as it seems at first sight. The speculative Reason produces that accumulation of theoretical understanding which at critical moments enables a transition to be made toward new methodologies. Also the discoveries of the practical understanding provide the raw material necessary for the success of the speculative Reason. (FR, p. 39)

Thus, the effort toward the best attainable life involves a balanced application of the various arts of reasoning. Reason lies at the center of the pursuit of happiness. It remains to be seen what the form and substance of this pursuit are. A consideration of Whitehead's theory of "value"
forms the necessary prelude for this discussion.

Value

Whitehead's approach to ethical and political issues is governed by his understanding of "value." Whitehead uses the term in a number of, oftentimes ambiguous, senses. There are at least two basic usages that need to be considered. First, Whitehead understands value as the "world of value," the co-ordinated realm of goodness that "exists" as a complex form eternally constraining God's subjective aim in relation to the temporal world (ESP, pp. 60-74). Goodness functions as the form under which God is apprehended. It is difficult to distinguish from mundane apprehensions of specific instantiations of goodness. Consequently, we must seek experiential clues to provide speculative attributions concerning the true form of "the Good."

The World of Value is not a self-subsistent realm simply there for God's contemplation. It informs the temporal world. Thus, it is necessary to explain the meaning of value in the temporal setting. Whitehead contends that religious intuition reveals three "allied concepts" which provide insight into "the ultimate character of the universe." These concepts are:

1. That of the value of an individual for itself.
2. That of the value of the diverse individuals of the world for each other.
3. That of the value of the objective world which is a community derivative from the interrelations of its component individuals, and also necessary for the existence of each of these individuals. (RM, p. 58)

All of these categories involve some sort of relation, although the first is a reflexive relation. On the other hand, Whitehead, at several points in his writings, insists upon the "intrinsic" value of actual
entities. Therefore, we need to distinguish between intrinsic and relational value.

Intrinsic value refers to the value an entity would have regardless of its relations to other finite actual entities. Whitehead believes that each entity has dignity and worth which is independent of valuation by other finite actual entities (or by any other entity in the case of God). That dignity and worth is recognized by an entity in its enjoyment of itself, in its quest for "satisfaction" and by God who loves every actual entity in itself. Thus, intrinsic value refers to the value an individual has for itself and for God.

Intrinsic value does not exhaust the range of values; it constitutes a relatively small portion of the valuational canvas. Most value is relational. Furthermore, intrinsic value has little ethical significance, where ethics is understood as involving decisions concerning how we should act. These decisions inevitably involve our relations to others.

The centrality of relational value for ethical discourse in Whitehead's scheme derives from his rejection of substance philosophy. "There is no entity, not even God, 'which requires nothing but itself in order to exist'" (RM, p. 104). A self becomes itself by virtue of its relations to others. However, relations to others are not always smooth; relational value involves conflict. The most poignant questions of ethics arise in regard to relational value.

The character of value can be clarified by considering Whitehead's

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understanding of the distinction between "facts" and "values." Whitehead consistently derides the notion of "mere fact." Facts have no meaning apart from their relations to other facts, and they cannot be understood without reference to their value. A fact with no import would never be conceived. Whitehead observes:

Those people who in a hard-headed way confine their attention to matter-of-fact do so by reason of their sense of the importance of such an attitude. The two notions are antithetical and require each other. (MT, p. 4)

In asserting that the "antithetical" notions of "matter-of-fact" and "importance" require each other, Whitehead lays the foundation for an unusual theory of knowledge.

"Stubborn fact" is required for theory; the "given" forms the material for theorizing. But theory cannot be divorced from value, and facts have no meaning apart from value. Attention to and recognition of facts requires a sense of their importance. More importantly, the existence of facts-to-be-found is dependent upon value; reality and value are inseparable. Whitehead uses the word value to denote "the intrinsic reality of an event" (SMW, p. 93). The meaning of the assertion is elliptical, but a portion of its significance is clear. Whitehead forcefully rejects the idea of values in a world of facts; facts are ingredients in a world of value.

Value is not construed strictly in terms of conscious decision. Whitehead does not share the humanist position which locates value solely in the thoughts and actions of men. Purposive valuation pervades nature. "Conceptual experience does not in itself involve consciousness; its essence is valuation" (PR, p. 280). All actual entities including those which are not conscious, are purposive; the act of including or excluding alternatives from reality is endemic to their becoming.
While valuation is not confined to "cognitive" activity, the most striking illustrations of its role in constituting reality occur in conscious decision-making. To return to Donald Sherburne's example, cited in Chapter Four, the businessman whoprehends the proposition "restaurant on that corner" could also prehend the proposition "massage parlor on that corner." The decisions issuing from the propositions are constitutive of the facts about the corner. The businessman's valuations, up or down, are causally relevant factors in the subsequent facts. A social scientist studying "The Social Effects of Massage Parlors in Sunnyville" will have different facts set before him depending upon valuations that occur.

Whitehead's emphasis on the role of value in creating facts should not lead to the conclusion that he is adopting a silly-putty theory of reality. There is a strong element of epistemological realism in this theory. Indeed, the reality of objects is entirely independent of their being known. Objects of cognition are either eternal objects or antecedent actual entities. Eternal objects are what they are eternally, independent of their ingresson within a given society; antecedent actual entities are objectively immortal, forevermore what they have become and nothing else. There are no future facts to be known, for the future awaits determination. There is presumed to be a necessity that there will be a future, and we can have some inductive confidence that the near future will resemble its immediate past. Nonetheless, the future is not there to be known until the experiences which will constitute it actually occur. These epistemological constraints apply even to God. He cannot know, in its definiteness, that which has not occurred, and He cannot know the past in a way that would change it.
An actual entity, however, can make something of the data it receives. In a sense, Whitehead agrees with Kant; data received are organized independent of their strictly objective character. The function of abstraction is to organize data in novel ways. Whitehead departs from Kant in four respects. First, Whitehead concludes that we can know an object, to some extent, "in itself." We can receive into our constitution antecedent feelings as they are, and we can recognize an eternal object as it is. Second, our access to objective routes of causal transmission leads to a rejection of "the Kantian doctrine of the objective world as a theoretical construct from purely subjective experience" (PR, p. xiii). Third, the organization of data is not subject to interpretation strictly in terms of fixed categories governing the unity of apperception. Feeling and Form may be introduced into subjective experience in ways totally unimagined. As Whitehead notes on several occasions, we cannot begin to imagine the ways in which "red" may be introduced into experience; therefore, the manner in which data are received in this cosmic epoch should not be construed to apply to all cosmic epochs. The limits of our imagination are not permanent prisons for experience. There is more to the world than twelve categories can hold.

Finally, Whitehead carries Kant's rejection of Locke's tabula rasa one step further. Actual entities not only organize received data, they play a creative role in the transmission of data in the world. Kant, like most early modern philosophers, seems to have accepted the final applicability of the Newtonian cosmology to "external
reality." The notion that "mind" can have any real efficacy in the physical world is foreign to Kant's view. (Although the efficacy of the will is presumed to be a necessary rational presupposition in ethics.) Whitehead contends that the "decisions" and "subjective aim" of actual entities are efficacious and that teleological effects may be novel.

Whitehead insists that there are limits to the "freedom" of actual entities. All actual entities are self-created, but they are not created ex nihilo. An actual entity is under an obligation to take into account antecedent actualities; an actual entity which failed to prehend the past could not exist. Furthermore, the range of eternal objects ingressible in an actual entity is limited by God's decision; therefore, possibilities are limited. Additionally, the efficacy of an actual entity's free decisions is quite restricted. A novel decision introduced by actual entity X may be efficacious throughout a long historic route. That depends on the way it is received by subsequent actualities. The decisions of an actuality are not coercive for experiences that follow; persuasion is essential to becoming if freedom be admitted.

The fact that our successors are somewhat free to make us what they will does not relieve us of responsibility regarding the future. To propose to posterity an alternative is to make oneself responsible for its acceptance. To reject the proposals of the past is to assume

responsibility for their discontinuation.

The subject is responsible for being what it is in virtue of its feelings. It is also derivatively responsible for the consequences of its existence because they flow from its feelings. (PR, p. 222)

In any event, Whitehead rules out the notion of neutral facts and considers the scholarly position which endorses exclusive attention to them an unwarranted check on the speculative impulse.

The concentration of attention upon matter-of-fact is the supremacy of the desert. Any approach to such triumph bestows on learning a fugitive, and a cloistered virtue, which shuns emphasis on essential connections such as disclose the universe in its impact upon individual experience. (MT, p. 19)

It remains to be seen what sort of ethical emphasis Whitehead proposes as an alternative.

The Form of Ethical Judgment

Whitehead never specifies the type of structure of ethical theory to which he is attracted. Nevertheless, the general form of his ethical thinking can be abstracted from his work. This abstraction can be accomplished under two headings: universality and teleology.

Universality

Whitehead's comments on Kant normally address epistemological issues, highlighting the discrepancies and agreements of the two theories in this area. Whitehead seldom refers to Kant's ethical writings. Nevertheless, there is a passage which—while not specifically referring to Kant—points to an important area of agreement between the two philosophers.

The rational satisfaction or dissatisfaction in respect to any particular happening depends upon an intuition which is capable of being universalized. This universalization of what is discerned in a particular instance is the appeal to a general character inherent in the nature of things. (RM, p. 65)
Universalizability is the primary condition and feature of Kant's famous "categorical imperative" which holds that one should "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." There are variations of the imperative, but the universal application of maxims to all "rational" beings is central to all formulations. Whitehead's faith in reason leads him to accept universal-ity as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for morality and civilization.

Nevertheless, Whitehead would not go all the way in accepting Kant's deontological ethic. The "appeal to a general character inherent in the nature of things" links Whitehead's understanding of ethics to cosmology, and this is foreign to Kant's approach. In linking ethics to cosmology, Whitehead returns to the classical teleological/eudaemonic approach to the good life represented by Aristotle.

**Teleology**

A teleological or utilitarian ethic requires that the rightness of an act (or selected means to an end) be judged by the consequences of the act. An act is right to the extent that its results are "good." G. E. Moore has insisted that a utilitarian theory of rightness need not (indeed, for Moore, cannot) be identified with "happiness." Nevertheless,
Whitehead works within the tradition that extends from Aristotle through Aquinas and Mill, and bases his approach upon a fusion of teleology and eudaemonism.

Whitehead is faced with a problem perennially associated with theories of this sort. His recognition of the problem reveals the basic structure of his concerns. The problem involves the necessity of squaring the condition of universalization with the conflicting claims for satisfaction among self-regarding individuals. Indeed, some critics have contended that Whitehead's approach to ethics is basically one of self-regarding pursuit of satisfaction. Whitehead, however, repudiates this claim.

Whitehead's commitment to reason precludes ultimate and inevitable disharmony in all spheres, including morality. Whitehead's solution to the purported disharmony between individual and general interests is to assert that the two coincide. Whitehead asserts that

morality of outlook is inseparably conjoined with generality of outlook. The antithesis between the general good and the individual interest can be abolished only when the individual is such that its interest is the general good, thus exemplifying the loss of the minor intensities in order to find them again with finer composition in a wider sweep of interest. (PR, p. 15)

But what assurance do we have that our interests will coincide with the general good when we witness so much basic conflict in human life? Whitehead's answer must be pieced together from scattered references, but the key seems to lie in his philosophy of identity. The apparent conflict

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9 This claim is rejected in Lynne Belaief, "Whitehead and Private-Interest Theories," Ethics, 76, 1965-1966, 277-86. See also Howard Press, "Whitehead's Ethic of Feeling," Ethics, 81, 1971, 161-68. Both Belaief and Press mention, in passing, the similarity between the ethical positions of Whitehead and Spinoza, a comparison that perhaps could occasion a valuable monograph.
between individual interest and the common good results from the fallacy of misplaced concreteness; the "individuals," i.e. human beings, whose "interests" are falsely asserted are not individuals at all.

An actual entity is not simply self regarding. First, the quality of experience X is dependent upon the quality of its antecedent environment. An actual entity must make use of the data which is there to prehend. It has some control over what data is received and how it is received, but generally speaking, adverse data makes for bad experiences.

Second, and more importantly, an actual entity is future regarding. Whitehead identifies this propensity with "appetition."

Appetition is immediate matter of fact including in itself a principle of unrest, involving realization of what is not and may be. The immediate occasion thereby conditions creativity so as to procure, in the future, physical realization of its mental pole, according to various valuations inherent in its various conceptual prehensions. All physical experience is accompanied by an appetite for, or against, its continuance: an example is the appetite of self-preservation. (PR, p. 32; cf. FR, pp. 33-34)

The presence of appetition means that self-enjoyment is not confined to a fleeting moment of pleasure. Actual entities desire the self-realization of experiences which lie beyond. Part of the joy of experience lies in the contribution that can be made to the historic routes to which an entity's future belongs. A self is not fully satisfied without the conviction that it can contribute to a larger environment.

These doctrines can be illustrated with reference to an aesthetic/ethical act which is central to much human experience: the sex act. During the act of sexual union there are innumerable moments of enjoyment. Each moment is an aesthetic synthesis which is satisfying in itself and which builds upon previous moments of experience. But the fulfillment of each moment involves the desire for greater intensities in succeeding moments. Even at the moment of climax, the desire to fulfill the future
remains both for the personal (serially ordered) moments of experience we call our "self" and the moments of experience of the "one" with whom we are united.

Hedonistic doctrines build upon a false abstraction called "the self." "Personal identity" in the macro-cosmic process is, in Whitehead's theory, the product of successive experiences, not the substantival subject of experience. A micro-cosmic self--an actual entity--always desires transcendent fulfillment through appetite.

There is, however, sound basis for the abstractions relating to "selfishness" understood, to use Augustine's term, as amor sui, and there is equally sound basis for criticizing the advocacy of such self-love. Fundamentally, hedonistic self-love is stupid. The attempt to be a being who needs nothing except itself in order to exist, diminishes the potentiality of enjoyment available to oneself (with "self" understood either as a single moment of experience or as a personal society). Consider the kind of "person" who constantly insists on his or her own enjoyment to the exclusion of all else. These people are bound, sooner or later, to alienate those elements of the environment upon which their happiness depends. Even if they steal a moment of pleasure here and there, the pleasure they attain is minimal in comparison to the joys of experience they could have chosen. Without a wider environment upon which to build happiness a self will always suffer losses it need not incur.

The Substance of Ethical Judgment

Having associated Whitehead's ethical position with the universal pursuit of happiness, the nature of happiness remains to be considered. Where do our true interests lie? How do we find our way in a world filled
with difficult decisions? The substance of Whitehead's ethical thought can be analyzed by noting its theocentric character and its grounding in aesthetics.

God and the Moral Order

The association of ethics with God is drawn on several occasions by Whitehead. Indeed, the title of this subsection (and a portion of the chapter's title) is drawn from one of Whitehead's subheadings (RM, pp. 91-96). In a sense, Whitehead's approach to ethics accords with that of the Athenian stranger who contends that

nothing is created except to provide the entire universe with a life of prosperity. You forget that creation is not for your benefit: you exist for the sake of the universe.10

Of course, the alternatives of the universe existing for me and my existing for the universe are not mutually exclusive. Whitehead's cosmology encompasses both views.

Whitehead does not like the view that rightness is acting in conformity with the will of God. He remarks that

in a communal religion you study the will of God in order that he may preserve you; in a purified religion, rationalized under the influence of the world-concept, you study his goodness in order to be like him. It is the difference between the enemy you conciliate and the companion whom you imitate. (RM, p. 40)

Whitehead's resistance to the traditional conceptions of the will of God derives from his revulsion for the divine despot image. Nevertheless, he seems to assimilate right acts to God's subjective aim as it operates in the temporal world.

One would naturally expect a theocentric emphasis in Whitehead's ethical theories, considering his stress on religious interests. The

connection of religion with all aspects of philosophy is indicated in his remark that "science suggested a cosmology; and whatever suggests a cosmology, suggests a religion" (RM, p. 136). God's central role is borne out in Whitehead's cosmology.

God provides the "initial aim" for all other actual entities; therefore, transcendent decision is always involved in finite decision. The coordination of the universe is governed by God's consequent nature; without God there would be no realization of value. God is the necessary condition for the attainment of finite perfections. There is none greater than God because He is the only entity who necessarily exists, the ground for all perfections and the highest instance of reality. All "reasons," all values, all perfections flow from God's aim toward the best harmony attainable within a given situation. God attempts to persuade actual entities to produce the finest resolution of conflicting decisions possible for a given finite context.

God's subjective aim, as it operates in the temporal world, is directed toward the attainment of harmony and value. As the principle of limitation, he provides the bulwark against "anarchy" (RM, pp. 91-92). In seeking the harmonious relations of the best attainable order, God must attempt to overcome "evil." Evil is possible and needs to be overcome because Whitehead's metaphysic rejects "complete determinism" in favor of "creative indetermination" (RM, p. 92). For what does God strive? "The purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world" (RM, p. 97). And how is this attainment measured? For Whitehead, no less than Plato, God is the supreme measure of the Good in the temporal world. "God is the measure of the aesthetic consistency of the world" (RM, p. 96). Thus, the criteria for judgment set before man are aesthetic; therefore
the fusion of ethics and aesthetics in Whitehead's theory requires consideration.

**Beauty and Goodness**

In seeking to conform ourselves with God's aim toward creative harmony, we are left to wonder how we are to know what God expects of us. As noted earlier, the form of the Good, as opposed to specific injunctions from burning bushes, is discovered in experiential clues providing speculative attributions concerning the true form of the Good. Traditionally, the clues concerning the Good have been found in the experiences of duty in following moral codes. Whitehead mistrusts these clues because he feels (for reasons discussed later) that strictness in following codes of morals can be "evil" (RM, p. 95).

Whitehead finds his clues for the nature of goodness in aesthetic experience.

Philosophic thought has to start from some limited section of our experience . . . .

My own belief is that at present the most neglected, starting point is that section of value theory which we term aesthetics. Our enjoyment of the values of human art, or of natural beauty, our horror at the obvious vulgarities and defacements which force themselves upon us—all these modes of experience are sufficiently abstracted to be relatively obvious. And yet evidently they disclose the very meaning of things. (ESP, p. 98)

Whitehead notes that an investigation always retains the taint of its starting point, and his philosophy is no exception. In the final analysis "the Good" collapses with "the Beautiful" for Whitehead. Either there is no distinction between them, or the Good is a subcategory of the Beautiful. In Whitehead's understanding of the Good and the Right, "right by nature" only can mean aesthetically right. Whitehead makes this point explicit in one of his rare comments on Kant's ethics. Whitehead's
line of thought extends Kant's argument. [Kant] saw the necessity for God in the moral order. But with his metaphysics he rejected the argument from the cosmos. The metaphysical doctrine, here expounded, finds the foundations of the world in the aesthetic experience, rather than—as with Kant—in the cognitive and conceptive experience. All order is therefore aesthetic order, and the moral order is merely certain aspects of aesthetic order. The actual world is the outcome of the aesthetic order. And the aesthetic order is derived from the immanence of God. (RM, p. 101)

Thus, for Whitehead, the Good is aesthetically grounded in God's aim and teleologically instantiated in the purposive activity of finite actual entities. For Whitehead, creativity "is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact" (PR, p. 21). Along with "many" and "one" it constitutes "the ultimate." These terms he takes to be synonymous with "thing," "being" and "entity." Consequently, aesthetic terms lie at the heart of Whitehead's theory of reality. Creativity involves the search for novel intensities of experience. Aesthetic experience must be novel because enjoyment cannot be confined to the endless repetition of one chord, and it must be intense because music which evokes no emotion is aesthetically worthless.

Aesthetic experience involves the transmutation of the many into the one and the one into the many. Each actual entity is the one which synthesizes the data from its past into a unity and in turn becomes a datum for new syntheses. While each synthesis qua self-enjoyment is equally (intrinsically) valuable, not all syntheses attain the same relational value. Aesthetic value is graded.

At the core of aesthetic value is unity in diversity; beauty requires unity and contrast.

The birth of a new aesthetic experience depends upon the maintenance of two principles by the creative purpose.
1. The novel consequent must be graded in reference so as to preserve some identity of character with the ground.
2. The novel consequent must be graded in relevance so as to preserve some contrast with the ground in respect to that same identity of character.

These two principles are derived from the doctrine that an actual fact is a fact of aesthetic experience. All aesthetic experience is feeling arising out of the realization of contrast under identity. (RM, p. 111)

It follows that conscious experience is of a higher grade than unconscious experience. Consciousness depends upon an explicit feeling of the negation-affirmation contrast. However, conscious experience is grounded in unconscious experience and dependent upon it. Therefore, the highest grades of experience are reliant upon the quality of their relations with lower grades.

The teleological character of aesthetic/ethical decision should now be clear. If the general aim of the universe is the attainment of beauty, the general aim of any actual entity is beauty, and specific aims are subordinated to the general aim.

Whitehead's emphasis on the aesthetic grounding of ethical judgments does not place him wholly at odds with the drive toward moral codes. Quite naturally, moral insights are expressed in codes that stabilize judgment. Whitehead feels that such codes are justified on utilitarian grounds. It is not always possible to agonize through a difficult decision, and readily accessible rules of judgment are often desirable in morals and law.

Nevertheless, Whitehead believes that we can lay too much stress on moral duty and codes of behavior. He illustrates his hesitancy to rely on moralizing rules with reference to a performance of "Carmen" which he attended with a ten year old friend and her great-aunt. The little girl
asked her aunt whether "those were really good people"? Whitehead and the aunt sidestepped the question, but Whitehead later drew some general conclusions concerning it.

Our enjoyment in the theatre was irrelevant to moral considerations applied to the performance. Of course smugglers are naughty people, and Carmen is carefree as to niceties of behaviour. But while they are singing their parts and dancing on stage, morals vanish and beauty remains.

I am not saying that moral considerations are always irrelevant to the stage. In fact, sometimes they are the very topic of the play, especially modern plays. But the retreat of morals in the presence of music and dancing and the general gaiety of the theatre is a fact very interesting to philosophers and very puzzling to the official censors. (MT, pp. 12-13)

Whitehead makes it clear that "the retreat of morals" is the retreat of moral codes in the face of higher moral experiences. "Morality is always the aim at the union of harmony, intensity, and vividness which involves the perfection of importance for that occasion" (MT, p. 14).

Moral rules, whether conventional or constructed as axiological systems by moral philosophers, can carry us only so far. Ethics cannot be subsumed under a set of mechanical rules. Rules assume certius paribus, but equality of conditions throughout the application of a rule cannot be expected. Each actual entity is a unique unrepeatable moment of experience, and the "world," understood as macro-cosmic process, is subject to radical change. Some of the "same" features are retained in the course of an historic route, which is the basis for natural law and personal identity, but the potential for change precludes the creation of a rule that will apply to John Doe once and for all.

Whitehead goes so far as to suggest that moral rules can be positively evil. Moral correctness can lead to diminishment of experience and destroy the true spirit of moral endeavor.
Good people of narrow sympathies are apt to be unfeeling unprogressive, enjoying their egotistical goodness. Their case, on a higher level, is analogous to that of a man completely degraded to a hog. They have revealed a state of stable goodness, so far as their own interior life is concerned. This type of moral correctitude is, on a larger view, so like evil that the distinction is trivial. (RM, p. 95)

The belief that one moral code suffices to answer our moral dilemmas for all time is precisely the evil which results from the fallacy of dogmatic finality. It is the spirit of Torquemada, not the spirit of Christ.

The spirit, not the letter, of the law is what is finest in the moral impulse. No man can legislate for the whole of creation.

There is no one behaviour system belonging to the essential character of the universe, as the universal moral ideal. What is universal is the spirit which should permeate any behaviour system in the circumstances of its adoption. (MT, p. 14)

This is the law of love, and its central motif, inspiration and imperative is to harmonize (and thereby immortalize) insofar as is possible. This advice may seem vague—and to some extent it must be—but it does render some notion of what is to be avoided (evil) and, consequently, what is to be done.

The imperative to seek novel beauties in experience demands that we avoid a recognizable Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand, there is the evil of trivialized order; on the other, the evil of chaotic intensity. Aesthetic satisfaction depends on the fusion of order and intensity—one without the other will not do. Sterile order leads to boredom which often reaches the point of *taedium vitae*; chaotic intensity is productive of pain and suffering. Both forms of evil contribute to the greatest evil of all—diminishment of possibility. In an earlier quotation Whitehead referred to the man who is degraded to the status of a hog. Now, it is not degrading for a hog to be a hog, but it is degrading for a man to sink to the level of a hog. To degrade literally means to move from a higher
grade, appropriate to one's self-realization, to a lower grade of existence. The evil of evils is to diminish the possibilities that are open to oneself. For a hog there is no possibility for aspiring to manhood, but a man may despair to the level of hoghood, and from Whitehead's point of view he should be judged accordingly. The attempt to decide in what our "manhood" consists requires consideration of the question of philosophical anthropology.

The Station of Man

The question of philosophical anthropology has deep roots in western culture. One of the more poignant expressions of it is Job's cry of anguish.

What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? And that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldst visit him every morning and try him every morning?11

The question of philosophical anthropology is crucial for political philosophy; one's assessment of human nature is intimately related to one's stance on ethical and political matters. An assessment of human nature is an assessment of human possibilities.

At first blush, it is difficult to see how Whitehead could take any position on "human nature." Any single man is an "abstraction" in Whitehead's scheme of interpretation—how much more so "mankind"! Whitehead bluntly indicates his resistance to the traditional answer of philosophical anthropology.

It is said that "men are rational." This is palpably false: they are only intermittently rational—merely liable to

11Job 7:17-18.
rationality. Again the phrase "Socrates is mortal" is only another way of saying that "perhaps he will die." The intellect of Socrates is intermittent: he occasionally sleeps and he can be drugged or stunned. (PR, p. 79)

With this repudiation of "enduring substances," what is left of the anthropological question?

Whitehead does not entirely eschew the language of human nature. An earlier quotation cited him defining religion as "the reaction of human nature to its search for God." In one sense, "man" surely "exists." He has an "essence." "Mankind" is a complex eternal object whose graded relational essence is whollyprehended in the primordial envisagement of God. This at least addresses "the problem of universals," telling us how we can recognize "men" under the common form "man." But man is more than a primordial concept. Men exist in act, and the anthropological question seeks an answer to questions concerning man's "possibilities." Possibilities occur for actual entities within finite contexts. Thus, the question concerning man's being entails consideration of his existence in actuality.

Whitehead's answer to the anthropological question seems to emphasize higher degrees of certain capacities among men, specifically, reason, freedom and transcendence. While reason does not predicate a man for the whole of his experience the capacity for reason—especially speculative reason—does seem to distinguish us at our finest (most human?) moments.

Our capacity for freedom is equally distinctive. Recall the earlier discussion of "life." Whitehead defines life in terms of the grades of novelty—the more freedom, the more life. Man is the most free of the
finite "societies" of which we have knowledge. Thus, man's capacity for freedom makes him distinctively "human."

The capacity for freedom is deeply entwined with his capacity for "transcendence." Indeed, man at his best is constituted by transcendence. Transcendence might be defined as the capacity to use our freedom successfully—to rise above ourselves at any moment and attain the best of what we can attain. Whitehead puts it this way:

What distinguishes men from the animals, some humans from other humans, is the inclusion in their natures, waveringly and dimly, of a disturbing element, which is the flight after the unattainable. This element is that touch of infinity which has goaded races onward, sometimes to their destruction. It is a tropism to the beckoning light—to the sun passing toward the finality of things, and to the sun arising from their origin. The speculative reason turns east and west, to the source and to the end, alike hidden below the rim of the world. (FR, p. 65)

 Appropriately, Whitehead's most definitive statement on the nature of men links reason with transcendence and is rooted firmly in the comprehensive quest for God.

But what is this man who quests? What is the basis for his acts? We often think of human nature as something we act from—as a substratum setting limits to our possibilities. Whitehead does not doubt that our possibilities are limited, but he would not accept the need to posit the existence of a substantial self that grounds each personal act. The "person" is a society of actual entities each of which decides freely what it is to become. Human nature, conceived in terms of transcendence and freedom, is something we act toward, something we strive to attain. It is a standard to which we can measure up or sink beneath. Men are not creatures who act this way or that way simply because they share a common—possibly corrupted—nature. They are beings who can choose to live up to the standard set by "humanity." We can indeed be more or less human.
This approach to philosophical anthropology emphasizes man's freedom in choosing his destiny to the extent that he heeds God's call to higher harmonies. It also avoids pitfalls concisely identified in Eric Voegelin's discussion of "natures" in Aristotle's philosophy.

The philosopher who is in the possession of Truth should consistently go the way of Plato in the Republic; he should issue a call for repentance and submission to the theocratic rule of the incarnate Truth. Aristotle, however, does not issue such a call and, consequently, the imperfections of actualization (though technically called "perversions") tend to become essences in their own right, forming the manifold of reality; they become "characters" and the category of character is even extended from human individuals to types of constitutions.12

Thus, the upward reach of humanity is fixed by the type or types it displays. Of course, the Aristotelian conception of the spoudaios counterbalances the bleak disjunction between men who truly represent the best of humanity and men who are merely slaves by nature. But maturity is an acquisition. It is something for which we struggle, not a prize distributed at birth. The path to maturity involves the quest for a wholeness we never fully possess.

Summary and Prospect

This chapter has examined Whitehead's approach to the good life. The aim was to show how the quest for comprehensiveness leads, in his thought, to the pursuit of God, wholeness and man. Whitehead's approach had to be abstracted from its context in a comprehensive scheme of interpretation. The intent of the chapter was to show that Whitehead is intimately concerned with the search for the good life and what his position

on the "foundations" of the good life is. Whitehead is not nearly as explicit or systematic in elucidating these matters as Aristotle, but the concerns are present and integral.

The attempt to explore the foundations for the good life is an indispensable element of political philosophy as classically conceived. In the attempt to elucidate these foundations, a host of "problems" and "issues" have arisen, exercising the attention of political philosophers for centuries. The question arises: What does Whitehead contribute to the "perennial dialogue" that constitutes political philosophy insofar as its distinctive issues are concerned?

The following chapter attempts to map out Whitehead's position on some crucial issues in political philosophy--either judging from his explicit statements or by extending his position as it applies to the issues. The chapter will not attempt to argue for or against Whitehead's approach, for this would involve resolution of numerous and difficult controversies. Rather, the aim is to show where Whitehead fits in the world of political philosophy, thereby rounding out the illustrations and contentions of the previous chapters.
CHAPTER VI

APPLICATIONS, EXTENSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The infinitely complicated process which we call history continuously gives rise to what are called social problems, and at the same time generates those political and intellectual trends which indicate the direction which the solution to those problems is likely to take. The term "solution" used in this connection is misleading. It connotes a certain perfection or finality, comparable to the solution of a mathematical or a chemical problem, which is never possible in social relations.

Carl L. Becker

How long can the needle of the human gramaphone stay in the rut of Angst without wearing out and ending in the repetition of a ghoulish gibbering?

James Thurber

What a strange Machine Man is . . . You fill him with bread, wine, fish, radishes, and out of him come sighs, laughter and dreams.

Nikos Kazantzakis

Introduction

Most of Whitehead's attention is devoted to technical refinement of his elaborate cosmology. He is more deeply exercised by the interpretation of space and time than by the problem of authority. In this sense, Whitehead's philosophizing is "a-political." Nevertheless, the questions of space and time are themselves a part of the comprehensive interpretation wherein "political" issues derive their meaning and importance for Whitehead. Whitehead is not unconcerned with political issues, and these issues
can be addressed from the perspective of his theory. Indeed, he expects his philosophy, insofar as it is successful, to be "applicable" to all experience and to coordinate all spheres of interest. Thus, his theory must include our concern with the best possible polity.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how Whitehead's approach applies or can be applied to some basic topics in political philosophy. The chapter's applications and extensions are a combination of what Whitehead says, what a prominent author, Charles Hartshorne, has done by way of extending Whitehead's insights and my own extensions of Whitehead's thought. The first section deals with the broad topic of "order," seeking to illustrate the overall assessment of "human possibility" and political order which can be derived from Whitehead's cosmological and ethical vision. The second section addresses some classical problems associated with the political order. Specifically, the section attempts to map a Whiteheadian position on a problem that has plagued political philosophers for centuries: the possibility of freedom. The aim is to show how Whitehead gives a fresh slant to persistent riddles, not to claim any finality for his position. The third section introduces Whitehead into the arena of contemporary political philosophy by applying his outlook to the timely issues "utopia," "humanism," and "crisis." The concluding section undertakes a brief assessment of Whitehead's significance for political philosophy.

The Nature of Order in the Order of Nature

From the time when the symbol of "cosmos" was introduced into the lexicon of Greek philosophy to the present day, the idea of "order"

1See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I, 4-13; III, 5; VII.
has assumed a central place in the concerns of political philosophers. Recently, Eric Voegelin has provided a massive illustration of the continued vitality of the notion. The concept of order figures prominently in Whitehead's speculative philosophy. The concept provides a valuable nexus between political philosophy and more general cosmological speculation.

"Order" is a polysemous term, and some of its many connotations need to be sorted if it is to serve as a focus for discussion. There are at least four broad senses of the term conforming both to Whitehead's usage and that of ordinary language. We may refer to the "existent order" or the "factual order" as the order of things which are what they are regardless of what might be thought or done about them. In Whitehead's scheme, the existent order consists of objectively immortal antecedent actualities and eternal objects. These objects constitute the order of "stubborn fact" which must be accepted resolutely if we are to face up to reality.

Notwithstanding the stubbornness of stubborn fact, giveness is not the whole of reality. It is a characteristic of conscious beings that we can reject the "validity" of the existent order and conceive alternatives. Along with the facts of experience, comes the experience of facts, and experience is often anything but stoical acceptance of what "is." Thus, a second sense of order may be designated as the "ideal order" which is grounded in appetition. An "ideal," in Whitehead's cosmology, is a set

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2Eric Voegelin, Order and History, 4 vols. to date (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1956--).
of coordinated propositions concerning what might be. An ideal is the
not-yet which may never be. Nevertheless, ideals are very much a part of
our experience; we experience the not-yet as desire for realization in an
undetermined future. Ideals may be grandiose or pedestrian with varying
degrees in between. If I am lost in the desert, I may hope for a simple
drink of water, or my thoughts may turn to writing a dissertation or build-
ing a socialist society. All these thoughts are ideals for realization in
an unknown future.

For Whitehead, there is more to the world than empty dreams and brute
facts. Neither the dreams nor the facts float in nonentity. Realty is not
simply "there" interred in a cold tomb of isness; nor is it simply "here"
as a shadow play in the "mind." The world we experience is there and here
and there again as preservable moments in the creative advance of the uni-
verse. The confluence between fact and ideal derives from the capacity
for efficacious purpose. The efficacy of ideals stems from the fact that
subjects are also superjects. The ideal of one moment of experience can be
carried forward and possibly implemented in future moments of experience
which inherit the aims of their predecessors. But the implementation of
ideals seldom proceeds unhindered. The mediation among ideals in a world
of stubborn facts and cross purposes gives rise to a third type of order
which may be designated as the "ethical order." Order results from ethics
because conscious beings are purposive and must choose among alternatives.

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3 This definition represents my interpretation of Whitehead's usage.
So far as I know, Whitehead never explicitly defines "ideals," but he uses
the term extensively. Both propositions and ideals are described as "lures
for feeling," and I suppose the terms could be taken as synonyms. But I
fail to see how, for instance, The Communist Manifesto could be construed
a) as an ideal and b) as a single proposition. See PR, pp. 83-84; 91; 150;
185-87; 212; 255; 337.
Not all choices are good choices, however. The ethical order may be dismally 'bad order. If we allow that we not only can choose, but that we can choose for better or worse, it is appropriate to introduce a fourth sense of order—"right order." For Whitehead, right order involves the harmonious mutual adaptation of ideals with facts, while "disorder" or "chaos" involves their disjunction.

Whitehead warns against interpreting order as a single fixed hierarchy of Being. He believes that this view is a perversion of the Platonic view wrongly attributed to Plato. Whitehead summarizes his interpretation succinctly:

"Order" is a mere generic term: there can only be some definite specific "order," not merely "order" in the vague. Thus every definite total phase of "giveness" involves a reference to that specific "order" which is its dominant ideal, and involves the specific "disorder" due to its inclusion of "given" components which exclude the attainment of the full ideal. The attainment is partial, and thus there is "disorder;" but there is some attainment, and thus there is some "order." There is not just one ideal "order" which all actual entities should attain or fail to attain. In each case there is an ideal peculiar to each particular actual entity and arising from the dominant components of its phase of "giveness" . . . . The notion of one ideal arises from the disastrous over moralization of thought under the influence of fanaticism, or pedantry. The notion of a dominant ideal peculiar to each actual entity is Platonic. (PR, pp. 83-84)

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5 In this connection, it is interesting to note that the term hierarchy (hierarchia) was coined by the influential neo-Platonist pauedo-Denys and attained its connotations of rigidity and political solidity in the context of medieval philosophy. See Walter Ullmann, A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965), p. 31.
Thus, the standard for right order is not the Right simpliciter, but the appropriateness of a realization for an occasion or grouping of occasions. And the criteria by which "appropriateness" is judged are largely aesthetic, as was indicated in Chapter Five.

In any event, the question of right order brings us to the heart of our anxieties concerning the political order. Politics is an example of purposive action par excellence. If we rule out blind acceptance of fate or self-satisfied decisionism, the need to understand the requirements of right order becomes the nodal point for an inquiry concerning the political order.

From Whitehead's perspective, order and harmonious order should not be confused. Right order would not be that order where "chaos" is eliminated from the "cosmos." Harmony requires patterned contrast, and the "final attainment of order" would be nothing more or less than an order of deadness. Order can be seen as "the condition for excellence" or as "stifling the freshness of living" (PR, p. 338). And freshness of living requires contrast and diversity. "Chaos is not to be identified with evil; for harmony requires the due coordination of chaos, vagueness, narrowness and width" (PR, p. 112). The attempt to eliminate chaos from the universe results from the "disastrous overmoralization of thought" which results in the production of "ultimate ideals."

Whitehead associates the production of ultimate ideals with religious conviction, but we need only remind ourselves of our history, running from the Hundred Years War up through the ultimate ideals of the ideologies, to see their political relevance. Whitehead is not wholly unsympathetic to zealots. Their idealism constitutes an energizing force which has importance and grandeur.
There is a greatness in the lives of those who build up religious systems, a greatness in action, in idea and in self-subordination, embodied in instance after instance through centuries of growth. There is a greatness in the rebels who destroy such systems; they are the Titans who storm heaven, armed with passionate sincerity. It may be that the revolt is the mere assertion of youth of its right to its proper brilliance, to that final good of immediate joy. (PR, pp. 337-38)

But Whitehead reminds us that "philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world" (PR, p. 338). The schemes of the inquisitor and the rebel can be stifling and morally repugnant.

The passion for order is frequently deadening; the passion for chaos robs us of the possibility for satisfaction. The good life requires both order and chaos. It also requires permanence and change. Whitehead cites a hymn which captures both the flux and permanence which characterizes our experience.

Abide with me; Fast falls the even tide.
(PR, pp. 209; 338)

Both flux and permanence must be retained if an adequate rendering of experience is to be achieved. "Those who would disjoin the two elements can find no interpretation of the patent facts" (PR, p. 338).

Balance is the key to right order. Whitehead associates his understanding of "progress" with Aristotle's golden mean—the mean between static order and directionless change.

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order. Life refuses to be embalmed alive . . . order is not sufficient. What is required, is something much more complex. It is order entering upon novelty; so that the massiveness of order does not degenerate into mere repetition; and so that novelty is always reflected in the background of the system. (PR, p. 339)

Thus, the most basic condition for right order involves the effective fusion of novelty and order. But Whitehead is quite correct in dubbing the
problem of order as "complex." The effective mating of intense novel-
ties with stolid order is difficult under any circumstances, and the
background of "giveness" which conditions the application of the prin-
ciple of balance will vary from place to place and time to time. Never-
theless, Whitehead attempts to provide guidance through the rough ter-
rain of the political order.

Whitehead's most comprehensive discussion of the problem of
political order occurs in Part I of Adventures of Ideas. The central
motif concerns the interplay between freedom and coordination. The
ideals which animate our desire for freedom are frequently frustrated by
the requirements of coordination. Whitehead exemplifies this interplay
between freedom and coordination with reference to the demands levied in
the "economic" sphere.

The primary demand for freedom is to be found in the
general urge for the accomplishment of ... general ends,
which are a fusion of ideal and economic policies making
the stuff of history. (AI, p. 67)

Nonetheless, ideal and economic policies may not always be fused harmon-
iously. Whitehead chides those who feel that laissez faire economics
represent the natural order for strifeless attainment of social ideals.
The early capitalist system was, in his view, a transient order appropri-
ate to a stable homogenous society, not the novus ordo seclorum which
freezes history in static equipoise. The older political economy was
successful for a hundred years from the time of Adam Smith because it
"remained a dominant truth that in commercial relations men were dom-
inated by well conditioned reactions to completely familiar stimuli" (AI,
p. 94). But the theoretical edifice of classical liberalism began to
crumble when faced with the realities of social change.
Whitehead argues that the faith of classical liberalism in the final harmony which would crown the "progress" of man was based on a misreading of the relationship between strife and harmony. The faith began to falter by the nineteenth century.

The political, liberal faith of the nineteenth century was a compromise between the individualistic, competitive doctrine of strife and the optimistic doctrine of harmony. It was believed that the laws of the Universe were such that the strife of individuals issued in the progressive realization of a harmonious society. In this way, it was possible to cherish the emotional belief in the Brotherhood of Man, while engaging in relentless competition with all individual men. Theoretically, it seemed possible to conciliate the belief with the practice without the intrusion of contradiction. Unfortunately, while this liberalism was winning triumph after triumph as a political force in Europe and America, the foundations of its doctrines were receiving shock after shock. (AI, p. 33)

The liberals were not mistaken in seeking a compromise between strife and harmony; they were mistaken in believing that any compromise can achieve finality.

Whitehead believes that strife and harmony are both necessary to a vital polity and that "the intellectual driving force of successive generations will sway uneasily between the two" (AI, p. 32). Excessive emphasis on strife invites cynicism, though it may provide "a much needed corrective to an unqualified, sentimental humanitarianism" (AI, p. 32). The ideal of harmony may be a valuable spur to zestful and rewarding life, or it may degenerate into world denying renunciation or mindless activism. In Whitehead's view, it is the glory of Christianity and the Platonic tradition to have provided the west with its most rewarding ideals, but the western intellectual tradition is not without danger. "Christianity has wavered between Buddhistic renunciation, and its own impracticable ideals culminating in a crude millennium within the temporal flux" (AI, p. 33).
In the political arena strife results from the interplay of
three factors: the need for coordination, individualism and the de-
mand for group autonomy. The quarrel between the state and the indi-
vidual derives from varying stress on "Individual Absoluteness and
Individual Relativity." The individual--here understood as a personal
society--is both unique and related to all others. But to the officers
of the state, the individual is often as nothing. Yet the individual may
consider himself all important. Consequently, the individual and the
State may come into conflict. The general conditions for resolving this
conflict satisfactorily are twofold. The State must use compulsion to
preserve the public order and minimize compulsion to secure the fruits
of liberty. Compulsion is not in itself desirable, but it is necessary.
"There can be no evasion of the plain fact that compulsion is necessary
and that compulsion is the restriction of liberty" (AI, p. 56). Never-
theless, freedom and diversity are prerequisites for the good life.
Whitehead observes that social tolerance is requisite for "high civil-
ization." He notes that this truth receives its first explicit defense
in the funeral oration of Pericles as reported by Thucydides (AI, pp. 50-
51). He further notes that the Platonic dialogues, which stand as a
cornerstone to Western civilization, "constitute one prolonged apology for
freedom of contemplation, and for freedom of the communication of con-
templative experiences" (AI, p. 51). But the Periclean ideal of social
order does not receive its validation exclusively through tradition. The
primacy of persuasion over force is cosmologically grounded in the

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6Whitehead's admiration for the funeral oration was so great that
he suggested that it replace the book of Revelation as the concluding
chapter of the Bible. AI, pp. 170-71.
requirements for higher, more rewarding experience.

The peculiar civilization of speech arises from its stress upon the aesthetic end of all action. A Barbarian speaks in terms of power. He dreams of the superman with the mailed fist. He may plaster his lust with sentimental morality of Carlyle's type. But ultimately his final good is conceived as one will imposing itself upon other wills. This is intellectual barbarism. The Periclean ideal is action weaving itself into a texture of persuasive beauty analogous to the delicate splendor of nature. (AI, p. 51)

In Whitehead's analysis, the ethical force of persuasion is limited by the tragic nature of existence. The refusal to live by the canons of reason on the part of some necessitates compulsion, but we ought not forget that persuasion is a positive good whereas compulsion is right only as a dictate of prudence.

The claims of the individual and the claims of the state do not exhaust the elements of the political landscape. Whitehead is no less aware than De Toqueville of the importance of intermediary groups in social life. Whitehead insists that the state must limit its authority over these groups if satisfying harmony is to be achieved. This is particularly true of scientific and professional organizations. The state is constantly tempted to transcend its proper authority beyond its sphere of competence, and the professional groups are often the victim (AI, p. 61). Generally, Whitehead believes that the professions ought police themselves on the basis of "general professional opinion as exhibited in

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the practice of accredited institutions" (AI, p. 61). Unfortunately, he does not carefully consider the problems of sorting quack professions from genuinely accreditable professions. Nor does he consider the problem of a discipline which has lost confidence in its theoretical core and is unable to effectively combat the heretics within its ranks. Indeed, if all are heretics, who is to decide on behalf of orthodoxy? For good or ill, professional issues rapidly become political issues. When faced with competing claims concerning, for instance, "wonder drugs," who is to decide—the Food and Drug Administration, and American Medical Association, the viewers of "Sixty Minutes" or Congressman Jones? In any event, we are usually faced, in conflicts between the state and groups and/or individuals with the necessity for making hard decisions with only the vaguest glimmering of proper resolution. Whitehead does not dissolve our perplexity through verbal gymnastics and blueprints for perfection. He merely reminds us of both the value and the complexity of preserving freedom in modern society.

The Possibility of Freedom

Since "freedom" is a quintessential component of Whitehead's vision of the good society, it is appropriate to consider the angle he provides on the traditional issues in political philosophy surrounding the idea of freedom. As Chapter Five indicated, Whitehead's ethical outlook is largely teleological or utilitarian. Thus, his standard of judgment for right order and right acts in the political arena would naturally be teleological, placing him squarely in the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas. If this is the case, his theory must address a range of theoretical problems associated with man's freedom to choose
among alternatives. The purpose of this section is to outline some
of these problems and to indicate the direction Whitehead's thought could
take in attempting to answer the questions raised. The payoff should come
by illustrating that Whitehead's approach allows fresh lines of attack on
the problems—not by suggesting that he "solves" these ancient conundrums.

A profitable way to begin the discussion of freedom is by intro-
ducing the related problems of "obligation." The problem has been consi-
dered particularly acute for ethical theories that are teleological;
therefore, it would seem imperative to face the issue squarely. Martin P.
Golding raises the problem of obligation concisely in his discussion of
Aquinas' claim that a purported law has "the force of law" if it is "a
reasonable direction toward the attainment of a given end." Golding
cites the classic Kantian/deontological criticism of the position.
Deontologists hold that the theory fails to explain why laws have "the
authority of obligations."

For lawmaking, on this theory, involves what Immanuel Kant
called "hypothetical imperatives." When the lawmaker issues
his directive to do A, he is presupposing the validity of a
hypothetical imperative of the form "If you wish to achieve
end E, then you ought to (must) do A" or, perhaps, "if you
wish to achieve E, then A is the best thing to do." Clearly,
such hypothetical imperatives do not give rise to obligations.
We can see this by considering the hypothetical imperative "If
you wish to fix the Kitchen sink, then you ought to (must) use a
wrench." Even if it is assumed that one does wish to fix the
sink, the consequent ("you ought to use a wrench") hardly amounts
to an obligation to use a wrench. Laws, it is argued, are in
exactly the same case.

If this argument is accepted, it applies with equal force to the ethical
position described in Chapter Five. The notion that "right means producing

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8 Martin P. Golding, Philosophy of Law (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:

9 Ibid.
harmonious order in accordance with God's aim is reduced to a non-obligatory hypothetical imperative.

Nevertheless, there is a defensible interpretation for the meaning of obligation underlying Aquinas' teleological ethic which Golding simply overlooks. In Golding's argument, we are asked whether we wish to fix the sink. Make the terminology stronger and the denial of obligatoriness loses its psychological force. If I intend to fix the sink and if the wrench is the only sink fixing tool available, indeed, I must use the wrench. I have established what might be described as an instrumentally incurred obligation. If I am unwilling to lift the wrench, the evidence is conclusive that I do not intend to repair my plumbing (at present, at least). This is not evidence which denies my instrumental obligation to use my wrench if I really intend to fix the sink. Nevertheless, establishing that I have an instrumental obligation does not establish that I have a primary (or certainly not an "absolute") obligation. The question remains: Must I repair the sink?

Aquinas' reply (which dates back at least to Augustine) is simple: I must do x because I cannot fail to intend y. More specifically, no one can fail to will his own happiness; and if he understands that which contributes to his happiness, he will not fail to will it. This is

10 Golding does recognize that Aquinas' ethic is teleologically grounded, but he does not consider whether or not one teleological theory might render a more plausible interpretation of ethical experience than another. Golding seems to believe that the standards for obligatoriness must be purely "formal."

what Aquinas means by "obligation." Obligation is that which I "must" (cannot but) do if I know the end toward which I am naturally (necessarily) inclined. Aquinas links the pursuit of justice to the will of God which eternally ordains that man pursue his rightful natural and supernatural ends (with the former being subordinate in importance in importance to the latter). Man's happiness lies in the pursuit of his proper ends, and God's ordinances give rise to a "kind of necessity" that is analogous to efficient causation in the non-human sphere. As Aquinas puts it:

God is the first mover of all wills . . . . Therefore just as all natural things are subject to divine motion by a natural necessity, so too all wills, by a kind of necessity of justice, are bound to obey the divine command.12

Primary obligation or "the necessity of justice" derives from the necessity that we will our happiness. Obligation can be understood to mean that which we cannot fail to do (and, therefore, must do). And this ethic is grounded in a view that links teleology with a cosmology viewing God as the first mover of all wills.

It would seem that Whitehead could not accept the understanding of obligation as that which we cannot fail to will. The definition seems to hinge on some theory of determinism, and Whitehead is clearly no determinist. Nevertheless, the rejection of total determinism does not imply that X is determined in no respect. To say that X must will his own happiness is not equivalent to saying that X has no choice concerning anything. Thus, Whitehead's teleological theory could be grafted to the view of obligation under consideration. The view cannot be endorsed, however, without addressing the issue of responsibility.

The discussion of obligation quite naturally leads to consideration of responsibility. Assuming that people should be held morally responsible for accepting their obligations, the question arises: If no one knowingly can fail to will his happiness, what is the basis for praise or blame? How can one be held responsible for the evil or good they do? On a determinist hypothesis, the question of responsibility may be unanswerable. If I cannot but do X, I cannot be blamed or praised justly for doing X, though it may be good to restrain me.

Whitehead insists on retaining both the ideas of responsibility and freedom:

The point to be noticed is that the actual entity, in a state of process during which it is not fully definite, determines its own ultimate definiteness. This is the whole point of moral responsibility. Such responsibility is conditioned by the limits of the data, and by the categorical conditions of concrescence. (PR, p. 255)

But even if strict determinism is denied, as in Whitehead's case, the problem is not necessarily resolved. If the ground for moral acts lies in the pursuit of happiness and if I cannot will my own unhappiness knowingly, the source of my moral failings must lie in ignorance, and I cannot be blamed justly for what amounts to mere error on my part.

The answer may lie in removing the strict dichotomy between "happy" and "unhappy." There are many grades of becoming that lie between maximal happiness and maximal unhappiness. While it may not be possible for me knowingly to choose maximal unhappiness (though I may unwittingly reach that state), it is possible to choose less than maximal happiness. A choice of this sort would result from a lack of moral courage for which I could be justly blamed. (Conversely, I would be praised for a maximal effort.)

These musings correspond reasonably well with Whitehead's theory of becoming which suggests that it may require some effort of will to
attain a state of realization appropriate to a specific grade of becoming. When faced with conflict arising from variant valuational aims, it may be easy to adopt the path of least resistance and lapse into a degraded state. For instance, if my hand hurts from writing, I may find it easier to put down my pen and wait until another day to finish what I am writing. However, I may be convinced, correctly, that I shall lose the thread of my argument and, subsequently, produce a poor piece of writing if I stop. If I choose to stop, I knowingly have chosen a lower grade of becoming over a higher grade of becoming—I have chosen diminished pain (or in some cases, momentary pleasure) over true happiness. I have not, however, willed my maximal unhappiness, nor could I do so with full knowledge.

Unfortunately, the modification of the original happiness thesis wrecks the strict obligatoriness (mustness) of the original. There seems to be no sense in which I "must" will maximal happiness. This suggests the need to modify or abandon the requirement that law and morality be obligatory.

If obligation is construed in terms of mustness, and if mustness means "we have no choice but to . . . ," Whitehead would probably reject the need for obligation. If on the other hand, obligation means that we ought to do what is right, Whitehead would clearly assent, and what is right means acting in accordance with God's aim toward harmony. We ought to do it because it is a) reasonable and b) conducive to happiness. Whitehead rejects any view of governance, Divine or human, which grounds right in might emphasizing what we are forced to do. Obligation is not something we are coerced into; it is something we freely and rationally accept as a condition for our happiness. If a government employs coercion, it is justified only to the extent that it preserves and defends the conditions
for happiness. Law is, by Aquinas' definition, "an ordinance of reason promulgated by him who has care of the community." But neither Aquinas nor Whitehead view the ordinances of government as absolute; the obligation arises only because the law is reasonable; i.e. ordained by God and conducive to happiness. The "authority of obligations" does not rest with the mustness of guns, but with the rational decisions of God and Man. This view of law as a rational instrument for harmonious adjustment is quite consistent with the stress on freedom and persuasion as desiderata for right order outlined in the preceding section. The view may provide a rough indication of why we should obey some laws. Law is a precondition for rational development of maximum happiness—happiness requires (coercive) order. On the thorny question of when we should obey or disobey human laws, the approach provides less instruction. Of course, this is a question to which volumes have been dedicated. Here, the question only can be left as a quandry.

The questions of obligation and responsibility are centrally related to the problem of freedom. As noted, Whitehead seeks to retain both moral responsibility and freedom to decide. A longstanding enigma centers upon the possibility of fusing the two. Whitehead provides a plausible cosmology allowing for novelty, but that does not mean that his theory allows for the exercise of freedom if freedom is understood to involve responsible choice. The difficulty involved in fusing responsibility with novelty is well illustrated by George Pitcher in his book on Wittgenstein.

Pitcher begins by noting that the conviction that all events have causes undermines our belief in "free will." He believes that "psychology

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Aquinas, ST, I-II, Q 90, Art. 4; in The Political Ideas, p. 9.
and the social sciences seem to be moving ever closer to the ideal of being able to explain causally all human actions." This incredible overestimation of the social sciences is not crucial to his argument, however. Pitcher agrees to concede, arguendo, that there can be human actions which have no causes. With the concession,

we only jump from the frying pan into the fire . . . .
The free human action now comes into the world out of the blue, as a kind of miracle, altogether fortuitously. Since it proceeds from no causes, it therefore of course proceeds from no causes in the agent himself; he, in short, is not responsible for it—nothing is—and so he cannot be blamed or praised for its occurrence.

This has been a foundering point for many "free will" doctrines. Whitehead's cosmology provides a fresh slant on the problem. The argument assumes that there must be a strict dichotomy between that which is freely done and that which is "caused." Whitehead's theory accepts no such dichotomy. It proposes that a) there are antecedent causes for all actual entities other than God, where cause is understood to mean antecedent data which may be accepted into the constitution of a prehending entity; b) all actual entities are self-caused, where cause is understood to mean the "decision" to include antecedent data into one's constitution; and c) some actual entities consciously decide to include some causes antecedent to them in their constitutions and exclude other possibilities.

For Whitehead, a being is its decision, and decisions concerning either what to accept from the past or what to propose to posterity can be novel, responsible and partially "caused" by antecedent conditions (though


15Ibid.
not "determined"). First, I can choose from among the alternatives proposed to me—whether to wear a green shirt or a red one. Second, I can choose whether or not to aim for the retention of something novel within me in routes of inheritance lying beyond me—whether or not "Yzak Moozum Rggg" will be the new name of what is presently known as "Kingsley's Shoe Shop." Finally, I can decide to reject or promote novelties I inherit from the past—whether or not to say "right on." All of these types of decision are common to our experience, and none of them clearly imply that the outcome must be either completely determined by antecedent sequences or totally uncaused by self or other.

Even if it is conceded that a single actual entity can act freely and responsibly, the ethical and legal questions surrounding responsibility and freedom are not resolved. It has been argued that Whitehead's denial of the substantial identity of a "man" with himself lays waste to our most fundamental moral and legal notions.16 We do not normally talk about praising, blaming or punishing "a moment of experience"; we charge Jones with the crime of murder. Clearly, the moment of experience that freely contemplates Mary's murder is not, on Whitehead's theory, the "same" moment of experience that contemplates the complex eternal object "electric chair" with unbounded trepidation. How can we justly punish this actual entity for the sins of its predecessors?

Anything more than a superficial sketch of this problem would take us far afield into the subtleties and refinements of legal theory.

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Whitehead provides few clues, for he never seems to have realized that the problem exists. The best clue lies, I think, in one of the central terms of the present analysis: responsibility. The index to *Process and Reality* contains four references to "responsibility" (PR, pp. 47; 222; 224; 255), and these references direct us to major elements of Whitehead's theory. The index contains no references to "guilt," and I do not recall Whitehead ever using the word.

"Identity" is a function of historic routes of succession, the product of the individual contributions of each moment of experience within a "serially ordered society" (PR, pp. 21; 551; 571; 78-79; 165; 169-70; 192; 225; 227). A conscious society transmits data along long routes of inheritance with each dominant occasion receiving data from its predecessors, organizing the data and transmitting it in modified form to subsequent members of the society. At each stage of conscrresence, the actual entity is responsible for what it contributes to the future, but there is nothing it can do about the past, which is objectively immortal. But an actual entity can refuse to continue the effective transmission of historic decisions and act responsibly. Perhaps guilt is useless—as useless as responsibility is necessary if the actual entity cares for the society to which it belongs.

Whitehead's view of identity seems to lend little aid and comfort to the retributivist view of law and morals. Retributivism is mistaken, if Whitehead is correct, in its belief that there are selves which "need" or "deserve" punishment. The belief is succored by a denial of "change" at the level of macro-process—the leopard cannot change his spots; once a criminal always a criminal. Whitehead rejects this characterological determinism in favor of indeterminism coupled with responsible decisions.
Whitehead's approach precludes the idea that a "person" may be judged to fit a single pattern once and for all. This commits the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. But this legal question reverts to the moral questions adumbrated earlier. Do we also give up the notions of praise and blame? Can legal and moral "responsibility" extending beyond any single moment be retained? Are moral notions connected with substantial predicates truly dispensable?

These are hard questions which no more can receive resolution here than the enigma concerning voluntary acts of evil discussed earlier. The points to be remembered are: a) that these traditional questions of political philosophy are meaningful and important in the context of Whitehead's cosmology and b) that his indeterminist cosmology at least suggests some interesting directions for pursuing the questions.

Utopia, Humanism and Crisis

Having briefly indicated the relevance of Whitehead's speculative philosophy to some enduring puzzles in political philosophy, it is appropriate to consider some applications of his theory to contemporary inquiries. The discussion focuses upon utopia, humanism and crisis. The first issue was selected because it links well with the discussion of "order" with which the chapter began. The second is included because it serves to reaffirm the classical, theocentric base of Whitehead's thinking and because Charles Hartshorne's critique of humanism involves an interesting attempt to apply a roughly "Whiteheadian" standard and approach to a major issue in political philosophy. The issue of "crisis" is considered with the issue of humanism because the two issues are tied together in much contemporary political philosophy.
Utopia and Realism

Whitehead's recognition of the importance and limitations of "ideals" for political life naturally leads to a consideration of the role of "utopia" in the western intellectual tradition. Ideas, utopian or otherwise, are not "nowhere." They "exist" in anticipation as the not-yet. Utopian ideals are characterized by their finality—the end point toward which the logos moves or the perfect state which can be attained if certain conditions are met. As indicated earlier, for Whitehead, ultimate ideals are both valuable and dangerous. They are valuable because they provide the moral energy needed to achieve novel harmonies; they are dangerous because nothing in our experience warrants belief in a final state of perfection. The utopian impulse can be tamed only if a sense of transcendence is retained—"the aim is always beyond the attained fact" (AI, p. 81). Unfortunately, Utopians forget the "equations of reality" which require "hard decisions," as Walter Lippmann would have it. Furthermore, Utopians lack the foresight to consider


the oftentimes disastrous consequences of their proposals for reform—a tendency which is exacerbated by excessive moral fervor. As Whitehead puts it, "it may be better that the heavens should fall, but it is folly to ignore the fact that they will fall" (AI, p. 21).

Recognition of the follies of Utopianism does not amount to a sanction of a hard-boiled realism that would expel all ideals from "the real world." Ideals may have little practical importance at the time they are enunciated, but their long term importance may be monumental.

Impracticable ideals are a program for reform. Such a program is not to be criticized by immediate possibilities. Progress consists in modifying the laws of nature so that the Republic on Earth may conform to that Society to be discerned ideally by the divination of Wisdom. (AI, p. 42)

Whitehead illustrates the slow working character of ideals with reference to the notion of Humanity as conceived in classical and Christian thought.

According to Whitehead, the notion of the Brotherhood of Man enjoins the practice of slavery. But the abolition of slavery was an impracticable dream in ancient society. Nevertheless, this and other implications of the ideal were worked out and brought into practice during the long course of Western history. Paradoxically, the abolition of slavery received its final impetus during the period when classical humanism was faced with its most serious theoretical challenge. Hume's reduction of reality to a "flux of impressions and of reactions to impressions, each impression a distinct, self-sufficient existence, was very different to the Platonic soul" (AI, p. 29). According to Whitehead, Hume drew the proper conclusion from his metaphysics and psychological hedonism.

Whitehead quotes Hume's *Treatise*, Part II Section I, which asserts that

In general, it may be affirm'd that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, or services, or relation to ourself. (AI, p. 30)
But Hume's assertion entails a serious theoretical difficulty. What could explain the moral fervor with which slavery was opposed by the Catholic missionaries in America, the Quaker John Woolman or the free thinker Thomas Paine? "In some mysterious way, they all cared for 'mankind merely as such'" (AI, p. 30). Beyond Hume's theoretical problems lies a point that Whitehead thinks worth noticing. Men like Hume and Huxley, notwithstanding their theoretical dispositions, were inclined to oppose slavery. In effect, the "impracticable" ideals of Christianity and Platonism had become the intellectual air which skeptical men breathed unconsciously. The hard-boiled realist lives from the capital of ideals he explicitly repudiates.

Humanism and Crisis

Whitehead's attempt to walk the tightrope between the excesses of the utopians and the corrosive force of skepticism brings us to the question of "humanism." How can we preserve our attachment to the brotherhood of man? Can modern "secular humanism" successfully walk the tightrope? Charles Hartshorne, whose theism is markedly inspired by Whitehead's vision of God, argues that it cannot. He believes that "humanism" is a doctrine which suffers from its "narrowness." Hartshorne describes humanism as follows:

In general, humanists hold that so far as we know, man is the highest type of individual in existence, and that therefore if there is any proper object of religious devotion, any real "God," it can only be humanity considered in its noblest aspirations and capacities, together with nature so far as expressed in and serviceable to humanity.

Hartshorne considers the conception of man as the highest instance of "value" and "reality" to be deficient.

According to Hartshorne, the primary deficiency of humanism is its failure to take time seriously. The claim that man—or man's enjoyment—is the supreme instance of value toward which our moral efforts ought be devoted is dissolved in the acids of transience. Hartshorne submits this conclusion by posing a dilemma:

Either [the humanist] has faith that the human race will last forever—in spite of astronomy which predicts the eventual uninhabitability of the planet (to mention only one consideration)—or he looks forward to the ultimate extinction of mankind and the complete blotting out from the universe of all the values we have striven to realize. According to Hartshorne, accepting the first horn of the dilemma opens the humanist to the charge of over-credulity; accepting the second entails "absurd" consequences.

The consequences of humanism are "absurd" because the humanist position implies that a "value" can pass into "nothingness." According to Hartshorne, experience reveals that the only value of the past which we can ascertain is the preservation of past values in the present through memory. But what happens when all value passes? That it must pass is implied in the recognition that man—the repository of value—can disappear.
When all of life is in the past, what then? What will it mean then that "man had a good time in his day"? Nature will not know it, he will not know it; in what sense will it even be a fact? To say that such an eventuation is ahead of us, that the very last moment of the future may after becoming present immediately pass into nothingness, and with it all the past moments of whose values it is the cumulative sum and depository, is to talk sheer nonsense. It means that something may become absolutely nothing. Humanistic naturalism thus can give no intelligible account of the relation of past values (or of the past generally) to time.\(^{21}\)

Hartshorne contends that the only hypothesis which can make the relationship between time and value intelligible is the attribution of perfect memory to divinity where all value is permanently ensconced in the divine life. If our efforts are not to pass into permanent insignificance, a concept of perfection lying beyond the transcience of human experience is required. In Hartshorne's view, that perfection is only attainable by a being who can preserve the genuine values produced by finite beings and exist without fail. This is the sort of God posited in the process philosophies of Whitehead and Hartshorne—a being who necessarily exists and preserves value through "objective immortality."

One response to the transcience of human existence is stoical acceptance of tragedy. Hartshorne disposes of this option, to his satisfaction, by noting a failure to distinguish between the finite and the ultimate. He considers it an "almost childish notion" merely to be brave about the distant demise of mankind. He observes that Plato—who distinguishes between courage and mere folly—would have been amused by this stance.

For when the question is how life, on a certain assumption, can be intelligibly conceived to have any value whatever, it is no answer to talk about the particular value of courage.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\)Ibid., pp. 14-15. \(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 16.
Hartshorne's argument does not rely on a denial of tragedy in human existence; rather, it rests on the conviction that, with the acceptance of absolute tragedy, none of our responses—courage, defiance or fear—would have the slightest significance.\textsuperscript{23} The theist, on the other hand, can accept tragedy and bravely focus on "the brighter possibilities sufficiently to endure the darker."\textsuperscript{24}

Even if Hartshorne's criticisms of humanism are accepted, important questions remain for political philosophy. What sorts of consequences flow from the humanist faith? Is humanism merely a delusion or does it produce deleterious results? Is it not possible that the delusion is profitable insofar as it makes an otherwise unbearable existence palatable in some cases?

Neither Hartshorne nor Whitehead accept the opinion that "religious" matters are purely private concerns. Whitehead is quite convinced that the search for God has a keen bearing on the quality of civilization we possess; a sense of transcendence is required to maintain a vital society.

There stands the inexorable law that apart from some transcendent aim the civilized life either wallows in pleasure or relapses slowly into a barren repetition with waning intensities of feeling. (AI, p. 85)

When a civilization loses its transcendent aim, the result is disorder and decay. When the pressures of decay become too much to bear, there is a temptation to substitute demonic intensities for the delicately woven adjustments required by persuasion tempered by a sense of wonder. Hartshorne has expressed this theme pointedly, and his words deserve quotation at length.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid. \textsuperscript{24}Ibid.
Distinguished students have shown that the decay of civilization is not merely a technological affair, but has religious and philosophical elements of great importance. Man cannot live without ideal aims which relate to his endeavor and his suffering and his joy to something more lasting and more unitary than the sum of individual human achievements taken merely at face value. Without such an aim, he falls into cynicism or despair, by which the will to live is indefinitely nullified. The conduct of affairs cannot long remain in the hands of persons thus weakened. History seems so far entirely on the side of the doctrine that when the gods go the half-gods arrive. There is never a vacuum of religious power. . . . If human reason seems to discredit known religious forms, what ensues is not a sober rational appraisal of merely human factors accepted as such. What ensues is Lenin Worship, party worship, state worship, self-worship, despair, sensuality, or some other vagary. The proper reaction to this apparent fact is not necessarily the advocacy of a "return to religion," meaning by that to a religion whose deficiencies were the very reason why men of the highest integrity and wisdom felt dissatisfied with it, and which is deeply entangled in vested interests. What we need is to make a renewed attempt to worship the objective God, not our forefathers' doctrines about him.25

Thus, humanism, in seeking to elevate man to the status of the gods, ends in the actual reduction of man's life to its meanest proportions.

Whitehead links the false worship of false gods to the totalitarian perversions of our age. He finds in the Nazi's attempt to destroy the Jews a prime example of a worship which undermines the condition for true worship or any meaningful form of life. He asserts that the world, especially Europe, is relapsing into barbarism. The main seat for the relapse is Germany, where the over-emphasis on the idea of nationality produces the "ideal" of the totalitarian state. The totalitarian state rejects the demands of "human nature as greater than any state-system" demanding unqualified worship of the state.

The Jews are the first example of this refusal to worship the state. But religions, arts, and sciences will come next, until mankind are reduced to mean little creatures subser­vient to the god-state, embodied in some god-man. The worth of life is at stake. (ESP, pp. 53-54)

The Nazi apotheosis of the state is, as the quotation from Hartshorne indicates, only one form of contemporary deification. Thus, there is no guarantee that the passing of Nazism or any other variety of statism will preclude a "relapse" into barbarism. Thus, an important question remains to be addressed. How serious is the "vacuum of religious power" in the modern world? Is our sense of transcendence so deeply submerged that we face a "crisis" so deep that there is little hope for recovery.

The theme of "crisis" is a major topic in contemporary political philosophy, and the crisis from which we suffer is often linked with the triumph of secular humanism in western society. Whether or not the litany of voices warning of a deepening crisis in western civilization are correct cannot be settled here. Nor can the relationship between "humanism" and "decay" posited in the writings of Hartshorne and others receive detailed critical attention. Nevertheless, Whitehead's search for a re­vitalized vision of God has relevance to contemporary debates in political theory. The humanist option is not the only possible approach to our contemporary malaise. Whitehead's theistic philosophy provides a challenging alternative.

In any event, several morals concerning the issue of "crisis" can be elaborated as extensions of Whitehead's outlook, while also indicating

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his broader relevance for political theory as a whole. First, warnings should not be mistaken for prophecies indicating an iron necessity for the outcome of our civilization. Whitehead is not a determinist, fatalist or historicist.

Second, the rejection of fatalism implies that the recognition of a "crisis" in the life of the West should not be taken as a sanction for quietism. If we take our moral responsibility seriously, we must begin with awareness that possibilities for "improvement" are not closed—novel adjustments are open to an undetermined future. Indeed, fatalism of all stripes is inconsistent with "warnings." Unless there are possibilities for free action directed toward renewal, recognition of a state of crisis has no moral significance.

Third, theoretical inquiry surrounding moral issues such as the crisis of western civilization can and should have some "practical" significance—a point on which Whitehead frequently insists. Indeed, one would expect a diagnosis of our current malaise to have some therapeutic bearing on the body politic, however indirect. At minimum, exposing the sources of our anguish should tell us what to avoid. We should constantly recall, however, Whitehead's analysis of the slow working character of ideals and avoid the expectation that a theorist working in accordance with Whitehead's approach can yield programmatic designs for social renovation.

Finally, the function of theory in Whitehead's approach is not exclusively related to its "practical" function of fostering social responsibility. The sense of transcendence extends beyond our relations to our fellow men to include our duties toward God and Nature. Consequently, Whitehead's philosophy urges a sense of the relative insignificance of our tiny slice of reality. Faith in the human spirit must be balanced with a
clear understanding of the transcience of the human order. Whitehead, in referring to the delicate interplay of interest satisfaction accompanying the industrial revolution notes that "the solution was merely temporary and so is the planet itself" (AI, p. 46). Humanism can lead to an exaggerated sense of importance attaching to humanity in the scheme of things. All orders pass; civilizations grow and decay, and their passage conforms to the overarching order of things. The demise of Man would not mark the end of reality, the end of experience, the end of beauty nor the end of goodness.

Whitehead believes that the moral contribution of a theorist cannot exclusively rest with his effectiveness in promoting meritorious reforms—if it were true, Whitehead observes, Jeremy Bentham and Auguste Comte would rank among the greatest political philosophers (AI, pp. 36-38). The task of theory is to lift our sight above the dramatic moments of history, indeed, above history itself. It is only by fulfilling its true mission that vision can acquire its most profound relevance for civilization. Whitehead summarizes his understanding of the moral and political relevance of the theoretical life elegantly.

Philosophy is not a mere collection of noble sentiments. A deluge of such sentiments does more harm than good. Philosophy is at once general and concrete, critical and appreciative of direct intuition. It is not—or, at least, should not be—a ferocious debate between irritable professors. It is a survey of possibilities and their comparison with actualities. In philosophy, the fact, the theory, the alternatives, and the ideal are weighed together. Its gifts are insight and foresight, and a sense of the worth of life, in short, that sense of importance which nerves all civilized effort. Mankind can flourish in the lower stages of life with merely barbaric flashes of thought. But when civilization culminates, the absence of a coordinating philosophy of life, spread through the community, spells decadence, boredom, and the slackening of effort . . . .

Mankind is now in one of its rare moods of shifting its outlook. The mere compulsion of tradition has lost its force.
It is our business—philosophers, students, and practical men—to re-create and reenact a vision of reverence and order without which society lapses into riot, and penetrated through and through with unflinching rationality. Such a vision is the knowledge which Plato identified with virtue. Epochs for which, within the limits of their development, this vision has been widespread are the epochs unfading in the memory of mankind. (AI, p. 98)

Conclusions

The present study was not intended primarily as an evaluative study of Whitehead's philosophy. However, if the central thesis of the study is correct and Whitehead properly can be located within the tradition of classical political philosophy, some of the basic conditions are set for an evaluation of his work. An estimation will need to address three questions: 1) What are the merits and shortcomings of the classical tradition? 2) Has Whitehead fostered this tradition? and 3) Has he extended it?

The classical tradition has both eloquent detractors and defenders. The debate over its merits, both in and outside the discipline of political science, continues. Similarly, Whitehead's rank as a philosopher is widely contested. I do not hesitate to express my love for the classical tradition and my admiration for Whitehead's magnificent synthesis. But to argue these predilections against the objections of all the detractors of Whitehead and/or the classical faith would require a separate work. For those who do not share my enthusiasms, the present study should at least afford the opportunity to make their reservations explicit. As Sheldon Wolin notes in regard to political philosophy:

In many intellectual circles today there exists a marked hostility towards, and even contempt for, political philosophy in its traditional form. My hope is that this volume, if it does not give pause to those who are eager to jettison what remains of the tradition of political philosophy, may
at least succeed in making clear what it is we shall have discarded. 26

But perhaps there are those who do not seek to jettison the classical tradition and who grant Whitehead's status as an important figure in the tradition. For these kindred souls, the third question remains open: How has Whitehead extended the tradition?

Two initial points are in order. First, if Whitehead truly represents the tradition, he extends it. Since the classical tradition is a quest for vision, there is no historical terminal point for the search. We are never entitled to say: "It is over; let us all go home and cease with this searching. The truth is ours at last." Each concrete embodiment of the philosophical quest expands the horizons of our search for our humanity. Second, the "wisdom" conveyed through a philosophical inquiry is not a permanent possession of mankind. Philosophical truth can be forgotten. If Whitehead is correct, ours is an age that all too often lapses into "the fallacy of dogmatic finality." The call to restore the spirit of openness and inquiring wonder is a valuable extension of the classical spirit.

Beyond these initial considerations, I would suggest that Whitehead's attempt to "re-enact a vision of reverence and order" (AI, p. 98) has special relevance for "modern" man. Whitehead's work stands as a unique challenge to what Leo Strauss calls "the modern project."

According to the modern project, philosophy or science was no longer to be understood as essentially contemplative and proud but as active and charitable; it was to be in the service of the relief of man's estate; it was to be cultivated for the sake of human power; it was to enable man to become the master and owner of nature through the intellectual

The reverberations of this shattering conception of reason in human life extended well beyond its initial sounding by thinkers such as Bacon, Descartes and Marx. The idea that knowledge is power has become a dynamic force in our Faustian culture. The results have not been all bad, of course. Man's estate has been relieved in many respects. Nevertheless, the massive dislocations and barbaric horrors of this century bear poor witness to the faith that the perfection of technique necessarily leads to the elevation of man. Indeed, there is reason to fear that the unbridled faith in the technical soteriology will lead to the desolation of the human spirit. Jacques Ellul has explored the ramifications of the view that "politics" involves a series of "problems" to be "solved" through technical means. He calls this frame of mind "the political illusion." The reality we experience is not a set of "problems" to be worked over by the technician and molded to fit his specifications. Reality is an arena where men act in freedom and love to find and preserve the best order attainable for finite beings under restricted circumstances. To the extent that we view ourselves as objects to be manipulated to some preconceived end, we violate our freedom and our humanity. The outcome of the technicians dream is portrayed by Ellul in decidedly bleak terms.

The future is clear enough under such conditions. More or less quickly, the political illusion, which is transitory in nature, will dissolve into ashes, and what will

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27 Strauss, City and Man, pp. 3-4.
be left will be an organization of objects run by objects.28

Of course, if Ellul's faith in the power and dignity of human freedom is justified, such an outcome is by no means necessary. But the political issue is clear enough. Is the idea that "knowledge is power" an idea we can live with, as opposed to an idea we can act upon? What good is all the know-how in the world if we lack the know-why? If we are not to merely trust the wisdom of our experts, a return to the search for wisdom is required, and that search involves the search for knowledge of the Good. Indeed, if knowledge is not knowledge of the Good and the Right, knowledge can give no account of why it is worth having. Insofar as Whitehead's loving search is a search for wisdom, his work provides an important counterpoint to the prevailing technical rationality.

More importantly, Whitehead seeks to trace our cultural affinity for instrumental rationality to its roots, an attempt with decided importance for understanding our contemporary cultural malaise. The "absence of a coordinated philosophy of life" (AI, p. 98) is traced, in Whitehead's writings, to a highly coordinated picture of reality: mechanist materialism. If Whitehead is correct, the mechanization of reality has been a dominant force in the psychic life of western man for some four centuries. The net result of the mechanical vision is to remove man as an actor in the drama of existence. Man is no more than an epiphenomenal

product of impersonal forces over which he has no control. Nevertheless, the abdication of control was only partial; the machine could be commanded if she were obeyed.

This century has seen the scientific demise of the Newtonian cosmology, but we have not witnessed an end to what Floyd Matson describes as "the mechanization of man." What could be termed political Newtonism is alive and well—especially among our social scientists. The political element—the desire to manipulate and control—was quite amenable to the Newtonian vision. As Matson observes,

the political significance of the Saint-Simonians . . . was their zealous effort to apply the Newtonian principle to the study of society wholly made over in the image of the new mechanics—technically rationalized in every detail, predictable in every activity, and hence brought under total scientific management.29

Political Newtonism need not be based on the eschatological faith and cognitive assurance of the Saint-Simonians in order to remain a powerful force. It can be based on nothing more than a perceptive lust for power accompanied by a "human" object's inability or unwillingness to resist. But the collapse of the Newtonian cosmology as a paradigm of scientific understanding undercuts the cognitive claims which once seemed unassailable. There is no reason to accept one's elevation to objecthood.

But the collapse of an image of man commonly shared—no matter how spiritually demeaning—is no cue to rejoice. One possible (and quite noticeable) reaction (not response) is to lapse into aggressive nihilism—not only to disbelieve in the great machine but to reject all. The

cacophonous crescendo of the nihilists' waltz and the technicians' concerto are the dominating sounds of our epoch. In a milieu of this sort of a "vision of reverence and order" is not a luxury but a condition for sanity. Whitehead's vision of reality may not become widespread in this epoch, but in the quiet corners of solitude it may provide shelter from the epoch.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{30}Rom. 9:18.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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Wallace Stevens: "Beauty is momentary ..." "Peter Quince at the Clavier," pt. IV.

Alfred North Whitehead: "The creativity of the world ...," AI, p. 177.


Wallace Stevens: "Politic man ordained ...." "Academic Discourse at Havana," pt. III.

Alfred North Whitehead: "If we desire a record ...." PR, p. 15.


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