

Whitehead speaks of “the goings-on of nature in which we, and all things of all types, are immersed,” and, in the same context, refers to “the thought of ourselves as process immersed in process beyond ourselves” (MTr: 8).

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“This is at once the doctrine of the unity of nature, and of the unity of each human life. . . . [O]ur consciousness of the self-identity pervading our life-thread of occasions, is nothing other than knowledge of a special strand of unity within the general unity of nature. It is a locus within the whole, marked out by its own peculiarities, but otherwise exhibiting the general principle which guides the constitution of the whole. This general principle is the object-to-subject structure of experience. It can be otherwise stated as the vector-structure of nature. Or otherwise, it can be conceived as the doctrine of the immanence of the past energizing in the present” (AI: 241).

“We speak in the singular of *The Universe*, of Nature, of φύσις which can be translated as Process. There is the one all-embracing fact which is the advancing history of the one Universe. This community of the world, which is the matrix of all begetting, and whose essence is process with retention of connectedness,—this community is what Plato terms The Receptacle” (AI: 192).

“Transcendence [is] the feeling essential for Adventure, Zest, and Peace. This feeling requires for its understanding that we supplement the notion of the Eros by including it in the concept of an Adventure in the Universe as One. This Adventure embraces all particular occasions but as an actual fact stands beyond any one of them. It is, as it were, the complement to Plato's Receptacle, its exact opposite, yet equally required for the unity of all things. In every way, it is contrary to the Receptacle. The Receptacle is bare of all forms: the Unity of Adventure includes the Eros which is the living urge towards all possibilities, claiming the goodness of their realization. The Platonic

Receptacle is void, abstract from all individual occasions: The Unity of Adventure includes among its components all individual realities, each with the importance of the personal or social fact to which it belongs. Such individual importance in the components belongs to the essence of Beauty. In this Supreme Adventure, the Reality which the Adventure transmutes into its Unity of Appearance, requires the real occasions of the advancing world each claiming its due share of attention. This Appearance, thus enjoyed, is the final Beauty with which the universe achieves its justification. This Beauty has always within it the renewal derived from the Advance of the Temporal World. It is the immanence of the Great Fact including this initial Eros and this final Beauty which constitutes the zest of self-forgetful transcendence belonging to Civilization at its height" (*AI*: 380 f.).

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*Ad* 3 December 2005—I wonder whether "the Receptacle" of Plato may not be most appropriately interpreted by Whitehead's concept of "the consequent nature of God," i.e., the abstract *variable* necessary, along with the abstract *constant* that he calls "the primordial nature of God," to characterize God's individuality as the "chief exemplification" of all the categories—or, better, transcendentals. In any case, what he says in contrasting "Plato's Receptacle" with what he calls "the Unity of Adventure" (which is, presumably, to what he otherwise calls "the consequent nature of God" as "the Eros of the Universe" is to "the primordial nature of God") makes clear that "the Receptacle" can only be abstract in comparison with "the Adventure," which is manifestly—and eminently—concrete, embracing, as it does, "all particular occasions" (*AI*: 380 f.).

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