

Notwithstanding all the things he says or implies that tacitly (and fallaciously) assign concrete actuality to what can only be the most extreme abstraction—notably, his repeated statements that "creativity" is "an underlying [ontological] activity"—Bracken clearly says, and, I believe, intends to say, that "the notion of ground," in the sense of the creativity that is the "principle or necessary condition for the existence of entities," "corresponds to what is real without being fully actual or determinate." Thus, while "the ground is just as real as the existent," still "it never achieves determinate actuality in itself but only in and through the existent." This means that "the ground of the organic universe must be located somewhere and that, if it can only be located in existents [*sc.* in what is fully actual or determinate], it must exist, first of all, in God as the primordial existent and then from that 'location' likewise exist in all finite occasions as the ground of their existence and activity" (66 f.).

The difficulty, however, is that Bracken never seems to realize that all that could possibly be meant by "what is real without being fully actual or determinate" is either the merely possible or indeterminate determinable or else the abstract common denominator thereof, and thus the unconditionally necessary, which can only be the most extreme abstraction, by contrast with the concrete actualities in which it alone is real. The closest he ever seems to come to saying something like this is when, in interpreting Schelling and Heidegger, he says that "they both stipulated in different ways that the ontological ground of a being is not another being but rather a hidden dimension of the being in question" (66). What could such "a hidden dimension" of a being possibly be except an abstract aspect, a mere empty outline, of the being?

25 September 1995