

When Bracken says (159 f., n. 5) that "creativity is not simply a logical abstraction from specific instances of creativity within innumerable actual occasions," he is, of course, correct if the statement he objects to were to be understood to mean, as he evidently takes it to mean, that creativity is simply "a descriptive generalization of the way things are rather than [a] systematic or ontological specification of the way that they have to be" (54 f.). In other words, if creativity is understood to be simply a *scientific*, as distinct from a properly *metaphysical*, abstraction, there is reason enough to argue, as Bracken does, that it does not do justice to "the ontological status of creativity within the philosophy of Whitehead" (159, n. 5).

But being "an underlying activity," as Bracken holds creativity must be (159, n. 5; cf. 51) is clearly not the only alternative to its being a merely scientific abstraction. There is the distinct alternative of understanding it as a properly metaphysical abstraction, which, in point of fact, is exactly what Whitehead himself tells us it is when he speaks of it as "the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact," and cautions against misunderstanding it as itself something concrete and actual. Therefore, while creativity may indeed be said to be "Whitehead's metaphysical Absolute, the specification of the way things have to be," one need not say, as Bracken does, that "creativity is the metaphysical Absolute as an activity, not as an entity." In fact, one *cannot* say this, consistently either with Whitehead's own express statements or with the most fundamental principles and distinctions of his philosophy.

25 September 1995