

*Process and Reality, Part V*

340 [516 f.]—Note the parallel Whitehead draws here between "physical feelings" and "the higher intellectual feelings." Presumably, the "other order" by the vague insistency of which the higher intellectual feelings are said to be haunted even as the physical feelings are haunted by the vague insistence of causality, is identical with the order referred to in the next paragraph, "in which novelty does not mean loss." But, then, the order "where there is no unrest, no travel, no shipwreck," or "in which novelty does not mean loss," is to be contrasted with "the order of the physical world." And yet, significantly, Whitehead does not speak of "the process of the temporal world" passing into the formation of *another actuality*, but rather of "*other actualities*, bound together in an order in which novelty does not mean loss." I take this to mean that Whitehead could hardly have understood God to be *an* actuality, except in the loose sense in which he can speak—for instance—of the body as *an* actuality. What is significant here is not "actuality," but "order"; "actuality," by contrast, appears in the plural. And what could it possibly refer to except the "actualities" bound together in the consequent nature of God, in which, as Whitehead says, "there is no loss, no obstruction," just as he speaks of the process of the temporal world passing into the formation of "other actualities, bound together in an order in which novelty does not mean loss"?—That Whitehead speaks as he does here strongly suggests to me that he hardly thinks of God as an actual entity in any rigid way when he speaks of considering God—having made "a distinction of reason"—in "the abstraction of a primordial actuality" (344 [522]).

—Isn't it rather clear that the "question" that Whitehead here takes to be "the most general formulation of the religious problem" is the sort of question a Westerner, conditioned by the biblical tradition, would be likely to ask? Also, to what extent is this formulation of the religious problem at all apparent in *Religion in the Making*? Wouldn't one be inclined to judge from the position set forth there that the "religious problem" had more to do with the *origin* of value, and hence with the necessary conditions of its origin, than with its *destiny*?

340 [516 f.]—What, really, is "the ultimate evil in the temporal world"? Does it lie in "the fact that the past fades, that time is a 'perpetual perishing,'" or rather in the fact that those of us who have the capacity to ask and answer this question

are unable or unwilling to come to terms with the fact that the past fades, and so on? Perhaps, in "the temporal world" generally, the ultimate evil is, indeed, transience. But in that part of the temporal world where there can be such things as "the higher intellectual feelings" and therefore *moral* freedom, isn't the ultimate evil the inauthentic way in which beings capable of such feelings, or of such freedom, fail to come to terms with "perpetual perishing"—in short: "sin"?

341 [517 f.]—In what sense is "God" a *maîer* of "interpretation," as distinct from "intuition"? Also, how is God, conceived as primarily, if not only, "conceptual appetite," any kind of a possible solution to the "religious problem," as Whitehead formulates it just above?—Perhaps Whitehead's comment here that "God and the World introduce the note of interpretation" helps to shed light on some of his other comments concerning God. Thus, for example, he can say that "the immanence of God gives reason for the belief that pure chaos is intrinsically impossible" (111 [169]). Or, again, he can say, "the concept of 'God' is the way in which we understand this incredible fact—that what cannot be, yet is" (350 [531]). In both of these comments, the same point is made as appears to be made in the original comment, namely, that by reason of the concept-term "God" we are able to understand or interpret what is already a matter of direct intuition, belief, or experience. By inference from what Whitehead says on 347 [526], we may say that the "fundamental intuition" of which the concept-term "God" is the interpretation is "the intuition of permanence in fluency and of fluency in permanence."

344 [522]—But, clearly, what God presupposes is not just "the *general* metaphysical character of creative advance," of which God is the primordial exemplification, but also "the 'temporal creatures'"—not these, those, or any other *particular* creatures, but *some* creatures (cf. 225 [344]).

345 [523]—Note Whitehead's reference here, not to the "primordial nature of God," but to "the primordial side of the nature of God," which, presumably, must also be said to have a "consequent side." That he can speak in this way, surely indicates how little the first way of speaking should ever be interpreted rigidly.

346 f. [526 f.]—What does it mean to be "everlasting"? Does it mean (1) to combine creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy; (2) to be

objectively immortal while devoid of perpetual perishing; or (3) to reconcile immediacy with objective immortality (cf. 351 [532])? Or are these only verbally different ways of saying the same thing?

347 [527]—When Whitehead speaks, as he does here, of "actuality with permanence" and "actuality with fluency," he is hardly using "actuality" in the strict sense of "*an* actual entity," since an actual entity as such cannot change and hence is precisely not "fluent"—no more, indeed, than it can be "permanent," since an actual entity that does not change does become—and perish. Somewhat similarly, to say of "the universal feeling," which is *God's* feeling, that it is "always with novel advance, moving onward and never perishing" (346 [525]) is to imply that God's feeling cannot be that of *an* actual entity, since no actual entity by itself and as such can instance "the creative advance," and any actual entity necessarily "perishes" as well as "becomes." It seems ever clearer to me that, when Whitehead says that God is "an actual entity," he is really saying only that God is actual, other than ideal, potential, etc., because "God" means agency of decision, subjectivity, concreteness, and so on—all of which, of course, are characteristics of individuals as well as events.

348 f. [529]—What Whitehead says here about God in contrast to world makes only too clear how much he tends to think and speak of God as though God were nothing but the primordial nature of God, or "the primordial side of the nature of God" (345 [523]).

349 [529]—When Whitehead speaks here about the world being "in the process" of acquiring "a consequent unity, which is a novel occasion and is absorbed into the multiplicity of the primordial character," presumably, "the primordial character" does not refer, as it does elsewhere, to the primordial nature of *God*, but rather to *the world's* being "primordially many," as in "the many become one and are increased by one." In the same way, his reference to "a consequent unity" presumably uses "consequent" otherwise than when he uses it to refer to the consequent nature of *God*, and thus to what he speaks of elsewhere as "the final unity" in which the many are absorbed everlastingly (347 [527]). By "consequent unity" here he seems to mean only what he elsewhere calls "the genetic unity of the universe" (286 [438]), or "the self-creative unity of the universe" (47 [75]), which is to say, *the unity involved in the many becoming one and being increased by*

*one*. Even so, Whitehead does clearly distinguish between "the oneness of the universe" and "the oneness of each element in the universe" (228 [348]).

349 [529 f.]—What sense does, or could, it make to speak of such things as the primordial character absorbing the consequent multiplicity, or the consequent unity being absorbed into the multiplicity of the primordial character, or the static vision accomplishing its purpose of completion by absorption of the world's multiplicity of effort? *God* may very well absorb the world; but it makes no sense at all to talk about *the primordial nature* of *God* doing so!

350 [531]—What, exactly, is "this incredible fact—that what cannot be, yet is"? Is it simply that "all the 'opposites' are elements in the nature of things, and are incorrigibly there"? Or is it that our immediate actions "perish, and yet live for evermore" (351 [533])?

350 [532]—What Whitehead says here about "the universe accomplish[ing] its actuality" is presumably only a way of talking about the universe's potentiality being actualized. But, then, what reason is there to suppose that, whenever he uses the term "actuality," he can only mean *an* actual entity?