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THE PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE IN SPINOZA AND WHITEHEAD[1]

I

In his *Process and Reality* and *Science and the Modern World* Professor Whitehead explicitly acknowledges that his metaphysics bears a close relation to that of Spinoza. Thus he writes:

> The philosophy of organism is closely allied to Spinoza's scheme of thought. But it differs by the abandonment of the subject-predicate forms of thought, so far as concerns the presuppositions that this form is a direct embodiment of the most ultimate characterization of fact. One result is that the substance-quality concept is avoided and that morphological description is replaced by description of dynamic process. (*P.R.* 10.)

Similarly in *Science and the Modern World* (102-3) he says:

> In the analogy with Spinoza his one substance is for me the one underlying activity of realization individualizing itself in the interlocked plurality of modes. Thus concrete fact is process. Its primary analysis is into underlying activity of prehension and into realized prehensive events.

The passages just quoted bear ample evidence of Whitehead's recognition of the similarity between his system of metaphysics and that of Spinoza. It shall be my purpose in what follows to make explicit just wherein the relation between their schemes of thought lies and what constitutes their fundamental differences. The main thesis I shall try to maintain is that there is a conflict of philosophical traditions at the basis of the metaphysics of Spinoza and Whitehead, and that all the problems of Spinoza's metaphysics recur in Whitehead's works in a more acute form. With this object in mind I think it best to select for discussion those concepts of Spinoza's thought to which Whitehead has drawn attention.

The substance of Spinoza is also God or the most perfect being. The infinite substance or God is allowed a final 'eminent' reality beyond that of the finite modes or accidents. The principle upon which this reasoning is based is that of the inseparability of perfection and reality—a doctrine which identifies Spinoza with all the other philosophers of the Great Tradition. I suggest that all

[1] This paper was read in its present form at a session of the Philosophical Conference held at the University of Toronto in the fall of 1935. The section on Spinoza is based on a larger study to be entitled *The Conflict of Traditions in the Philosophy of Spinoza.*

of Spinoza's proofs of the existence of God can be expressed in two brief theses: First, existence is an attribute of the essence of a most perfect being—which is his definition of *'causa sui'* and a doctrine he held in common with St. Anselm. Second, perfection determines existence, or more elaborately, perfection is prior in reality to being and is that which determines the actual existence of being. Hence if anything exists, the most perfect or infinitely perfect being exists. The point I would make here is that both theses of Spinoza may be reduced to the single proposition that perfection (or value) and existence (reality) are inseparable.[2]

There is one very important implication of Spinoza's doctrine of perfection. If we say that quantity of perfection determines existence, it follows at once that an infinitely perfect being is most real. Another way of arriving at the same conclusion is by beginning with the notion that the attributes of a substance constitute its essence. From this it follows that the more attributes a substance has, the greater is its reality, and that hence a substance constituted by infinite attributes is most real. The common thesis of both arguments is that only an infinite substance or being is most real. The finite thing by the very fact of its finitude lacks being. This thought, I take it, is at the basis of Spinoza's dictum *Omnis determinatio negatio est* (1-8, schol. 1)—a phrase which is usually misinterpreted by commentators who begin the study of Spinoza with a Hegelian bias. It is not that any form or category of being involves its negate as Hegel would urge, but that a determinate form of being is by its very nature a limitation or negation of infinitely perfect being. In brief, the Spinozistic thesis is that the infinite is prior in nature to the finite.[3]

I have taken the space-time to elaborate this point because I regard it as constituting one of the fundamental differences between Spinoza and Whitehead, as indeed between all *philosophia perennis* and modern relationistic philosophies.[4] One direct implication of Whitehead's principle of the primacy of process is that value or perfection is not intrinsically bound up with the

[2] See my paper "Value and Reality in the Metaphysics of Spinoza" in this *Review* XLV 229.

[3] Professor Hallett in his *Aeternitas* has previously drawn attention to this point.

[4] I am indebted to Professor Sheldon of Yale for the use of this term.

nature of reality. Values, as exemplified in various temporal, finite forms of being, may emerge or evolve in time, but process as such, unlike Spinoza's substance, is not essentially constituted by value-attributes. In his *Adventures of Ideas* Whitehead has some explicit statements to this effect. He writes: "All realization is finite and there is no perfection which is the realization of all perfections" (330). And again (357):

> Every occasion is in its own nature finite. There is no totality which is the harmony of all perfections. Whatever is realized in any one occasion of experience necessarily excludes the unbounded welter of contrary possibilities. There are always others which might have been and are not. This finiteness is not the result of evil or of imperfection. It results from the fact that there are possibilities of harmony which either produce evil in point of realization or are incapable of such conjunction.

Here we see that Whitehead follows the Greek rather than the Hebrew-Christian tradition. For him, as for Plato and Aristotle, an actual event is that which has some definite form. The infinite is the formless, that which lacks all determination and therefore all actuality. Hence according to Whitehead there can be no infinitely perfect being who is the realization of all perfections. Perfection is something which can be attributed only to some finite form of being.

The reason for this fundamental difference between the Greeks and Whitehead on the one hand, and Spinoza and the Scholastics on the other, is their different conception of the nature of ultimate reality. For Spinoza the essence of substance consists not in a particular form but in its attributes. Hence the more attributes any substance has expressing its power and reality, the more perfect is that substance. Therefore the most perfect being or God is a being constituted by all or infinite attributes (1-9; 1-11). Infinity of being does not mean indeterminateness or lack of definite characteristics. Infinity means absolute fulness of being. In this respect the infinite of the Hebrew-Christian tradition differs from the infinite of the Greeks, the TO APEIRON or boundless of Plato, which is merely the indeterminate receptacle of forms of being but in itself lacks all causal efficacy or actuality. Whitehead, like Plato, conceives all being as dependent upon some finite form. It is the forms which limit the boundless and produce determinate being and order and harmony.

II

Before analysing further the idea of God in Spinoza and Whitehead, it may be best to make a few historical remarks about the nature of substance, in order to see our problems in their proper perspective.

The early Ionian philosophers asked themselves the question, what is nature made of? They gave various answers, each one choosing some substance from sense-experience which he imagined could be the source of all things, such as water, air, etc. The point I wish to note here is that, once we begin with the notion of substance as that which is the permanent substratum of all particular forms of being, we must conceive all particular things as in some way modes or modifications of that continuous substance and as having no independent existence apart from that substance.

Plato and Aristotle, as I interpret them, differed from the Ionian philosophers in that they were metaphysical dualists. They made a definite separation between the formal and the material principles of nature, and then were forced to make desperate, though unsuccessful, efforts to bring them together again as they appeared in nature. Plato conceived the realm of Forms or Ideas as somehow participating in the world of change or flux. If we follow the account of the *Timæus*, there were the forms or limits somehow limiting the boundless or unlimited. Aristotle too, in spite of his criticism of Plato for separating the forms from particular things, could not avoid this metaphysical bifurcation. Ultimately, for him, the highest form of being is God or Pure Form; lowest in the scale of being is Prime Matter (Hyle) which has a minimum of form.[5] Matter is that which has the potentiality for becoming all things; form is that which constitutes the essence or being of things. It is true that as regards particular things Aristotle insisted upon an inseparable union of form and matter and was opposed to the Platonic doctrine of universal forms. The point I wish to suggest here is that in the end Aristotle also, since he worked with the two ultimate principles of matter and form, could not overcome this fatal dualism.

The thought I wish to emphasize here is that the reason why both Plato and Aristotle insisted upon the distinction between mat-

[5] See *Metaphysica* 1072*a*, *b*.

ter and form is that they adopted the thesis of Parmenides, namely, that being must be unchanging and eternal. That which is ever in a state of becoming cannot be said to be. Hence they were opposed to the Heraclitean doctrine that all is flux. This also is why they rejected the tradition of the Ionian philosophers who maintained that there is one substance or stuff which serves as the substratum of all things. If in the observable world there is change and motion, substance also must be undergoing change; otherwise one is forced to say with Parmenides and Zeno that change or motion is an illusion of the senses. By maintaining the permanence of form as over against the passage of nature, Plato and Aristotle attempted, though unsuccessfully, to do justice to the demands of reason and experience.

III

This lesson, it appears, was not taken to heart by Spinoza and Whitehead; and this accounts for the essential ambiguity of their thought. Spinoza, as is well known, tried to overcome the dualism of Descartes by positing one substance constituted by the known attributes of extension and thought. From this it followed, as Spinoza himself realized, that all finite, perceptible things must be regarded ontologically as modes or modifications of that one infinite substance. But the perfection of an absolutely perfect substance demanded that it be actually and fully realized in all respects and not subject to temporal change and process; and this could not be the case if the infinite substance was the immediate ground or source of the modes. This I take to be the significance of those propositions of Spinoza's *Ethics* (Prop. 21-28, Bk. 1) where he demonstrates that "all things which follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must forever exist and must be infinite" (1-21); and concludes (1-28) that "an individual thing or a thing which is finite and has a determinate existence cannot exist nor be determined to action unless it be determined to existence and action by another cause which is also finite and has a determinate existence".

To overcome this difficulty, Spinoza resorts to various expedients. He summons the Neo-Platonists and the Cabbalists to his aid; and they inform him that if only he introduce a doctrine of

degrees of emanation all his difficulties will be solved. Hence appears the famous distinction between attributes, immediate infinite modes, mediate infinite modes, and finite modes (*Letter* 64 to Schuller: *Sh. Tr.* 1, ch. 9). The immediate modes which follow directly from the attributes are eternal, but those which are more remote from the divine source of perfection lack the potency or power of the divine substance and hence are subject to mutability. This argument failed to satisfy some of Spinoza's correspondents, and in modern times no commentator lets the opportunity go by without drawing the reader's attention to its shortcomings. The doctrine of emanation, which in Neo-Platonic literature usually goes along with degrees of being, is one which Spinoza cannot consistently adopt if he is to retain an essential monism in which all finite things are modes or modifications of the divine substance.

Spinoza, however, had a very resourceful mind and besides was learned in the philosophical traditions. Hence he reintroduced the Aristotelian distinction between form and matter—but, of course, like a discreet man, without using these precise terms. He preferred instead to employ the terminology of Francis Bacon and distinguished between *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata* (*Sh. Tr.* 2, ch. 9; *Ethics* 1-29, schol.). For Bacon, *Natura Naturans,* the nature engendering nature, is the formal principle in things (*Aphorisms* II, 1, 2). *Natura Naturans* is the formal, universal law or structure immanent in things which determines their operations and properties. The particular thing, as we observe it in its relations to other things, is nothing but the effect, the *natura naturata,* or produced nature, which follows from the active universal principle within it. The formal principle immanent in things is eternal and immutable; but the particular things which are the effects of the latent form are subject to change in time. In Spinoza's treatise *On the Improvement of the Understanding* there occurs this passage (Wild Edition 39-40):

> The essences of particular mutable things are not to be gathered from their series or order of existence which would furnish us with nothing beyond their extrinsic denominations, their relations, or at most, their circumstances, all of which are very different from their inmost essence. This inmost essence must be sought solely from fixed and eternal things, and from the laws inscribed (so to speak) in those things as in their true codes, according to which all particular things take place and are ar-

> ranged. Nay, these mutable particular things depend so intimately and essentially upon the fixed things, that they cannot either be or be conceived without them. Whence these fixed and eternal things, though they are themselves particular, will nevertheless, owing to their presence and power everywhere, be to us as universals or genera of definitions of particular mutable things, and as the proximate causes of all things.

Now although there have not been wanting commentators who, when they read this passage, pointed out its similarity to the thought of Bacon, very few have tried to show the connection between this doctrine of forms and Spinoza's theory of *naturans* and *naturata.* Instead, learned but futile researches have been undertaken to trace the history of the term in Scholastic philosophy, which all end by showing that, although Spinoza uses a term occasionally found in Scholastic literature, he employs it in a different sense. Although the Scholastics at times spoke of God as *Natura Naturans,* they still regarded Him as a being who transcended nature, as the Creator of nature, whereas for Spinoza *Natura Naturans* is a principle immanent in nature. My thesis is that Spinoza simply adopted the Baconian use of the terms, but, unlike Bacon, he made of them metaphysical principles. God as *Natura Naturans* is simply the formal principle immanent in nature as a whole; *Natura Naturata,* the world of things which depend on God, does not differ substantially from Him. Within substance itself one is nevertheless forced to introduce the distinction between active and passive nature, so as to allow for a formal principle which is constant and is the source of order in the sense-objects which are always coming into being and ceasing to exist.

It should be remembered in this connection that the primacy of *Natura Naturans* implies that God or nature is to be conceived as a concrete, individual being of a definite, determinate nature. This means that God must ultimately be conceived as finite because, as we have shown, the formal and the finite are identical. An infinite form, as Plato and Aristotle truly saw, is a contradiction. Spinoza attempted to pass lightly over this difficulty by identifying God as constituted by His eternal, infinite attributes with *Natura Naturans* and the world of finite modes with *Natura Naturata.* Thus he writes (*Ethics* 1-29, schol.): "By *Natura*

Naturans we are to understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself or those attributes of substance which express eternal and infinite essence". Now my contention is that the principle of *Natura Naturans* cannot be applied consistently to a substance whose essence is constituted by attributes. Two entirely contrary metaphysical theories as to the nature of substance are involved. Substance as constituted by attributes may be infinite and perfect, precisely because it lacks a formal, determining principle. Spinoza is forced to readopt the substance-attribute metaphysics because he wishes to retain his metaphysical monism. Logically, by introducing the concept of *Natura Naturans,* he has introduced a formal, relational principle which, considered by itself, apart from *natura naturata,* can no longer be spoken of as an actual substance qualified by attributes.

Furthermore, to add to the difficulties of the situation, Spinoza did not realize that his metaphysics was not at all consistent with his physics. He took over the mechanistic, Democritean physics of Galileo and Descartes. On this basis, the union of bodies is explained to be the result of the combination of atomic particles. Form becomes secondary; form is the result of the union of the physical particles, but in no way determines their formation. Although Descartes conceived nature as a continuum of extension, he continued to speak of particles and primary and secondary qualities as if the atomic physics still held. Since he held further that thought constituted a distinct substance, he conceived man as composed of a substantial soul and a mechanistic body and then was faced with the problem of the interaction of body and mind.

As regards Spinoza, the situation is more complex. In so far as he held to the doctrine that nature was one infinite substance, his individuals, as modes of that substance, had to be internally related to that substance, which determined their essence and existence. This step Spinoza refused to take. Instead he proceeded to separate the world of modes from the infinite substance. The perceptible world he, like Descartes, conceived as acting according to mechanistic laws. Furthermore, on the basis of his Baconian theory of forms, *Natura Naturans* should have been the formal, determining principle of nature as a whole. Instead we find that the

form of nature is something secondary and derivative depending upon the combination of individual things. Spinoza's doctrine of the world conceived from the standpoint of physics is best illustrated by the following passage (2-lemma 7 preceding prop. 14):

> If we now consider an individual of another kind composed of many individuals of diverse natures we shall discover that it may be affected in many other ways, its nature nevertheless being preserved. For since each of its parts is composed of a number of bodies, each part without any change of its nature can move more slowly or more quickly and consequently can communicate its motion more quickly or more slowly to the rest. If we now imagine a third kind of individual composed of these of the second kind, we shall discover that it can be affected in many other ways without any change of form. Thus if we advance ad infinitum we may easily conceive the whole of nature to be one individual, whose parts, that is to say, all bodies, differ in infinite ways without any change of the whole individual.

Here we see that nature, conceived as an individual, is such as a result of the communication of parts in motion in a definite ratio of motion and rest. The parts are not conceived as internally or necessarily related to one another, and the form of the whole in no way determines the action of the parts. I submit that such a physical theory is not consistent with a metaphysics which gives the primacy to the formal principle, nor is it consistent with a monistic theory in which all nature is a continuum of changeless substance.

IV

We turn now to a similar analysis of Whitehead's metaphysics. The general thesis I shall try to maintain is that all the difficulties of Spinoza's metaphysics recur in Whitehead's works in a more aggravated form. Let us consider:

Throughout all his work Whitehead repeats and repeats the lesson that as a result of modern physics we must no longer conceive of nature as constituted by inert, static substances. The electrical theory of matter is that matter is essentially an activity, quanta of energy. The notion of an inert substance qualified by attributes must be abandoned and in its place we must substitute process or series of occasions and events. Whitehead expresses this doctrine clearly and briefly in his pamphlet, *Nature and Life,* where he says: "Matter has been identified with energy and energy is activity; the passive substratum composed of self-identical

enduring bits of matter has been abandoned". He is careful to point out that we must not commit the fallacy of 'simple location' by regarding any bit of energy in isolation from its environment. To quote again: "In the modern concept the group of agitations which we term matter is fused into its environment. There is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence. The environment enters into the nature of each thing."

The question now occurs, What is the relation between the individual forms of energy and the cosmic activity which constitutes their environment? Is Process in any way to be conceived as a unity? Is it prior to the events? It seems to me that Whitehead, like Bergson, in spite of his repeated criticisms of the category of substance is forced to reintroduce it under another name. For him the ultimate substrate of things is energy of some sort. Process or energy is that whose nature it is to act—just as Descartes conceived the soul as that whose nature it is to think and therefore held that the soul thinks always. In his *Science and the Modern World* (102-3) Whitehead states his position clearly: "In the analogy with Spinoza his one substance is for me the one underlying activity of realization individualizing itself in an interlocked plurality of modes.—Each event is an individual matter of fact issuing from an individualizing of the substrate activity." Here we see clearly that Whitehead, like Spinoza, postulates one fundamental substrate of which all things are modes, but he identifies this substrate with activity.

The main reasons for Whitehead's rejection of the category of substance are two:

First, there is the argument from Logic and Mathematics which he holds in common with Bertrand Russell. Throughout all his works Whitehead makes it very obvious that he is opposed to a substance-attribute metaphysics and to a subject-predicate logic. Instead he urges that philosophy should be based on a logic which gives the primacy to relations or structure and not to the terms or subjects. Similarly in metaphysics the ultimate principle must be a relational activity and not some underlying static substance. He believes that some such entity as process, change, or becoming, is the ultimate reality which serves as the bond of relation between the various events or occasions which emerge in time from the cosmic process. Just as in logic it is the relational form of the

proposition which determines the truth-function of the variable term, so in metaphysics, process or creativity is the relational principle which constitutes reality as one continuum.

Secondly, there is the Bergsonian argument from Intuition and the Theory of Creative Evolution. Bergson in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and *Creative Evolution* reveals to us most clearly the fundamental presupposition of modern relationistic philosophy. Becoming, he argues, is more intelligible than being. This, he claims, can be shown if we bear in mind the phenomenon of motion. Movement is not the series of static positions of things. It is essentially a certain duration of flux. This duration can be analysed for the purposes of action into a series of stages or positions, but motion cannot be reconstructed through a series of static positions. When one attempts to do so he becomes involved in all the paradoxes of Zeno. Similarly from Becoming or Process we can by abstraction derive various static forms of being. But from the notion of being one cannot derive the notion of becoming. In this respect, Bergson and Whitehead maintain, all philosophies of the past have been misled by the Aristotelian subject-predicate logic and by the consequent substance-attribute metaphysics.

As said, the doctrine of the primacy of becoming over being depends upon the assumption that becoming is more intelligible than being. This, I wish to urge, is a fallacious assumption. There is more, I should say, to active being than to static being, there is more to a body in motion than to a body in a series of static positions; but process or activity apart from a being or substance to which it may be attributed is essentially unintelligible. It seems to me that Whitehead's remark in his *Nature and Life* that "It is always possible to work one's self into a state of complete contentment with an ultimate irrationality" is well illustrated in the case of Relationistic philosophers.

The compatibility of the category of substance with the category of activity is best demonstrated by the philosophy of Leibniz, whose influence Whitehead acknowledges. Leibniz, it will be recalled, was opposed to the Cartesian-Spinozistic conception of a continuous extended substance. Extension by nature was divisible and hence, he claimed, substance as extended was not really one. Instead he conceived a theory of monads or individual substances which were centres of activity. The activity of the monad or unit

consisted in its perception or representation of the universe of other monads. Monads differ from one another in the qualities of their perceptions. There are degrees of activity. Perception is the lowest form of activity and does not involve consciousness. It corresponds to one's state when he is in a swoon or deep sleep. Apperception involves consciousness or reflective knowledge of these inner states and is characteristic of souls. Briefly put, the following points are important in this connection. First, the ultimate constituents of reality are individual substances whose essence consists in the character of their experience. Second, one monad has nothing in common with another and cannot affect that other. This is what Leibniz means by saying that all monads are windowless. Third, each monad experiences or represents the rest of the universe as a result of the preëstablished harmony arranged by God. Fourth, space or extension is not a substantial or real attribute of a monad; it is only a phenomenal relation between substances. Fifth, all nature is essentially alive though in varying degrees. Sixth, each monad is internally determined.

If now we examine the writings of Whitehead we find certain marked similarities. In his *Concept of Nature* he agrees with Leibniz that space is not an attribute of reality, but only a relation between events. Secondly, he agrees that the ultimate subjective or formal nature of each event consists in the enjoyment of some experience, though he defines experience differently. Of course, there are some important differences between them. Whitehead is opposed to a theory of pluralistic substances such as Leibniz maintains; he conceives the Leibnizian monads as events or modes of a more ultimate Spinozistic substance. Furthermore, he is opposed to the substance-attribute view implied in Leibniz's doctrine that the monads are substances to which discernible differences of activity or quality are attributed. He is opposed to a 'windowless' theory of substance such that there is no interaction between things. Whitehead's variations seem to consist, first, in postulating internal relations between various actual events instead of internal relations between the various experiences of one entity. Thus he avoids the doctrine of a preëstablished harmony and at the same time agrees with Leibniz that each event, on account of its internal relations, mirrors the whole universe. Secondly, according to Whitehead, the actual occasions have no substantial

existence of their own; they are modes or effects of cosmic process or creativity. In this manner he is interpreting the Leibnizian monads in a Spinozistic fashion; he retains the doctrine of Leibniz that the nature of things consists in their activity or experience, but like Spinoza he refuses to give individual things a substantial existence of their own. Whitehead himself summarizes his position clearly in *Process and Reality* (pt. 2, ch. 2, p. 124):

> This is a theory of monads, but it differs from Leibniz's in that his monads change. In the organic theory they merely become. Each monadic creature is a mode of the process of 'feeling' the world, of housing the world in one unit of complex feeling in every way determinate. Such a unit is an actual occasion—it is the ultimate creature derivative from the creative process.

I suggested in the preceding paragraph that Whitehead is interpreting the Leibnizian monads in Spinozistic fashion. The same point can be made by saying that Whitehead's system approximates a form of the Indian Upanishidic philosophy. He himself makes this suggestion in his *Process and Reality* (11) where he says:

> In monistic philosophies Spinoza's or absolute idealism, this ultimate is God, who is also equivalently termed 'The Absolute'. In such monistic schemes the ultimate is illegitimately allowed a final 'eminent' reality beyond that ascribed to any of its accidents. In this general position the philosophy of organism seems to approximate more to some strains of Indian or Chinese thought than to Western Asiatic or European thought. One side makes process ultimate; the other side makes fact ultimate.

The connection between the Indian conception of the ultimate nature of process and Whitehead's theory is very close. In both there is the doctrine that the ultimate substrate of things is indeterminate activity or process, from which the world of finite, temporal forms emerges. For both this ultimate process is essentially qualitative experiential feeling or subjective enjoyment without representation or consciousness; experience is said to be prior to consciousness. One might also say that the theory of cosmic, indeterminate experience is akin to one of Leibniz's lowgrade monads but conceived as a boundless, infinite continuum after the fashion of the Platonic space of the *Timæus*.[6] Whitehead, however, differs from the Indian sages in insisting with the Greeks

[6] In his *Science and First Principles* Professor Northrop has developed the theory that the Platonic space of the *Timæus* is identical with the indeterminate boundless of Oriental philosophy. This point of view enables one to gain insight into Whitehead's doctrine.

that loss of finite, actual individuality is a real loss, not a gain; that the individual attains his perfection by achieving some harmonious form of being and thereby extricating himself from the indeterminacy of pure experience.

V

At this point the problem which the Ionian philosophers and Spinoza faced recurs. If we begin with infinite, indeterminate experience, how shall we account for the origin of change and differentiation into finite modes? In Whitehead's system the problem is more acute than in Spinoza's because the latter at least started with an actual determinate substance with power of activity to modify itself into various finite modes. But Whitehead's ultimate substrate is indeterminate potentiality or feeling, lacking any actual powers and characteristics. How is one to derive actuality from potentiality? Aristotle postulated a pure form or actuality, which he also designates as Prime Mover, because he was convinced that potentiality was intelligible only in relation to a prior actuality.[7] This too is the common assumption of Maimonides, St. Thomas, and Spinoza. The reason why Spinoza takes such pains to prove the existence of an absolutely infinite, perfect substance is because he assumes that all becoming or process, all modes that become in time, can be rendered intelligible only by conceiving some infinitely perfect being of which they are the effects. In brief, the less real or perfect is to be explained by the more real or perfect. Whitehead, however, in common with Bergson and S. Alexander, has to explain the origin of the actual from the potential. I suggest here that he can do so only by endowing the potential with attributes which can consistently be attributed only to something actual. This is shown by the fact that Whitehead endows Process or Creativity with an urge or Eros to realize itself. He thus introduces into the cosmic process the principle of appetition or endeavor which characterized Leibniz's monads. A typical passage illustrating this thought occurs in *Adventures of Ideas* (357): "We must conceive the divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideas with the urge to their finite realization each in its due season. Thus a process must be inherent in God's nature whereby his infinity is acquiring realization." I conclude from the

[7] See *Metaphysica* 1049*b*.

above quotation that Whitehead endeavors to derive the actual from the potential by attributing to process an eros or urge to realize all possibilities. This, it seems to me, is to endow process with attributes which it cannot have in so far as it is mere indeterminate potentiality. To say as Miss Emmet does in her book *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism* (248) that "in the last resort action can do anything that it must do in order for there to be anything at all", is to give up any claim to rational interpretation and explanation of the nature of reality.

Whitehead himself is implicitly aware of the unsatisfactoriness of his position. Nature exhibits not only process but also constancy. According to the *Concept of Nature,* there are universal forms of being which appear or are situated in the ephemeral events; *e.g.,* Cambridge blue may be situated in many events, but the blue does not change with the events. These universals Whitehead later calls "eternal objects". The point here is that he realizes that one cannot derive these eternal objects from the mere notion of creativity or process.

Thus Whitehead like Spinoza is forced by the problem of the relation of permanence and change to revise his conception of the nature of God. Like Spinoza he comes to maintain that God must be conceived as a purely formal principle, rather than as a substrate of events. God is then conceived by him as the "Principle of Concretion", as that in virtue of which the eternal objects or pure possibilities are brought into relation with actual events so that they become relevant to one another. God so conceived is a purely formal, relating principle which makes the eternal objects and events grow together (concrescence). He does not create or produce eternal objects and events. He also serves as a limiting principle, limiting the number of possibles from among the infinite many which can be actually realized. By this limitation God introduces values into the world. The points here indicated are clearly stated by Whitehead in the following passages. In *Science and the Modern World* (257) he writes: "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." And again (258): "If He be conceived as the supreme ground for limitation, it stands in his very nature to divide the good from the evil". So in *Process and Reality* (522): "By reason

of this primordial actuality [of God] there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation".

In so far as God is the principle of concretion, He is, like the *Natura Naturans* of Spinoza, a purely formal principle and not at all a substance or substrate underlying its modes. It seems to me that Whitehead commits the same error as Spinoza in continuing to attribute to God, considered purely as a formal principle, attributes which could only pertain to Him if He were a substance. This explains why Whitehead proceeds to speak of God himself as an accident or emergent of the general activity. Thus in *Process and Reality* (11) we find the arresting statement: "In the philosophy of organism, this ultimate is termed creativity and God is its primordial non-temporal accident". And again (*P.R.* 135): "This is the conception of God according to which He is considered as the outcome of creativity, as the foundation of order and as the goal towards novelty". These passages may serve as sufficient indication that Whitehead is attempting to combine the notion of God as a principle of order or concretion, with God as in some sense identical with ultimate creativity or substantial activity. To solve this difficulty he conceives of God as an emergent or mode of creativity, Who then proceeds to act as principle of concretion.

The difficulties of Spinoza's theory are slight as compared to those of Whitehead. Spinoza, at least, was always dealing with the actual. God, whether as consisting of infinite attributes or as *Natura Naturans,* was always actual. Whitehead, however, has two realms, the potential and the actual, and is faced with the problem of deriving the one from the other. On the level of the potential he endows process or creativity with the conative urge to realize itself. Then, as this is not sufficient to account for the facts, he adds a principle of concretion to synthesize and limit the eternal objects and the actual events, if and when the latter do emerge. Whitehead is consistent enough to realize that God identified with process or creativity, and God as principle of concretion, are still merely potential and not anything actual. Hence he proceeds to evolve an actual God Who will be not merely "primordial" but also "consequent". Let us see how he attempts to accomplish this feat.

As said, Whitehead does not wish to confuse the actual with the potential. God, as primordial, shares the nature of the poten-

tial, in that, though actual, He is not fully actual; He is "deficiently actual". He has only conceptual "luring" feelings, not physical feelings (*P.R.* 522). In the fulness of time God too becomes actual, but He is dependent upon the activity of the actual occasions. When eternal objects become realized in actual events as a result of the coöperation of God considered in His primordial nature, then they also exist as ideas in the mind of God. As a consequence of the realization of the eternal possibilities, the potential nature of God becomes realized too. This can be understood in two ways: First, the Divine Being acquires a consequent nature because the indeterminate, boundless activity takes on a definite, determinate character as a result of the self-creative function of the interrelated events. Secondly, from the point of view of God as the principle of concretion, we can say that God is conscious of the actual interrelation between the various objects of nature considered as a unity. He is, so to speak, the actual order of nature, whereas in His primordial nature He was simply the necessary condition or source of order. Furthermore, in the passage of nature, events endure for a limited time or epoch and then cease to be. But in perishing each event enjoys an "objective immortality" because it constitutes a part of the eternal nature of the consequent character of God. In this sense God is the home of values. Typical passages illustrating Whitehead's conception of the dual nature of God are the following from *Process and Reality*.

> Thus analogously to all actual entities, the nature of God is dipolar. He has a primordial nature and a consequent nature. The consequent nature of God is conscious, and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of His nature, and through the transformation of His wisdom. The primordial nature is conceptual, the consequent nature is the weaving of God's physical feelings upon His primordial concepts (524).
>
> Thus by reason of the relativity of all things, there is a reaction of the world on God. The completion of God's nature into a fulness of physical feelings is derived from the objectification of the world in God. He shares with every new creature its actual world; and the concrescent creature is objectified in God as a novel element in God's objectification of that actual world (523).

By a long and devious route Whitehead has finally arrived at the stage where Spinoza and the classical philosophers began; but, so far as I can see, his actual or consequent God has no causal efficacy. He serves as a sort of reservoir of values and past

objectives, and is a symbol of human aspirations. In his eagerness to preserve the autonomy and freedom of the individual, Whitehead has relegated his God to a secondary position.[8] What is done on earth is registered in heaven, but earth is primary. Whitehead's attitude is clearly shown in *Process and Reality.*

> The sheer force of things lies in the intermediate physical process; this is the energy of physical production. 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 over-powering 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 (525-526).

In order to guarantee the freedom of the individual, Whitehead conceives of God as acting simply by persuasion and as exerting no force. As primordial, God is simply an unconscious urge imparted to the occasions; as consequent, He is the conscious object of desire. Thus we receive back again the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle's psychology, though the Unmoved Mover of the Aristotelian physics and biology is rejected.

Briefly put, the reasons for the inadequacy of Whitehead's system are two. First, he attempts to derive the actual from the potential. This I regard as intrinsically impossible and unintelligible. Secondly, he is trying to combine a monistic metaphysics with a pluralistic theory of physics and biology—a fallacy similar to that of Spinoza. Instead of offering us any solution of the perennial problem of the one and the many, he merely restates the difficulties in a more ambiguous and aggravated form. He wishes to retain a monistic substrate and also to keep the independence of the individual events and their self-creativeness. At one time he gives the primacy to God and calls the individuals modes of

[8] It is instructive to note in this connection that Spinoza is more oriental in his conception of freedom than is Whitehead. Spinoza takes determinism seriously; the law of cause and effect, the law of Karma, holds with inexorable necessity among the modes; and there is also a necessary connection in the dependence of the modes upon ultimate substance. Freedom, in the last analysis, consists in identifying oneself with the eternal source of all value and being (4-28). Spinoza, however, differs from the orientals in that this identification is the result of an intellectual love of God, and does not involve an ecstatic state of spiritual intoxication wherein there is loss of self-consciousness. Whitehead, on the other hand, is anxious to preserve the freedom of the individual apart from any reference to the ultimate substrate. Every occasion gives birth to some novelty; there is an indeterminism about each actual occasion and about God. No ground or reason can be given for the creative activity of God or the events.

His activity; at other times he gives the primacy to the nexus of events and conceives of God as an accident derived from the process.[9] It seems to me that he actually has a vicious bifurcation between his fundamental principles, though he tries vainly to reassure us that he does not mean to introduce any real dualism or bifurcation.

The positive theses to be derived from this paper are two. First, an ultimately intelligible theory of metaphysics must begin with the primacy of the actual, as Aristotle, the Scholastics and Spinoza insisted.[10] Secondly, a metaphysics which is to do justice to the problems of the one and the many, permanence and change, eternity and time, must in the last analysis be some form of dualism. There must be some eternal principle of being over against the world of events. This was the great insight of Plato and Aristotle and the failure to appreciate that insight accounts for the mutual difficulties of Spinoza and Whitehead. Just precisely how these two metaphysical principles are to be harmonized is still the task of future philosophy.

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[9] Although Whitehead in his *Science and the Modern World* emphasizes the organic character of his philosophy and its close relation to the monism of Spinoza, yet in his *Process and Reality* he has a tendency to go to the opposite extreme. It is surprising to find him saying (114): "Thus the philosophy of organism is pluralistic in contrast with Spinoza's monism". In his anxiety to guarantee the autonomy and independence of the events, Whitehead tends to conceive them somewhat as temporal monads each of which is a *'causa sui'* (135). It is hard to see how this pluralism in the realm of physics and biology is consistent with his previously acknowledged metaphysical monism (*Sc. Mod. World* 99). Instead of having God, the ultimate metaphysical reality, explain the origin of events, he attempts to have the temporal events account for the origin of this eternal principle. This procedure renders his whole philosophy intrinsically unintelligible and goes contrary to all philosophy of the past. Whitehead's theory is simply a complex illustration of the problems of the one and the many, permanence and change, but in the last analysis solves none of them.

[10] I am much indebted to Professor Urban's *The Nature of the Intelligible World* for an appreciation of the notion of intrinsic intelligibility. Professor Urban has developed this thesis from an axiological point of view which presupposes Neo-Kantian categories. My thesis, however, is in agreement with common-sense Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrine. The main insight to be derived from a study of modern Relationistic philosophies and 'Philosophia Perennis' is that revolutions in philosophy accomplish as little as in the realm of politics. In the realm of the intellect as in the Commonwealth there results nothing but chaos and the destruction of sacred values and institutions. When in the process of time a less hysterical mood prevails, one comes to realize that certain categories of thought, certain principles of metaphysics, cannot be violated if we are to continue to live and think rationally.