Matthew David Segall, PhD
Associate Professor
Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness Program
California Institute of Integral Studies

Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism: Turning Idealism Inside Out

Introduction: The Whole in a Nutshell

Despite many sharp disagreements with Francis Herbert Bradley, Alfred North Whitehead asks in his preface to *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (1929) whether the Philosophy of Organism is not, in the final interpretation, "a transformation of some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism onto a realistic basis."[1] Whitehead invites us to understand his work as a critical reconstruction of the idealist view, and, more specifically, as an imaginative transformation of Bradley's theory of feeling.[2] Whitehead's title is already an obvious allusion to F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (1893). All is here contained in *nuce*: Whitehead replaces Bradley's finite centers of appearance with an account of creative process in terms of the concrescence of individual occasions of experience, thereby pluralizing Bradley's monistic metaphysics into an experiential cosmology offering a consistent, coherent, applicable, adequate, and revisable account of the generalities applying at least to our cosmic epoch, with perhaps a faint whisper of what holds true of all such epochs.

In obedience to Whitehead's call for philosophy to reverse the abstractive tendency of the special sciences by exhibiting "the fusion of analysis with actuality,"[3] this chapter seeks to understand the technical innovations of Whitehead's organic doctrine while remaining in close contact with

[1] *Process and Reality*, xiii.
[2] James Bradley, "'The Critique of Pure Feeling': Bradley, Whitehead, and the Anglo-Saxon Metaphysical Tradition." *Process Studies* 14 (2), 1985, 253.
[3] Whitehead, "Mathematics and the Good," in *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, 113.

the concrete historical context granting his inquiry its human significance. The early 20th century brought the decline of British Idealism alongside the rise of new methods of logical analysis. But more was at play in idealism's wane than just a superior method. While he borrows from both the idealist and analytic schools, Whitehead's radically novel understanding of relations distinguishes his speculative organicism both from F. H. Bradley's mystical monism and from Bertrand Russell's logical atomism. Whitehead processual account of relations is designed to avoid philosophical shipwreck by successfully navigating between the all-consuming whirlpool of the Bradleyan Absolute and the shattering rock shoal of Russellian analysis:

> All relatedness has its foundation in the relatedness of actualities; and such relatedness is wholly concerned with the appropriation of the dead by the living—that is to say, with 'objective immortality' whereby what is divested of its own living immediacy becomes a real component in other living immediacies of becoming. This is the doctrine that the creative advance of the world is the becoming, the perishing, and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute the world.[4]

The further explication of Whitehead's new doctrine of organic relations is enhanced by the historical treatment to follow. A review of the largely political reasons for the eclipse of idealism and speculative philosophy more generally clears the air for a renewed examination of Whitehead's accomplishment. What Whitehead offers is not a return to naïve realism or pre-Kantian dogmatism, but a participatory descendental ontology initiated into the materialism melting intuitions of Absolute Idealism but unwilling to forego concern for the individually creative and yet relationally intimate appropriation of the dead by the living. "Descendental" is my neologism signaling the inverse of Kant's transcendental idealist approach. Descendental realism inquires after the necessary and universal conditions of *actual* rather than merely possible experience.[5] It continues the effort toward what Whitehead called a "critique of pure

[4] *Process and Reality*, xiii-xiv.
[5] See my *Crossing the Threshold: Etheric Imagination in the Post-Kantian Process Philosophy of Schelling and Whitehead* (Revelore, 2023). See also Daniel W. Smith, "The Conditions of the New," in *Deleuze and Guatarri Studies*, Vol 1, No. 1 (2007), 3ff.

feeling"[6] that, as I argue below, evades Kantian epistemological antinomies by an appeal to a process-relational ontology.

F. H. Bradley was not wrong to discern that a world of actually existing rather than merely apparent finite centers of experience would entail an endless flux wherein experients pass perpetually beyond themselves and into one another.[7] Whitehead's organic realism turns idealism inside out precisely by affirming this relational process, thus hurling Bradley's timeless monistic Universe into a self-differentiating creative advance, wherein "each creative act is the universe incarnating itself as one, and there is nothing above it by way of final condition."[8] In short, Whitehead's doctrine of the actual occasion as "the whole universe in process of attainment of a particular satisfaction" is simply a realistic inversion of the Bradleyan Absolute.[9]

The chapter to follow is divided into five parts. Part I introduces Whitehead's philosophy of history before recounting the sociological reasons for idealism's decline in the Anglophone world. Part II revisits Whitehead's work with Russell on the logical foundations of mathematics in an attempt to elucidate the relationship between abstract pattern and concrete process. Part III introduces Whitehead's metaphysical generalization of the function of propositions in the actual world. Part IV details Whitehead's creative repurposing of the concept of feeling found in F. H. Bradley's idealism. Part V concludes with a brief final interpretation emphasizing Whitehead's process theological amendments to the Bradleyan Absolute.

I: History

> "You will sometimes hear people say they have no metaphysics. Well, they are lying. Their metaphysics are implicit in what they take for granted about the world. Only they prefer to call it 'common sense'… When we study consciousness historically, contrasting perhaps what men perceive and think *now* with what they perceived and thought at some period in the past, when we study long-term *changes* in consciousness, we are studying changes in the world itself, and not simply changes in the human brain. We are not studying some so-called 'inner' world,

[6] *Process and Reality*, 113.
[7] J. E. Barnhart, "Bradley's Monism and Whitehead's Neo-Pluralism." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* (Winter, 1969), 398.
[8] *Process and Reality*, 245.
[9] *Process and Reality*, 200.

divided off by a skin or a skull, from a so-called 'outer' world; we are trying to study the world itself from its inner aspect. Consciousness is not a tiny bit of the world stuck on the rest of it. It is the inside of the whole world."

–Owen Barfield, "History, Guilt, and Habit"[10]

"Every scientific man in order to preserve his reputation has to say he dislikes metaphysics. What he means is he dislikes having his metaphysics criticized."

–Alfred North Whitehead, "Harvard Lectures, Vol. 2"[11]

Shortly after the above rather Whiteheadian affirmation that consciousness has truck with the totality of things[12], Barfield cites "the Cambridge Realists" Bertrand Russell and George Edward Moore as examples of those who sought to obsolesce metaphysical speculation by chaining human knowledge to the sober methods of propositional logic and empirical science. Barfield's criticism warrants qualification. Though they would distinguish themselves by becoming the school's sharpest critics, both Russell and Moore began their philosophical careers as students of idealism. And even after they had emptied their quivers into the heart of the idealist worldview, both remained convicted Platonists in their affirmation of universals (Russell at least for the truths of logic and mathematics, and Moore for ethical ideals). Their assault on idealism came in the form of a new analytic mode of thought that equipped them to make explicitly metaphysical arguments concerning the supposed implausibility of the doctrine of internal relations, especially the sort alleged to form the mystical core of F. H. Bradley's monism. Of course, as any halfway sympathetic reader of Bradley will know, he was hardly a defender of the notion of relations, whether internal or external. As J. Mander explains, his analytically minded critics "simply misunderstood Bradley's meaning [by accusing him] of thinking all relations are internal, when it is in fact his view that there are no relations at all."[13]

Regardless of Russell or Moore's incomprehension of F. H. Bradley's dialectical method of presentation, it is not the case that the Cambridge Realists claimed to have no metaphysics. Russell recounts his historic break from idealism in his memoir, noting that he and Moore's

[10] *A Barfield Reader: Selections from the Writings of Owen Barfield* (Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 131-132.
[11] *The Harvard Lectures of Alfred North Whitehead, Vol. 2, 1925–1927: General Metaphysical Problems of Science*, ed. by Brian G. Henning, Joseph Petek, and George R. Lucas (University of Edinburgh Press, 2021), 375.
[12] *Process and Reality*, 15.
[13] Mander, *British Idealism: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 108.

rebellion centered upon "the doctrine that fact is in general independent of experience."[14] That is, the truth (or falsehood) of a proposition remains an objective fact regardless of whether a mind apprehends it. In Moore's terms, they were rejecting as self-contradictory the idealist thesis that "whatever is, is experienced,"[15] whether by a conscious human being or by Absolute Spirit. Russell's doctrine of external relations and the logical atomism which followed from it were an attempt to secure the knowledge of physics, but also to eliminate vagueness and confusion resulting from our commonsense ways of speaking about the world disclosed to sense awareness: "Ordinary language is totally unsuited for expressing what physics really asserts, since the words of everyday life are not sufficiently abstract."[16] In this sense, Barfield is correct that the so-called Cambridge Realists sought, by means of the methods of logical analysis and a strict adherence to isolated sense data, to supplant any need at least for *speculative* metaphysics. His criticism stands, that by seeking a more perfect vantage upon the merely external structure of the universe, they abstracted consciousness from its worldly niche, forgetting "that what we perceive is structurally inseparable from what we think."[17] It is because of this inseparability between observation and interpretation that Whitehead's process-relational reinauguration of metaphysics could only begin by challenging not only established theories but also received notions as to fact.[18]

Whitehead must also be counted among the Cambridge Realists, but his "organic realism"[19] diverges in crucial respects from the analytic school, if not always in method than at least in attitude and results. While Whitehead shared enough with his student-turned-collaborator to spend nearly a decade working to establish the logicist thesis motivating *Principia Mathematica* (published in three colossal volumes between 1910-1913), it is clear that he and Russell differed significantly regarding the project's proper philosophical interpretation and implications. In short, while Russell pursued certainty and deductive proof, Whitehead sought coherence,

---

[14] *My Philosophical Development* (London: George Allen and Unwin; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 54.
[15] Moore, G. E. "The Refutation of Idealism," in *Mind, New Series*, Vol. 12, No. 48 (Oct., 1903), 437.
[16] Russell, *The Scientific Outlook* (London: George Allen and Unwin; New York: W.W. Norton, 1931), 82.
[17] Barfield, *A Barfield Reader*, 131. See also Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* (1894/1918), a key influence on Barfield's conception of the evolution of consciousness and whose early exegeses of Goethe's scientific method is strikingly similar to Whitehead's philosophy of science (see "Goethe and Whitehead: Steps to a Science of Organism" in *Holistic Science Journal*, Vol. 2, October 2022).
[18] *Process and Reality*, 9.
[19] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 309.

analogical connection, and the unification of diverse branches of mathematics.[20] Russell's own account is again instructive:

> The conceptions of the universe of Pythagoras and Plato were informed by mathematics, and I followed them eagerly. Whitehead was the serpent in this paradise of Mediterranean clarity. He once said to me, "You think the world is what it appears to be at noon when it's sunny; I think it's what it appears to be at dawn when one awakens from deep sleep." I found his remark horrifying but couldn't see how to prove that my way of seeing was better than his. Finally, he showed me how to apply the technique of mathematical logic to his world in a way that wouldn't shock the mathematician, by dressing it up in Sunday best.[21]

Contrary to Russell and Moore, Whitehead could not accept the independence of fact from experience. "If we desire a record of uninterpreted experience," says Whitehead, "we must ask a stone to record its autobiography. Every scientific memoir in its record of the 'facts' is shot through and through with interpretation."[22] Nor was he willing to deny the relevance of the everyday use of words to philosophical investigation (thus bringing him somewhat closer at least to Moore than to Russell):

> …the understanding of the immediate brute fact requires its metaphysical interpretation as an item in a world with some systematic relation to it. When thought comes upon the scene, it finds the interpretations as matters of practice. Philosophy does not initiate interpretations. Its search for a rationalist scheme is the search for more adequate criticism, and for more adequate justification, of the interpretations which we perforce employ.[23]

---

[20] See Desmet, Ronny (2010). "Principia Mathematica Centenary." *Process Studies* 39 (2): 237-238. See also Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead, The Man and His Work: Volume 1, 1861-1910* (Johns Hopkins University, 1985), 265.
[21] *Portraits from Memory* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1956), 39.
[22] *Process and Reality*, 15.
[23] *Process and Reality*, 14-15.

Like Barfield, Whitehead conceives of languages as "storehouses of human experience."[24] Also like Barfield, he understood his own philosophical language to be composed of "metaphors mutely appealing for an imaginative leap."[25] For Barfield, the act of logical predication itself, considered analytically apart from imaginative participation in perceptual experience, becomes nonsensical, either false or tautologous.[26] "Hence the attempts we are now witnessing," Barfield wrote in the mid-1950s,

> to replace the traditional logic based on predication by a new logic, in which symbols of algebraic precision refer to 'atomic' facts and events have no vestige of connection with the symbols and no hierarchical relation to each other.[27]

While philosophy is in the business of redesigning language so as to promote the coherence and adequacy of civilized thought, it does so as a constructive critic of the abstractions of the special sciences, which left unchecked have a marked tendency to explain away all that is important in human life: "Philosophy is the welding of imagination and common sense into a restraint upon specialists, and also into an enlargement of their imaginations."[28] Whitehead, stung by the failure of his earlier effort with Russell to logically formalize mathematics, was in his later philosophy especially sensitive to the limitations of deductive devices for overcoming the ambiguities of ordinary language.[29] As he admits in the final lines of his last published article:

> Logic, conceived as an adequate analysis of the advance of thought, is a fake. It is a superb instrument, but it requires a background of common sense. …My point is that the final outlook of Philosophic thought cannot be based upon the exact statements which form the basis of special sciences. The exactness is a fake.[30]

…

[24] *Process and Reality*, 5.
[25] *Process and Reality*, 4.
[26] Barfield, *Saving the Appearances* (Wesleyan, 1988), 89, 98.
[27] Barfield, *Saving the Appearances*, 99n1.
[28] *Process and Reality*, 11, 17.
[29] Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead, The Man and His Work: Volume 1, 1861-1910* (Johns Hopkins University, 1985), 260.
[30] Whitehead, "Immortality" in *Science and Philosophy* (Philosophical Library, 1948), 104.

Whitehead conceives of human history as an adventure of ideas. But ideas cannot be adequately considered in abstraction from the emotions, purposes, and aesthetic prejudices in which they are clothed by particular peoples at particular places at particular times. The history of ideas is thus best approached as an *evolution of consciousness*, that is, as a study not only of the introduction of new words and ideas or the changing definitions and designations of old ones, but of a deeper transformation of worldviews—that is, of our very modes of perception and sense of what is to count as "fact." Such an approach may seem initially to muddy the waters, obscuring an impartial reading of the history of philosophy with social and political issues, or worse, fanciful notions stemming from some grand cosmic metanarrative. But as Whitehead reminds us, a concept of "history devoid of any reliance on metaphysical principles and cosmological generalizations is a figment of the imagination."[31]

Though diverging on some of the metaphysical details, Whitehead is an enthusiastic inheritor of William James' pragmatic approach to philosophizing as an active participant in social life: "As we think, we live."[32] While Hegel held that philosophy always comes too late to play a rejuvenating role in civilized life—"the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk," as he famously put it[33]—Whitehead emphasizes the persuasive and meliorative force of albeit initially dimly apprehended general ideas for energizing the intellectual ferment stirring social transformation.[34] F. H. Bradley, like Hegel, also took a decidedly conservative stance on the relation between philosophical reflection and active political life: "All philosophy has to do," Bradley wrote, "is 'to understand what is.'"[35] If Hegel and Bradley are philosophers of dusk looking back on what has finished, Whitehead is a philosopher of dawn imagining what may yet become. The growth in generality of apprehension of ideas may seem slow, sometimes taking hundreds or thousands of years to permeate a society. But in comparison to other major evolutionary changes in earth's history that often take millions of years, the irruption of human self-consciousness has transformed the planet in the blink of an I. It is the task of philosophy to

[31] *Adventures of Ideas*, 4.
[32] *Modes of Thought*, 63.
[33] Hegel, Georg Wilhelm. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen Wood, transl. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23.
[34] *Adventures of Ideas*, 16, 70.
[35] Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (1873), 193.

actively protect and promote this growth in mentality, to aid the mind in its awakening.[36] Whitehead likens the role of ideas in history to microbes lurking quietly in the jungle for eons before some new circumstance allows them to escape into the broader world to transform a civilization or topple an empire: "Such is the potential power of the ideas which live in the various systems of philosophy."[37] And yet as the very example shows, despite the power of our capacity for conscious self-determination, the rest of the living world remains beyond our mastery. One out of place virus can bring the entirety of civilization to a standstill, making clear that ideas are not the only makers of history.

In proper pluralist fashion, Whitehead views "the discordance of competing philosophic systems [as] a factor essential for progress."[38] Indeed, the clash between British Idealism and new methods of logical analysis at the turn of the 20th century provided a major impetus behind Whitehead's imaginative search for the higher generalities, with the other essential factors coming from the relativistic and quantum revolutions in physics, as well as the crisis of scientific specialization and knowledge fragmentation in universities. While Russell and Moore's criticisms played an important role in the perceived downfall of idealism, there are many other important factors to consider when evaluating its demise. For one thing, despite the sway their rhetoric had over popular perceptions, on purely philosophic grounds Russell and Moore can hardly be said to have "won" their debates with Bradley or idealism more generally. They often argued against strawmen, showing little understanding of the dialectical nuances of the position they attacked.[39] The situation rather reflects Whitehead's dictum that "a system of philosophy is never refuted; it is only abandoned."[40]

…

The rise of British idealism in the mid-19th century corresponded with the threat to traditional religious belief posed by advancing scientific knowledge. The idealists offered a sensitive and

[36] *Adventures of Ideas*, 24.
[37] *Adventures of Ideas*, 146.
[38] *Adventures of Ideas*, 144.
[39] See Mander, *British Idealism*, 544-545.
[40] *Process and Reality*, 6.

rational defense of spiritual reality at a time when many people were not yet willing to embrace a fully secular materialist outlook.[41] Some of idealism's popularity also stemmed from disquiet concerning the massive social upheavals brought about by rapid industrialization and monopolistic capitalism, as it offered compelling metaphysical arguments in favor of a more socially responsible political and economic ethos. While Samuel Taylor Coleridge outright rejected commercial industrialism, later idealists tended more to begrudgingly accept the inevitability of industrial capitalist civilization, seeking at least to restrain its tendency to atomize society into nothing more than a sum of competing individuals.[42] But despite the attempts of idealists to appeal to the conscience of capitalists and to make some conception of spiritual teleology compatible with the new Darwinian understanding evolution, the cumulative effect of dramatic advances in science and technology would lead many to grow more comfortable rejecting traditional religion entirely, hitching their hopes instead on the new myth of progress.

Another contributor to idealism's decline was that, unlike their original German influences Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, most of the British idealists showed little interest in natural science. Here it is important to address Whitehead's opinion that "the great German idealistic movement [was] out of effective touch with its contemporary science so far as reciprocal modification of concepts is concerned"—a charge from which Whitehead exempts Kant, who he says was "saturated with Newtonian physics."[43] Whitehead was apparently unaware of the extent to which Schelling's early works on *Naturphilosophie* were laden with citations to the new paradigm sciences of his time, sciences on which he in turn also had an important influence.[44] And despite its flaws, Hegel's dissertation (1801) focused on planetary orbits, and his later systematic writings devoted many pages to mechanics, chemistry, and biology. Like Whitehead's misreading of German idealism *vis-à-vis* natural science, the British idealist's protests against the old mechanistic materialism began to seem increasingly misplaced as the first decades of the 20th century brought

[41] James Bradley, "Hegel in Britain: A Brief History of British Commentary and Attitudes" in *The Heythrop Journal*, Vol. 20, Iss. 1 (1979), 12-14. Bradley suggests that the British idealists, principally T. H. Green, were involved more in a reinterpretation of Christianity rather than its defense.
[42] See Anthony Quinton, *The Politics of Imperfection: The Religious and Secular Traditions of Conservative Thought in England from Hooker to Oakeshott* (Faber and Faber, 1978), 83. See also James Bradley, "Hegel in Britain," 15-16.
[43] *Science and the Modern World*, 139.
[44] See Robert Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago, 2002), 128. See also Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (Continuum, 2006).

yet another set of paradigm shattering discoveries ushered in by Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and others, forcing science to accept the limits of classical reductionism. However, the candle continued to flicker, as some idealists, like R. B. Haldane[45] and H. Wildon Carr[46], saw vindication for idealism in Einstein's relativity theory, while many physicists, including Arthur Eddington and James Jeans, found themselves drawn into rather idealistic ruminations due to the shock of the new physics.[47] Other quantum physicists, like Erwin Schrödinger and Werner Heisenberg, turned to Eastern mysticism.[48] With regard to the metaphysical implications of relativity and quantum physics, for his part Whitehead saw no reason "why a realist should choke at having to swallow events."[49] The nonlocal interfusion of space, time, matter, and energy achieved in the early 20th century physical sciences did not shock Whitehead's imagination enough to spur a retreat into Mind in search of solid ground; instead, it inspired him to reconstruct reality in process-relational terms.

Perhaps the most significant sociological factor responsible for upsetting 19th century idealist trends of thought was the catastrophe of the World Wars. Anti-German feeling surged in Britain and the United States during and after the First World War. The spirit (if not the letter) of especially Hegel's political theory was blamed for enflaming German militarism and nationalism. For example, in 1915, John Dewey wrote of Hegel that "he writes in nationalistic terms the entire history of humanity," with states replacing people as the main players in an international battle for supremacy on earth: "War is the signally visible occurrence of such a flight of the divine spirit in its onward movement."[50] In a similar vein, towards the end of the war after witnessing German Zeppelins bombing London in the distance, L. T. Hobhouse wrote:

> The raid was soon over… As I went back to my Hegel my mood was one of self-satire. Was this a time for theorizing or for destroying theories, when the world was tumbling about our ears? … In the bombing of London I had just witnessed the visible and tangible

[45] See *The Reign of Relativity* (1921).
[46] See "Discussion: The Idealistic Interpretation of Einstein's Theory" by H. Wildon Carr, T. P. Nunn, A. N. Whitehead, and Dorothy Wrinch in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*, Vol. 22 (1921 - 1922), 123-138.
[47] Mander, *British Idealism*, 548, 550.
[48] See Ken Wilber (ed), *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Great Physicists* (Shambala, 2001).
[49] "Discussion: The Idealistic Interpretation of Einstein's Theory," 131.
[50] Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics* (1915), 115, 118.

> outcome of the false and wicked doctrine, the foundations of which lay, as I believe, in the book before me.[51]

"Hegelianism," Hobhouse continued, was a "dangerous" enemy of "liberal progress" because of its view of "the state as an incarnation of the Absolute, a super-personality which absorbs the real living personality of men and women."[52]

While there are certainly Right-Hegelian reactionaries who push nationalist interpretations of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1820), and Left-Hegelian revolutionaries prepared to violently seize the state apparatus to affirm the wage worker as the true and totalizing subject of history, Allen Wood argues that most contemporary scholars, unbefogged by a world-engulfing war (for now), agree "that Hegel was fundamentally a theorist of the modern constitutional state" and not a "forerunner of modern totalitarianism."[53] On Wood's reading, Hegel's proposals in *Philosophy of Right* were actually progressive and democratic relative to the actually existing Prussian state in 1820. Neither a radical nor a reactionary, Hegel's political thought is best described as moderate reformism. That said, Hegel's arguments against the idea that healthy societies can be organized around nothing but liberal individualism and self-interest remain relevant, even increasingly so. Hegel insisted that real freedom is only possible for those who have overcome their idiosyncratic partiality so as to participate universally and objectively in the ethical life of their society. Social life becomes the arena for the actualization of our freedom, rather than its restriction. On this point, it would be difficult to distinguish the Hegelian position from Dewey's own criticisms of negative freedom and *laissez-faire* liberalism, and arguments that individual selves are socially constituted rather than pre-given.

Despite attacks on everything of German origin, neo-idealists in Britain continued to be influential after the trauma of the World Wars.[54] In fact, historical hindsight gives the impression

---

[51] Quoted in Thomas Baldwin, 'Interlude: Philosophy and the First World War' in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy* 1870-1945 (2003), 367.
[52] *The Metaphysical Theory of the State: A Criticism* (Batoche Books, 1999), 16.
[53] "Editors Introduction," Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ix.
[54] Josef Chytry, "From Brexit to Hegel," a review of *The Afterlife of Idealism* in *History and Theory* 57, no. 3 (September 2018). R. G. Collingwood and Michael Oakeshott in particular so thoroughly Anglicized the old idealism that they found themselves preoccupied "with humanism, pluralism, and variety" (452). See also Admir

that the story of the eclipse of idealism in the Anglosphere was never more than a political distortion fueled by anti-Germanism and an "unexpected philosophical illiteracy" from scholars who should have known better.[55] British ire was more accurately aimed at the bellicose racist nationalism of Friedrich von Bernhardi and Heinrich von Treitschke, though self-reflective British critics must have blushed when considering the unmatched viciousness of their own nation's imperial exploits. In an opinion piece published in the United States during the war, the German historian Herman Oncken defended German culture and protested against the hypocrisy evident in the "English factory of public opinion," reminding his readers of the British Imperial army's own colonial conquests: "the poor devils may sing in the verses of Rudyard Kipling":

> Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,
> For 'alf o' Creation she owns:
> We 'ave bought 'er the same with the
> sword an' the flame,
> An' we've salted it down with our bones.[56]

Though his children served in the war effort, with his son Eric losing his life in an air battle over France in March 1918, Whitehead did not share the unthinking exultation which many Britons displayed as they sent their children off to battle. He saw no glory in the war but also no escape from it. Whitehead wrote to Russell on August 28, 1914 to express his misery at having to disagree with his closest friend's pacifism: "You must remember that the Germany which would emerge victorious is not the Germany of Goethe and Helmholtz, but the Germany of the Kaiser, Bernhardi, and Treitschke."[57]

In response to the blame placed on German idealism for the world wars, it is important to note that by the time of idealism's rise in Britain around 1860, idealism in Germany was well into its

---

Skodo, *The Afterlife of Idealism: The Impact of New Idealism on British Historical and Political Thought, 1945-1980* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[55] See Andrew Vincent, "What Bradley a Conservative Philosopher?" in *Collingwood and British Idealism Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2019), 215-219, 222.

[56] Hermann Oncken, "American Opinion of Germany," *Current History*, Vol. 2, Iss. 6 (Sept. 1915), 1144.

[57] Victor Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead: Volume Two: The Man and His Work, 1910-1947* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 27-29.

decline. With Schelling's death in 1854, the last of the great idealists had departed the earth, and the rising tide of pessimistic philosophy and positivistic science quickly filled the void. German thinkers who did not succumb to what Georg Lukács infamously called the "irrationalism"[58] of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's philosophies, like Franz Brentano, Friedrich Albert Lange, and Gottlob Frege, set to work developing new, more analytic methods. Frege (who took up a lectureship at University of Jena in 1874, 76 years after Schelling gave his first lecture at Jena in 1798) has been called "the undisputed father of analytic philosophy"[59] for his attempt to logically purify arithmetic of any intuitive element. Few of his admirers knew about his efforts late in life to develop a political theology in support of National Socialism.[60] Russell and Whitehead would have found nothing in Frege's publications on mathematical logic to indicate his fascist inclinations, but his political allegiances should dispel the prejudice that supposedly clear-headed analytic philosophers are somehow immune to the totalitarian impulse.

II: Number

> "What if we ascribe to all things the power of participation in one another?... some things will commingle and others will not, [like] the letters of the alphabet…the vowels…run through them all as a bond, so that without [them] the other letters cannot be joined… Now since we have agreed that the classes or genera also commingle with one another, or do not commingle, in the same way, must not he possess some science…who is to show correctly which of the classes harmonize with which, and which reject one another…? [B]y Zeus, have we unwittingly stumbled upon the science that belongs to free men and perhaps found the philosopher while we were looking for the sophist?"
>
> –Athenian Stranger, "Sophist"[61]

[58] See Georg Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason* (Verso Books, 2021). Lukács unfairly pegs Schelling as the origin of the irrationalist school, a label which has more to do with Lukács' dogmatic commitment to Marxist materialism than to an impartial consideration of Schelling's (or Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's) philosophical contributions.
[59] Tyler Burge, "Gottlob Frege: Some Forms of Influence," in M. Beaney, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 356.
[60] Stephen D'Arcy, "Gottlob Frege's völkisch Political Theology," in *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* (2022), Vol. 23, No. 2, 138-157.
[61] Plato, *Sophist*, 252d-253c (*Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12 translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1921). Referenced by Whitehead in "Indication, Classes, Numbers, Validation," 294.

Frege's *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (1893) aimed to provide a formal logical foundation for arithmetic. Russell wrote to Frege in 1902 to inform him of the paradox he had discovered while finalizing the proofs of *The Principles of Mathematics* (1902), which he thought also applied to Frege's own efforts. Frege replied: "Die Arithmetik ist ins Schwanken geraten" [Arithmetic verges on collapse]. Frege would go to his grave having concluded that the logicist program was a mistake, and that Kant had been right about the role of intuition in arithmetic as in geometry.[62]

Russell was, at first, undeterred. He compared his paradox concerning self-referential sets (or "classes," as he and Whitehead preferred to call them) that are and are not members of themselves to the "liars paradox" associated with the 6th century BCE philosopher-poet Epimenides of Crete. It is unlikely that Epimenides intended any irony in his statement "All Cretans are liars," but its seemingly trivial and yet viciously circular implications threatened to topple the entire foundation of mathematical logic. Nonetheless, inspired by George Boole's earlier work on algebraic logic and especially the symbolic methods of Giuseppe Peano, whom the two had met at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Paris in 1900, Russell and Whitehead forged ahead with work on their own effort to eliminate the need for intuition in arithmetic by deducing it from clear logical principles.[63] Russell introduced the doctrine of "types" in an attempt to sidestep statements producing paradox.[64] But as Ronny Desmet has shown, this attempted patch sprung a leak, requiring an updated "ramified" theory of types, which then itself proved to be too restrictive, requiring an "axiom of reducibility" to patch the patch, which itself required yet more patches, the "axiom of infinity," and the "multiplicative axiom."[65] All this "extra-logical patchwork" meant that, rather than the "bottom-up" logical reconstruction of mathematical notions from certain principles that he had hoped for, Russell found himself engaged in "top-down" inductive mathematical research.[66]

When Whitehead first began work on the *Principia* with Russell, he was apparently so transfixed by the brilliance of Peano's symbolic apparatus that the logicist dream appeared to be within

[62] Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead: Volume One,* 273.
[63] Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead: Volume One*, 255.
[64] Russell and Whitehead, *Principia Mathematica*, Volume 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1963), 60.
[65] Ronny Desmet, "*Principia Mathematica* Centenary" in *Process Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 249.
[66] Ronny Desmet, "*Principia Mathematica* Centenary," 253-254.

reach. As Lowe suggests, "the subsequent history of mathematical writing suggests that Whitehead went too far."[67] Whitehead would later jest: "Logic is the chosen resort of clear-headed people, severally convinced of the complete adequacy of their doctrines. It is such a pity that they cannot agree with each other."[68] With the third volume of *Principia* published in 1913, the two moved on to other projects without completing the originally planned fourth volume on geometry.[69] Many decades later, Russell would admit: "the splendid certainty which I had always hoped to find in mathematics was lost in a bewildering maze."[70]

Whitehead would eventually go on to offer his own version of the missing fourth volume of *Principia*. As the dust of the first world war settled, it became clear that Einstein's relativistic revolution had left classical physics no less demolished than Europe itself. So, unlike Kant who had leaned on Euclidian geometry to establish synthetic *a priori* knowledge of space, Whitehead sought to logically reconstruct Minkowskian space-time from our intuitions of durational regions and rest or motion.[71] Whitehead generalized his point-free approach even further by the time he wrote Part IV of *Process and Reality* on extension, there deeming synthetic *a priori* not the specific metrical relations of Euclid's or any other special geometry, but the non-metrical projective principle of uniform congruency of extensive connection.[72]

…

Whitehead acknowledges the failure of the *Principia* project on page 2 *Modes of Thought* (1938) by alluding not only to Russell's paradox but to Gödel's incompleteness theorems discovered

[67] Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead, Volume 1*, 260.
[68] Whitehead, *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, 211.
[69] See Desmet, Ronald and Andrew David Irvine, "Alfred North Whitehead", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/whitehead/https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/whitehead/#MathLogi.
[70] *My Philosophical Development*, 157.
[71] See Desmet, Ronny and Andrew David Irvine, "Alfred North Whitehead", 3. Physics. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/whitehead/#Phys
[72] Process and Reality, 286, 331-333. See also Segall, Matthew David. *Crossing the Threshold: Etheric Imagination in the Post-Kantian Process Philosophy of Schelling and Whitehead* (Revelore, 2023), 99.

only several years earlier.[73] Whitehead problematizes he and Russell's attempt to reduce arithmetic to logic by defining numbers as static groups. "In this way process seems to [have been] absent in our treatment of arithmetic."[74] Despite Russell's frustration at not securing theoretical certainty, Whitehead remained optimistic about his own search for deeper insight into both physics and metaphysics through the exploration and application of mathematical pattern.[75]

In an article published a few years before *Modes of Thought* but after Gödel's discovery, "Indication, Classes, Numbers, Validation" (1934), Whitehead admitted that numerosity as such is a qualitatively meaningful factor in the Universe and so "lies outside logic."[76] He rehearses the *Principia* approach of constructing classes with logical definitions mapping to specific numbers (e.g., we can define the number 7 as the class of all sets with seven elements, thus abstracting the seven-ness of any particular set of squirrels or piglets, etc., that might be indicated), with these classes then being subject to extensional analysis. He now believes that this approach, along with the theory of types that had been used to avoid Russell's paradox, must be abandoned, as these procedures left the meaning of number dependent "upon shifting accidents of factual existence," as though arithmetic were "bound up with intension and with history" such that "a new litter of pigs alters the meaning of every number, and of every extension of number, employed in mathematics."[77] He then makes a fresh attempt to logically define the otherwise ambiguous "togetherness" of distinctive propositions, such mingling being necessary to produce the contentless validity or invalidity of propositional forms, which in *Principia* had been left up to the intuitive deliverances of experience granting us a sense of spatial and temporal order.[78] In his later metaphysics Whitehead was convinced that togetherness ultimately has no other meaning than the experiential one; still, he continued the attempt to win for logic as much precision as is possible without denying the ultimately intuitive nature of mathematical pattern recognition.

---

[73] See McHenry, Leemon B. "The Axiomatic Matrix of Whitehead's *Process and Reality*" in *Process Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 1986), 173.
[74] *Modes of Thought*, 97.
[75] Desmet, "*Principia Mathematica* Centenary," 255.
[76] Whitehead, "Indication, Classes, Numbers, Validation" in *Mind, New Series*, Vol, 43, No. 171 (July 1934), 288.
[77] Whitehead, "Indication, Classes, Numbers, Validation," 288.
[78] Whitehead, "Indication, Classes, Numbers, Validation," 290, 296.

In the pre-Gödel *Process and Reality*, which J. Bradley reads as "the revision and culmination" [79] of the *Principia*, Whitehead again addressed the metaphysical status of arithmetic by examining the truth-value of the proposition "one and one make two." He cites Volume II of *Principia* for the proof of the proposition in abstraction from any application, but he admits "residual scepticism" about its relevance to the ambiguities of the actual world-process.[80]

> We hardly ever apply arithmetic in its pure metaphysical sense, without the addition of presumptions which depend for their truth on the character of the societies dominating the cosmic epoch in which we live. … There is no difficulty in imagining a world—i.e., a cosmic epoch—in which arithmetic would be an interesting fanciful topic for dreamers, but useless for practical people engrossed in the business of life. In fact, we seem to have been only barely rescued from such a state of things.[81]

Realizing that logical atomicity and intuitive continuity are both essential for deeper understanding but are meaningless in isolation, Whitehead sought in his later metaphysics to strike a harmony between the "life and motion" of process and the "changeless world of form": the philosophy of organism thus construes "the mathematical modes of fusion, such as 'addition,' 'multiplication,' 'serial form,' and so on…as forms of process."[82] No closed deductive logical system can ground arithmetical intuitions because, like all creative process, the operations of mathematics are constantly issuing in new forms, which themselves become components for further process stretching beyond all prior order, *without thereby invalidating that order*.[83] As Gödel himself noted, since novel arithmetical truths can be synthesized that are not deducible from logical axioms, "the concept of arithmetic truth cannot be defined in arithmetic."[84] The point is that processes of commingling include but transcend the components out of which they originate, like the vowels that bind consonant into words, or the copula binding subjects with their predicates. Whitehead's philosophy of organism generalizes the relational processes evident

---

[79] Bradley, James. "The Speculative Generalization of the Function: A Key to Whitehead" in *Collected Essays in Speculative Philosophy* edited by Sean J. McGrath (Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 101.
[80] *Process and Reality*, 198.
[81] *Process and Reality*, 199.
[82] *Modes of Thought*, 96-97.
[83] *Process and Reality*, 238.
[84] Hao Wang, *Logical Journey: From Gödel to Philosophy* (MIT Press, 1996), 82.

in mathematical operations by drawing proportional analogies with modes of transition as they occur in the physics of electromagnetism, in biological evolution and ontogeny, and in the streams of conscious experience we each refer to as 'I.'[85]

Whitehead chides mystics satisfied with the mere sense of vague infinitude, emphasizing instead that value requires limitation, even if the achievement of limitation in turn implies a "necessary relevance" to "modes of infinitude stretching beyond finite fact."[86] Each individual creature achieves and expresses a perspective of the *universe* and in so doing exemplifies universal conditions. Number and geometry thus map remarkably well to patterns thought finds exemplified in the physical sense world. But the effort to reduce mathematical intuitions of such patterns to deductive logical procedures betrays a lack of appreciation for the logic of discovery and the creative unrest introduced by process. The world-rhythm is not a bloodless dance of digits computing a closed chain of causes but a living harmony open to emergent evolution, "an incompletion in process of production."[87] Logical form can be abstracted from historic process after the fact, but without our intuitive recognition of cosmic harmonies, arithmetic, geometry, and the idea of physical laws would never have occurred to us.[88] While logic enables the elaboration of explicit definitions, the avoidance of errors, the fine-tuning of predictive models, and precise inferences about measurements of the settled past, and while mathematical reasoning may approach the ideal limit of eternal interconnectedness abstracted from process, nothing is finally understood until the reference of propositional functions to process is made evident.[89] Vectors of becoming pass infinitely into the future, with each novel occasion of experience achieving a differential repetition of many into one, adding itself to an open order that remains forever unfinished. "Evidently new propositions come into being with the creative advance of the world," enriching the eternity of Truth as they go.[90] As Brian Swimme frames the issue, investigation into the foundations of mathematics has led its proof procedures to be pushed off their eternal perch, submerging them in evolutionary process:

---

[85] *Modes of Thought*, 74-75.
[86] *Modes of Thought*, 78-79.
[87] *Process and Reality*, 214-215. See also Roland Faber, *The Mind of Whitehead: Adventure in Ideas* (Pickwick, 2023), 81-82.
[88] See Desmet, Ronny. "Whitehead's Notion of Intuitive Recognition" in Desmet, ed., *Intuition in Mathematics and Physics* (Process Century Press, 2016), 98-99.
[89] *Modes of Thought*, 46. See also Desmet, "Was Whitehead an Analytic Philosopher?," 226.
[90] *Process and Reality*, 259.

> Just as natural selection tests a new organism before allowing it to enter the community of life, so do the proof procedures test new mathematical propositions before allowing them to enter the body of mathematical knowledge. …an understanding of mathematics has come to mean an understanding of its development.[91]

Divinely inspired mathematicians can asymptotically approach the total abstraction of pure form from factual content, but so long as we remain immersed in "the goading urgency of contingent happenings,"[92] counting still takes energy and time. Each new piglet brings new indicative feelings and demonstrative propositions into the world and so *does* alter at least the *relevant* meaning of every number, even if some logical definition can be given to the interconnectedness among numbers that remains untouched by the given course of history.

In thinking through the relation between fact and form, Whitehead seeks to balance his delight in the power of abstract analysis to transform piglets into "food for a possibility"[93] with his insistent attentiveness to the situated perspectivity of things experienced and of the act of experiencing. This emphasis is a check not just on the analytical dream of deductive certainty at the level of form, but on idealist monism and its elision of individual experiential facts. To slightly modify Whitehead's rejoinder[94] to F. H. Bradley's *The Principles of Logic* (1883), sow-birthing-piglet as a universal qualifying the absolute is a travesty of the evidence: *that* sow birthed *that* piglet at *that* spot at *that* time: the sow knew it; the piglet knew it; and the barn mice knew it. If the birth of that particular piglet is to count as accomplished fact and determinate truth in the actual universe, the eternal necessities of number must somehow become adjusted to the contingencies of self-creating, perpetually perishing creatures.[95] Mathematics, too, has a history.[96]

---

[91] Brian Swimme, "The New Natural Selection" in *Teilhard in the 21st Century* (Orbis, 2003), 129.
[92] Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 20.
[93] *Process and Reality*, 258.
[94] *Process and Reality*, 43.
[95] See Whitehead, *Harvard Lectures, Vol. 1*, 74-75. See also Segall, "Standing Firm in the Flux: On Whitehead's Eternal Objects," in *Process Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2023), 168.
[96] Whitehead recounts this history in, *Introduction to Mathematics* (1911), Ch. 1 and 2 and again more thoroughly in Ch. 1 of *Science and the Modern World* (1925).

III: Truth

> I find seeing Whitehead an immense stimulus, please tell him. I have been thinking a great deal about matters he and I discussed, and there seems to me to be a lot of interesting work to be done on Facts, Judgment, and propositions.
>
> –Bertrand Russell (letter, July 1, 1918)[97]

For Russell, language is said to have only two functions: our words seek either to state facts or to evoke emotions.[98] Philosophers (except when engaged in politicking) are tasked with clarifying language so as to allow it to better serve the first function, with the ultimate goal of replacing ordinary words with logical propositions that can be correctly applied to the statement of facts via the method of induction. Sciences mature, according to Russell, as inductive reasoning is gradually replaced by deductive models.[99] But what is a proposition? Whitehead and Russell agree that the subject-predicate form of proposition—i.e., wherein a fact is stated in terms of some substance having some quality—is defective. As F. H. Bradley also knew well, this is because subject-predicate logic can find only contradiction and infinite regress in the idea of terms and their relations. Because Bradley still took this logic to be "the finally adequate mode of statement about the actual world,"[100] he shut his eyes to finite things and took refuge in a super-subjective Absolute, denying in theory what in practice he still presupposed.[101] Another example of this logical form's defectiveness is provided by Whitehead in his criticism of Descartes' "representative theory of perception." Due to the inability of the subject-predicate form of statement to adequately interpret relations—in this case the relation between thinking and extended substances—Descartes was forced to fall back on divine decree to secure the

---

[97] Russell wrote the letter to his brother after a visit from Whitehead while imprisoned for his political writings during the First World War. See Lowe, *Alfred North Whitehead: Volume Two*, 39.
[98] See Bertrand Russell, "Ch. 12: A Plea for Clear Thinking" in *Portraits from Memory, And Other Essays*, ed. Nicholas Griffin (Routledge, 2020).
[99] *Our Knowledge of the External World*, 27. Unfortunately, the empiricist attempt to justify induction by means of a principle of causation defined in terms of probabilistic enumeration of general truths from specific instances so far as we have observed them merely begs the question: "since it is required to justify all inferences from empirical data to what goes beyond them, [the principle] cannot itself be even rendered in any degree probable by such data" (30).
[100] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 30.
[101] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 7, 13. See also Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, 38.

possibility of true judgments linking thoughts with things.[102] As such, "'representative perception' can never, within its own metaphysical doctrines, produce the title deeds to guarantee the validity of the representation of fact by idea."[103] Whitehead adds that "the very possibility of knowledge should not be an accident of God's goodness; it should depend on the interwoven natures of things. After all, God's knowledge has equally to be explained."[104] For his part, Russell blames the maliciousness of mystical emotion for driving idealist logicians like Hegel and Bradley to demote the real world of science and daily life to mere appearance in favor of a cognitively inaccessible Absolute.[105] Such philosophers, on his reading, fail to purify and keep separate the two functions of language. Despite claims to have widened the scope of logic, many modern rationalists and idealists have failed to wean themselves off the old Aristotelian subject-predicate form.[106]

Despite his broad agreement with Russell about the limits of the subject-predicate form of statement, from Whitehead's intervention into the debate involved a radically new theory of propositions. He complained that most logicians failed to properly distinguish propositions from conscious judgments, treating the former as mere appanages to the latter.[107] Verbal statements are almost never adequate statements of the propositions they seek to express. The proper distinction between propositional feelings and conscious judgments makes "the logician's rigid alternative, 'true or false,'…largely irrelevant for the pursuit of knowledge."[108] In Whitehead's metaphysical scheme, propositions are given a much wider role in experience. Mostly, propositions function as unconscious "lures for feeling," from which it follows that their determinate truth-value cannot be isolated from the subject feeling them (i.e., *prehending* them, and not necessarily consciously judging or comprehending them): "its own truth, or its own falsity, is no business of a proposition."[109] When propositional feelings do rise to the level of consciousness, the judging subject need not decide whether they are simply correct or incorrect, that is, worthy of belief or disbelief, but can *suspend* judgment by entertaining propositions as hypotheses, "weapons

[102] *Process and Reality*, 49.
[103] *Process and Reality*, 54.
[104] *Process and Reality*, 190.
[105] Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, 36.
[106] Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, 30.
[107] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 259.
[108] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 11.
[109] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 258.

essential to scientific progress."[110] Inferential methods of induction then assist scientists and logicians in settling accounts.[111]

Russell's attempt to entirely separate the logical from the emotional function of propositions runs afoul of Whitehead's sense that the truth-value of propositions and of conscious judgments have an ineradicably emotional aspect, a "subjective form." Propositions lack determinateness without a subject to entertain them. Further, as judging subjects we state truths because we find them important:

> The fact that propositions were first considered in connection with logic, and the moralistic preference for true propositions, have obscured the role of propositions in the actual world…The result is that false propositions have fared badly, thrown into the dust-heap, neglected. But in the real world it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true. The importance of truth is, that it adds to interest.[112]

In place of a narrowly logical treatment, Whitehead sets propositions free from human heads to propagate through the networks of organic occasions composing our sense organs and viscera, as well as the earth, its encompassing galaxy, and the fractal clustering of other such galaxies that spiral over the edges of time. Russell's isolation of statements about the atomic facts of sensibilia from relevance to the overall texture of experience stands in conflict with Whitehead's sense that every proposition, in proposing a finite fact, must implicitly refer to a cosmic background exhibiting some systematic metaphysical character.[113] The complete analysis of a factual proposition must include the general character of the universe required for that fact: "There are no self-sustained facts, floating in nonentity."[114] A proposition cannot be torn from its niche.

Whitehead affirms the power of symbolic logic to clarify and distinguish for our thought aspects of the hierarchies of formal patterns weaving the true and false propositional feelings of the

[110] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 275.
[111] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 272.
[112] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 259.
[113] Ronny Desmet, "Was Whitehead an Analytic Philosopher?" in *The Algebra of Metaphysics*, eds. Ronny Desmet and Michel Weber (Chromatika, 2010), 217.
[114] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 11.

world-process together into the complex unity of God's consequent nature.[115] He reminds the logician of the abstraction involved in their technique, and of the endless layers of cosmological and metaphysical context that each of their factual statement presupposes. For one thing, symbolic logic is a form of writing. As a widespread factor in human experience, the capacity to write, and the precision of thinking which it affords, is very new in the history of consciousness. In comparison to the resonating vitality of speech as a means of experiencing and conveying important propositions, the meaning conveyed by writing is very artificial.[116] In the case of logical notations, this artificiality reaches its apex. The symbols have a purely conventional meaning and seek a purely formal kind of proof, with its own internal consistency independent of the contingencies of our social relations or the broader spatiotemporal environment. And yet we only arrive at such elevated conceptual experiences because we can write the symbols down with pen and ink on a sheet of paper or letters keyed onto the screen. "The exactness is a fake." Because Whitehead refuses to explain the concrete by means of the abstract, he deems aesthetic experience to be the wider topic for philosophy than logic, the latter being a special case of the former. Philosophy does not seek proof, nor any finished form of Beauty, but "sheer disclosure."

> Both logic and aesthetics concentrate on the closed fact. Our lives are passed in the experience of disclosure. As we lose this sense of disclosure, we are shedding that mode of functioning which is the soul. We are descending to mere conformity with the average of the past. Complete conformity means the loss of life. There remains the barren existence of inorganic nature.[117]

…

Whitehead's philosophy of organism seeks to resolve the epistemological difficulties raised by philosophers from Descartes to Russell regarding the disjunction between individual experience and the external world by an appeal to ontology.[118] Whitehead claims an intuitive confirmation of the fact that individual experience exhibits a "togetherness" of its elements (here he means to

[115] *Process and Reality*, 12-13.
[116] *Modes of Thought*, 36-37.
[117] *Modes of Thought*, 62.
[118] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 189.

include the Jamesian sense of a "stream" alongside his novel notion of an "occasion" of experience). He then denies that, in the final metaphysical analysis, there can be any other meaning of togetherness than the experiential meaning. Philosophers who separate the causal nexus of the external world from the experiential nexus of thoughts and feelings constituting subjectivity become entangled in insuperable epistemological difficulties, as "there is no bridge between togetherness in experience, and togetherness of the non-experiential sort."[119] The "sensationalist mythology"[120] makes matters worse by denying the conscious subject any real objective relation to the external world, reducing all sense impressions to the mind's awareness of universals.[121] Whitehead constructs his category of prehension precisely to bridge this gap between subject and object. Prehension allows him to describe the causal relations of physical processes as of a kind with their conscious perception and the memory of such perceptions in the life history of a human person. In other words, "the problems of efficient causation and of knowledge receive a common explanation."[122] Prehension is the process by which perished actualities become objectified in the experience of subsequently concrescing subjective actualities. Whitehead thus adopts a reformed version of what he calls "the subjectivist principle," that "apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness."[123] The Whiteheadian reformation of the subjectivist principle amounts to a cosmological generalization of Kantian transcendental idealism. Whereas Kant asked how the knowledge relation is possible between a conscious subject and its world, Whitehead's account of the "private synthesis"[124] of an actual occasion answers to a more general question: how is *any* relation possible between entities?[125] In Claude Dumoncel's pithy phrase, Whitehead in this way "opens to the philosopher a true promised land that he dared not hope for: the prospect of a transcendental philosophy without idealism!"[126]

---

[119] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 190.
[120] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 141.
[121] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 146.
[122] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 190.
[123] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 167.
[124] *Process and Reality*, 85.
[125] See Whitehead, "First Lecture: September, 1924," in *Whitehead at Harvard, 1924-1925*, ed. by Brian G. Henning and Joseph Petek, 47.
[126] My digitally assisted translation of Dumoncel, Jean-Claude. "Whitehead ou le Cosmos Torrentiel: Introduction critique à une lecture de 'Process and Reality,'" in Archives de Philosophie, Vol. 47 (1984), 584. Transcendentalism without idealism is perhaps better described as descendentalism, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

But what makes Whitehead's philosophy realist? James Bradley criticizes those wily American Whiteheadians allegedly upholding "a kind of pre-Kantian metaphysical realism of a pan-psychic nature"[127] because of the way such interpretations reify actual entities into infinitesimal quantum-like events. I agree with his rejection of what he elsewhere calls the "micrological"[128] misinterpretation of actual occasions as minute, imperceptible existents, as though they collectively composed a secret substratum out of which the empirico-transcendental doublet of everyday human experience would somehow emerge.[129] Such an interpretation of Whitehead's occasions makes it difficult to discern how his supposedly realistic transformation ultimately differs from F. H. Bradley's reduction of all relational thought to "mere appearance,"[130] since the minute existents would be just as impossible for our limited minds to relate to as is the Absolute. Our everyday consciousness in either case becomes a "metaphysical nuisance"[131] with no real purchase on fundamental reality.

But Whitehead's actual entity is not a fundamental particle or noumenal reduction base meant to explain our consciousness of the phenomenal world. This way of assembling the problematic only reproduces the very bifurcated ontology his metaphysics was intended to overcome. In Whitehead's scheme, consciousness finds its own interpretation as one among the formative elements of concrescence, arising only in the subjective forms of propositional feelings in especially intense occasions of experience. While on the Kantian/Fichtean reading, the phenomenal world becomes a mere mirror reflecting our self-consciousness back to us, and on the Bradleyan reading, the dream of consciousness dissolve into a felt mass of psychical wholeness rationalized as the Absolute[132], on Whitehead's reading the immediately presented world remains rationally divisible in extensional terms even if our relation to those terms comes together with the antecedent prehensive phases of our own concrescence: "[A]ccording to this

[127] My digitally assisted translation from J. Bradley's article in French "La Cosmologie Transcendantale de Whitehead: La Transformation Spéculative du Concept de Construction Logique" in *Archives de Philosophie* 56 (1993), 7.
[128] J. Bradley, "The Critique of Pure Feeling," 260.
[129] Foucault considers the human as "the locus of an empirico-transcendental doublet" in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (Routledge, 2002), 351.
[130] F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 558.
[131] *Process and Reality*, 137.
[132] See Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 95ff.

philosophy, the knowable is the complete nature of the knower, at least such phases of it as are antecedent to that operation of knowing."[133]

The actual entity is a generic quasi-mathematical descriptive model of cosmological process meant to find descriptive application to concrete existents at any scale, from molecules to human souls to stars and galaxies.[134] Obviously, "Whitehead is not maintaining that the world is full of descriptive models."[135] "Real facts are happening."[136] And so, the question remains, what makes Whitehead's philosophy an organic *realism* rather than a new species of idealism? Why does Whitehead repeatedly insist that his actual occasions "are the really real things which in their collective unity compose the evolving universe"[137]?

In this context, Whitehead again affirms the approximation of his scheme to F. H. Bradley's: the universe is both the plurality of its finite actual entities and the unity of its primordial entity, God. God "[embodies] the principle of unbounded permanence acquiring novelty through flux," while each finite actuality "[embodies] the principle of bounded flux acquiring 'everlasting' permanence": "On one side, the one becomes many; and on the other side, the many become one."[138] Whitehead intends God to exemplify the same generic category of genetic process applying to all finite actual occasions, with the one exception being that God is "primordial." The point to emphasize, which is part of what makes Whitehead's philosophy of organism a realistic transformation of Bradley's Absolute idealism, is not only that his cosmological story seeks a balanced interplay of static vision with dynamic history, but most importantly, that every player in the story is a real individual occasion of experience. "This doctrine of organism is the attempt to describe the world as a process of generation of individual actual entities, each with its own absolute self-attainment," which "is nothing else than a decision referent beyond itself"—becoming thereby an immortal superject to be prehensively reincarnated into subsequent individuals.[139]

---

[133] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 58.
[134] See Ronny Desmet, "Was Whitehead an Analytic Philosopher?," 242.
[135] J. Bradley, "The Critique of Pure Feeling," 264.
[136] *Modes of Thought*, 144.
[137] *Modes of Thought*, 206.
[138] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 167.
[139] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 60.

Kant's adoption of both the (unreformed) subjectivist and sensationalist principles led him to describe the temporal world as merely experienced, a dead phantasm, such that no entity in that world could also be perceived as a fellow experient.[140] Since the transcendental categories and formal treatment of sensibility constituting his critical scheme were conceived under the sway of the abstractions of Newtonian mathematical physics and Humean phenomenalism, such a barren treatment of temporal intuition sufficed for his purposes. But Whitehead argues that Kant's transcendental position amounts to no more than a holding pattern. Eventually, he must land his philosophical plane again on solid metaphysical ground, either through a retreat to Leibniz's many windowless monads or an advance to Bradley's one Absolute Super-Subject. Unfortunately, "either alternative stamps experience with a certain air of illusoriness."[141]

Whitehead's organic doctrine avoids Kant's aporia by recurring to Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, and Hume, deriving a new kind of realism from their underemphasized insights into thinking, perception, space, time, and causality.[142] Whitehead's adventure in cosmology transforms the epistemological playing field of modern philosophy. With Whitehead's process-relational ontology at our disposal, conscious judgments of propositions can be understood to satisfy the criteria of a correspondence just as well as a coherence theory of truth. In judging a proposition, the conscious occasion evaluatively compares its physical prehension of an objectified nexus of actualities with a propositional prehension, itself arising from an earlier integration of a conceptually prehended predicate of possible relatedness with actualities in the physical datum. The judging experient evaluates the conformity or non-conformity of its physical and propositional prehensions, issuing in an intellectual prehension, or judgment. Because the judgment concerns a comparison between two components within one concrescent experience, it satisfies the coherence theory of truth. And because the logical subjects indicated by the proposition under consideration do not originate within the judging experient, but refer to "a nexus whose relatedness is derived from the various experiences of its own members," it also satisfies the correspondence theory. Thus the philosophy of organism affirms a coherence theory of the correctness, incorrectness, and suspension of conscious judgments and a correspondence

[140] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 190.
[141] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 190.
[142] See *Process and Reality*, Part II, Chs. 5-6. See also *Science and the Modern World*, 66ff.

theory of the truth and falsehood of propositions.[143] Rather than judging the categoreal scheme constituting the philosophy of organism as either correct or incorrect as a world-model, Whitehead intends judgment of his scheme to be held in suspension, treating it as a hypothetical "supposal"[144] or *lure for feeling* aiding the philosophical imagination in its pursuit of the higher generalities of experience.

IV: Feeling

> "[E]very pattern can only exist in virtue of the doom of realization, actual or conceptual. And this doom consigns the pattern to play its part in an uprush of feeling, which is the awakening of infinitude to finite activity. Such is the nature of existence: it is the acquisition of pattern by feeling, in its emphasis on a finite group of selected particulars which are the entities patterned. …The notion of pattern emphasizes the relativity of existence, namely, how things are connected. But the things thus connected are entities in themselves. … The crux of philosophy is to retain the balance between the individuality of existence and the relativity of existence."
>
> –Whitehead, "Mathematics and the Good"[145]

F. H. Bradley died on September 18, 1924, seven days before Whitehead gave his first lecture as a philosophy professor at Harvard University. Whitehead would go on to single out Bradley's metaphysics for criticism in at least half a dozen of his lectures during his first academic year.[146] The reason, of course, is Bradley's treatment of relations and rejection of the reality of process. Bradley's dialectical negations of the relational form—that is, all finite thinking, feeling, and willing—led him, in Whitehead's view, to discard everything we really care about.[147] With impeccable logic, he denied any real difference between past, present, and future, affirming instead a non-relational unity of feeling as the totally given content of immediate experience.[148] Our consciousness of freedom and individual achievement amidst a buzzing world of fellow creatures is then reduced to mere appearance, with consciousness assigned no more than the

---

[143] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 191.
[144] See F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, 85.
[145] *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, 110-111.
[146] See *The Harvard Lectures of Alfred North Whitehead, Volume One, 1924-1925: Philosophical Presuppositions of Science*, eds. Paul A. Bogaard and Jason Bell (Edinburgh University Press, 2017).
[147] *The Harvard Lectures, Vol. 1*, 351.
[148] See Bradley, *Appearance and Reality,* 39ff, 530.

"role of turning over the leaves of a book," which for the Absolute, come as a closed solid block, once upon eternity.[149]

Whitehead, in contrast, preserves the reality of both internal and external relations through an account of the asymmetry of temporal process. The experiential immediacy of the present does, in some sense, contain the past and the future, but in distinct ways. While the past is fully determinate and internally related to the present, the future remains open, with an actual occasion thus externally related to the various possibilities available to satisfy its determining decision. Whitehead's account of the cumulative character of time also affords a realistic, process-relational re-reading of feelings as prehensive vectors.[150] Rather than a unifying substratum, prehensions or "vector-feelings" function both to distinguish experiencing subjects from and to relate them to experienced objects, the latter coming in the form either of perished subject-superjects or eternal potentials). As we've seen, he preserves a coherence theory of judgment as regards the knower-known relation, but by distinguishing derivative intellectual feelings from more primitive nonconscious propositional feelings, Whitehead is also able to affirm a correspondence theory of truth in the form of an objectifying subject's felt conformation with its objectified past.[151]

Russell's pluralistic realism also arose from a critique of the idea of symmetrical internal relations; but whereas Russell's logical atomism vanquishes internal relations outright by stressing "disconnectedness, nonconstitutive external relations, and the absence of anything resembling inherent order, structure, or community,"[152] Whitehead salvages them by repurposing the processual alternative Bradley's metaphysics of presence compelled him to dismiss. "We are not less indebted to a thinker when we adopt the alternative which he discarded."[153]

…

[149] *The Harvard Lectures, Vol. 1*, 351, 364.
[150] *Process and Reality*, 237.
[151] See J. Bradley, "Critique of Pure Feeling," 258.
[152] George Lucas, Jr., "'Muddle-headedness' vs 'Simple-mindedness,'" 33. To be fair to Russell, by the end of his life he had arrived at a position that would be difficult to distinguish from James and Whitehead's experiential event ontology (37-38).
[153] *Process and Reality*, 11.

Despite Whitehead's criticisms of Bradley, the two share both a speculative method and an appreciation for the importance of feeling in comparison to conscious thought, sense perception, and volition (the latter three being the real stars and main characters on the Kantian stage, with feeling playing only a supporting role in the third critique).

J. Bradley laments that F. H. Bradley's philosophical contributions have until recently been dismissed as idealistically over-confident "high priori" Victoriana antiques.[154] This despite the fact that he characterized his method of inquiry not as deduction from *a priori* axioms but as "ideal experiment" or "supposal," where metaphysical suppositions are treated as if they were real in order to evaluate their consequences for our interpretation of experience.[155] Like Whitehead, Bradley never claims certainty for speculative philosophy, but embarks on his metaphysical adventure more modestly in pursuit of "intellectual satisfaction."[156]

Bradley found intellectual satisfaction in the logical consistency and coherence of his metaphysical judgments. Whitehead, while inclusive of these criteria, also sought wide empirical applicability and experiential adequacy for his cosmological propositions. While Whitehead's additional criteria require attending to a real plurality of individual experients whose compositional activities constitute the creative advance of the world, Bradley flat out denies that a logically consistent reality could be plural in nature. For him, reality cannot be a set of independent and yet related entities. As he deftly displays in hundreds of pages of conceptual experimentation, ontologically severing terms from their relations, or "thats" from their "whats," leads only to the logical aporia of irresolvable contradiction.

Thus for Bradley "relations…are unmeaning except within and on the basis of a substantial whole [of feeling]."[157] Only the Absolute is non-contradictory, or in Hegel's terms, only the whole is true.[158] Except that for Bradley, the whole is not an "unearthly ballet of bloodless

[154] "From Presence to Process," 83.
[155] F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, 85.
[156] *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), 311.
[157] F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 125.
[158] See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface, Para. 20: "truth is the whole."

categories"[159] or intellectual *a priori* but "a demand of the object as experienced in non-relational feeling," as James Bradley puts it.[160] F. H Bradley determines thought, and with it all our concepts of sense perception and volition and the relational form as such, to be inconsistent with the unity presented to immediate feeling. Since the abstract relational differentiations of the apparatus of knowledge are constitutively blind to this nonetheless immediately felt unity, we can never reason our way to the Absolute. The Absolute thus requires the suicide of analytic thought.

Bradley does, however, develop a kind of makeshift account of this non-relational unity of feeling by analogically analyzing it terms of our usual perspective as "finite centers of experience."[161] He argues in the idealistic vein that finite centers of experience are ideal constructs, the transcendental basis upon which a world of objective facts is constructed and the way in which conditions of experience must be conceived, without themselves being real.[162]

F. H. Bradley's account of the non-relational unity of feeling functions as an anchor securing his concept of the absolutely real as the perfect infinite. But because he can offer no realistic relational account of how infinite possibilities can be determinately actualized, he also deprives his perfect infinite of any productive or causal relation to its finite appearances. While it is clear enough that finite centers of experience do appear, Bradley can give no analysis as to why such appearances appear.[163]

Whitehead takes up and transforms Bradley's theories of feeling and ideal construction, but with the "grave divergence"[164] that he abandons the concept of the real as the perfect infinite. Whitehead is in thorough agreement with Bradley that "experience is not a relation of an experient to something external to it, but is itself the 'inclusive whole' which is the required connectedness of 'many in one.'"[165] But rather than dissolving everything into the unity of the

[159] F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, 50.
[160] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 85.
[161] F. H Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 279ff.
[162] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 88.
[163] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 90-91.
[164] *Adventures of Ideas*, 231.
[165] *Adventures of Ideas*, 233.

Absolute Experient, Whitehead attempts an analysis of the real in terms of the principle of pluralistic self-differentiation. Bradley's finite centers become Whitehead's self-actualizing occasions of experience. Bradley's theory of the non-relational unity of feeling is transformed into Whitehead's theory of concrescence, wherein relations are no longer mere universals but become prehensions functioning as concrete vectorial connections between felt objects and a feeling subject. Whitehead's pluralist theory of asymmetrical differentiation thus passes the empiricist test of objective truth—that subjective forms arise in response to independent data—without succumbing to the strict external relations of Russell's logical atomism. His account of genetic process also affirms the idealist insight into subjectivity as a self-constructing activity by reinterpreting the objective datum and subjective form as phases in the process of concrescence.[166] In James Bradley's summation:

> 'Reality' is now conceived as the dative actual entities constituting the objective contents of the antecedent world, and 'appearance' as the transformation of that content by the concrescent actual occasions. In Whitehead's hands, Bradley's 'vertical' distinction between appearance and reality has become a horizontal, or, better, 'vectorial' distinction within the process of feeling itself."[167]

Here a difficulty arises for Whitehead's proposed pluralistic inversion of the Bradleyan absolute. If reality is a creative advance into novelty rather than an already completed eternal perfection, how can reason analyze that which in each occasion of its actualization is unrepeatably unique? It is for this reason that J. Bradley argues Whitehead cannot be understood as a conventional metaphysical realist. His categoreal scheme is said to have a transcendental status as an effort to analyze the conditions of possibility of the empirical world understood as a plurality of self-actualizing processes.[168] As was explained above in reference to the reformed subjectivist principle, J. Bradley also interprets Whitehead's transcendentals in the medieval (rather than modern, Kantian) sense as referring to the nature of everything that is and not just to cognitive representations: "Whitehead's transcendentalism thinks being in terms of its immanent, vectorial

[166] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 93.
[167] Bradley, James. "'The Critique of Pure Feeling,' 259-260.
[168] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 94.

conditions of self-actualization."[169] My own reading would be that, precisely because of his inversion of Kantian idealism, Whitehead is best understood as seeking not transcendental conditions of possible knowledge but descendental conditions of self-actualization.[170] As J. Bradley clarifies, Whitehead approaches his topic not in a disengaged theoretical way, but "in terms of the historically situated entirety of experience."[171] He is not a metaphysical realist in the dogmatic, pre-Kantian sense; but in affirming a reformed subjectivist principle, his must still be understood as a panexperiential ontology. His categoreals are not a finished table of transcendental deductions standing prior to the world but an open and revisable experiment in imaginal generalization meant to be in ongoing dialogue with the world-process.

Whitehead does distinguish between feeling or prehension, as a categoreal proposal, and immediate experience, which is the empirical topic under investigation.[172] But his concept of the empirical world is not the same as Russell's indubitable sense-data. As J. Bradley puts it, Whitehead's "concept of the empirical world refers to everything of which we are conscious—doctrines and ditties as much as cabbages, sealing wax and physics."[173] To philosophize is to seek some "thread of coordination" linking the various experiential assemblages, knitting together propositions from the special sciences, the arts, religion, and civic life into a coherent and comprehensive cosmological outlook.[174] The categoreal scheme is a complex proposition swimming amidst an ocean of facts, evaluative interests, and other propositional feelings propagating through the actual world. The creation of categories "is primarily a matter of the construction of coordinating analogies out of the singularities of historical experience."[175] As such, the speculative scheme is offered as a mobile constellation of proportionally translatable analogies, a matrix of propositional functions whose variable applications afford us some rational means of analyzing even the unique and unrepeatable.[176]

[169] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 97.
[170] See note 8 above.
[171] J. Bradley, "Whitehead's Transcendental Cosmology," 24.
[172] *Process and Reality*, 4.
[173] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 95.
[174] *Modes of Thought*, 35; *Adventures of Ideas*, 286.
[175] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 96.
[176] J. Bradley, "From Presence to Process," 98.

Whitehead's list of categories takes on the air of completeness by being placed at the beginning of *Process and Reality*. But as he makes clear in the first chapter laying out his speculative method, "the accurate expression of the final generalities is the goal of discussion and not its origin."[177] the matrix evolved concurrently with his application of it to the various special topics explored.[178] Whitehead himself exemplifies the revisable status of his essay in cosmology by including a category, Contrasts, by means of which "an indefinite progression of categories" may be introduced, and by abruptly abolishing a category two-thirds of the way into the book.[179]

V: Final Interpretation

In the final analysis, Whitehead's organic realism only gains in distinctiveness when read as a realistic transformation of F. H. Bradley's absolute idealism. Whitehead encourages the growth of novel propositions. He provides accounts of their creative and canalizing functions, and of the imaginative freedom they afford to individual conscious occasions. Bradley postulates a higher Absolute super-unity in whose light all relation and process are boiled away, reabsorbed into wholeness.

On the other hand, it is not as easy to distinguish Whitehead's account of the divine element in the world from Bradley's perfect infinite. Bradley writes, "The world discordant, half-completed, and accidental for each [finite center of experience], is in the Whole a compensated system of conspiring particulars."[180] Compare this to Whitehead, who writes:

> The truth itself is nothing else than how the composite natures of the organic actualities of the world obtain adequate representation in the divine nature. Such representations compose the 'consequent nature' of God, which evolves in its relationship to the evolving world without derogation to the eternal completion of its primordial conceptual nature. In this way the 'ontological principle' is maintained—since there can be no determinate truth, correlating

[177] *Process and Reality*, 8.
[178] McHenry, "The Axiomatic Matrix of Process and Reality," 176.
[179] *Process and Reality*, 22, 250.
[180] *Appearance and Reality*, 472.

> impartially the partial experiences of many actual entities, apart from one actual entity to which it can be referred.[181]

What can be said is that, while the Bradleyan Absolute is imagined to be a perfect and indifferent eternal Whole, the Whiteheadian God is fused with the flux, becoming together with the world of finite creatures as an "incompletion in process of production." While God cannot change God's mind about creation—"Lo! it is good/beautiful,"[182] no matter what happens—the growth of God's heart in response to creaturely happenings does change the *meaning* of God's mind, attuning the eternal vision to the resounding rhythm of occasions perpetually perishing into objective immortality, forever enriching the divine life in all things. It is in this way, by learning to suffer with and die into the world, that eternity falls in love with the creations of time.

[181] *Process and Reality*, 12-13.
[182] *Genesis* 1:31.