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A STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF A FINITE GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF WILLIAM JAMES AND ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Field of Philosophy

by

Earl Duane Forderhase
Norman, Oklahoma
1973

A Study of the Concept of a Finite God

in the Philosophies of

William James and Alfred North Whitehead

A Dissertation

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To Carol: Whose patience and understanding have been a reserve of stamina to see this work through to completion. Whose love has continued in moments when despair threatened.

To Gregory: Whose youthful humor has often struck the balance between research and insanity for his father.

To Alison: Whose delicate charm has encouraged her father.

For Goldie and Earl: In whose home I early learned the lesson of human value and worth, and where I was introduced to the concept of God.

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INTRODUCTION: Presentation of the Problem

The finite-God theories of two prominent American philosophers, William James and Alfred North Whitehead, will be the subject of this research study. My major effort will be directed to a consideration of these theistic positions in an attempt to discover the philosophical motives upon which both positions are developed. Each writer's position is constructed in explicit and partial opposition to the theory of an infinite God. As a part of my task, I hope to clarify just where the basic lines of divergence lie between these two finite-God theories and the infinite-God theory. Further, I shall make a comparative study of the finite-God theories of the two men.

After a brief introductory presentation of the major problems involved, I will survey the evidence for the existence of God and the nature of the divine limitation as found in both James and Whitehead. This initial step will be concluded with a brief comparative précis, restating the basic problems.

The second major undertaking of this research will be a delineation of the basic conflicts which both James and Whitehead appear to have with the infinite-God position. While both men are critics of the traditional theistic positions, there is some dissimilarity in the arguments they present. In spite of the differing reasons each gives for the finitude of God, their presuppositions appear similar. Their effect in each case

is the same--to excise the possible grounds of agreement with the opposed infinite-God theories.

Further, the philosophical motives of James and Whitehead will be considered. Evidence for their positions, not unknown to others who continue to maintain that God is infinite in every respect, entails the finite nature of God for James and Whitehead. I shall attempt to clarify the philosophical motives of both James' and Whitehead's theisms by an accompanying exposition of their philosophical methodology.

Upon initial survey, James and Whitehead would seem to be almost polar opposites in the philosophical sphere. James was an outstanding spokesman and accomplished leader of the pragmatic movement in American philosophy. On the other hand, Whitehead fits into that group of philosophers known as process thinkers. As a pragmatist, James kept company with notables like Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey, neither of whom were writers within the theistic tradition. Whitehead, on the other hand, works within a somewhat different tradition. His emphasis upon creativity, along with the primordial and consequent natures of God, centers within an organismic philosophy.

It might appear that James and Whitehead had little in common when one notes that they reside in different philosophical camps. Actually, their theisms do show some marked similarities. Both men consider their philosophical approach to God as partially an empirical one. When using the term "empirical" here I refer to the evidence drawn from the data of our experiences, both objective and subjective, as well as from the conclusions of modern science. In using the term "subjective" I mean such

factors as value experiences or "needs" we have. This empirical approach is such that their theistic analyses tend to remain on a very concrete level, not readily moving from the data of experience to a conception of God remote from that experience. The theistic analyses of both men are carried out in constant reference to the empirical order. Problems underlying man's relation to God, or God's relation to man, are decided in a rather special experiential fashion. I obviously do not mean by this that the demands of consistency are ignored, but only that the issues are discussed in continued openness to the data of experience. It it hoped that my analysis will reveal this with some degree of clarity.

In addition to the empirical factor, both men are intent upon discussing God in terms which are religiously meaningful to man. The God they wish to discover is the God of our everyday worship--albeit, not a denominational deity. Were God not to meet the requirements of our worship, he would not be worth discussing. Both of these philosophers are concerned with the area of religious experience. As we shall note, a (totally) transcendent deity is found lacking; the stress is upon a God immanent in the world with whom we enter into a real relationship just as he reciprocally does with us. Such a God is seen as having maximum relevance to our lives. (It should be noted parenthetically that Whitehead, much more than James, is also interested in God as partially transcendent.)

While our dominant interest is in those factors that are responsible for their conceiving God as a finite being, this consideration will best

be understood when viewed through the reasons which both men give for their acceptance of the existence of God in the first place. Consequently, some time must be expended in situating the problem in view of the evidence each man offers for the finitude of God, as well as in giving an analysis of the philosophical motives involved in treating this problem.

JAMES: Evidence for the Existence of God

If one is to assess the evidence for the existence of God within the philosophy of William James, he must attempt to ferret out a preliminary idea of what we mean by this God. James is aware of the attributive nature of God as disputed by theists, but he contends that most would agree on some essential features. "First, it is essential that God be conceived as the deepest power in the universe; and, second, he must be conceived under the form of a mental personality."[1] His earliest writings suggest that James considered this "mental personality" as "something outside of my own."[2] (He later disavowed this early contention.) Further, James adds that this God must be considered as a power of righteousness, and as a being who takes account of man.[3]

Within James' philosophy no logically cogent proofs for the existence of God are to be found. However, he does offer certain arguments or

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[1]William James, The Will to Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897). All references are to the republication (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 122.

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

respected positions as to why he does believe in God and will continue to believe in God. In place of demonstratively constructed proofs, most of James' statements about God appear to be points of a practical position. The question of the existence of God can be put to James, and it will receive a favorable reply.

In answer to a questionnaire presented to him by Professor James B. Pratt, James attempted to formulate his answers as to why he believed in God. Pratt asked James, "Why do you believe in God? Is it from some argument?" James replied, "Emphatically, no." Pratt continued, "Could it be because you claim to have experienced his presence?" James replied, "No, but rather because I need it, so it must be so."[4] James has summarized an initial position by claiming a "need" of God; therefore, God must exist. One familiar with James' writings will not be shocked by this position. James maintained that our heart is "our deepest organ of communication with the nature of things."[5] The heart becomes for James a dependable pioneer in discovering the ultimate nature of reality. The nature of the will, or the volitional aspect of man, assumes a basic importance for the existence of God. But why would our volitional nature necessarily direct us toward the conclusion that God exists?

James contends that our volitional nature must produce relevance within the sphere of man's affairs. A philosophy, if it is productively

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[4]William James, The Letters of William James, ed. Henry James (2 vols.; Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), II, p. 213.

[5]William James, The Will to Believe, pp. 62, 141.

accepted, "must define the future congruously with our spontaneous powers."[6] A philosophy must be cognate with our desires, and it must contribute an adequate stimulation to our life. I shall return to this point later, but let it suffice for the moment to say that James' grasp on the finitude of God requires a philosophy that regards actions as instrumental and indispensable in creating the ultimate meaning of reality. At this point, let me just reiterate that James finds that God's existence is demonstrated by our needs. "Anything short of God is not rational . . . ," James says. It appears that by using "rational" James is contending for that which is acceptable to our whole human nature.[7]

One of the basic reasons for our belief in God, according to James, must therefore be an "answer to our needs." He states:

> Not an energy of our active nature to which it does not authoritatively appeal, not an emotion of which it does not normally and naturally release the springs. At a single stroke, it changes the dead blank *it* of the world into a living *thou*, with whom the whole man may have dealing.[8]

This seems to indicate that the agnostic's position is unteneable to James, for it is a world-view without God, simply an "it-world" of no lasting or satisfying meaning. Theism finds its impetus in meeting our needs; therefore, our "needs" become a dynamic reason for our belief in a God.

James suggests that the works of God are empirically verifiable. From the psychological point of view, James has posited a God who comforts the ill, encourages a positive healthy-mindedness, and produces

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[6]*Ibid.*, p. 82. [7]*Ibid.*, p. 116. [8]*Ibid.*, p. 127.

converts and saints. The reality of religion is, according to James, that which produces effects within another reality (and) must be termed a reality itself; therefore, we have no philosophical excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal.[9] Since religion becomes such a positive power in the lives of persons, and because of this basic dynamic, James contends that the truth or falsity of an idea is determined in no other way than through its workableness.

> On pragmatic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true. Now whatever its residual difficulties may be, experience shows that it certainly does work.[10]

The workableness or the effectiveness of the idea within the lives of the religious converts is taken as support for his basic premise that God exists.

Obviously, this evidence for the existence of God is part and parcel of the basic claims of the pragmatic theory of truth. The lives of people serve as a valid witness to the workings of religion. Unless the sceptic can explain away these workings of religion, then it will stand the test of disorder or illusion. Further evidence is claimed by James for the existence of God through the myriad experiences of the mystics. For the mystic, experiencing the presence of God is ample testimony for His existence. While one might question the validity of the mystic's

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[9]William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1902). All references are to the republication (New York: University Books, 1963), p. 424.

[10]William James, Pragmatism (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), p. 299.

claim, perhaps based on one's own inexperience, the mystic's testimony cannot be termed valueless. James claims that it must be classed with other empirical facts which would bear on the existence or the non-existence of God.

Regardless of the source of these religious claims, whether from the far-out realms of mysticism or the more traditional religious habits, the empirical data arising from religious experience do make the existence of God more feasible to accept. The very kernel of James' claim for the existence of God turns on that basic concept of the pragmatic hypothesis--our need of God. James demands that man's ethical dimensions be relevant; this world cannot be neutral to man's basic needs. As we view the reasons why James holds that God is a finite being, this "need factor" seems to be crucial. James contends that there is a God--because man basically has a need of God.

JAMES: Nature of the Divine Limitation

It is of interest to note how James' mind matured in his thoughts concerning God. In an early address (1881) entitled "Reflex Action and Theism," James said that God's "personality is to be regarded, like any other personality, as something lying outside my own and other than me, and whose existence I simply come upon and find."[11] This emphasizes his belief that God and man are distinct personalities. Later, James seems to reverse this position, and to hold that as humans we are substantially

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[11]William James, The Will to Believe, p. 122.

fused with God. We become "internal parts"[12] of God, "part and parcel of that deep reality."[13] The pantheistic problem, to be discussed later, becomes two-fold. James seems to place God within the confines of the lesser world of humans, while at the same time giving much greater importance to mankind's inclusion in the divine.

James presents God as an inclusive being; yet there must be divine limitation, for God is not all-inclusive.[14] According to James' description, God must be a being; that being must be within an environment, must not be an all-inclusiveness, but an individual form like man. Since God is not all-inclusive, he must confront the world--part of which is other than his creation. As to the nature and magnitude of this reality, James seems to pay little heed. James considers the essential factor to be that this divine "environment" reduced God to a type of life similar to that of man. Therefore, it makes God finite, and he cannot be omnipotent and omniscient, because some part of the universe resides outside his domination.[15] After relegating God to a finite environment, James is just one step away from saying that God is a temporal being, for he has a history, much like that of humans.[16] James stresses this characteristic of God, for it seems to most cogently answer the absolutist's doctrine of the

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[12]William James, A Pluralistic Universe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1932), p. 318.

[13]Ibid., p. 30. [14]Ibid., pp. 310-311, 322.

[15]Ibid., pp. 124, 311; cf. Letters, II, p. 269.

[16]Ibid., pp. 38-40.

"Timeless Absolute." This timeless characteristic of God, James seems bent on removing.

Again, James in the Varieties leaves open the possibility of a polytheistic interpretation of his position concerning God. Apparently, he could see no reason for stating that monotheism is more plausible than polytheism, or vice versa.[17] Be it many gods or one, James remains convinced that the divine element in the universe is still finite in nature. James did not work out a systematic theology; however, he stressed a few basic facets central to a discussion of God in human terms.

WHITEHEAD: Evidence for the Existence of God, and the Nature of the Divine Limitation

Contrary to James' life-long interest with the theistic question, a chronological study of Alfred North Whitehead reveals that he gave little attention to the problem of God until his later years. This is not to indicate that he never contemplated the question, but merely to state that his earlier writings are relatively free of any mention of the problem. It apparently arose in his mind after his thoughts turned to the metaphysical speculations on an organismic universe. One should not overlook Whitehead's own statement to the effect that the great things are never first but always come later in the order of experience. While he does not view the question of God as one of mechanical necessity, Whitehead does infer God as an absolute necessity for the interpretation of experience and for reality.

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[17]William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 396.

Whitehead views philosophical understanding to "aim at piercing the blindness of activity in respect to its transcendent function."[18] It is also an "endeavor to obtain a self-consistent understanding of things observed."[19] He states that "speculative philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, and necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."[20] For Whitehead, it seems rather clear that fact and interpretation cannot be separated, but instead are correlative. Philosophy is to reveal fact and interpretation laced together within experience. It makes available the proper system by which this interlacing can be explicated, since fact and interpretation are components of the same world of experience. If Whitehead is to espouse God as the final explanation of things, then God must be part of the world which is being explained; or at least God must be discovered as an element within the analysis of experience.

It is obvious that Whitehead introduces God into his process philosophy, for the primordial and consequent natures of God give an adequate final explanation. God is contrasted with other actual entities because of the difference in His primordial and consequent natures. In God, Whitehead finds an answer to the beleagured paradoxes of traditional

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[18]Alfred North Whitehead, Nature and Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 46.

[19]Ibid., p. 28.

[20]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 4.

theistic approaches. The Whiteheadian process view will account for the eternal vs. the temporal, the determined vs. the free, and the permanent vs. the changing. They will be shown to be interacting within the process philosophy of Whitehead, which places God at the acme.

Whitehead's process philosophy conceives God as an actual entity who is both determined and free, eternal and temporal, static and active, absolute and relative, permanent and changing. His approach will try to bridge the harassing question which has plagued both theologians and metaphysicians. Whitehead says:

> The notion of God as the 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle, at least so far as western thought is concerned. The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favorite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys, is the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and Mohammetanism.[21]

There is another stream of thought in which "the vicious separation of the flux from the permanence leads to a concept of an entirely static God, with eminent reality, in relation to an entirely fluent world, with deficient reality."[22] Both of these approaches are viewed as philosophical cul de sacs by Whitehead; therefore, he endorses a conception of God as an evolving actual entity in organismic relations with this actual world.

One cannot overestimate the significance of Whitehead's claim that God is an actual entity, sharing likenesses and showing differences with other actual entities. He states:

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[21] Ibid., p. 519. [22] Ibid., p. 526.

> The presumption that there is only one genus of actual entities constitutes an idea of cosmological theory to which the philosophy of organism endeavors to conform. The generic character of an actual entity should include God, as well as the lowliest actual occasion, though there is a specific difference between the nature of God and that of any occasion.[23]

As he indicates, God's primordial character is the solution to the problem of process. "God is to be taken account of in every creative phase."[24] In succeeding chapters I shall spend additional time with the problem of God's relation to the world of process.

In Science and the Modern World, Whitehead refers to God as the substantial activity underlying all occasions. "It [substantial activity] is a general metaphysical character which underlies all occasions. . . . There is nothing with which to compare it: it is Spinoza's one infinite substance."[25] Apparently, his opinion of the primordial is that "the general activity is not an entity in the sense in which occasions or eternal objects are entities."[26]

Further evidence of God shows Him to be the antecedent of particular occasions. Whitehead says:

> The fact that there is a process of actual occasions, and the fact that the occasions are the emergence of values which require limitation, both require that the course of events should have developed amid antecedent limitations composed of

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[23]Ibid., p. 168.

[24]Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 4.

[25]Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 255.

[26]Ibid., p. 256.

> conditions, particularizations and standards of value . . . . God is the ultimate limitation, and His existence is the ultimate irrationality.[27]

The preceding two functions, substantial activity and antecedent limitation of actual occasions, suggest that without God there could be no succeeding actual occasions.

We turn now to view the connection between the principle of concretion and actual entities. Some Whiteheadian proponents have adopted Whitehead's definition of God as the "principle of concretion" to enhance their own views. However, a closer view of the conception of God as the principle of concretion will show it to underwrite what Whitehead means when he says that God is an actual entity.

The principle of concretion was meant as a support doctrine by Whitehead for his notion of God as an actual entity. He says, "the general principle of empiricism depends upon the doctrine that there is a principle of concretion which is not discoverable by reason."[28] Further he states, "In this sense God is the principle of concretion; namely, he is the actual entity from which each temporal concrescence receives that initial aim from which self-causation starts."[29] Again, he contends, "The principle of concretion is the primary action of God on the world . . . whereby there is initiated a definite outcome from a situation otherwise riddled with ambiguity."[30] God becomes for Whitehead the

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[27]Ibid., p. 256. [28]Ibid., p. 257.

[29]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 374.

[30]Ibid., p. 523.

unique actual entity. He is the well-spring of all decision, originality, and novelty within the process world.

Within the evidence which we have submitted, Whitehead has accepted (partially) the finitistic concept of God based upon a developing organismic system. (It should be noted parenthetically that there is a very definite sense in which God's primordial nature is infinite. This will be considered in Chapter Three.) Whitehead's experiences reveal that final real things are really processes. He has viewed the world as a gigantic process, but this has presented some problems. Process as the basic reality makes it imperative that God be viewed as an actual entity. Like all actual entities, God has His primordial and consequent natures, his mental and physical poles.

Whitehead cautions that the problem which swept traditional theistic views into failure was its conception of God as the final explanation, i.e., a static, transcendent God which excluded change. Whitehead overcomes this failure when he postulates the concept of God as an evolving actual entity, whose progress is at least partially dependent upon the world (consequent nature). The finitistic implications show God's relation to the organismic actual world. In particular, Chapter Four of this dissertation will be given to the development and interpretation of the consequent nature of God as viewed by Alfred North Whitehead.

It has been the intent of this introduction to indicate how James and Whitehead present differing kinds of evidence to support their finite-God theories. Traditional theism and the philosophy of the Absolute seek to establish (with certainty) the infinite nature of God as necessarily

true. With neither James nor Whitehead do we find that certainty of knowledge about God which is claimed by the traditional perspective. We must look at the philosophical motives which both men present, as well as the methodology they use.

The exposition will show the empirical emphasis which underlies the finite-God theories. The question of meaning and value in relation to this concrete God will be shown. Both James and Whitehead stress the immanence of God, and this will be seen partly in the discussion of religious experience. Both finite-God theories emphasize the relevance of God to our lives.

My purpose in the following chapters will be to support the finitistic approach to God through an exposition of both James and Whitehead's views. Both depend heavily upon forms of experience to support the finitistic approach. The meaning of truth will become an important aspect of both theories. A further question will be encountered: the nature and extent to which both James and Whitehead see reality as intelligible.

CHAPTER ONE: JAMES' ENCOUNTER WITH THE INFINITE-GOD THEORY

Chapter One

JAMES' ENCOUNTER WITH THE INFINITE-GOD THEORY

In December of 1880 James wrote to Renouvier:

> My principal amusement this winter has been resisting the inroads of Hegelism in our University . . . . It is a strange thing, this resurrection of Hegel in England and here after his burial in Germany. I think his philosophy will probably have an important influence on the development of our liberal form of Christianity. It gives a quasi-metaphysic backbone which this theology has always been in need of, but it is too fundamentally rotten and charlatanish to last long. As a reaction against materialistic evolutionism it has its use, only this evolutionism is fertile, while Hegelism is absolutely sterile.[1]

In the following decades, James will indulge his "amusement" with rapid increment flavored with an apparent bitterness. We will view a few of the representative works of his polemic directed toward an excising of the Absolute.

James: Critic of the Absolute

In an essay entitled "On Some Hegelisms," published in 1882, James specifies for the first time a bill of particulars against this particular brand of "Absolutism." James states that while the "real is identical with the Ideal, yet the real, upon examination, seems irreducibly plural." To him it appears united only by "three great continua":

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[1]William James, Letters, I, p. 208.

"Memory or personal consciousness," "Time and space."[2] The unity effected by these continua is "ruptured on every side" when the "material qualities of being" are confronted; only a few "á priori couplings" hold things together, and it seems to James "deeply probable" that the slight cohesion accomplished by first principles is all one can hope for.[3]

> Why may not the World be a sort of republican banquet . . ., where all the qualities of being respect one another's personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time? . . . Why, if one act of knowledge could from one point take in the total perspective, with all mere possibilities abolished, should there ever have been anything more than that act? Why duplicate it by the tedious unrolling, inch by inch, of the foredone reality? No answer seems possible. On the other hand, if we stipulate only a partial community of partially independent powers, we see perfectly why no one part controls the whole view, but each detail must come and be actually given, before, in any special special sense, it can be said to be determined at all. This is the moral view, the view that gives to other powers the same freedom it would have itself . . . .[4]

James' Reaction to Hegel's Idealism

James indicates that there will be those who scorn this simple truth, for they prefer an "intellect . . . insatiable enough to declare that all existence must bend the knee to its requirements." Yet, he asks why this warrant should be allowed, and the "theorizing faculty [allowed] to ride rough-shod over the whole." "I confess I can see no

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[2]William James, "On Some Hegelisms," Mind, 1882, p. 264; reprinted in Will to Believe, pp. 263-298.

[3]William James, Will to Believe, pp. 266-271.

[4]Ibid., pp. 270-271.

a priori reason for the exception. He who claims it must be judged by the consequences of his acts, and by them alone. Let Hegel then confront the universe with his claim, and see how he can make the two match."[5] And when Hegel takes up the quest, "The universe absolutely refuses to let him travel without jolt."[6] Ultimate unity is simply not accessible when one considers the diversity of beings which comprise the real.

But Hegel has decreed a synthesis of opposites, the identical showing through the apparent contradictory: "Let all that negation which seemed to disintegrate the universe be the mortar that combines it, and the problem stands solved."[7] James objects that this "utterly defies understanding," especially since Hegel seeks to make it rational by appeal to data whose proper interpretation demands the prior acceptance of the principle. If one is to ask "how self-contradiction *can* do all this, and how its dynamism may be seen to work," Hegel can only reply by showing him (the datum, *e.g.*, space) and saying:

> 'Lo, *thus*.' In other words, instead of the principle of explanation being more intelligible than the thing to be explained, it is absolutely unintelligible if taken by itself, and must appeal to its pretended product to prove its existence. Surely, such a system of explaining *notum per ignotum*, of making the *explicans* borrow credentials from the *explicand*, and of creating paradoxes and impossibilities where none were suspected, is a strange candidate for the honors of being a complete rationalizer of the world.[8]

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[7] *Ibid.* [8] *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

James holds that "the principle of the contradictoriness of identity and the identity of contradictories is the essence of the Hegelian system," that it is more understandable by a companion principle called the "principle of totality." This principle holds that a part cannot be known until the whole of which it is a part is known. Noting that this is not a Hegelian possession, James holds that it is "an integral part of empiricism, an integral part of common sense":

> . . . empiricism contends that we must everywhere distinguish between the intrinsic being of a thing and its relations, and, among these, between those that are essential to our knowing it all and those that may be called adventitious. The thing as actually present in a given world is there with all its relations; for it to be known as it there exists, they must be known too, and it and they form a single fact for any consciousness large enough to embrace that world as a unity. But what constitutes this singleness of fact, this unity? Empiricism says, Nothing but the relation-yielding matrix in which the several items of the world find themselves embedded,--time, namely, and space, and the mind of the knower.[9]

This curtailed version of the theory of relations will not be acceptable to the absolutists:

> Hegelism dogmatically denies all this to be possible. In the first place it says there are no intrinsic natures that may change; in the second it says there are no adventitious relations.[10]

The validity of this Hegelian version of the principle of totality, "which demands that if any one part be posited alone, all the others shall forthwith emanate from it and infallibly reproduce the whole,"[11] stands in contradiction to James' position of empiricistic pluralism.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 277-278. [10] Ibid., p. 279.

[11] Ibid.

Given the theory of Hegel, it appears as erroneous to call it a monism as to call it a pluralism. "The truth refuses to be expressed in any single act of judgment or sentence." While Hegel persists in combining under one proposition the diverse propositions that announce the world's complexity, James takes the view that

> the unity of the propositions is that of the mind that harbors them. Any one who insists that their diversity is in any way itself their unity can only do so because he loves obscurity and mystification for their own pure sakes.[12]

Empiricism Preferred to Idealism

In reaction to the Hegelisms, James professes a distinct taste for the finite and the pluralistic, as over against the absolute and the monistic. Geared by his background in British empiricism, James opposes the rationalist systems that manipulate the raw data of sensation within the perceiving mind alone. The pragmatic test of meaning which James had been developing during his early years adds its weight. The moral question becomes relevant, for absolutisms seem to leave no room for freedom and responsible human action. It is of interest to note how James draws these ethical ends together, and ties them with another cord--his early acceptance of moderate idealism.

James claims a discovery from his exploratory surgery on Hegel's dialectic. The ugly tumor of irrationality seems to be the find. He claims that Hegel's

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[12]Ibid., p. 280.

> sovereign method of going to work and saving all possible contradictions, lies in pertinaciously refusing to distinguish. He takes what is true of a term secundum quid, treats it as true of the same term simpliciter, and then, of course, applies it to the term secundum aliud.[13]

Hegel's account of the mutability of the real world seems to James a prime example. The "notion of a being which forever stumbles over its own feet, and has to change in order to exist at all," James considers a "picturesque symbol";

> But how is the reasoning done? Pure being is assumed, without determination, being secundum quid. In this respect it agrees with nothing. Therefore simpliciter it is nothing; wherever we find it, it is nothing still, and hebt sich auf.
>
> It is as if we said, Man without his clothes may be named 'the naked.' Therefore man simpliciter is the naked; and finally man with his hat, shoes, and overcoat on is the naked still.[14]

When one begins to ferret out other instances of metaphysical predication, other Hegelian principles find their explanation. Rules such as "to know a limit is already to be beyond it," and "the knowledge of opposites is one," seem to indicate to James that Hegel foundered on the aspects of being.[15] While missing the point of being itself, Hegel reveals the purpose he intends to posit:

> If I characterized Hegel's own mood as ὕβρις, the insolence of excell, what shall I say of the mood he ascribes to being? Man makes the gods in his image; and Hegel, in daring to insult the spotless σωφροσύνη of space and time, the bound-respecters, in branding as strife that law of sharing under whose sacred keeping . . . the dance of the atoms goes forward still, seems to me but to manifest his own deformity.[16]

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[13]Ibid., p. 280. [14]Ibid., p. 281.

[15]Ibid., pp. 283-290. [16]Ibid., p. 289-290.

James has clarified his own attitude towards Hegelian idealism when he states, "I have not myself the least objection to idealism . . . an hypothesis which voluminous considerations make plausible." His objection is against idealism's attempt to prove by "patient ready-made á priori methods that which can only be the fruit of a wide and patient induction."[17] If idealism were to be true, James states, "the great question . . . is whether its truth involves the necessity of an infinite, unitary, and omniscient consciousness, or whether a republic of semi-detached consciousnesses will do." Hypothetically, James concedes that either will do, but "whether the egos be one or many, the nextness of representations to one another within them is the principle of unification of the universe."[18] If we are to insist on this extrinsicality, the Hegelian logic with the "senseless hocus-pocus of its triads" is wiped out. The cosmos requires a manifestation more consistent with itself.

> In short, the notion that real contingency and ambiguity may be features of the real world is a perfectly unimpeachable hypothesis. Only in such a world can moral judgments have a claim to be . . . . In the universe of Hegel--the absolute block whose parts have no loose play . . . --there can be neither good nor bad, but one dead level of mere fate.[19]

As far as I can determine, this is the first appearance of James'

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[17] Ibid., p. 290.

[18] Ibid., p. 291, cf. review of Royce's Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Atlantic Monthly, April, 1885.

[19] Ibid., p. 292.

reference to the "block universe," a concept later to be found in most all his writings.

Later, James suggests a comparison of the Hegelian doctrine to intoxication by nitrous oxide gas. Such "anaesthetic revelation," which James experimentally induced upon himself, exhibits a striking parallel with the Hegelian triadic movement. Based upon several documented cases, James contends:

> . . . the togetherness of things in a common world, the law of sharing . . . may when perceived, engender a very powerful emotion; . . . Hegel was so unusually susceptible to this emotion throughout his life that its gratification became his supreme end, and made him tolerably unscrupulous as to the means he employed . . . .[20]

Perry records that this action on the part of James and his ensuing comments "scandalized [his] idealistic friends."[21] This incident seems to return in James' later life to haunt him. His comprehension of Hegel's work continued to grow, and in 1909, he affectionately termed it "one of the great types of cosmic vision."[22] Embryonic themes which started within this essay, "On Some Hegelisms," occur in others yet to follow. Emphasis on differing aspects already mentioned will foster James' growing appreciation of the finite and the pluralistic approach. We shall turn to a rather concise approach to these doctrinal positions. First, we shall look at James' view of determinism and how this problem

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[20]Ibid., p. 298.

[21]Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 161.

[22]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 108.

raises questions concerning absolutism as it issues into a basic immorality.

The Problem of Determinism

As early as 1876, James had anticipated the dominant thrust of his 1884 essay "The Dilemma of Determinism." He had insisted that the issue of freedom vs. determinism was virtually a checkmate. Determinism must always issue from some spring other than its own. James suggests that it could come from either a monistic position or it could be selected from some "extra-logical considerations."[23]

James makes no claim to "coercive demonstration of free will," but he does hope to lure others in following his "own example in assuming it true, and acting as if it were true." Because "external evidence is strictly impossible to find" for deciding between freedom and determinism, we must look at what the individual position suggests for the method of a practical decision. "Freedom" had come to mean about anything; therefore, James suggests the word be changed to "chance." He says this will cause a "war-cry" because it is so "opprobrious"; yet, "chance" is really a bland notion. As a "purely negative and relative" term, it is useful as a step toward a "certain ultimate pluralism" of real possibilities. This term means only that a thing is "not controlled, secured, or necessitated by other things in advance of its own actual presence." Look at the universe as a "joint-stock society" whose

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[23]William James, Collected Essays and Reviews, (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1920), p. 35.

share-holders have only "limited liabilities and limited powers." While this term might apply to the indeterminists' position, the determinists might be offended because of its revolting effects upon their rigidly structured universe which allows for no variation of possibilities. For those who prefer, the world "shall be a solid block, subject to one control," "nothing future can be ambiguous." But "indeterminate future volitions do mean chance," and "the idea of chance is, at bottom, exactly the same thing as the idea of gift":[24]

> And whether the world be the better or the worse for having either chances or gifts in it will depend altogether on what these uncertain and unclaimable things turn out to be.[25]

James arrives at the core of his doctrine. While determinism appears theoretically irrefutable, what are its practical consequences? The history of human beings is torn with "judgments of regret." Men are distraught because evil is in the world. Now, James raises his question. If the world is determined, and the determinist position states that evil had to be, why should we have regret? If regret is justifiable, then pessimism about the cosmos would be the only option available to the determinist. James believes the only salvation for the determinists is to abandon the "judgment of regret" in favor of a sentimental "judgment of approval," i.e., to develop an optimistic view within determinism. However, if we follow the line of the deterministic approach, this

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[24]William James, Will to Believe, pp. 146-158.

[25]Ibid., p. 158.

is not logically cogent because the "regret" was a necessary conclusion. James recognizes this as the dilemma of determinism; therefore, moral values must count.

Determinism vs. Moral Subjectivity

Moral values cannot be contained solely within a "block universe"; therefore, James sees the only alternative to futility as the "subjective" point of view. Within this subjective approach, the acts of good and evil are secondary to knowing the criteria for good and evil decisions. Every external good can be felt, or recognized, only by contrast with evil. In other words, evil is a necessary condition of the good.[26] When faced by the pessimism of determinism, James states his preference for this theory of evil. The necessity of the approach of "subjectivism" underscored James' position of indeterminism, since the "only consistent way of representing a pluralism" and a cosmos where conduct counts, is the approach of "chance" or indeterminism. Within such a universe objective moral values are possible as a ground for "regret." Moral values presuppose a choice; thus, the possibility of regret entails choice. For James this view is a more cogent approach because:

> The indeterminism I defend, the free-will theory of popular sense based on the judgment of regret, represents that world as vulnerable, and liable to be injured by certain of its parts if they act wrong as a matter of possibility or

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[26]It should be noted that this position is similar to both that of Henry James and that of Josiah Royce's idealism.

> accident, neither inevitable nor yet to be infallibly warded off. In all this, it is a theory devoid either of transparency or of stability. It gives us a pluralistic, restless universe, in which no single point of view can ever take in the whole scene; and to a mind possessed of the love of unity at any cost, it will, no doubt, remain forever unacceptable. A friend with such a mind once told me that the thought of my universe made him sick . . . .
>
> But while I freely admit that the pluralism and restlessness are repugnant and irrational in a certain way, I find that every alternative to them is irrational in a deeper way.[27]

Addressing himself to his audience of Unitarians, James draws their attention to a seeming "irrationality" within his view. The presence of chance within his theory of pluralism seems to "preclude utterly the notion of a Providence governing the world."

> To this my answer must be very brief. The belief in free-will is not in the least incompatible with the belief in Providence, provided you do not restrict the Providence to fulminating nothing but fatal decrees. If you allow him to provide possibilities as well as actualities to the universe, and to carry on his own thinking in those two categories just as we do ours, chances may be there, uncontrolled even by him, and the course of the universe be really ambiguous; and yet the end of all things may be just what he intended it to be from all eternity . . . .
>
> The creator's plan of the universe would be left blank as to many of its actual details, but all possibilities would be marked down. The realization of some of these would be left absolutely to chance; that is, would only be determined when the moment of realization came. Other possibilities would be contingently determined; that is, their decision would have to wait till it was seen how the matters of absolute chance fell out. But the rest of the plan, including its final upshot, would be rigorously determined once for all. So the creator himself would not need to know all the details of actuality until they came; and at any time his own view of the world would be a view partly of facts and partly of possibilities, exactly as ours is now. Of one thing,

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[27] Ibid., p. 177.

> however, he might be certain; and that is that his world was safe, and that no matter how much it might zig-zag he could surely bring it home at last.[28]

As though James were scouting difficulties in advance of his hearers, he calls their attention to one of seemingly major import. His approach "leaves the creative mind subject to the law of time." If one is to "insist on the timelessness of that mind," James contends that he offers "no reply for this." He counters, "Is not the timeless mind rather a gratuitous fiction?"

> And is not the notion of eternity being given at a stroke to omniscience only just another way of whacking upon us the block-universe, and of denying that possibilities exist? . . . Admit plurality, and time may be its form.[29]

James later states:

> I prefer to stick in the wooden finitude of an ultimate pluralism, because that at least gives me something definite to worship and fight for.[30]

He has cast his die! His commitment is made--once and for all times--to an anti-Absolutistic, radically empirical and pluralistic theory of the universe. Later versions will become more subtle, and his ideas will become interwoven with facets of a metaphysical position. This initial approach is grounded in moral imperatives and directives which he suggests man can place upon his world. Take note that James' pragmatic doctrine gains its original impetus from religious and moral

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[28] Ibid., pp. 180-182.

[29] Ibid., p. 181n.

[30] William James, Letters, I, p. 238; (additional comments noted in Letters, I, pp. 243-247; 256-257; 304).

considerations. Because they must be, the conditions prerequisite to their accomplishment must be, too. Issuing on the plane of practical discourse we see his early position stated; later we will correlate his positions of radical empiricism and finitistic pluralism.

The Role of Freedom

Throughout these earlier years of James' preference for the indeterminist position, he had remained unable to frame a theoretical solution to the problem of how this freedom is possible. His preference he states as his "belief" in freedom, and he urges others to accept it. He claims that he can muster a "demonstration" of freedom in terms of consequences, due to the moral dimension and choice, as well as reminding his readers that the "judgment of regret" necessitates a realm of volitional possibilities. His claim to shatter determinism via the moral realm has become a major reason for rejection of the Absolutist position. The Absolutist, James holds, refuses to take hold of this actual world in preference to his "block-universe," where the direction of the past delights the monist more than the opportunity of the future. James sees this as removed from the scene of life as it is lived; moreover, he regards the position as being extremely immoral.

There is a pattern to the development of the thoughts of James. It will be of some explanatory help now and in the future of this research work, to make use of some of these trends. He sees determinism issuing into absolutism, which further issues into a basic immorality. At the same time, indeterminism serves as a base for pluralism, thus allowing

for moral possibilities. There is no need to hold to the strangling tenets of absolutism, for its result is a death of philosophical soundness for James. He opts for what he terms a "finitistic, loosely-structured, republical pluralism" in which all existent beings share. While James has made great effort to uncover the flaws of some choice Hegelisms, he also applies his approach to the spawning problems of absolutistic theism. His main point of contention with the traditional approach is that of allowing God to be omniscient and superior to time. The eternality of such a being does not seem to provoke James' judgment nearly as much as the absolutist's claim that God thinks above the temporality to which all of us are subject. This places God above this level of "regret" to which we referred earlier, and it does not allow his involvement with this world of "chance." Further, James views this as a stifling obstacle to the moral claim which he has urged. This "block-universe" approach appears as a mere pantomime, or instant playback, of what has already happened in the mind of God.

James' Attitude Toward Metaphysical "Omniscience"

James' position on freedom and determinism is indispensable to James' formulation of his "natural theology." This naturalistic approach comes full-blown in the Varieties. One major trend becomes quite evident during these formative years: when James has the choice between the metaphysical and the moral, he will inevitably choose the latter. The current discussion of working out the relationship between God and time, omniscience and freedom, ultimately is decided by the moral fact

of human freedom and personal responsibility. He terms the metaphysical postulate of omniscience a "gratuitous fiction," and "another way of whacking upon us the block-universe." James meets metaphysical speculation with his own approach to the moral dimension. This new dynamic for James, the moral factor, coupled with his negative imposition of the "will-to-believe," have finitized the traditional position of an omnipotent, omniscient God.

When James writes the essay "Absolutism and Empiricism," he resurrects earlier remarks directed toward Hegel. He appears gleeful over the growing confrontation between "Empiricism and Transcendentalism," or "Irrationalism and Rationalism." His own "strong bias towards Irrationalism" leads him to state that "the question 'Shall Fact be recognized as an ultimate principle?' is the whole issue between the Rationalists and Empiricists of vulgar thought":

> Fact holds out blankly, brutally and blindly, against that universal deliquescence of everything into logical relations which the Absolutist Logic demands, and it is the only thing that does hold out.[31]

James derides the Rationalists for not concurring that "likes and dislikes" are some of the "ultimate factors" of their philosophy. He suggests that they, too, recognize they are "avowedly making hypotheses, playing with ideals." Recognition on their part of the "motives for our several faiths" would settle much of the problem. "I frankly confess mine--I cannot but think that at bottom they are of an aesthetic and not

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[31]William James, "Absolutism and Empiricism," Mind, IX, p. 283.

of a logical sort."[32] For James it seems poignant that the "one fundamental quarrel Empiricism has with Absolutism is over this repudiation by Absolutism of the personal and aesthetic factor in the construction of philosophy."[33] James further chides, "All Hegelians are not prigs, but I somehow feel as if all prigs ought to end, if developed, by becoming Hegelians."[34] James suggests that understanding will be possible only when these two positions are open to Absolutism, and the Absolutists become aware that

> all philosophies are hypotheses, to which all our faculties, emotional as well as logical, help us, and the truest of which will at the final integration of things be found in possession of the men whose faculties on the whole had the best divining power.[35]

The Clash of Value-Structures

James develops his own finitistic theory in reaction to both traditional theism and the philosophy of the Absolute. His most lengthy attack is against the latter, and this is noted in our study of the reasons James offers for the shift to the finite God. The Absolutists adopted positions which James considered intolerable. We might do well to remember that the Absolutist position was popular at the time of his writing; therefore, it posed a formidable threat to the value structure which James espoused. Perhaps the outstanding advocate of this absolutist position was James' colleague at Harvard University, Josiah Royce,

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[32] Ibid., p. 285. [33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid. [35] Ibid., p. 286.

whom James considered "the champion of absolute idealism for Anglo Saxondom . . . ."[36] Royce became the epitome of the position which James rejected.

The Case for the Efforts of Man

If God were infinite, James contends, and He had already created a world conditioned to His desires, then our lives would appear to be meaningless. This infinite-God theory would entail that man's efforts are not necessary or needed as a basic ingredient in world-building. If this deterministic direction were the case, man's efforts would not be an affective dynamic within the universe. Its life-blood would lie elsewhere, and man's moral anemia would sound the death-knell to aspirations. James goes to great lengths to make clear his position in regard to one's acceptance of the orthodox position of the absolute, infinite and total forms of reality.

James levels his strongest criticism at the concept of the Absolute in his work entitled Pragmatism. This Absolute Being of orthodoxy would squeeze all the meaning out of living. It would become the great demoralizer to which man, as though a programmed automaton, would simply respond as directed. James sharpens the contrast between the finitist view, which he espouses, and the absolutist view, when he says:

> Here all is process; that world is timeless. Possibilities obtain in our world; in the absolute world, where all that is not from eternity impossible, and all that is is necessary, the category of possibility has no application. In this world

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[36]William James, Letters, II, p. 813.

> crimes and horrors are regretable. In that totalized world regret obtains not, for 'the existence of ill in the temporal order is the very condition of the perfection of the eternal order.'[37]

What real possibilities would there be in a world controlled by a timeless and all-inclusive being?[38] We would be merely sand on the beach of this "block-universe," part of this "ready-made world," parcel of the "eternally complete."[39] That which is referred to as life would really be sham. No meaning could be attached to our productive and creative attempts, since all the world's destiny would be pre-decided. A world without thought and action would imprison us in the arena of stagnating results. This world-view William James rejects.

James' alternative theistic world-view is that of a finite-God theory. This view conceives the deity as being somewhat less than all-inclusive and as being part of the temporal framework of the world. The existence of this type of divinity would allow our efforts some impact upon our world. James even suggests that this finite God may stand in need of man, just as man may have need of Him. From two different sources, we note James' position on the finite-God:

> I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this

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[37]William James, Pragmatism, p. 266.

[38]William James, The Will to Believe, p. 176f.

[39]William James, Pragmatism, p. 261.

> life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will.[40]

> Does our act then <u>create</u> the world's salvation so far as it makes room for itself, so far as it leaps into the gap? Does it create, not the whole world's salvation of course, but just so much of this as itself covers of the world's extent?
>
> Here I take the bull by the horns, and in spite of the whole crew of rationalists and monists, of whatever brand they be, I ask <u>why not</u>? Our acts, our turning-places, where we seem to ourselves to make ourselves and grow, are the parts of the world to which we are closest, the parts of which our knowledge is the most intimate and complete. Why should we not take them at their face-value? Why may they not be the actual turning-places and growing-places which they seem to be, of the world--why not the workshop of being, where we catch fact in the making, so that nowhere may the world grow in any other kind of way than this?[41]

James' doctrine seems to ring clear. As he suggests, if the world is hinged in indecision, our actions may help decide the verdict. Remove the a-temporal and omni-attributes of God, and you eradicate the predetermined concept of reality. Our actions become vital to the central heart-beat of reality. They cannot be viewed as superfluous campaigning in a rigged and predestined election. Our actions do improve the status of the cosmos. This is the core of meaning for James' "meliorism."[42]

Man: Robot or Co-Worker?

In addition to granting a place for human freedom, James wishes to make our actions co-creative with those of God. Both God and man decide

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[40]William James, <u>The Will to Believe</u>, p. 61.

[41]William James, <u>Pragmatism</u>, pp. 287-288. [42]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 286.

the course of the environment. Our human role is creative, not merely conformative. Herein lies a basic point in the finitistic approach of James.

As a reaction to the "poor-mindedness" of his early approach to the religious question, James emphasizes the finitistic position to be fit only for the "healthy-minded,"[43] and it necessitates the "strenuous mood." He contends the "morbid minded" prefer a world in which all decisions have been cast for them. They are asked to contribute nothing by way of effort and they would simply acquiesce in their pre-cast world-conditions. Attempting to be as fair as possible with this position, James says it "affords a kind of passive pleasantness within existence," and we supposedly have some need of this from time to time.

In Pragmatism, James provoked the antagonists of his position when he suggested that the value of the Absolute came by its providing for humans "a moral holiday."[44] While misinterpreted by some, James seems to be recommending this as a genuine value. He regarded his own philosophical position as somewhat deficient in this respect.[45] "Despite this willingness to grant value to the theory of the Absolute, James' own gospel was predominantly one of an ultimate hardihood, zestful for the world of real gains and real losses."[46] James suggests a vigorous

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[43]Ibid., p. 291. [44]Ibid., p. 74.

[45]William James, The Meaning of Truth, pp. 238-239.

[46]Bernard Brennan, The Ethics of William James (New York: Bookman Associates, 1961), p. 64; cf. William James, Pragmatism, pp. 290-297.

attempt at living a full and meaningful life. "Pluralism is a view to which we all practically incline when in the full and successful exercise of our moral energy."[47]

The Problem of Intimacy

Intimacy is the missing ingredient from the orthodox attitude toward God. James advocates a finitistic divinity compatible with our actions, sharing in the total impact of the environment. This intimacy would allow us to be "substantially fused" with this Deity, and He must gain a similar vantage and perspective of the world as we have. As we noted earlier in James' view of the nature of the divine limitations, this "substantial fusing" with God is James' attempt to underwrite our intimacy with divine reality. James rejects both the traditional theistic God and the pantheistic absolute because God, on these views, has no intimacy with mankind. Note in the following paragraphs how this absence of intimacy differs with the nature of both theism and pantheism.

The basis of James' dissatisfaction with the traditional understanding of God is that the Deity is distinct from his creation.

> The theistic conception, picturing God and his creation as entities distinct from each other, still leaves the human subject outside the deepest reality in the universe. God is from eternity complete, it says, and sufficient unto himself; he throws off the world by a free act and as an

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[47]Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, II (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 265.

> extraneous substance, and he throws himself. Between them, God says 'one,' the world says 'two,' and man says 'three,' --that is the orthodox theistic view. And orthodox theism has been so jealous of God's glory and it's taken pains to exaggerate everything in the notion of him that could make for isolation and separateness. Page upon page in scholastic books go to prove that God is in no sense implicated by his creative act, or involved in his creation. That his relation to the creatures he has made should make any difference to him, carry any consequence, or qualify his being, is repudiated as a pantheistic slur upon His self-sufficingness.[48]

When viewed closely, the theistic doctrine provokes two reactions. The first disillusion appears within the framework of theism itself: there is no reciprocity between God and man (as quoted above).[49] It is quite apparent that James is not concerned to perpetuate a God who is insensitive to our actions and who really has no need of us.

The Problem of Reciprocity

Secondly, this problem of reciprocity is not the only difficulty with orthodox theism. We must be "substantially fused" in the creativity of this God, not a mere external creation by him. For "to be like a thing is not as intimate a relation as to be substantially fused into it, to form one continuous soul and body with it."[50] Pantheism has achieved a greater degree of intimacy by identifying the world with God. We have come to a level of development in which humanity can dismiss the orthodox theistic doctrine as simply outmoded:

> Our contemporary mind, having once for all grasped the possibility of a more intimate weltanschaung, the only opinions quite worthy of arresting our attention will fall within

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[48]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, pp. 25-26.

[49]Ibid., p. 26. [50]Ibid., p. 25.

> the general scope of what may roughly be called the pantheistic field of vision, the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator, and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality.[51]

By this latter fact that God and the world are somewhat "fused," it appears that the reciprocity of relations between God and man would be assured.

This apparent satisfaction with the pantheistic approach is but partial. James revelled in the fact that it made us tentatively "fused" with God. Yet, from another perspective, James points out that it ultimately produced an incongruity with our relationship to God.

The orthodox perspective views the absolute as a-temporal. God sees all of reality, time-past, present, and future, in one fell-swoop. Since God's perspective is a "one-glance-does-all" approach, it differs strikingly from our own.

> An absolute, then, or sub specie eternitatis, or quatenus infinitus est, the world repels our sympathy because it has no history. As such, the absolute neither acts nor suffers, nor loves nor hates; it has no needs, desires, or aspirations, no failures or successes, friends or enemies, victories or defeats. All such things pertain to the world qua relative, in which our finite experiences lie, and whose vicissitudes alone have power to arouse our interest.[52]

The eternality of the orthodox theistic view, like that of pantheism, is foreign to James' own experiential view. Regardless of our identification with the absolute in its non-historical aspect, in its a-temporality --it remains a foreign concept to us. James views this radical discrepancy between the absolute and the relative points of view as a sizeable

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[51] Ibid., p. 30. [52] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

barrier, like that of the lack of intimacy between God and his creation.[53]

The Direction of James' Finitism

How can one overcome the discrepancy noted as a problem within the theistic infinitistic position? James really shines when he suggests the only answer is that of a finite God. Since this God cannot be superficially or externally related to man, the only solution is for us to be internal parts of him, "substantially fused" with him. Further, God must be a being like unto us, in a temporal continuum. The tenet that God is less than all-inclusive will allow him to fulfill this requirement, because being in time will provide God a history and an environment. James pictures his finite-God theory as preserving some of the theistic attributes, as he says:

> We are indeed internal parts of God and not external creations, on any possible reading of the panpsychic system. Yet because God is not the absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of the other smaller parts,--as similar to our functions consequently.
>
> Having an environment, being in time, and working out a history just like ourselves, he escapes from the foreignness from all that is human, of the static timeless perfect absolute.[54]

Stressing the concern for intimacy, James reiterates his preference for a finite God.

Difficulties crop up during James' spasmodic and unsystematic description of God. One of those problems comes in James' discussion of

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[53]Ibid., pp. 40, 44. [54]Ibid., p. 318.

his conception of God. While he maintains that we are "part and parcel" of God, "substantially fused" with God, the question arises as to how we regain any individuality. His peculiar pantheism has landed him in an apparent contradiction upon initial interpretation; however, James would not allow this compromise. Based upon further study, we will find individuality to be a fundamental concept of his entire philosophy. His solution to the problem comes in the form of pluralism. James asserts that God is to be like us, possessing an environment, a being within time, and continuously working out his destiny. We are alike in some respects, yet James speaks of God as "one of the eaches"; therefore, we are individuals of a pluralistic community. James' position is pluralism, somewhat clouded by this "substantial fusing" of God and man.

Reaction to Institutionalized Religion

James had explicitly rejected the doctrinaire and institutional position of Christianity, along with its revelation of the God-man. He claimed to give up those "theistic prejudices of infancy," and arrive at the plateau where he could grasp that "all the special manifestations of religion (I mean its creeds and theories) may have been absurd."[55] A further piece of correspondence reveals his attitude:

> I do not (and fear cannot) follow the gospel schemes as you do, and . . . the Bible itself, in both its testaments (omitting parts of John and the Apocalypse) seems to me, by its intense naturalness and humanness, the most fatal document that one can read against the orthodox theology, in so far as

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[55]William James, The Letters of William James, II, p. 127.

> the latter claims the words of the Bible to be its basis. I myself believe the orthodox theology contains elements that are permanently true . . . I believe that they will have to be expressed in any ultimately valid religious philosophy; and I see . . . a foretaste of the day when the abstract essentials of belief will be the basis of communion more than the particular forms and concrete doctrines in which they articulate themselves.[56]

In answer to the question whether he believed the Bible as the authority in religious matters, he replied, "No. It is so human a book that I don't see how belief in its divine authorship can survive the reading of it."[57] It appears that James discounts the biblical record because of its claim for super-human authority.

The claim to be intellectually free of Christianity was strangely accompanied by the reference to himself as "protestant." Although James educated his family in Christian scriptures and attended the daily prayer sessions in Harvard Chapel, attracted by the "simplicity of the worship and the paucity of the congregation,"[58] his disdain for organized religion was quite vocal. In one of his lectures he put it this way:

> I must personally confess that my own training in natural science has completely disqualified me for sympathetic treatment of the ecclesiastical universe . . . . It is impossible to believe that the same God who established nature should also feel a special pride at being more immediately represented by clergymen than by laymen, or find a sweet sound in church-phraseology and intonation, or a sweet savor in the distinction between deacons, archdeacons and bishops. He is not of the prim temper.[59]

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[56]Ibid., pp. 196-197. [57]Ibid., p. 215.

[58]Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, p. 357.

[59]Ibid., p. 358.

Further, in a letter to Schiller he lashes out at the superficial extrinsicality of the automated ecclesiastics. "Just been to Church!--automatisms throughout! Let us beware of the day when pragmatism becomes automatism in our mouths!"[60] Accompanying his dislike of automatism and its parallel association with prayer, James declared that he could not "possibly pray--I feel foolish and artificial."[61] He left little untouched in his scathing attack upon the automated Christians and what appeared to him a life of artificiality. However, this "automated church" probably served as one of the strong antitheses which caused James to formulate his finitistic position.

A New Solution to the Old Problem of Evil

James sees a problem with the classic interpretation of the problem of evil. His Gifford Lectures, later published as The Varieties of Religious Experience, and also A Pluralistic Universe, present a compendium of his view concerning the problem. Opposing the theory of the absolute, James states:

> It introduces a speculative 'problem of evil' namely, and leaves us wondering why the perfection of the absolute should require just such particular hideous forms of life as darken the day for our human imaginations. If they were forced on it by something alien and to 'overcome' them the absolute had still to keep hold of them, we could understand its feeling of triumph, though we, so far as we were ourselves among the elements overcome, could acquiesce but sullenly in the resultant situation, and would never just have chosen it as the most rational one conceivable. But the absolute is

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[60] Ibid., p. 359.

[61] William James, The Letters of William James, II, p. 214.

> represented as a being without environment, upon which nothing alien can be forced, and which has spontaneously chosen from within to give itself the spectacle of all that evil rather than a spectacle with less evil in it.[62]

A Restatement of the Absolutist Position

Basic to the problem is the abiding question, how can a perfect being, spontaneously and out of the resources of its own perfect self, allow or permit the imperfections and evils seen within the world? Does it not seem irrational to assert that perfection demands imperfection? It appears that the "ideally perfect whole" would be a whole whose parts were likewise perfect, (or at least perfect in their own way).

> The absolute is defined as the ideally perfect whole, yet most of its parts, if not all, are admittedly imperfect. Evidently the conception lacks internal consistency, and yields us a problem rather than a solution.[63]

James pays particular attention to the facet of the problem in which imperfection characterizes all the finite and fragmentary views of the world. If you are given a situation in which the cosmos is viewed as perfect by the absolute, what is to be gained by adding innumerable imperfect views of the same cosmos?[64] How could the absolute "have lapsed from the perfection of its own integral experience of things, and refracted itself into all our finite experiences?"[65] James sees this as a reversion to the pluralistic approach.[66] Note James'

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[62]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 117.

[63]Ibid., pp. 123-124. [64]Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[65]Ibid., p. 120. [66]Ibid., pp. 122-123.

argument when he contends that to make the being of the absolute dependent upon its constituent parts within the universe is to allow the latter to develop selfhoods on their own accounts, and this would be contrary to typical absolutistic theism. "The absolute as such has objects, not constituents," says James.[67] It appears that James means that, in keeping with the theory of the absolutist, the finite experiences we are discussing must be accounted for as derived from this absolute--as its objects. The absolute qua absolute is its own integral experience of things, and cannot be thought of as dependent on any finite experiences of the world.

James' View of the Problem of Evil

The absolutistic position on the problem of evil is rejected by James. In its place, James puts forth his own finitistic theory as being able to handle the problem with little difficulty. The solution comes when we

> allow the world to have existed from its origin in pluralistic form, as an aggregate or collection of higher and lower things and principles, rather than an absolute, unitary fact. For then evil would not need be essential; it might be, and may always have been, an independent portion that had no rational or absolute right to live with the rest, and which we might conceivably hope to see got rid of at last.[68]

If we do not insist on injecting rationality at the very basis of all reality as the monist does, if we will allow even the slightest something

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[67]Ibid., p. 123.

[68]William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 132.

to escape that all-inclusive ultimate, then the responsibility for evil in the universe can be excised from the forces of goodness. Further, we would not be forced into the irrational approach of showing how the goodness requires evil as the necessary condition of its goodness. James' finitistic theism escapes this latter difficulty.

The approach which James makes to the problem of evil is unlike his previous affirmative solutions. His consideration of the problem from a speculative viewpoint suggests a different approach from the "practical value" approach heretofore considered. How could it be otherwise than a speculative problem? Yet he does attempt to qualify his position.

James was not unaware that there would be practical implications, as well as speculative ones, with regard to the problem of evil. In the Varieties, immediately following his solution through the finitistic approach, James states:

> Now the gospel of healthy-mindedness, as we have described it, casts its vote distinctly for this pluralistic view. Whereas the monistic philosopher finds himself more or less bound to say, as Hegel said, that everything actual is rational, and that evil, as an element dialectically required, must be pinned in and kept and consecrated and have a function awarded to it in the final system of truth, healthy-mindedness refuses to say anything of the sort.[69]

Likewise in A Pluralistic Universe, he continues:

> In any pluralistic metaphysics, the problems that evil presents are practical, not speculative. Not why evil should exist at all, but how we can lessen the actual amount of it, is the sole question we need there consider.[70]

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[69]Ibid., p. 132. [70]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 124.

Note how James regards both the practical and the speculative approaches within his gospel of healthy-mindedness. Evil, as something we must actively combat rather than to submit to, serves as an incentive for those who act. As James puts it, evil becomes a practical problem, and it beckons forth our moral activities.

It appears that the cardinal reason for James' taking the position toward evil which he does was the practical value it could contribute to one's life. An authority on James, Julius Seelye Bixler, prefers the priority of practicality on the problem of evil.

> James does, it is true, refer in the Varieties to the speculative difficulty of finding the origin of evil in a God who is wholly good. And in a certain limited sense it may be said to be the logic of the situation which drives him to postulate a finite God. But surely the logical sense is most limited. The problem was logical only as every problem can be expressed in logical terms. The issues as they presented themselves in James' mind were living issues first and logically arranged afterwards. His interest, emphatically, was not in describing how evil can come from good. Rather it was a 'melioristic' interest in what can be done about it.[71]

We concur with Bixler that the prevalent intent of James in solving the problem of evil from the finitistic viewpoint was its ability to demonstrate that practical interests are operative.

Evil and the Natural Situation

Evil presents a problem of how to interpret the natural world. Within the finitistic approach to God, evil is a datum which must be

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[71]Julius S. Bixler, Religion in the Philosophy of William James (Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1926), p. 36.

understood basically from our finite position. Therefore, it must be understood as though God, who coexists with these evils, is subject to the same standards of goodness as we are. From this approach, this God will be a knower and a power which might far surpass our own human standards within the universe, but He is not to be considered as a being completely outside our own value standards. Judgments which we use concerning God will parallel those we use to judge other persons. Since this is viewed as the condition of the world, evil could scarcely be considered as less than a distasteful dilemma which we are forced to confront. To the observer and/or participant of a universe filled with innumerable tragedies, who recognizes no level of certainty about an infinite God, the world simply cannot be recognized as the handiwork of an all-good and all-powerful God.

The finitistic position is that the world with all its evil simply cannot be the effort of an all-powerful and benevolent God. Evil, as we said, is judged from our finite perspective. Our term "finite perspective" indicates that evil is adjudicated upon the standards of human goodness. By human values "good" indicates man's efforts to do his best to restrict evil to a minimum and do all within his capabilities to improve the conditions of human existence. This pictures man as striving toward overcoming the meaninglessness in the human predicament. Since God is judged by our standards, then his task will be similar to ours. God will be expected to cooperate in this campaign, to put forth efforts to produce the best world possible. Since the standards of human goodness are applicable to God, then He must be considered

finite, too. If this deficiency were not to be found in God, then there would be no explanation for an imperfect natural existence.

There is a further comment on James' discussions of evil over what he calls the lack of intimacy expressed by an Absolute Being. The foreignness of such an Absolute makes its perspective on issues timeless, quite unlike ours. This not only applies to the Absolute's understanding of daily events, it is quite important to a discussion of evil. This would pose a real threat to that which we hold valuable. Urgency and comradeship will not allow one to take a seat of disinterest and disengagement, and an Absolute would have virtually no identity with our human predicament.

Evil Requires the Finitude of God

From the finite point of view, it is impossible to understand how an all-good and all-powerful God could produce a world superior to this, particularly one that is without evil. This would imply that God did less than his best on this one, or that he could not do any better at any given time. Either case points up the finitude of God, either in power or in goodness. A rational explanation of evil seems to come short of satisfaction. Perhaps the tack which James takes is to be preferred, for he limits the powers of goodness which are at work in the universe. Since the question of God's nature cannot be determined by rational principle alone, the finitistic God seems to be James' practical conclusion.

When we have finished stating all the arguments for it, evil will still remain a bleak mystery, understandable only through warranted assumption. The assumption that it has been redeemed, that it is now under control, that it will ultimately serve some humane purpose--these are the assumptive bases which are refused by James. He rejects this kind of argument concerning evil because of the magnitude of evil. Is the universe such a forlorn spot as James sometimes suggests? He said, "there is no problem of good," but then he seems to reverse himself when he contends that good justifies the inference of evil.[72] If evil is no big problem in the deficiency of the world, why make so much of the problem? The problem of good in relation to evil remains within James.

What can be said of moral evil within the general discussion of the problem of evil? James seems to indicate that this moral dimension is the only unquestioned kind of evil in our experience. This would appear to be the only really obvious point of individual connection to the problem of evil. James makes little attempt to differentiate the various kinds of evil. It would appear that his solution might have taken the problem of evil too lightly.

Granting evil its biggest blight, does this entitle James to de-absolutize God in light of the problem of evil? There appears to be slight inconsistency. James has argued in Human Immortality against any attempt to curtail the divine imagination and intelligence by human and "comfortable standards." "The Deity that suffers us" may have plans

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[72]William James, Dilemma of Determinism, p. 23.

for others like us which go beyond our present prognostications. He has warned us not to measure God by human standards alone, and one might wonder why this could not equally apply to the question of evil. "The scale of the evil actually in sight defies all human tolerance." For James, the worth of the philosophical argument weighed on the object in question, however imperfect and distant that object appeared. This is the concern with the question of a finite God.

Approaching God imperfectly and anthropocentrically, James states that his belief in God's presence is structured: "I need it so that it 'must' be true." This "need" is met in God as "a more powerful ally of my own ideals."[73] This finite God has the characteristic of "use-value," which makes God unquestionably attractive from James' pragmatic point of view. There is another facet to this charm, for to constitute the divine, this God must transcend the level of mere utility. The problem of evil is an area in which this more-than-utility factor of James' finitistic God could be demonstrated. Taking note of evil in his own experience, and following it on the horrendous scale of the cosmos as detailed by Darwin, James admits to no place for this "God of nature":

> We see indeed that certain evils minister to ulterior goods. . . . We can vaguely generalize this into the doctrine that all the evil in the universe is but instrumental to its greater perfection. But the scale of the evil actually in sight defies all human tolerance; and transcendental idealism, in the pages of a Bradley or a Royce, brings us no farther than the book of Job did--God's ways are not our ways,

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[73]William James, Letters, II, pp. 213-214.

> so let us put our hands upon our mouth. A God who can relish such superfluities of horror is no God for human beings to appeal to. His animal spirits are too high. In other words the 'Absolute' with his one purpose is not the man-like God of common people.[74]

The God of traditional theology and secular idealism cannot meet the demands of human necessities, according to James. Man needs a "man-like God," who will join him in his campaign against our "common enemy."

James' reaction to the moral phase of evil is not too unlike that of the traditional Christian response. Like James, the responsive Christian is militant against evil by refusing to bring it into his own person and by neutralizing its effects wherever found. There appears to be a correlation between the pluralistic insistence upon man's contribution within a world process and that of the classic saintly hero who does battle with evil.

Summary:

The infinite-God theories discussed in the preceding pages have called into question for James the problem of their basic doctrines. The infinite-God theories accept the existence of God as necessarily true; probability does not enter the picture because truth is necessarily demonstrated. A philosophical position which holds that we can know with certainty that God exists as an infinite being has read a great deal into human experience. The problem arises in showing any connection between the infinite and the world of nature. As James sees it,

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[74]William James, Pragmatism, pp. 142-143.

what is accepted by the infinite-God theorists will have to stand the attack of the finitistic approach.

The finite-God approach calls attention to the fact that the problems of the natural world appear to be of a different sort than those of the infinite. For example, evil for the Absolutists would have to be explained in reference to an already established God as infinite. It would have no purpose nor demonstrate any worth for the finite position. The meaning of evil must be controlled by that which has already been accepted as necessarily true within the Absolutist's view.

When the subjectivity of the individual is the point of departure in building one's theory of God, objective certainty seems to be of little significance. As a result, the facts of evil, as well as other data, are viewed from a different perspective within the finitistic positions. They become data viewed as disclosing the essential limitations of the divine. This lack of objective certitude, noted in the method of James, presents the possibilities of interpreting certain data as possible evidence for the finitude of God. We will be able to see this in the following chapter as we study the motives, the dimensions, and the preference which James has for the pluralistic.

CHAPTER TWO: PHILOSOPHICAL MOTIVES OF JAMES' FINITE THEISM

Chapter Two

PHILOSOPHICAL MOTIVES OF JAMES' FINITE THEISM

For William James, God must be finite. The evidence which he offers for the finite-God theory is viewed as positive evidence for the finitistic, and enables us to piece together his unorthodox views. The general nature of the evidence we have viewed leads us to suggest that it issues basically from practical concerns. One can note a trend developing in the mind of James that certain life values, or practical values, need to be defended at all costs. Since these seem to be best preserved if God is finite, then God is finite.

Intellectual considerations come to the scene when James feels the necessity to construct a theory consistent with the values he is upholding. As in the case of the problem of evil, when the contradiction between positions of practical fact and the absolutist viewpoint clash, so much the better. Give the contradiction emphasis in order to gain favor for your own point of view. Basic to all the evidence which we have viewed, James is concerned with pointing out how the absolute contradicts the values he defends. James recommends the finite-God theory in order to preserve the values which make life worth living.

James' finitistic theory of God is discovered in three of his major works, all written in the last decade of his life. As a result of the Gifford lectures of 1901-1902, he published <u>The Varieties of Religious</u>

Experience. In this particular volume, James is intent upon attacking philosophical theology for its inability to direct man's thinking about God.[1] His attack is levelled at the more traditional theisms based upon natural arguments, and his rejection of Newman's works will serve as an example. He does not seem too concerned about developing his own theory of finitism at this point; rather, his criticism is directed against the intellectual approach to the problem of God's existence.

A later work, Pragmatism, and his last official volume, A Pluralistic Universe, contain James' own theory of the finite God. In Pragmatism, James reacts more against the Absolutists' position within Idealism than he does against the traditional theistic position.[2] His last work dismisses the antiquated traditionalist position and attempts to excise the philosophy of the Absolute.[3]

In an attempt to understand the finite characteristics of God as held by William James, we have taken note of James' development. Initially, James was viewed as reacting to the theistic position of his father; later, he made a systematic approach to the theistic questions. Within the last thirty years of his life, James did not produce any overwhelmingly revolutionary additions to his original theistic approach. With the exception of his brief flirtation with pantheism, and his later analysis of that problem, James maintains his view that finitism is the human response to a contingent world.

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[1]William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 329-347.

[2]William James, Pragmatism, pp. 165-193.

[3]William James, Pluralistic Universe, pp. 23-30.

The value of theism, as James conceived it, was seen pragmatically in its anthropocentric "workings," i.e., for the "healthy-minded approach," and the "powerful ally of my own ideals." Since the pragmatic maxim demands that "faith make a difference," James is fixing theistic merit by the difference it makes in human action, and by that "difference" it either stands or falls. With this criterion in mind, it seems that the case has been stated that for James, God is inconceivable in any terms other than the finitistic. Man's relation to God proceeds on the basis that God is social and interacting with this common world.

It has been noted in the last chapter that the "Absolute" God of the traditional theists and the "Creator-God" of the scholastics are not permissible for James, for these earlier approaches see God as aloof, distant, and of no pragmatic value. James held that these absolutistic approaches were not viable because their truth could not be verified through significant consequences. This brings us to the development of this chapter, in which we will first consider the motives for the finite nature of God as maintained by James; later, we will note James' pragmatic and empirical approach to our knowledge of God.

Motives for the Finite Nature of God

The Moral Incentive

As a prelude to understanding the "moral incentive" of James finite-God theory, one needs to gain insight into James' ultimate reasons for using the God concept. Contrary to the typical Christian, James did not

look upon this world as preparatory to another, or as a temporal span provided one to align his activities to God's eternal will. Instead, James' theism pictures man in a position of cooperating with God, where both man's and God's efforts will improve the conditions needed by both. This moral goad spurs us on to sharing in the creating of a desirable situation in our everyday world. It seems to carry little, if any, of the eternal-reward doctrine of orthodoxy. There is need for this incentive to moral activity, for it, in a sense, conditions the kind of world in which we live.

If God were infinite, James contends, and He had already created a world conditioned to His desires, then our lives would appear to be meaningless. This infinite-God theory would entail that man's efforts are not necessary or needed as a basic ingredient in world-building. If this deterministic theory were the case, man's efforts would not be an affective dynamic within the universe. Its life-blood would lie elsewhere, and man's moral anemia would curtain his hopes and aspirations. James' criticism is directed to the lack of intimacy with the absolute, and he returns to the old theme of moral incentive.

> But the world that each of us feels most intimately at home with is that of beings with histories that play into our history, whom we can help in their vicissitudes even as they help us in ours. This satisfaction the absolute denies us; we can neither help nor hinder it, for it stands outside of history.[4]

What greater incentive could one have than a God who needs man? What greater response could be requested than from one who cannot accomplish

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[4]Ibid., p. 49.

his purposes without our cooperation? Man and God share in the same task--that of fashioning the shape of reality. Here is the hardcore issue for James' desire for God to be finite--the moral incentive of interacting needs betwixt God and man; we need each other. Man must be a co-creator of the moral fibre of the universe, not simply find it ready for his approving nod when he arrives.

The method by which James seeks to preserve the moral incentive value is that of finitizing God. Both man and God become co-creators in securing a real meaning for existence. James runs a gallant campaign to preserve the creative role which man will play in the universe. Man and God, both, become central to the meaning of the universe; and man must have some role in determining the destinies of life. His rejection of the "block universe" of the absolute comes as a result of his insistence upon the volitional basis of man. Only then can man's life have integrity and not be deprived of real meaning.

Although James gives man a central place in his consortium, he feels an equal need for some sort of God for man; otherwise there would be little justification for the moral incentive man experiences.[5] If the world were totally indifferent to the ideals of man, there would be no need or reason for the moral incentive. Either atheism or traditional theism can fall victim to the world-view just described. The God which William James espouses would fit the pattern of neither position.

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[5]William James, The Will To Believe, pp. 212-213.

The Pluralistic Moral Dimension

The moral incentive as related to the problem of a finite God can be traced in James' writing as early as the "Dilemma of Determinism," but its shaping into a systematic facet of his radical finitistic pluralism came during the final phase of life--the metaphysical period. Within the Literary Remains, James states that the kind of monism his father advocated ought to raise no quarrel from the "half-practical pluralism" hardened by reflection, and deliberate," which was wrangled over the "old mystery of the One and the Many"--only to conclude "by taking sides against the One." Note James' pluralistic moral dimension:

> It seems to me that the deepest of all philosophic differences is that between this pluralism and all forms of monism whatever. Apart from analytic and intellectual arguments, pluralism is a view to which we all practically incline when in the full and successful exercise of our moral energy. The life we then feel tingling through us vouches sufficiently for itself, and nothing tempts us to refer it to a higher source . . . (In such euphoria we are inclined to no monistic transcendence). The feeling of action, in short, makes us turn a deaf ear to the thought of being; and this deafness and insensibility may be said to form an integral part of what in popular phrase is known as healthy-mindedness. Any absolute moralism must needs be such a healthy-minded pluralism; and in a pluralistic philosophy the healthy-minded moralist will always feel at home.[6]

From this pluralistic background, James continues with the "moral business." His ambition, as the advocate of the "healthy-minded," is to direct adherents to recognize that "healthy-mindedness is not the whole of life":

> and the morbid view, as one by contrast may call it, asks for a philosophy very different from that of absolute moralism.

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[6]William James, Literary Remains of Henry James, Sr., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1884), p. 186.

> To suggest personal will and effort to one all sicklied o'er with the sense of weakness, of helpless failure, and of fear, is to suggest the most horrible of things to him. What he craves is to be consoled in his very impotence, to feel that the Powers of the Universe recognize and secure him, all passive and failing as he is. Well, we are all potentially such sick men. The safest and best of us are of one clay with lunatics and prison-inmates. And whenever we feel this . . . our morality appears but as a plaster hiding a sore it can never cure, and all our well-doing as the hollowest substitute for that well-being that our lives ought to be grounded in, but, alas! are not. This well-being is the object of the religious demand,--a demand so penetrating and unassuageable that no consciousness of such occasional and outward well-doing as befalls the human lot can ever give it satisfaction.[7]

James raises the point that men cannot have it both ways:

> to satisfy the religious demand is to deny the demands of the moralist. The latter wishes to feel the empirical goods and evils, on the recognition of which his activity proceeds, to be <u>real</u> goods and evils, with their distinction absolutely preserved. So that of religion and moralism, the morbid and the healthy view, it may be said that what is meat to the one is the other's poison. Any absolute moralism is a pluralism; and absolute religion is a monism.[8]

James seems to sense a practicality in this position:

> The accord of moralism and religion is superficial, their discord radical. Only the deepest thinkers on both sides see that one must go. Popular opinion gets over the difficulty by compromise and contradiction . . . . Such inconsistency cannot be called a solution of the matter, though it practically seems to work with most men well enough.[9]

Something vital comes from this practical order. It is the <u>modus vivendi</u> by which ordinary man seems to face the problem of life.

> Must not the more radical ways of thinking, after all, appeal to the same umpire of practice for corroboration of their more consistent views? Is the religious tendency or the moralistic tendency on the whole the most serviceable to man's

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[7]<u>Ibid</u>. [8]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 186-187. [9]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 187.

> life, taking the latter in the largest way? By their fruits ye shall know them. Solvitur ambulando; for the decision we must perhaps await the day of judgment. Meanwhile, the battle is about us, and we are its combatants, steadfast or vacillating, as the case may be.[10]

In the theistic context, James uses the pragmatic test to question the "fruitful results." He continues his case for that finitistic pluralism based upon the moralistic claim as the more rewarding and "fruitful approach" to life.

The ethical dimension becomes crucial when James states that his "main purpose" for a study in religion is to show that "there is no such thing possible as an ethical philosophy dogmatically made up in advance." Our everyday action gives content to ethics, and "there can be no final truth in ethics any more than in physics, until the last man has had his experience and said his say." If the ethicist is actually studying the existing ideals found in the world, he will discover that moral ideals presuppose persons, and that beyond the "de facto constitution of existing consciousness" there is no more ultimate ground of obligation. It becomes the work of this "consciousness" to determine which ideas are right and which are wrong. This is accomplished by "feeling" the one to be right, the other wrong. James does not accept any "over-reaching system of moral relations" which are claimed as valid in themselves. Instead, James is of the opinion that obligation for ethical claims can ultimately be traced to a claim made by a specific person.[11] This becomes

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[10] Ibid. [11] William James, Will to Believe, pp. 193-194.

especially true if there is a God, says James, whose demands "carry the most of obligation simply because they are the greatest in amount." Further, he claims that it would be true even if there were no God, since "we form at any rate an ethical republic here below."[12]

Ethics' "most valuable principle" is that the "essence of good is simply to satisfy demand," which James suggests might be "anything under the sun." The pluralistic notion of James is underscored as he says, "The elementary forces in ethics are probably as plural as those of physics." "Those ideals must be written highest which prevail at the least cost," or which nullify the fewest number of other ideals. Further, there can be no "absolute" philosophy of ethics:

> There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see.[13]

James reminds us that history is viewed from the perspective of

> The anarchists, nihilists, and free-lovers; prohibitionists and . . . radical Darwinians with their idea of the suppression of the weak,--these and all the conservative sentiments of society arrayed against them, are simply deciding through actual experiment by what sort of conduct the maximum amount of good can be gained and kept in this world. These experiments are to be judged, not *á priori*, but by actually finding, after the fact of their making, how much more outcry or how much appeasement comes about.[14]

While "abstract rules can help" in the practical decisions of ethical questions, they are less helpful "in proportion as our intuitions are more piercing, and our vocation is the stronger for the moral life."[15]

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[12]*Ibid.*, pp. 195-198. [13]*Ibid.*, p. 209.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 207. [15]*Ibid.*, p. 209.

The "chief of all reasons why concrete ethics cannot be final is that they have to wait on metaphysical and theological beliefs," James contends. The practical power of belief comes to the fore. Humans are capable of the "easy-going mood" or the "strenuous" mood, and belief in God greatly widens man's capacity for the latter. James claims that the man who possesses the "strenuous mood" is the morally-productive man, and he suggests that

> the strenuous type of character will in the battle-field of history always outwear the easy-going type, and religion will drive irreligion to the wall.[16]

Now comes the "divine thinker," who puts together the pieces of our moral productivity:

> In the interests of our own ideal of systematically unified moral truth, therefore, we, as would-be philosophers, must postulate a divine thinker, and pray for the victory of the religious cause. Meanwhile, exactly what the thought of the infinite thinker may be is hidden from us even were we sure of his existence; so that our postulation of him after all serves only to let loose in us the strenuous mood.[17]

James' ethical view, as well as that of his religious finitism, indicates that he is grounded in sentiment, pluralistic possibility, and pragmatic tests of truth. James has merely mentioned the special intuition of the "morally strong," but this will blossom after his acquaintance with Bergson. The theological problem remains shifting, as though in flux. His latest decree concerning God suggests a Divinity who is open to the possibilities which lie before man.

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[16] Ibid., p. 213. [17] Ibid., p. 214.

The Religious Dimension

James was nearing the sixty-year mark in life when he began his preparation for the Gifford Lectures. Much of the early emotional and spiritual crisis of his youth had continued to ferment through the developmental years, and a glimpse of his broadening spiritual awareness is attested by a letter he wrote in 1899.

> I have managed to read a good deal about religion, and religious people, and care less for accomplishments, except where . . . they go with a sanctified heart. Abundance of accomplishments, in an unsanctified heart, only make one a more accomplished devil.[18]

This renewal of effort to face the theistic question, as well as James' approach to the pragmatic future, is suggested in another letter of late December, 1899:

> Since July . . . my only companions have been saints, most excellent, though sometimes rather lop-sided company. In a general manner I can see my way to a perfectly bully pair of volumes, the first an objective study of the 'Varieties of Religious Experience,' the second, my own last will and testament, setting forth the philosophy best adapted to normal religious needs.[19]

James stated his intent was to write a two-volume work. The first of these finally appeared under the title of the Varieties, but his "last will and testament" in the field of religious philosophy never came off. While most of the content of the Varieties is psychological, there are threads of theism interspersed. His later life, after 1900, will convey some theistic provisions which might compose this "last will and testament." These begin with his idea of "religious acts."

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[18]William James, Letters, II, p. 106. [19]Ibid., pp. 111-112.

The Place of Religious Acts

In April, 1900, James had completed the first three of his lectures for the Gifford Foundation. His purpose is stated in some personal correspondence:

> The problem I have set myself is a hard one: first, to defend (against all the prejudices of my 'class') 'experience' against 'philosophy' as being the real backbone of the world's religious life--I mean prayer, guidance, and all that sort of thing immediately and privately felt, as against high and noble general views of our destiny and the world's meaning; and second, to make the hearer or reader believe, what I myself invincibly do believe, that although all the special manifestations of religion may have been absurd (I mean its creeds and theories), yet the life of it as a whole is mankind's most important function. A task well-nigh impossible, I fear, and in which I shall fail; but to attempt it is my religious act.[20]

Continuing the pursuit of his "religious acts," and by mid-1901, when he had completed his first group of lectures, James began to delineate both the personal and intellectual facets of the issue. A further bit of correspondence puts in precise form what James will attempt throughout the whole of the Varieties. In a letter to Henry Rankin, James said:

> Now, at the end of this first course, I feel my 'matter' taking firmer shape, and it will please you less to hear me say that I believe myself to be (probably) permanently incapable of believing the Christian scheme of vicarious salvation, and wedded to a more continuously evolutionary mode of thought. The reasons you from time to time have given me . . . have somehow failed to convince. In these lectures the ground I am taking is this: The mother sea and fountainhead of all religions lie in the mystical experiences of the individual, taking the word mystical in a very wide sense. All theologies and all ecclesiasticisms are secondary growths superimposed; and the experiences make such flexible combinations with the intellectual prepossessions of

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[20] Ibid., p. 127.

> their subjects, that one may almost say that the have no proper intellectual deliverance of their own, but belong to a region deeper, and more vital and practical, than that which the intellect inhabits. For this they are also indestructible by intellectual arguments and criticism. I attach the mystical or religious consciousness to the possession of an extended subliminal self, with a thin partition through which messages make irruption. We are thus made convincingly aware of the presence of a sphere of life larger and more powerful than our usual consciousness, with which the latter is nevertheless continuous. The impressions and impulsions and emotions and excitements which we thence receive help us to live, they found invincible assurance of a world beyond the sense, they melt our hearts and communicate significance and value to everything and make us happy. They do this for the individual who has them and other individuals follow him. Religion in this way is absolutely indestructible. Philosophy and theology give their conceptual interpretations of this experiential life. The farther margin of the subliminal field being unknown, it can be treated as by Transcendental Idealism, as an Absolute mind with a part of which we coalesce, or by Christian theology, as a distinct deity acting on us. Something, not our immediate self, does act on our life! So I seem doubtless to my audience to be blowing hot and cold, explaining away Christianity, yet defending the more general basis from which I say it proceeds.[21]

Religion cannot be destroyed, for it "must necessarily play an eternal part in human history." It starts with the individual, and this is "founded in feeling"; thus we note its transcendence of rational dimensions.

The Claim for Mysticism

It has been our attempt to show how James' finitistic theism has been developing. Within the Varieties, the pragmatic criterion has been applied repeatedly within the framework of empirical content. Within James' view, we summarize the intent of this writing:

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[21]Ibid., pp. 149-150.

1. The basis of all religion lies in individual mystical experience, which, being more primitive than intellectual experience, is unassailable by reason.
2. Mystical experience is the manifestation of a larger sphere of life with which we are continuous.
3. Mystical experience grounds life, yields value, produces happiness.
4. Philosophy and theology are conceptual interpretations of the experiential religious life.
5. The ground of mystical experience can be interpreted in Idealistic or Christian categories.

Within this pragmatic approach perceptual experience is preferred to conceptual. "Percept" now has the added dimension of intuition with its special religious significance (since James' reading of Bergson). Feeling, which comes from deeper inner resources, is preferred to rationalistic explanations. The mystical dimension has opened up a "wider sphere of consciousness," and there appears an energy conveyed by the mystical condition which could be advantageous "in case the inspiration were a true one."

Pushing his contention for the mystical dimension of life, James states what kind of truth-factor he sees in mysticism:

> (1) Mystical states, when well developed, usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individual to whom they come.
> (2) No authority emanates from them which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically.
> (3) They break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding and

> the senses alone. They show it to be only one kind of consciousness. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth, in which, so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely continue to have faith.[22]

The first of these conclusions states the mystic's case as "invulnerable," and the mystic remains in "undisturbed enjoyment of his creed." The second summary statement shows the mystic in a position to ask of us that we view his experiences as "establishing a presumption," or "forming a consensus" and having "unequivocal outcome." The mystic's third statement is a rejection of both the reductionist and the rationalist approaches, because there can "never be a state of facts to which new meaning may not truthfully be added, provided the mind ascend to a more enveloping point of view." Therefore, mysticism provides us with

> hypotheses which we may voluntarily ignore, but which as thinkers we cannot possibly upset. The supernaturalism and optimism to which they would persuade us may . . . be after all the truest of insights into the meaning of this life.[23]

"Feeling is the deeper source of religion," James contends, and further holds that if feeling did not exist, he doubts "whether any philosophic theology could ever have been framed."

> I doubt if dispassionate intellectual contemplation of the universe, apart from inner unhappiness and need of deliverance on the one hand and mystical emotion on the other would ever have resulted in religious philosophies such as we now possess.[24]

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[22]William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 422-423.

[23]Ibid., p. 428. [24]Ibid., p. 431.

Speculative schemes of the theistic variety are "secondary products," and they should be "classed as over-beliefs, buildings-out performed by the intellect into directions of which feeling originally supplied the hint."[25]

Intellectualism in Religious Perspective

Philosophy possibly could become the impartial court of theological notions, and allow some intelligent interpretation from our "immediate experiences," thus allowing for a finitistic development to take place. James challenges another kind of philosophy when he states:

> The intellectualism in religion which I wish to discredit pretends to be something altogether different from this. It assumes to construct religious objects out of the resources of logical reason alone, or of logical reason drawing rigorous inference from non-subjective facts. It calls its conclusions dogmatic theology, or philosophy of the absolute . . . It reaches them in an a priori way, and warrants their veracity.[26]

James questions why advocates of the "warranted systems" can possibly look with disapproval upon the "merely possible or probably truth" theories. Why must they disavow any "results that only private assurance can grasp?" The dogmatic positions within theology are vulnerable at the point where they claim triumph when "feeling . . . valid only for the individual . . . is pitted against reason (which is) valid universally."

> The test is a perfectly plain one of fact. Theology based on pure reason must in point of fact convince men universally. If it did not, wherein would its superiority consist? If it only formed sects and schools, even as sentiment and

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[25] Ibid. [26] Ibid., p. 433.

> mysticism form them, how would it fulfill its programme of freeing us from personal caprice and waywardness? This perfectly definite practical test of the pretensions of philosophy to found religion on universal reason simplifies my procedure . . . I need not discredit philosophy by laborious criticism of its arguments. It will suffice if I show that as a matter of history it fails to prove its pretension to be 'objectively' convincing. In fact, philosophy does so fail. It does not banish differences; it founds schools and sects just as feeling does. I believe, in fact, that the logical reason of man operates in this field of divinity exactly as it has always operated in love, or in patriotism, or in politics, or in any other of the wider affairs of life, in which our passions or our mystical intuitions fix our beliefs beforehand. It finds arguments for our convictions, [faith]; . . . it cannot now secure it.[27]

Here is James' most precise criticism of natural theology. Appeals to the natural world as indisputable are too obscure in principle to bear the weight of the whole structure of a theology. "The fact is that these arguments do but follow the combined suggestions of the facts and of our feeling. They prove nothing rigorously. They only corroborate our preexistent partialities."[28]

The nature of religion as suggested by James' epistemology and descriptive psychology is found in the Varieties. So many trends, definitions, and works on the subject of religion, James states, prove that the word "religion" cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name.

Perhaps part of the confusion lies in how James conceives "religion." To summarize briefly, James seems to be using the term "religion" in several different senses. His early usage of the term seems to imply his

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[27]Ibid., pp. 435-436. [28]Ibid., p. 439.

theological hang-over from his ancestral Calvinistic orthodoxy. Further, he uses "religion" to spell out the criteria of transcendence in relation to their human counterparts. (Cf. "Reflex Action and Theism.") Again, James uses "religion" as the equivalent of the liberal, scientifically-oriented doctrines of the Unitarians. Yet again, James approaches "religion" as an option for the spiritual, a transcendent-yet-immanent personal God conceived within the existential framework. His development of the usage of the word began within the structure of orthodoxy, then progressed through a scientific (factual) renovation, and finally included the moral and existential dimensions. His quest was to be a pluralist without losing the available religious values.

James proposed to bypass institutional religion and to cleave "as far as [he] can to personal religion pure and simple." His concise view attempts to define religion as

> . . . the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider to be divine.[29]

But the objective meaning of "divine" seems just as hard to define. James attempts to clarify its meaning by saying

> that the word 'divine' . . . shall mean for us not merely the primal and enveloping and real . . (but) such a primal reality as the individual feels impelled to respond to solemnly and gravely, and neither by a curse nor a jest.[30]

The question of objective truth in theism concerns primarily the reality of that "more," with which the believer feels conterminous. While attempting to construct a philosophical hypothesis about the

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[29] Ibid., p. 31. [30] Ibid., p. 38.

"more" James still holds closely to those relevant psychological data and renounces the ambition to be "coercive in his arguments." The "subconscious self" is a "well-accredited psychological entity," and James feels this to be the "exactly . . . mediating term required" to join the human and the transcendent. For this reason, James proposes that the "more," whatever might be its own nature, "is on its hither side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life." Lived religious experiences lead us to the "common and generic" conclusion:

> we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which . . . is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.[31]

The Utility of "Over-beliefs"

Another factor in the pluralistic dimensions of religion is that of "over-belief." Over-beliefs develop when a person begins to ask how far his own transmarginal consciousness can carry him. The over-belief is an identification of the finite self as it relates to the absolute self, and it claims to have always been one with God and identical with the soul of the world.[32]

Working toward his concept of "over-belief," James attempts to clarify the "farther limits of this extension of our personality." It becomes an "altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely 'understandable' world," and as no mere ideal, since "when we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for

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[31] Ibid., p. 515. [32] Ibid., p. 513.

we are turned into new men," and practical consequences in the order of conduct are sure to follow. We call this supreme reality "God" because this is the "natural appellation, for us Christians at least." James hastens to point out the proximity of his notion to that of the "instinctive belief" of mankind: "God is real since he produces real effects."[33]

The God of Everyday Worship

James occasionally suggests a further consideration in favor of the finite-God theory: religious interest neither demands nor attests to an infinite God.[34] He recounts that the God of everyday worship is finite in nature.[35] Our religious interests do not demand an absolute, but rather prefer something adequate to meet our needs. Apparently, anything larger than our needs will be sufficient if it answers our demands. Some might wish to object that this approach puts our salvation in jeopardy, but James suggests that common sense can live with the notion of this world being partly saved and partly lost. Further, the ordinary moralistic state of mind acknowledges that the salvation of the world is conditional upon the success with which each unit succeeds in doing its part.[36] In addition, some men may not object to being the unsaved remnant, so long as their cause prevails. (James uses the expression "salvation of the world" often in accord with his finitistic position. This

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[33]Ibid., pp. 515-516. [34]Ibid., p. 525.

[35]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 124.

[36]William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 526.

salvation is a phenomenon occurring in this world; i.e., it is the realization of certain ideals one might hold. We do not suggest that immortality become the issue at present; rather, we note that "salvation of the world" is basically a "this-worldly" notion.)

The religious life of the ordinary [common] man does not generally underwrite the infinite-God theory. The God of the common man calls man to cooperate in His purposes; such a God possesses enemies and has an environment.[37] James suggests that a God who wants our help is surely finite. If we were to accept him as infinite, it would be a result of some unthinking, lazy acceptance of an authoritative theology.

James is drawing attention to that "pragmatic view of religion," which has generally "been taken as a matter of course by common men":

> I believe the pragmatic way of taking religion to be the deeper way. It gives it body as well as soul, it makes it claim, as everything real must claim, some characteristic realm of facts as its very own.[38]

James reminds us that God is to the religious mind a rock of stability, a guarantee that "tragedy is only provisional" and that ultimate sanity is achievable:

> The world interpreted religiously is not the materialistic world over again, with an altered expression . . . it is something more, namely, a postulator of new facts as well, . . . It must be such that different events can be expected in it, different conduct must be required.[39]

God, for James, then, must be real and active, that dynamic of difference

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[37]William James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 124.

[38]William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 518-519.

[39]Ibid., p. 518.

which shifts the balance, the object of the "over-belief," which seems to "keep [James] more sane and true." "Who knows whether the faithfulness of individuals here below to their own poor over-beliefs may not actually help God in turn to be more effectively faithful to his own greater tasks?"[40] This reference to the divine nature led James to claim that there is a "crasser and [a] more refined supernaturalism." This "crasser" or "piecemeal" theism proposes no monistic lack of answers. It "admits miracles and providential leadings," and mixes the "ideal and real worlds together." This is James' position:

> Notwithstanding my own inability to accept either popular Christianity or scholastic theism, I suppose that my belief that in communion with the Ideal, new force comes into the world, and new departures are made here below, subject me to being classed among the supernaturalists of the piecemeal or crasser type. Universalistic supernaturalism surrenders . . . too easily to naturalism . . . Both instinctively and for logical reasons, I find it hard to beliefe that principles can exist which make no difference in facts. But all facts are particular facts, and the whole interest of the question of God's existence seems to me to lie in the consequences for particulars which that existence may be expected to entail . . . .
> . . . I believe that a candid consideration of piecemeal supernaturalism and a complete discussion of all its metaphysical bearings will show it to be the hypothesis by which the largest number of legitimate requirements are met. That of course would be a program for other books than this; what I now say sufficiently indicates to the philosophic reader the place where I belong.[41]

James has given the basic tenets of a pluralistic and finitistic conception of God. He continually repudiates every form of monistic theism which emphasizes the "other-worldly" in preference to the concrete and particular. Early in the Varieties, he identifies himself

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[40] Ibid., p. 519. [41] Ibid., pp. 520-523.

with that pluralistic view of the "religion of healthy-mindedness," as well as with the repudiation of the rationalistic defense of evil.[42] On both pragmatic-rational and moral grounds, James has been led to a finitistic pluralism. We must turn our attention to the preference which James has for the pluralistic and the empirical within his finite-God concept.

Preference for the Pluralistic

From his exposure to the philosophy of Gustave Fechner, James developed a doctrine which he entitled the "compounding of consciousness."[43] James states that "the more inclusive forms of consciousness are in part constituted by the more limited forms."[44] This inclusive form of consciousness is not a base totality of limited forms, just as our mind "is not the bare sum of our sights, plus our sounds, plus our pains, but in adding these terms together [one] also finds relations among them and weaves them into schemes and forms and objects of which no one sense in its separate estate knows anything."[45] Inclusion within this "compounding of consciousness" does not entail a loss of identity for a lesser state or single form of consciousness, for "states of consciousness, so-called, can separate and combine themselves freely, and keep their own identity unchanged while forming parts of simultaneous fields

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[42] Ibid., pp. 129-131.

[43] William James, A Pluralistic Universe, cf. chapters 4 and 5.

[44] Ibid., p. 168. [45] Ibid., pp. 168-169.

of experience of wider scope."[46] How does this "compounding of consciousness" influence the claim of Pluralism?

A Broader View of Experience

It would appear that many minds know many sets of facts, and that there is no median performance by any singular mind. Further, it would seem that each knowing process is singular, not merely the sum of less inclusive consciousnesses. James faces the trilemma of restoring the scholastic approach with its emphasis on the soul; or recognizing the impossibility of the logic of identity in order to adopt some higher form of rationality; or facing the fact that life is logically irrational. He rejects the approach of the scholastic and gives up the logic of self-identity "fairly, squarely, and irrevocably." The logic of self-identity cannot acquaint us with the essential nature of reality.

> Reality, life, experience, concreteness, immediacy, use what word you will, exceeds our logic, overflows and surrounds it. . . . I prefer bluntly to call reality if not irrational then at least nonrational in its constitution,--and by reality here I mean reality where things <u>happen</u>, all temporal reality without exception. I myself find no good warrant for even suspecting the existence of any reality of a higher denomination than that distributed and strung-along and flowing sort of reality which we finite beings swim in. That is the sort of reality given us, and that is the sort with which logic is so incommensurable.[47]

James has attempted to state the impact of pluralism--that reality is richer than that which could be grasped conceptually. Influenced by Bergson's critique of intellectualism, James shared the view that "mental

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[46]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 181. [47]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 212.

facts do function both singly and together, at once, and we finite minds may simultaneously be co-conscious of one another in a superhuman intelligence."[48] James sees us as individuals, yet as persons immersed in the life of God, who in turn, is literally our life and more. While we are cognate parts of God, yet we are, at the same time, our individual selves.[49] James' theory of "compounding of consciousness" attempts to provide a definite plurality of selves in the face of this identity with God. It is one of the problems that forces James to define his position with more clarity. The problem of the divine intimacy is correlated within the finite-God theory.

The more intense the study becomes of the intimate relation between man and God, the clearer it seems that the "intimacy between" is cognate to the "moral incentive." When James is quizzed as to the results of the "dualism in the theistic view," he answers:

> Man being an outsider and a mere subject to God, not his intimate partner, a character of externality invades the field. God is not heart of our heart and reason of our reason, but our magistrate, rather; and mechanically to obey his commands, however strange they may be, remains our only moral duty.[50]

James indicates his perturbation at the theistic consequences when he insists that we <u>are</u> to be God's "intimate partners" who have a role in directing the course of the world. We are more than programmed obedients.

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[48]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 292.

[49]James Collins, <u>God In Modern Philosophy</u>, p. 314.

[50]William James, <u>A Pluralistic Universe</u>, p. 27.

Man is to be an "intimate partner" with God and to fulfill God's need of us, just as we fill some of His needs. The consortium is formed, both God and man providing that of which each is capable. Need and interaction between God and man is indispensable, and such possibilities seem to be best fulfilled by our actually being parts of divine reality, wherein our actions immediately have effect upon its total dynamic.

Under the title "The Dilemma in Philosophy," James states the theistic dilemma as he sees it. The problem arises in the sensitive thinker when he notes a passion for the facts while at the same time feeling a deep need for a spiritual commitment: "He wants facts; he wants science; but he also wants a religion." Casting around for support, James encounters another seeming paradox: "an empirical philosophy that is not religious enough, and a religious philosophy that is not empirical enough . . . ." Either it is a "Rocky Mountain tough" like Spencer, spelling out the world's meaning through matter, or a "tender-minded" religious thinker of the Idealistic or Scholastic section like Bradley or Newman. He has disdain for their idealistic systems because over them the "trail of the serpent of rationalism" has caused them to "lose contact with the concrete parts of life."[51]

> The God of the theistic writers lives on as purely abstract heights as does the Absolute. Absolutism has a certain sweep and dash about it, while the usual theism is more insipid, but both are equally remote and vacuous. What you want is a philosophy that will not only exercise your powers of intellectual abstraction, but that will make some positive connection with this actual world of finite human lives.[52]

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[51]William James, Pragmatism, pp. 15-19. [52]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

While posing this dilemma of materialism's quest for facts as opposed to the rationalist's systems which must be closed,[53] James wonders if the only alternatives are a nihilistic empiricism and a persistently optimistic rationalism. James is convinced that they are not the only alternatives to futility:

> It is at this point that my own solution begins to appear. I offer the oddly-named thing pragmatism as a philosophy that can satisfy both kinds of demand. It can remain religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts.[54]

Values of Belief in God

In his work Pragmatism, James quotes and paraphrases his earlier "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," with the purpose of dealing with the "Prospective" values of belief in God as opposed to other theisms, which appear as a cul de sac. He concludes:

> spiritualistic faith in all its forms deals with a world of promise, while materialism's sum sets in a sea of disappointment . . . . The exact features of the saving future facts that our belief in God insures, will have to be ciphered out by the interminable methods of science: we can study our God only by studying his Creation. But we can enjoy our God, if we have one, in advance of all that labor. I myself believe that the evidence for God lies primarily to inner personal experiences.[55]

Given these "inner personal experiences," one has his God to declare for him "moral holidays," to underscore his "joyous, careless, trustful moments." However legitimate this subjective use of God may be, we are not to confound it with an objective demonstration of his existence.

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[53]Ibid., pp. 23-27. [54]Ibid., pp. 32-33. [55]Ibid., pp. 108-109.

Here the process doctrine shines as a continuing, collective effort in verification:

> The truth of 'God' has to run the gauntlet of all our other truths. It is on trial by them and they on trial by it. Our final opinion about God can be settled only after all the truths have straightened themselves out together. Let us hope that they shall find a modus vivendi![56]

Returning to the days of his "Will to Believe," James renews his contention that the legitimacy of religious belief can be grounded only in subjective craving and need. Verification that such religious commitment is not in vain can, and must, await the adjudication of history. An example of this verification within the historical context can be noted by a closer look at some of the classic natural arguments for the existence of God, e.g., the design argument.

When the pragmatic criterion is applied to the question of "design in nature" (and more specifically to the teleological grounds on which God's existence is projected), James maintains that any claim of "design" represents a subjective interpolation into the given particulars of experience. Reviewing the impact of Darwinism upon the argument from design, James reiterates the "stupendous laws and counter-forces," which have for us "grown so vast as to be incomprehensible to us humans." If one looks more closely, James implies that "design" becomes synonymous with what the historical process has actually achieved.

> No matter what nature may have produced or may be producing, the means must necessarily have been adequate, must have been fitted to that production . . . . When we look at what has actually come, the conditions must always appear perfectly

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[56] Ibid., p. 109.

> designed to ensure it. We can always say, therefore, in any conceivable world, of any conceivable character, that the whole cosmic machinery may have been designed to produce it. Pragmatically, then, the abstract word 'design' is a blank cartridge. It carries no consequences, it does no execution.[57]

Rather than depending, as the design argument does, upon the past to explain the "now" and the "future," the pragmatic approach to God is a way to "arm this cartridge" by converting it into a "term of promise." Against the opaque future it will creatively yield the same "pragmatic benefit" as the "terms God, Spirit, or the Absolute, yield us." As stated earlier, much of James' finitistic theism developed and was conditioned by his youthful repudiation of his father's "monistic" variation of the Calvinist orthodoxy.

James' View on the Nature of God

James had opted for a pluralistic morality which was rooted in subjective demand. He experimented with religion in a new sense, that of moral self-sufficiency and of the aggressive attack on evil based upon active prerogatives and the dignity of human nature. The only grounds which seemed to operate on the basis of general probability were the pragmatic, which tentatively identified origins by appeal to their consequences in experience here and now. Based upon these grounds, James finds his theistic inclinations capable of alignment with his moralistic outlook. God, who in the rationalistic tradition is an absolute point of departure, becomes for James' pragmatic approach a finite being like ourselves, "superhuman" enough to salve our

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[57]Ibid., pp. 113-114; cf., Varieties, pp. 437-439.

fears, but sufficiently de-absolutized to acquit God of the responsibility for evil.

In Pragmatism, James recommends finite theism as the theory best calculated to respond to normal human needs. He invokes the support of the religious tradition of "mankind," at first "polytheistic," and only "imperfectly sublimated even now into monotheism." Within this developing position, God is "but one helper, primus inter pares," in the great task of shaping the world. In this unique role, God shares in our joys as well as our disappointments, and he is as blameless and innocent of the world's evil as we are.[58]

James does not continue his analysis of God's nature in Pragmatism. In some of his later writings, notably Pluralistic Universe, he does pursue this theme. We shall address ourselves to those shortly. Writing to Charles A. Strong, who had figuratively slapped the hands of James for his "superstitious tendencies," James defends himself against the indictment by stressing the slight demands his system made on the divinity:

> My 'God of things as they are,' being part of a pluralistic system, is responsible for only such of them as he knows enough and has enough power to have accomplished . . . . The 'omniscient' and 'omnipotent' God of theology I regard as a disease of the philosophy-shop. But, having thrown away so much of the philosophy-shop, you may ask me why I don't throw away the whole? That would mean too strong a negative will-to-believe for me. It would mean a dogmatic disbelief in any extant consciousness higher than that of the 'normal' human mind; and this in the teeth of the extraordinary vivacity of man's psychological commerce with something ideal that

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[58] Ibid., pp. 142-143.

> feels as if it were also actual (I have no such commerce--I wish I had, but I can't close my eyes to its vitality in others); . . . . It's a will-to-believe on both sides: why should you not be tolerantly interested in the spectacle of my belief? What harm does the little residuum or germ of actuality that I leave in God do? If ideal, why . . . may he not have got himself at least partly real by this time? . . . I doubt whether you will find any great harm in the God I patronize--the poor thing is so largely an ideal possibility. Meanwhile I take delight, or shall take delight, in any efforts you may make to negate all superhuman consciousness, for only by these counter-attempts can a finally satisfactory modus vivendi be reached.[59]

After this defensive reaction, we can enumerate some of James' deepest concerns on the God-question. What he has termed the "extraordinary vivacity" of the theistic experience of other people, conjoined with his own statement of the need-to-believe, has given a basis for his will-to-believe. James hastens to point out how the traditional deity is boxed in by metaphysical restrictions. James' God must be good, in order to fulfill creative desire, but he cannot be all-good, for this would negate James' account of evil. This God must be personal, since He identifies with human need. He cannot be supra-personal, for this would remove Him from the realm of human need. In fact, James explains, this God does not have to be a "he," but perhaps a "they," in order to fit the anthropological and pluralistic imperatives of the pragmatic method. This God is an "ideal," but qualified with that actuality given him by human moral effort. God is a "hypothesis," validated by each counter-blow and option. Further, James argues, this God must be classed with all other philosophical problems

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[59]William James, Letters, II, pp. 269-270.

of great dimension; He is to be verified ambulando, and this is where the human dimension shares responsibility.

James' concept of God develops rapidly in the area of pluralistic metaphysics. Any private religious dimensions will be relegated to a secondary position behind the demands of moral comradeship in which God represents a "more powerful ally of my own ideals."[60] This comradeship James tells us, is "the social appeal for corroboration, consolation, etc."[61] As Perry suggests:

> Since man is not always hardy, the gospel of pluralism does not always meet his needs. But James was, on the whole and in the long run, spiritually hardy, hence his gospel was pluralism. Furthermore, since he uses the term 'healthy' for pluralism, and "sick" for monism it is impossible to avoid the inference that a proper spiritual hygiene would bring man to that better state in which pluralism is palatable--that the strong man eager for battle and enjoying the risk is the more ideal type . . . . It is the felt need of God and of religion as a reenforcement of the moral will that is the chief cause of his personal belief.[62]

When asked what he meant by "God," James replied: "A combination of Ideality and (final) efficacity."[63] As a position of philosophic pluralism, this statement offers a creative challenge to the healthy-minded.

> The pragmatism or pluralism which I defend has to fall back on a certain ultimate hardihood, a certain willingness to live without assurances or guarantees. To minds thus willing

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[60] Ibid., p. 214. [61] Ibid., p. 213.

[62] Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, p. 266.

[63] William James, Letters, II, p. 213.

> to live on possibilities that are not certainties, quietistic religion, sure of salvation anyhow, has a slight flavor of fatty degeneration about it which has caused it to be looked askance on, even in the church. Which side is right here, who can say? Within religion, emotion is apt to be tyrannical; but philosophy must favor the emotion that allies itself best with the whole body and drift of all the truths in sight, I conceive this to be the more strenuous type of emotion.[64]

The final five lines of the above quotation give a birdseye' view of James' theistic position during the last years of his life. Religion, he states, takes its structure from its alignment "with the whole body and drift of all the truths in sight."

The Hibbert Lectures, delivered by James in 1908, began with his favorite lifelong topic, the theistic problem. James suggests that this problem results from the conflict between spiritualistic and materialistic philosophies. We cannot, at this point, benefit by minimizing this issue. In 1908, caught up in the onslaught of his "metaphysical period," his pragmatic method has been expanded almost to the point of serving as an ontology. Not only does James begin the lectures on the point of theism; it becomes his point of destination via an extended discussion showing its relevance to the cosmos. This appears to underwrite our contention, made earlier, that at the very heart of James' writings was the theistic problem.

The Empirical Emphasis

All people desire to have a satisfactory outlook upon the world. James notes that some gain satisfaction empiricistically, some

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[64]William James, The Meaning of Truth, p. 229.

rationalistically: "empiricism means the habit of explaining whole by parts, and rationalism means the habit of explaining parts by wholes."[65] Granted either approach, intimacy with the real is the test of a philosophy's worth. "Cynical materialism" fails because it deteriorates man's deepest hopes. "Spiritualism" builds hope of two different kinds: the "more intimate" or monistic variety, as well as the "less intimate" or dualistic kind. James regards pantheism as one of the most intimate views of all because it contends that mankind is "entitatively one with God."

It becomes apparent that James has been wrestling with the theistic question for a great number of years. His encounter with materialism has led him to opt for the religious experiences of mankind based upon man's own needs and his hopes. As noted earlier, James' kind of divinity has remained largely amorphous, both in nature and in number. In these final years of philosophical development, James' radical empiricism combines with his pluralistic interpretation into a metaphysical scheme. As a result, he can now give a clearer, more "intimate" view of things in general, and of the divine in particular. This quasi-metaphysical view will attempt to rid his final position of the exclusiveness or divisiveness that causes humans to remain strangers. His universe harbors no strangers, least of all God, whom James welcomes into the community of being as experientially conceived. James has arrived at that tertium quid, the middleground between monistic absorption

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[65]William James, Pluralistic Universe, pp. 7-8.

and dualistic irrelevance, by means of his pluralistic community of being. The theistic position has far too long pictured God as Creator removed and distinct from his creation. This position leaves the human subject separated and outside of the deepest reality in the universe. James says:

> God and his creatures are toto genere distinct in the scholastic theology, they have absolutely nothing in common; . . . There is a sense, then, in which philosophic theism makes us outsiders and keeps us foreigners in relation to God . . . . His action can affect us, but he can never be affected by our reaction. Our relation, in short, is not a strictly social relation. Of course in common men's religion the relation is believed to be social, but that is only one of the many differences between religion and theology.[66]

James' theistic position remains tinged slightly with the implications of his past exposure to Absolutism. The dualistic concept of God presents us with a God who appears as a stranger: "God is not heart of our heart and reason of our reason, but our magistrate." Even the conceptions of criminal law have resulted from our experiences with this kind of God. "Scientific evolutionism" and the "rising tide of social democratic ideals" have rendered the "older monarchical theism . . . obsolete or obsolescent."[67]

> The theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of the world, its creation out of nothing, its judicial morality and eschatology, its relish for rewards and punishments . . ., sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish savage religion.[68]

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[66]Ibid., pp. 23-25. [67]Ibid., pp. 25-30.

[68]Ibid., p. 29.

James continues that the "place of the divine in the world must be more organic and intimate"; and since "cynical materialism" may be overlooked,

> . . . the only opinions quite worthy of arresting our attempt will fall within the general scope of what may roughly be called the pantheistic field of vision, the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator, and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality.[69]

What James has referred to as "the more intimate" kind of spiritualism can be further subdivided into monistic and pluralistic subphases. To this "monistic subspecies the name of philosophy of the absolute," may be given, while that "of radical empiricism [can be given] to its pluralistic rival." Under closer scrutiny, the monistic subspecies shows a gross defect, for it allows "almost as great a bar to intimacy between the divine and the human . . . as that which we found in monarchial theism."

> We humans are incurably rooted in the temporal point of view. The eternal's ways are utterly unlike our ways . . . . We are invincibly parts, let us talk as we will, and must always apprehend the absolute as if it were a foreign being.[70]

James prefers the empirical because "radical empiricism . . . holding to the each-form [and emphasizing the concreteness and individuality of facts] and making of God only one of the eaches, affords the higher degree of intimacy."[71] By way of summarizing this point, we offer the following:

> The philosophy of the absolute agrees with the pluralistic philosophy . . . in that both identify human substance with

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[69] Ibid., p. 30. [70] Ibid., p. 40. [71] Ibid., p. 44.

> the divine substance. But whereas absolutism thinks that the said substance becomes fully divine only in the form of totality, and is not its real self in any form but the all-form, the pluralistic view which I prefer to adopt is willing to believe that there may ultimately never be an all-form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected, . . . and that a distinctive form of reality, the each-form, is logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all-form commonly acquiesced in as so obviously the self-evident thing.[72]

By 1908, William James had developed a finitistic theism which allowed him to explain his "spontaneous pantheistic impulse" while at the same time not requiring him to compromise the freedom and novelty of the universe he defended. This radical pluralistic universe, in which "God [is] only one of the eaches," and in which God is "responsible for only such of [the others] as he knows enough and has enough power to have accomplished," will make possible the intimacy required of a deity.

Favoring the Finite

This finite-God concept, an integral part of James' pluralistic metaphysics, finds its relation to experience through religious data. In "abnormal or supernormal facts the strongest suggestions in favor of a superior co-consciousness are possible,"[73] and the "sick-soul" regains a healthful perspective by commitment to the transcendent.[74] Note the breadth of this suggestion:

> The analogies with ordinary psychology and with the facts of pathology, with those of psychical research, so called, and with those of religious experience, establish, when taken together, a decidedly formidable probability in favor of a spiritual view of the world . . . .[75]

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[72] Ibid., p. 34. [73] Ibid., p. 299. [74] Ibid., pp. 303-307.

[75] Ibid., p. 310.

It appears that the transcendence for which James is arguing must be qualified by his modifiers, for it does not carry the regimen of the traditional scholastic form. These available data are not to be inviolable decretals, but may rather be "polytheistically or monotheistically conceived of." Regardless of the number involved, divinity is to be conceived as finite:

> Only one thing is certain, and that is the result of our criticism of the absolute: the only way to escape from the paradoxes and perplexities that a consistently thought-out monistic universe suffers from . . . --the mystery of evil, in short; the mystery of the block-universe eternal and without a history, etc.;--the only way of escape, I say, from all this is to be frankly pluralistic and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an external environment, and consequently is finite.[76]

One of the concluding passages from the Pluralistic Universe states succinctly the mature theistic position of James:

> The line of least resistance, then, . . . both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept . . . that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once.[77]

James comes off as the champion of the common man; not the "hollow unreal god of scholastic theology," nor even the "unintelligible pantheistic monster," but an alignment with the finitistic approach.

> The God of our popular Christianity is but one member of a pluralistic system. He and we stand outside of each other, just as the devil, the saints, and the angels stand outside of both of us. I can hardly conceive of anything more different from the absolute than the God, say, of David or of Isaiah. That God is an essentially finite being in the cosmos, not with the cosmos in him . . . I hold to the finite God . . . .[78]

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[76]Ibid., p. 299. [77]Ibid., p. 311. [78]Ibid., pp. 110-111.

Both from the position of the moral and the metaphysical our needs indicate something other than the infinite God. As James writes:

> When John Mill said that the notion of God's omnipotence must be given up, if God is to be kept as a religious object, he was surely accurately right; . . . God, it was said, could not be finite. I believe that the only God worthy of the name must be finite . . . .[79]

What was previously noted as a metaphysical deficienty in James, i.e., his lack of a metaphysics of being, has been overcome by a pluralistic world fused by intimate relations. To remove God from His creation would make God totally unreal to James. He adopts John Stuart Mill's approach that the only God that can be an object of worship is finite. It was not James' intent to develop a metaphysics of transcendence, for this would play havoc with the forceful subjectivity of his approach. He showed disdain for the "block-universe" "whacked down upon us" with its rigid determinism. One can note his preference for "becoming" over "being" in this summary quotation:

> I think the centre of my whole Anschauung, since years ago I read Renouvier, has been the belief that something is doing in the universe, and that novelty is real. But so long as I was held by the intellectualistic logic of identity, the only form I could give to novelty was tychistic . . . . But Bergson's synechism has shown me another way of saving novelty and keeping all the concrete facts of law-in-change. Giving up the logic of identity as the means of understanding the essences of concrete things, we justify the Hegelian tendency without Hegel's own abominations; we put the world of concepts in its definite and indispensable place; we allow novelty to be, and join hands again with life.[80]

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[79]Ibid., pp. 124-125.

[80]Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, p. 656.

James accomplished what many merely dream about when he succeeded in "joining hands with life." James was moving in the direction of an existential metaphysic which placed stress upon creative participation and genuine freedom within the man-God relationship.

Although James has proved his openness to many varieties of religious experience, these somehow remain outside his personal realm--that of probability. For him, probability is achievable and is ample to ground the "will-to-believe," and to let him who will take the faith-option, take it. Accompanying this position is the "moral satisfaction" angle of knowing that one has opted for the nobler view. Within the "Pluralistic republic of beings," our faith-option might be sufficient to provide the finite deity a share in our struggle toward a new dimension in living.

Summary:

In writing this chapter, I have had several purposes in mind. I have attempted to show how James develops philosophical motives for the finite nature of God. The traditional theistic view of the infinite nature of God is inaccessible to man. James prefers a God who is related to man's value structure. In James' opinion, only a finite God can relate to man's needs, for finitism is the human response to a contingent world.

Since James has no concise systematic statement of his finitistic theory, I have tried to show how James' theistic position first developed as a negative reaction to the infinite-God theories. His basic

point of departure came as a response to the problem of evil. Since evil affects man and God, then God must be viewed as in social interaction with the world.

James suggests that the moral incentive shows the social interdependence between God and man. This moral incentive emphasizes not only the need of the "eaches," but holds that the interaction between God and man can create a better world for both parties involved. The moral incentive somewhat conditions the world in which we live. According to this co-creationist perspective, man and God need each other. The moral destiny of the universe depends upon both God and man. The creative dimension of man, as well as God, adds a sense of integrity to James' position. The point is that James insists on man's volitional nature as primary to, or more basic than, his intellectual nature.

James' advocacy of the struggle for "healthy-minded" morality stresses the activity of the productive life. From the broad spectrum of experience, man must actively pursue the best in life as he sees it. I have attempted to show that James' ethics are really of the relativistic type. The dynamic of James' ethics seems to be built upon the norm of satisfaction. His ethical approach is based upon pragmatic tests--its workability. Just as man's moral dimension must be open to possibilities, James' concept of God requires a God who is involved in pluralistic moral possibilities.

James was not a passivist in religious questions. He put great emphasis on the place of religious acts in the life of the individual believer. The religious acts are grounded in feeling prior to rational

explanation. Mysticism is a prime example of a religious act which precedes conceptual interpretation. The possibility of mystical experience enhances the pluralistic phase of finitism by opening a wider arena of consciousness.

It has been my intention to explore some of the pluralistic dimensions in James' approach, e.g., over-beliefs. James has claimed that over-belief is a kind of self-transcendence and identity with a greater source of conscious communion. Practical consequences give the pragmatic criterion of satisfaction an added boost, for we are turned into new men. God is real since He produces real effects.

Another facet of the philosophical motives can be noted in James' position that the common man in his everyday worship sees God as finite. From this perspective, man and God cooperate in Divine purposes, possess common enemies, and respond to their environments. In brief, the common man sees God as finite, and this God really needs the help of man.

"Experientialism," a term James prefers to "experimentalism," is set in the broad framework of a pluralistic world. From his broad view of experience, James sees a finite God as a reality richer than mere conceptualization. The intimacy between God and man is indicative of a creative partnership between them. Mutual need and interaction are experienced with this finite God. Pragmatism is James' answer which mediates both the idealistic approach of the rationalist and the factual intimacy approach expected by the empiricist.

One can recognize the impression which Pascal made upon James when the observer takes account of the values of belief in God as James states them. Certain inner personal experiences are coupled with pragmatic guarantees. Ultimately, subjective craving and need become the aspects by which one gains the meaning of the "wager" or will-to-believe.

A finite God is the only one, according to James, who responds to normal human needs. He makes use of a (modified) theory of probability to relate man's temporal predicament to the unique role of an interested finite God. God is personal since He identifies with human need. In addition to enumerating the characteristics of God's nature, James holds that God is verified ambulando--by the lived-experiences which man has with God.

Based upon his pluralistic universe, James contends that the encounter with a community of feeling is an empirical datum. James' universe will allow no strangers, least of all God. James' radical empiricism postulates a high degree of intimacy between God and man. The influence of John Stuart Mill's finite-God concept is apparent. James holds to a pluralistic universe, shot through with emotions, and fused with intimate relations. James has conjoined an existential metaphysic with the forceful subjectivity of his process approach. Only a finite God could meet the demands of man in such an existential predicament.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF GOD

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF GOD: The Progress of the World is Partially Dependent upon God

Alfred North Whitehead's doctrine of God is a speculative notion based upon the systematic implications of his doctrine of process. By following the logical implications of his process doctrine, Whitehead attempts to furnish his reader an explanation of experience which is adequate, coherent and consistent with our own experience. Because speculative conclusions inevitably are based upon hypotheses, they are incapable of iron-clad proof. This is where we take up Whitehead's doctrine of God in his speculative system. He is not seeking to construct an independent proof of his theistic doctrine. However, he does state that if his other views of the actual world are true, then due consideration must be given his development of a doctrine of God.[1]

If Whitehead's doctrine is to become clear, we must view the realm of pure possibilities, i.e., eternal objects as yet unrealized in the temporal process. According to Whitehead's own ontological principle, to be is to be either an actual entity or some facet of an actual entity.[2] Therefore, in some sense these possibilities must be real. Whitehead has

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[1]Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p. 249.

[2]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 73.

told us that eternal objects are not actual entities, but they may be some facet of those actual entities. Eternal objects, temporally unactualized, i.e., non-temporal, are facets of an actual entity which presently is in part non-temporal itself.[3]

Based upon some correlation with this speculative doctrine of God, hypothetically, if we follow Whitehead in his ontological principle, and if we accept the notion that pure potentiality has some kind of reality, it seems feasible to postulate the existence of a non-temporal actual entity which is inclusive of all possible eternal objects, thereby establishing their reality ontologically.

When we raise the ensuing problem of how eternal objects are fused into temporal occasions of experience, Whitehead contends that we must posit some kind of a God. It is part of the nature of temporal occasions to receive the ingression of eternal objects; however, nothing in an immediate actual entity can account for the availability of the realm of eternal objects for ingression in actual occasions. To put it another way, that which is finitely actual cannot account for the general relatedness of actuality and potentiality. Although this relationship is not easily demonstrable, Whitehead states that it does exist. We must assume that the "two sets are mediated by a thing which combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential."[4] Returning to the ontological principle, we note that only actual entities are efficacious; therefore, that which mediates must be an actual entity

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[3]Ibid., pp. 73, 530. [4]Ibid., p. 64.

which couples actuality and non-temporality in its own nature.[5] Returning to our speculative hypotheses, if we accept the ontological principle, and if we allow that potentiality is in some manner related to actuality, then it follows that we must accept the reality of an actual entity which shares both potentiality and actuality in order to make that conjunction possible.

With this argument in mind, we note that Whitehead's doctrine of God arises out of his notion of temporal process. Whitehead must develop an adequate doctrine to account for an actual entity which is inclusive of both potentiality and actuality. Accompanying this development will be Whitehead's concern to maintain philosophical coherence through his doctrine of the generic similarity of all actual entities. Therefore, we will note how Whitehead develops a theory of God as dual in nature,[6] how he points out the similarities of God to other actual entities,[7] and finally holds that God is ultimate in the sense of being the primordial actuality while creativity is the ultimate metaphysical principle.[8]

Our approach to Whitehead's doctrine of God will begin with the primordial nature for several reasons. First, it was the initial view to take shape in Whitehead's thinking. Further, this primordial nature of God is logically prior in God's own being.[9] Quite unlike the finite entities, God originates from his mental pole; i.e., his primordial

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[5] Ibid., p. 48. [6] Ibid., p. 54. [7] Ibid., p. 116.

[8] Ibid., p. 31. [9] Ibid., p. 521.

aspect is conceptual. The mental pole of God's nature is constituted by God's conceptual experience. As primordial fact in the world, this experience is limited by no actuality which it presupposes. This mental polar aspect of God is infinite, devoid of all negative prehensions. This primordial nature of God is free, complete, eternal, actual deficient, and unconscious. "God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world."[10] In fact, this is one of the major reasons Whitehead develops this aspect of primordiality.

God as the Primordial Instantiation of Creativity

Whitehead's explication of the primordial nature of God reveals two descriptive statements which will provide a basis for a study of this doctrine. "The primordial created fact is the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. This is the 'primordial nature' of God."[11] An additional attempt is made a few pages later in the same text to clarify that nature: "God's 'primordial nature' is abstracted from His commerce with 'particulars' . . . . It is God in abstraction, alone with Himself. As such it is a mere factor in God, deficient in actuality."[12] Since Whitehead has claimed this phase of God's nature to be an abstraction he further indicates that God cannot be identified with the abstract part alone. God as a concrete actual entity is more than either of his aspects (natures) taken by themselves.

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[10] Ibid., p. 524. [11] Ibid., p. 46. [12] Ibid., p. 50.

God as Primordial Created Fact

It will be of great help if we can ferret out what Whitehead means by the primordial nature of God. In the first of the definitions presented above, the primordial nature is said to be the "primordial created fact." While these three words deserve considerable thought, perhaps this could best be accomplished by viewing each separately. In reference to "fact," Whitehead says, "this divine ordering is itself matter of fact, thereby conditioning creativity."[13] The physical feeling is feeling a real fact; the conceptual feeling is valuing an abstract possibility."[14] A simple physical feeling is one feeling which feels another feeling. (The feeling felt has a subject diverse from the subject of the feeling which feels it.) A multiplicity of simple physical feelings constitutes the first phase in the concrescence of the actual entity which is the common subject of all these feelings. This simple physical feeling has the dual character of being the cause's feeling re-enacted for the effect as subject. This primary aspect of simple physical feelings constitutes the machinery by reason of which the creativity transcends the world already actual, and yet remains conditioned by that actual world. Simple physical feelings embody the reproductive character of nature and also the objective immortality of the past.

From each physical feeling there is the derivation of a purely conceptual feeling whose datum is the eternal object exemplified in the definiteness of the actual entity, or the nexus, physically felt. This

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[13] Ibid., p. 46. [14] Ibid., p. 421.

category of conceptual valuation maintains the old principle that mentality originates from sensitive experience. It lays down the [new] principle that all sensitive experience originates mental operations. The mental pole originates as the conceptual counterpart of operations in the physical pole. The two poles are inseparable in the origination. The mental pole starts with the conceptual registration of the physical poles in every actual entity, that is, except God.[15]

It appears that "fact" is about on a par with "actual entity," at least in this context. This is in apparent contrast with eternal objects. This abstraction, which is in itself deficiently actual, is God's primordial nature, which Whitehead views as one actual entity among many others. "God is the primordial creature; but the description of His nature is not exhausted by this conceptual side of it. His 'consequent nature' results from his physical prehensions of the derivative actual entities."[16] It is worthy of note that Whitehead does not mean that God in His primordial nature, as a fact, must be viewed in the sense of an event in the physical or material order. He has warned us that there are other facts besides physical ones. While God in His primordial nature is a fact, that does not mean to Whitehead that He is something material. In Whitehead's terminology, God is a "conceptual" fact.

We have seen what Whitehead means by "fact"; now let us try to see what he means by "created fact." "Created" means that God in His

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[15]Donald W. Sherburne, A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp. 22-23; 40-47.

[16]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 46.

primordial nature is part of, or belongs to, the process and shares some likenesses with all other actual entities in this cosmic process. To say that God is created is simply to say that he is a particular (though primordial) instance of the general principle of creativity. The primordial nature of God serves a significant place in the order of created things.

In the phrase "primordial created fact," "primordial" refers to that which is first in the order of cosmic process, that which is with all creation. As primordial, this nature is prior in the process, or in that there is nothing before it. Further, the idea of logical priority is involved, demonstrating the absolute necessity of its place in the process. As primordial, God is the prototype in the process, as well as the necessary condition for it.

Primordial Nature Conditions Other Actual Entities

Since the primordial nature is the initial part of the process, this primordial created fact conditions all other actual entities which follow it in a manner different from their qualifying it. (Note that other actual entities do qualify the experience of God as concrete.) Because of the priority of the primordial nature of God, the relationship between it and other actual entities could not be equal. It remains external and absolute.

As this "primordial created fact" God structures a necessary part of world process. Without God there would be no process, for God becomes the indigenous start of it. The primordial nature is God's unconditioned

conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. We have analyzed all three words, "primordial created fact," in order to draw out Whitehead's meaning. Whitehead shows that to place emphasis on the idea of that primordial at the expense of created fact would ultimately reduce God to a static, aloof something, which would have no interaction with what is happening in the cosmic process. However, to neglect the "primordial" in favor of the "created fact" would prescribe for God the plight of the perpetually perishing entities. To avoid such misconceptions, Whitehead reinforced the first definition with a second.

This second characterization is that "God's 'primordial nature' is abstracted from His commerce with 'particulars' . . . . It is God in abstraction, alone with Himself. As such it is a mere factor in God, deficient in actuality."[17] The primordial nature "is not before all creation, but with all creation."[18] Further, "He is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things."[19] Again, God is the "acquirement by creativity of a primordial character."[20] (Whitehead's philosophy of creativity will come under consideration later in this chapter.) The quotations seem to emphasize the absoluteness of God's primordial nature. The primordial nature is inseparable from creativity.

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[17] Ibid., p. 50. [18] Ibid., p. 521.

[19] Ibid., p. 522. [20] Ibid.

As Rational Superstructure

This latter definition does not intend "primordial" to indicate priority in time. Quite the contrary, for the concept of time is not part of the structure at this point. Instead, time and process are seen in relation to the eternal and the teleological. Process is suggested as the channel, the material, or the body in which the eternal and formal show themselves. As Whitehead indicates, the primordial nature becomes the rational superstructure of the process, the intelligible underpinning of actualities, and the logical explanation of the real world when accompanied by the consequent nature of God and the complex of finite occasions. Since form must have its content, the primordial must have its actual world.

When one views the primordial nature of God from this perspective, he gains a slightly altered view of the relation of God to the world. The flux of a world in process and its relation to God must be viewed as interrelated and interacting. If God can be described as primordial for the world, the same may be said about the world as being primordial for God. As Whitehead states,

> The final summary can only be expressed in terms of a group of antitheses, whose apparent self-contradiction depend on neglect of the diverse categories of existence. In each antithesis there is a shift of meaning which converts the opposition into a contrast. It is as true to say that God is permanent and the world fluent, as that the world is permanent and God is fluent.[21]

One of the basic characteristics of the world must be the primordial nature of God.

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[21] Ibid., pp. 527-528.

Whitehead has given us two complementary views of the primordial nature: first, one conception that God is not before, but with all creation; secondly, the conception that God's primordial nature is logically prior, thus making God inseparable from the actual world. This approach seems to avert some of the traditional problems concerning the nature of God. If we were to accept only the first notion of God's being with all creation, this would allow God, like all other actual entities, to be finite and perishing. This raises a question concerning traditional theism; for if God is nothing but an actual entity, why must He be viewed as God? How can a finite God present a solution for the lasting problem of evil? If He is subject to evil, then how could He be God--for God is supposed to resolve evil. By the second approach, that of God's inseparability from the world based upon His logical priority, the primordial nature of God is a logically necessary condition of any finite actual world. But it is independent of any particular finite world. God and the intelligible cosmos are united, and this presents a monism--which is what Whitehead tries diligently to exclude from his system. Whitehead attempts to synthesize the apparently conflicting elements in such a manner as to present a new idea of God.

As a basic rule of thumb, Whitehead sees a possible working relationship between antithetical approaches. From his statement about actual entities, we see that the actual entity is positively somewhere and potentially everywhere. God is an actual entity, first in the ordering of process, but at the same time potentially everywhere within the

process. There exist no actual entities where God is not potentially. Viewed as actual, God transcends all other entities; viewed as potential, God is everywhere immanent. (Note that it is also true that actual entities transcend God.)

Necessary Condition of Concrescence

Since God is viewed as being first in the process, God cannot perish; instead he is unique in transcendence and immanence. The primordial nature of God is a perpetually necessary condition of concrescence. Nothing exists without God. The primordial significance shows God as being positively in the primordial created fact and potentially everywhere in the mushrooming process. While God is logically prior, he is also indispendable to the whole order of the process. In His primordial nature, God constitutes the world's substructure. From this perspective, God is complete but not perfect; eternal, but not everlasting. The consequent nature of God is necessary for the perfection of God. By use of the dual concept of the primordial and the consequent, Whitehead has avoided traditional theistic pitfalls. He has shown the value of the interacting natures of God which allow for the finite and the infinite, the transcendent and the immanent.

The Primordial Nature of God and Eternal Objects

The primordial nature of God underwrites the relevance of eternal objects to the actual world. In the primordial nature of God, eternal objects relate to each other, as well as to actual entities. In eternal objects we find the meaning of the potentiality of the process.

This primordial created fact, heretofore discussed, is the "unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects."[22] "Apart from God, eternal objects unrealized in the actual world would be relatively non-existent for the concrescence in question."[23] In Process and Reality, Whitehead endorses the inseparability of God and eternal objects. However, in Science and the Modern World, Whitehead takes a different tack with regard to the nature of eternal objects. In this volume there is little mention of God as having any relation to eternal objects. This might indicate, as some critics claim, that Whitehead's system can be fully consummated without reference to God. Let us turn to a closer examination of eternal objects; we will then attempt to show the relation they have to the primordial nature of God.

In Science and the Modern World, Whitehead states that eternal objects are the ingredients which constitute the qualities and the internal relations of the organism. Some of the eternal objects are the essence of the event. Whitehead does not use the term "eternal" to suggest continuance throughout time; thus he can claim, "the mountain endures . . . when after ages it has been worn away, it has gone."[24] By "eternal" is meant something other than time and continuance.

> A colour is eternal. It haunts time like a spirit. It comes and it goes. But where it comes, it is the same colour. It neither survives nor does it live. It appears when it is

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[22]Ibid., p. 46. [23]Ibid.

[24]Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, pp. 126-127.

> wanted. The mountain has to time and space a different relation from that which colour has.[25]

"Eternal" means that it is other than temporal, yet it enters, or may enter, into time. The eternal cannot be defined as temporal, but it is found within time. Whitehead claims that this characteristic of the eternal cannot be defined, but it cannot be denied to give depth to experience. An eternal object is an entity that does not require, for its conceptual recognition, any reference to any particular time or place. Events could not exist without eternal objects, for eternal objects are among the necessary conditions of actual existence. Whitehead's point about the eternal objects is that man recognizes real things as they actually evolve within the process of the actual world.

The eternal objects are basic ingredients in the events into which they enter or ingress. Eternal objects provide possibilities to events; and without them no knowledge would be forthcoming. Events or organisms have meaning and are related, because they realize what was originally only a potentiality in the realm of eternal objects.

The primordial nature of God is the togetherness of the entire realm of eternal objects within God's conceptual realization, "togetherness in the formal constitution of a non-temporal actuality."[26] Whitehead uses this basic springboard widely as he takes the primordial nature of God to be complete "envisagement" of eternal objects;[27] and the

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[25]Ibid., pp. 126-127.

[26]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 48.

[27]Ibid., p. 70.

"unity of relevance of the many potential forms";[28] further, it is termed God's "ideal"[29] and His "conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality."[30]

As indicated, the primordial nature of God initially provides for the conjoining of eternal objects in an actual entity in several ways. This primordial nature underwrites the ontological status of possibilities since they are eternal facets of an eternal actual entity.[31] Further, this primordial nature makes eternal objects open to temporal occasions, as facets of an actual entity, namely God. These facets may possibly be objectified when the temporal occasion relates to God.[32]

As Realm of Possibility

Eternal objects constitute the realm of possibility. Eternal objects are similar to Platonic Forms.[33] Eternal objects emerge as a necessary element in the analysis of the actual world. Eternal objects compose the locus for possibilities, and the actual world becomes the realization of these possibilities. Eternal objects are made available in a particular form. Whitehead suggests that an occasion of experience may actualize any one of the possible modes of synthesis provided to it by God; if this were not so, these modes would not really be possibilities. However, Whitehead will not permit this to become a complete indeterminism, for then the novel entity would run directly counter to

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[28] Ibid., p. 529. [29] Ibid., p. 64. [30] Ibid., p. 521.

[31] Ibid., p. 73. [32] Ibid., pp. 46, 73. [33] Ibid., p. 70.

our daily experience. Based upon observations of natural order, physical laws, and our volitional activity, we are aware of strong influences at work and we recognize only degrees of freedom. As Whitehead sees it, occasions of experience in similar circumstances tend to actualize their data in similar ways.

These eternal objects are not to be viewed merely as qualities, for they are also the relations which unite eternal objects. Eternal objects noted in this actual world have come about by selection from the realm of possibility. An eternal object can be described only in terms of its potentiality for "ingression" into the becoming of actual entities; and its analysis further discloses other eternal objects. We note it as pure potential. "Ingression" refers to the particular mode in which the potentiality of an eternal object is realized in a particular actual entity, contributing to the definiteness of that actual entity. This ingression of the eternal objects into actual entities or events is an indeterminate relation. This indetermination, rendered determinate in the real concrescence, is the meaning of real potentiality, or a conditioned indetermination. However, all relations in the realm of possibility are determinate. An illustration of this determinate relation could be symbolized by the capital "A" (eternal object). "A" is related systematically to all eternal objects; therefore, it would seem that I cannot know anything about anything, unless I know everything about everything else. Whitehead delivers us from an apparent difficulty at this point. He says "the status of any eternal object 'A' in this realm

is capable of analysis into an indefinite number of subordinate relationships of a limited scope."[34] Viewed from the realm of eternal objects, three simple eternal objects (A, B, and C) have a relationship (R). Whitehead points out that a complex of eternal objects (say R(A,B,C)) is such that many particular eternal objects can satisfy, or fit into, the pattern R(A,B,C). Thus, if R(A,B,C) is a triangular shape, the individual eternal objects A,B,C can be anything capable of being parts of a triangular shape--colors, stones, galaxies, etc. This new relationship involves no other definite eternal objects in the capacity of relata. It may involve subordinate relationships, and there can be other relationships of A,B,C other than that of R. There remains the problem of determination of this relationship as completed and independent of further relata and relationships. For Whitehead, "the relationships of these objects among themselves are entirely unselective, and are systematically complete."[35] These relationships do not involve

> the individual essences of eternal objects; they involve any eternal objects as relata, subject to the proviso that these relata have the requisite relational essences . . . . This is the principle of the Isolation of Eternal Objects in the realm of possibility . . . . The eternal objects are isolated, because their relationships as possibilities are expressible without reference to their respective individual essences.[36]

Whitehead has told us that eternal objects are internally related and at the same time independent and mutually exclusive. There remains a need for a satisfactory explanation of the realm of possibility.

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[34]Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p. 236.

[35]Ibid. [36]Ibid., pp. 237-238.

Another difficulty arises in Whitehead's conception of eternal objects. "Actualization is a selection among possibilities . . . . It is a selection issuing in a graduation of possibilities in respect to their realization in that occasion."[37] The actual entity selects eternal objects; yet if the actuality is an integration of eternal objects, what can selection mean? How can an actual entity select? Who does the selecting? From what has just been stated, it would seem that the realm of possibility contains the essence of each individual actual entity. The essential feature of an actual entity to which I refer, is that it acts, and no eternal object can act. Does the realm of possibility contain the eternal forms of which the events in the process are the temporal images? Whitehead fails to give a satisfactory explanation of this relationship of eternal objects to actual occasions, or of possibility to actuality. How do the eternal forms and the actual entities get together? No satisfactory answer is precisely stated, but at this juncture we suggest that it might be that of God.

However unsatisfactory this solution of the problem might appear, a further note is given by the introduction of God's primordial nature as the final explanation of this problem in Process and Reality. God is pictured as resembling the Roman god Janus, the god of gates and doors. Presented as having two opposite faces, like the opposing sides of a door, this god could look backward upon the past and forward to the future. This is similar to God's primordial nature, with one face

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[37]Ibid., p. 229.

looking upon the possible and eternal, the other face upon the temporal and actual. God's primordial nature provides the explanation which the eternal objects in themselves could not provide.

Eternal objects are not actual; however, they structure the realm of possibility. Eternal objects have reality as possibility determining the form of the actual. How can we refer to them as real? Whitehead claims they have reality as the data of the primordial nature of God. Eternal objects have real relevance to the actual world because God is actual. Note that this "unfettered conceptual valuation . . . is only possible once in the universe; since the creative act is objectively immortal as an inescapable condition characterizing creative action."[38] It appears then that the realm of possibility is realized in the primordial nature of God as the primordial created fact. This new conception of possibility plays a sizeable role in the idea of God as one of the efficient causes of all that actually was, is, and will be.

Conceptual Valuation

When discussing the relation of the primordial nature of God to eternal objects, Whitehead states that the primordial nature is the "unconditional conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects."[39] "Valuation" denotes a species of subjective forms, as do certain other terms; e.g., "purpose," "adversion," "emotion," and "consciousness." Valuation is the subject valuing, prehending, assimilating the actual and the potential world into itself, so that it itself may

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[38]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 378.

[39]Ibid., p. 46.

become the creature it intended to be. Valuation is the process by which the subject comes of age (so to speak) and as such is objectively immortalized in the creative advance.

In conceptual valuation, the entity feels the eternal objects which constitute its subjective form and aim. In the primordial nature of God the conceptual valuation prehends, integrates, and assimilates all the eternal objects into its own nature. This indicates that the realm of possibility must be in and only in the primordial nature of God.

There is an element of God's conceptual envisagement which deals with an occasion's possible modes of unification. From its prehensions of past occasions, a becoming actual entity gains the data, the unification of which constitutes that entity in its becoming. Now this concrescing occasion may not be just any random version of unity; it is directed by its past and its own subjective aim to a synthesis of its own feelings and no others. How these feelings, once they are given, will be synthesized, i.e., which of the possible unifications of the given data the occasion will become, is not and cannot be determined solely by past temporal occasions.[40] The very manner by which an actual entity unifies its various feelings of past entities is a complex possibility which has not been actualized in the past. An occasion's possible modes of unification cannot be derived from an objectification of

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[40]Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 327.

the temporal past. Whitehead rejects the view that pure possibilities are created; therefore, possibilities for an occasion's synthesis of its given data are supplied by God for the occasion's subjective aim, which is derived from a hybrid physical prehension of God's primordial nature. This subjective aim, in its successive modifications, remains the unifying factor governing the successive phases of interplay between physical and conceptual feelings. A "physical feeling" is defined as the feeling of another actuality.

> If the other actuality be objectified by its conceptual feelings, the physical feeling of the subject in question is called 'hybrid.' Thus the primary phase is a hybrid physical feeling of God, in respect to God's conceptual feeling which is immediately relevant to the universe 'given' for that concrescence.[41]

The realm of possibility, including every possible relationship which may be realized sometime, finds its locus in God's primordial nature. Actual entities of a higher order of experience, e.g., our own conscious experience, in prehending the realm of possibilities, are rooted in God's primordial nature. Our personal conceptual valuations have their origin in God. Our normal mental and spiritual growth is in harmony with the realm of possibility already realized (only as possible) in God as primordial.

When viewed from this perspective, God's primordial nature explains how the multiplicity of eternal objects are internally and determinately related to each other. No one can understand one eternal object completely unless he grasps all eternal objects. Herein, we find the term

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[41]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 343.

"selection" gaining an intelligible function related to God's primordial nature. God, as primordial, is responsible for the initial stages of an occasion's subjective aim, but part of its explanation lies in its own self-causation. In God's primordial nature, the realm of possibility has its reality.

As Unconditioned Primordial Nature

As stated in the quotation above, "unconditioned" and "unfettered" are used to denote God's primordial distinction from other actual entities. The valuations of ordinary actual entities are conditioned by their original subjective forms, their actual worlds, and God. These actual entities are temporal. They have both a beginning and an ending in time; they are partially dependent upon God's valuations. They are limited by their environment. It is different in the case of God's primordial nature, for God's valuation is unconditioned, unlimited, and unchanging. (One might say that God as primordial has no environment.) God's valuation is eternal like the eternal objects themselves. God's primordial nature and the eternal objects belong together eternally; and in this interrelation we find their reality. God's valuation is the first in the process and necessary in the world of the finally real things, which are actual entities.

When discussing the nature of God, numerous questions arise concerning the relation of God's primordial nature to eternal objects. Questions such as: What are eternal objects, essences, qualities? What is the realm of possibility? What is God? Whitehead says a great deal about

what God is; in fact, it is like raising a question "where does color come from?" He refers to the impossibility of answering an unintelligible question, and suggests that philosophers would do well to take note that this in no way disproves the reality of things asked. For Whitehead, it is most important to know what God and the eternal objects are before attempting to categorize them. This realm of possibility, the object of the "unconditioned conceptual valuation of God as the primordial created fact," raises additional problems; e.g., the meaning of process, creativity, originality and the structure of actuality. These will be pursued in the context of God's primordial nature.

The Primordial Nature of God and Creativity

An analysis of Whitehead's use of the term "creativity" as it is related to the primordial nature of God will uncover a new facet of the meaning of "primordial." Creativity and the several related concepts, e.g., creative advance, creature, and creation, are inseparable from the concept of the primordial nature of God. "There is no meaning to creativity apart from its creatures, and no meaning to God apart from the creativity and the temporal creatures, and no meaning to the temporal creatures apart from creativity and God."[42]

Creativity as Ultimate Metaphysical Principle

Nowhere does Whitehead give a precise definition of creativity, since creativity is the ultimate and cannot be defined in any ordinary

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[42]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 344.

way. Creativity is the "ultimate which is actual in virtue of its accidents."[43] By "accident," Whitehead means a characteristic which is always found to qualify the subject, but which is not essential to its nature. "Creativity is the ultimate behind all forms, inexplicable by forms, and conditioned by its creatures."[44] Creativity is "the universal of universals characterizing the ultimate matter of fact."[45] Whitehead suggests his terms show similarities with such ancient philosophical notions as Aristotelian "matter" and such recent concepts as "Neutral Stuff"--but also important differences.

Whitehead's concept of creativity is divested of the notion of passive receptivity, either of "form" or of external relations. It is his pure notion of the activity conditioned by the objective immortality of the actual world--a world which is never the same twice through always with the stable element of divine ordering. Creativity, like matter, is without character of its own; it is the ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. Creativity cannot be characterized because all characters are more special than itself. Further, creativity is always found under conditions, as well as described as conditioned. The "double character" that God shares with all actual entities is that of (1) being a creature of creativity and (2) being a condition for (subsequent) creativity. By reason of its character as a creature, always in concrescence and never in the past, it receives a reaction from the world--the reaction of its consequent nature. The consequent nature is

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[43] Ibid., p. 10. [44] Ibid., p. 30. [45] Ibid., p. 31.

here termed "God"; because the contemplation of our natures--as enjoying real feelings derived from the timeless source of all order--acquires that "subjective form" of renewal and togetherness at which religions aim.[46]

Whitehead states that we are all aware that creativity is, but we are at a loss for words as to what it is. As an ultimate, it is the basis of all which is; and if we are to deny it, it must still be assumed within the denial. It appears to be close to Aristotle's concept of matter which was subject to form and telos. In an updated approach it has striking similarities with the physicist's concept of energy. It is that about which one thinks, has ideas, yet cannot define in terms of something more absolute or universal. Creativity is known via intuition; therefore, it is outside the bounds of scientific inquiry.

> Process for its intelligibility involves the notion of a creative activity belonging to the very essence of each occasion. It is the process of eliciting into actual being factors in the universe, which antecedently to that purpose, exist only in the mode of unrealized potentialities. The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual.[47]

Again, Whitehead says: "Creativity is the actualization of potentiality and the process of actualization in an occasion of experiencing."[48] Creativity, then, must be viewed as an intelligible activity; it becomes the basis for actuality. It is "the throbbing emotion of the past hurling

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[46]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[47]Alfred North Whitehead, Nature and Life, p. 26.

[48]Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 230.

itself into a new transcendent fact."[49] "Each creative act is the universe incarnating itself as one."[50] Creativity performs the task of putting the pieces together, of conjoining multiplicity into concrescent unity.[51] It produces an intelligible process within the actual world, e.g., constant change, process, and novelty.

Creativity, according to Whitehead, is always conditioned. There is no such thing as creativity in the abstract. Creativity exists only in its creatures. The "divine ordering . . . itself matter of fact . . . conditions creativity."[52] It is further conditioned by the subjective form of individual actual occasions. "The subject objectively conditions the creativity transcendent beyond itself."[53] Since there seems to be an interdependency structured into creativity, due consideration must be given the relation of creativity to the primordial nature of God. In a definite sense, every instance of creativity (that is, every actual entity) is fully complete and determinate. It is indeterminate only in its role as a datum for subsequent occasions. That is, just how it will function as an element in the concrescence of future occasions is indeterminate. Creativity, or more precisely "creative advance," signifies the process as of yet incomplete. The past and present are working to structure a meaningful future; therefore, this creative advance is intelligible.

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[49] Ibid., p. 227.

[50] Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 375.

[51] Ibid., p. 528. [52] Ibid., p. 41. [53] Ibid., p. 399.

When qualifying his usage of the term "creature," Whitehead reiterates his basic view of the world as one and also as a multiplicity. In this line he proceeds to show that an actual entity is a creature, which is likewise a creator. The creature is busy creating a new world out of the past one. In this frame of reference, God, too, is a creator. God

> can be termed the creator of each temporal actual entity. But the phrase is apt to be misleading by its suggestion that the ultimate creativity of the universe is to be ascribed to God's volition. The true metaphysical position is that God is the aboriginal instance of creativity.[54]

This allows Whitehead a novel tack by providing that God remain open because creativity is the ultimate, and God is an instance of its activity. Repeatedly in his discussion of creativity, Whitehead attempts to relate God to creativity. There appears no easy answer to creativity, and particularly without bringing God into the picture. God seems to share some responsibility for the nature and direction of creativity. "God is its primordial, non-temporal accident."[55] God seems to give direction to creativity, thus preventing chaos within creativity.

Perhaps some effort should be given to clarifying what is meant by "accident," particularly when one claims that God is an accident. Referring to a certain event as an accident does not mean that it has already occurred, or that it had to occur in some specific manner, or that it might happen otherwise. This conception is based upon the usual experience of having things occur in many different ways, without any particular

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[54] Ibid., pp. 343-344. [55] Ibid., p. 11.

reason for one occurrence rather than another. In this manner of speaking, God is not an accident. Could actuality occur without God? No evidence within our experience warrants the idea that creativity possibly could be actual without God being a part of it. Whitehead may have something slightly different in mind. He may have had in mind that the actual world as a process might have come about in a different way; however, it has already been constructed in a particular way. To the extent of my present knowledge of the world, I am not aware of the actual world, presently or at any stage of the process, having existed without the characteristic described as God's primordial nature. One might conceive of the world without God, but does experience justify the assertion that God is an accident in the usual meaning of the term? To the contrary, according to Whitehead, the primordial instance of creativity is God; i.e., God is the first "accident" of creativity.

God as Non-temporal Accident

The primordial nature of God is creativity's non-temporal accident. "Non-temporal" suggests the eternal, yet it differs from the eternal in that it characterizes what is temporal. "Non-temporal accident," with reference to creativity, indicates that creativity never was, nor can it ever become, without God as its accident or aboriginal condition. God is not to be viewed as something prehended or created in time or as something dissolved by time. His is the very essence of creativity; thus God is a blending of both accident and the essence of creativity. It is

in this sense that God is viewed as creativity's non-temporal accident. Creativity, as activity, will perpetually have this stable, non-temporal, and eternal character.

It might appear that the statement that the temporal has non-temporal as a characteristic is just so much babble. But for Whitehead, the non-temporal is not the same as the not-temporal. The non-temporal is like the color of a petal or the odor of a flower. These qualities belong to the object, but they do not vanish with the changes which occur in the object. These non-temporal qualities are eternal, and they abide amidst change in the objects. Just as the non-temporal qualities abide during periods of change in the objects, so God's primordial nature abides as creativity's non-temporal accident in spite of the change in the creative advance.

We have heretofore mentioned that "primordial" refers to both that which is temporally first and logically prior. This we have shown to be God, the first in the order of process and constituting the aboriginal instance of creativity. We have shown that God is creativity's primordial, non-temporal accident. From this perspective, God may be considered an accident of creativity. But this must be qualified by showing that God is not only to be considered the aboriginal instance, but also as the basic condition of creativity. Without God, creativity would be chaotic and the process would be rendered meaningless. This is similar to showing God as an efficient, as well as the final, cause. As the alpha, God is the occasion and the inescapable condition of

creativity; as the omega, God is the purpose of creativity. God holds a unique place as the primordial, non-temporal accident of creativity.

As Aboriginal Existence of Creativity

One of Whitehead's basic teachings about the primordial nature of God is that it is the aboriginal instance of creativity. "The non-temporal act of all-inclusive unfettered valuation is at once a creature of creativity and a condition for creativity."[56] Again Whitehead states: "The true metaphysical position is that God is the aboriginal instance of this creativity, and is therefore the aboriginal condition which qualifies its action."[57] This seems to substantiate the claim that Whitehead views God as more than mere accident. God is a condition because He is an actuality, and the only one of His kind. "His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things."[58] God's creativity becomes a condition for all other creativity, which receives part of its character from Him. While God might be claimed to be an accident, that it could have been otherwise, it does indeed happen to be this way--God is the aboriginal instance. This is quite important as Whitehead sees it, for this becomes the basis upon which the actual world is constructed. God is the source of possibility and the genesis of further creative advance. God is first in the order of process, and He has logical priority in the structure of the process.

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[56] Ibid., p. 47. [57] Ibid., p. 344. [58] Ibid., p. 522.

An objection could be raised to this interpretation of the relation of God to creativity, for it seems, on the surface, to deny the Whiteheadian view of creativity as ultimate. Whitehead contends that creativity is characterized as activity, creative advance, and the changing potentiality into actuality. If one were to say that the primordial nature of God is a mere accident of creativity, then it would seem that God would be devalued to a characteristic of reality. This would be similar to what Whitehead has claimed for God--that God is an actual entity. If God is an actual entity--even a uniquely important one--he is, like other actual entities, only one instance of creativity. As the primordial actual entity, God not only realizes himself; he further constitutes the basis for the advance of the world as a creative process.

No creativity seems possible, unless God as the primordial created fact partially determines its course. With this limitation, the evolutionary concept can continue to be used as a valuable scientific tool. In this manner, creativity will be useful for the explanation of the actual world. It will be free of the unpredictable and irrational, and it can transcend monistic confines. God is aligned with creativity and gives a purposive direction to it.

The Primordial Nature and Actual Entities

Whitehead makes considerable reference in Process and Reality to both the primordial and the consequent natures of God. There are other references to God as an actual entity.[59] Some Whiteheadian critics feel

[59]Ibid., pp. 28, 54, 116, 134, 135, 143, 168, 248, 374.

that calling God an actual entity is merely a linguistic game. It appears that Whitehead meant it as no game, and that one finds it indeed difficult to understand his concept of God without reference to God as an actual entity. In fact, there would be rather strong support for viewing God initially as an actual entity, and later discussing his dual natures. (Every actual entity, God included, has a dual nature which is reflected in at least two sets of correlative terms, e.g., formal/objective and physical/mental.)

God As Actual Entity

When viewing the initial concept of God as an actual entity, we see that it is consistent with Whitehead's doctrine of nature. This aspect of God's being provides the value structure of the combinations of possibilities. (This raises the point that God values or grades the realm of possibilities. It seems apparent that this cannot be part of the consequent nature, as we shall point out in the next chapter.) Relationships of temporal occasions in God would not be an adequate gauge of possibilities because many of the possibilities are unrealized in temporal sequence. Perhaps the only adequate answer to the problem is that God as actual entity sees all the possibilities. There is a gradation of possibilities as a result of, or because of, the actual entity, God, who eternally prehends the totality of eternal objects in a selective manner. Therefore, it appears that Whitehead's doctrine of the primordial nature of God posits God as actual entity for the starting place.

An attempt will be made in the next chapter to understand God as an actual entity in relationship to the consequent nature. We will note how the consequent nature is the reception, realization, and prehension by God of the temporal world. The question is briefly raised at this point as to what in the nature of the deity can claim to receive, realize, and prehend. Since the consequent nature will be shown to be the relatedness of objectively immortal temporal occasions in God, let it suffice at this juncture to say this is a result of God as actual entity prehending the world of perishing occasions.

The Ontological Principle

For both the primordial and the consequent natures of God to have meaning, it is necessary for God to be an actual entity. This is further suggested by Whitehead's assumption of the ontological principle. As we have shown the primordial nature to be a valuation, we will show the consequent nature to involve the prehension of objectified temporal occasions. This raises in Whitehead's approach the question of causality. What does the valuing, and what accomplishes the objectification?

The typical "design argument" rests on a recognition of a tendency toward order within natural world events, or to use Whitehead's terminology, "preferential adaptation" of possibility to actuality. However, Whitehead states that few who accept the design argument are willing to proceed with further questioning as to "why" we recognize the order. He gives an example of the positivistic approach, that of calculating carefully the words to describe what has been seen, with little concern as to

the assumptions or reasons for the view. This apparent positivistic indifference or intentional blindness toward basic assumptions is little more than a negligible device, a "self-denial of thought."[60] Whitehead states it this way:

> Suppose that a hundred thousand years ago our ancestors had been wise positivists. They sought for no reasons. What they had observed was sheer matter of fact. It was the development of no necessity. They would have searched for no reasons underlying facts immediately observed. Civilization would never have developed. Our varied powers of detailed observation of the world would have remained dormant. For the peculiarity of a reason is that the intellectual development of its consequences suggests consequences beyond the topics already observed. The extension of observation waits upon some dim apprehension of reasonable connection. For example, the observation of insects on flowers dimly suggests some congruity between the natures of insects and of flowers, and thus leads to a wealth of observation from which whole branches of science have developed. But a consistent positivist should be content with the observed facts, namely insects visiting flowers. It is a fact of charming simplicity. There is nothing further to be said upon the matter, according to the doctrine of the positivist. At present the scientific world is suffering from a bad attack of muddle-headed positivism, which arbitrarily applies its doctrine and arbitrarily escapes from it.[61]

Whitehead claims that the positivist has grown apathetic toward traditional answers due to the supposed meaninglessness of traditional questions. Whitehead prefers to use the traditional questions as the basis for rational stimulation and growth.

While rejecting Plato's non-actual Forms as an appropriate solution to ultimacy, Whitehead's view is that only the actual can be the real (or the "really real"). Questions such as "What eternally sees all

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[60] Ibid., p. 8.

[61] Alfred North Whitehead, Modes of Thought (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 203; Adventures of Ideas, pp. 157-164.

possibilities in graded valuation?" or "What could prehend all temporal actual occasions within their objective immortality?" point up the necessity of a metaphysical solution. If it is possible for us to accept that reality is divisible into actuality and potentiality, and if we concur with Whitehead in his rejection of non-temporality as the answer to ultimacy, then it would appear that we must accept Whitehead's ontological principle, that only that which is actual can be an explanation of anything.

Having identified the actual entity as that which is actual, Whitehead, through his ontological principle, states that actual entities are the only genuine solutions to the problem of reality. His definition of God as the foundation of value through the envisionment of possibilities has brought him to state that God, then, must be an actual entity.

As previously stated, dividing God into the primordial (or mental) and consequent (or physical) aspects of His nature is similar to the division of other actual entities into mental and physical poles. An actual occasion is termed a synthesis of "feelings" with a minimal amount being either solely physical or solely mental. If we take note of other feelings, e.g., comparative feelings, propositional feelings, physical purposes, or intellectual feelings, we will recognize a weighting toward their basic characteristics. Few will be found that are either totally mental or totally physical; instead, they tend to mingle within the synthesizing process. This applies to God, for Whitehead pictures God as more than the total of the primordial and consequent

natures. As an actual entity, God has the dual natures of primordial and consequent, but there appear to be other natures which synthesize the mental and physical poles.

Whitehead can refer to God as an "instance of experience,"[62] based upon his notion of God as an actual entity. Christian's compilation of God's likeness to actual entities is adequately stated in the following:

> God is a unity of conceptual and physical experience (PR 54). He is concrescence (PR 47, 54, 134), satisfaction (PR 48, 135), and superject (PR 135, 532; MT 128). He has subjective aim (RM 100; PR 134-4, 522, 524) and subjective forms of feeling (PR 50, 134, 522). He exists formally, as an immediate actuality, and he exists objectively for other actual entities (PR 47, 377-8).[63]

Whitehead suggests that the primordial nature of God is the basis of order, relevance, and novelty in the actual world. By claiming both order and novelty within this actual world, Whitehead is attempting to synthesize and make possible both limited determinism and freedom for each actual entity. God's primordial nature is the source of order within this world. It "is the divine element in the world [and] constitutes the metaphysical stability whereby the actual process exemplifies the general principles of metaphysics."[64] "The things which are temporal arise by their participation in the things which are eternal."[65] The actual represents a selection from the plethora of possibilities, and

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[62]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 54.

[63]William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 287.

[64]Ibid., p. 64. [65]Ibid.

the multiple possibilities find their basis in the primordial nature of God. This appears to indicate that the order of the world is somehow derived from God's primordial nature.

God as Basis of Order and Meaning

God's primordial nature saves the world from chaos by giving it order and meaning. The order appears to be eternal, and this may be one of the fringe benefits of worship--the assurance man receives of living in an orderly world. "'God' is that actuality in the world, in virtue of which there is physical law."[66] Further, "by the recognition of God's characterization of the creative act, a more complete rational explanation is attained."[67]

Closely aligned with the concept of order in the system of Whitehead is that of relevance. Not all entities are equally related, but there is a hierarchy of importance among the entities. Relevance deals with the individual relations of one entity to other entities. Each entity is involved in the process, although some have a purely negative relation. This rule of relevance attempts to preserve the individuality of each actual entity in the process. Gradation is illustrative of this concept of relevance, e.g., important or trivial, warmer or cooler, more or less, etc. Since there is an interaction of entities, each contributing to the worth of the others, it is important to ferret out the meaning of relevance. "The principle of relevance asserts that any item of

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[66] Ibid., p. 434. [67] Ibid., p. 382.

the universe, however preposterous as an abstract thought, or however remote as an actual entity, has its own gradation of relevance, as prehended, in the constitution of any one actual entity."[68] Whitehead is contending that even the future has certain relevance to the structure of the present concrescence.

The relevance of interrelated things involves the realm of possibility from which the forms are derived. Likewise, the realm of real possibility stems from the primordial nature of God, which furnishes the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the plethora of eternal objects. From this it follows that order and relevance within the universe are derivatives of God's primordial nature. Thus, the place and importance of every entity is to be determined in context with the primordial nature of God. Whitehead seems to indicate that nothing ever enters this real world without God's primordial nature. Whitehead has insisted that each actual entity individually transcends its past, God included. Novelty is discovered in the individuality of each actual entity. Paradoxical as it may seem, Whitehead contends that an entity is both determined and free. Whitehead states that the concrescence of each individual actual entity is internally determined and is externally free. This category of freedom and determination can be condensed to hold that in each concrescence whatever is determinable is determined, but that there is always a remainder for the decision of the subject-superject is the universe in that synthesis.[69]

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[68] Ibid., p. 224. [69] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

As Basis of Novelty

The basis of novelty in the actual entity is to be found in its subjective aim, which contains an element that cannot be found in anything else from the actual world. Whitehead uses the illustration of an organism to make this point. The organism has life--its own--this is part of its individuated novelty. Its life is more than its constituent parts detailed by the scientific analysis of it. "This culmination of bodily life transmits itself as an element of novelty throughout the avenues of the body. Its sole use to the body is its vivid originality; it is the organ of novelty."[70] Consider the place of novelty as it is stated by Whitehead: "The ultimate freedom of things, lying beyond all determinations, was whispered by Galileo--E pur si muove--freedom for the inquisitor to think wrongly, for Galileo to think rightly, and for the world to move in despite of Galileo and inquisitors."[71]

We have shown novelty to be a quality (or result) of subjective aim. Novelty has resulted from the ingression of eternal objects constituting the subjective aim of actual entities. The process is "constituted by the influx of eternal objects into a novel determinateness of feeling which absorbs the actual world into a novel actuality."[72] "Eternal objects in any one of their modes of subjective ingression are then functioning in the guise of subjective novelty meeting the objective datum from the past."[73] Eternal objects ingress into actual entities; novelty

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[70] Ibid., p. 516. [71] Ibid., p. 75.

[72] Ibid., p. 72. [73] Ibid., p. 249.

is the realization of a possibility. We have heretofore shown that possibility has its basis in God's primordial nature; therefore, God is the source of novelty. As Whitehead states, "this initial phase of the subjective aim is a direct derivate from God's primordial nature. In this function, as in every other, God is the organ of novelty, aiming at intensification."[74] Without God's primordial nature there would be no relevant eternal objects, no real possibilities, and no novelty. "Originality in the temporal world is conditioned, though not determined, by an initial subjective aim supplied by the ground of all order and of all originality."[75]

If God has ordered both the data and the subjective aim of the actual entity, how would novelty have any bearing? According to Whitehead, the data and subjective aim are not determined in the same way. Data are determined by past actual occasions of the world, and there only indirectly by God. Data are to be viewed as occurring prior to the concrescence, as that which has already happened. Subjective aim appears almost miraculously as a direct resultant of God, i.e., the ingression of eternal objects. The eternal breaks into the process; and once this ingression has been made into the process, it thereafter functions according to the laws of the process. This emphasizes the earlier point that the difference between data and subjective aim has left the actual entity externally free but internally determined. Viewed from the natural perspective of the actual world, the entity is a novelty.

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[74] Ibid., p. 104. [75] Ibid., p. 164.

Seen from divine purposiveness, it is internally determined within the realm of possibility and actualized only within the process.

Novelty for Whitehead does not imply the unintelligibility of the actual entity. Instead, he contends that an entity is irrational from a certain perspective, i.e., a datum in the process which is contributing to the concrescence of an actual entity. However, any one actual entity is constituted by its synthesis of other actual entities, and each actual entity develops from the primary dative phase into its own individual actual existence, involving its individual enjoyments and appetitions. An actual entity is concrete because it is such a particular concrescence of the universe. Both order and originality stem from God's primordial nature.

Whitehead suggests that each entity is a novelty; in a sense, it has its own law. It has its own blueprint and develops it in relation to its essential character. In part, this is its freedom, and it is responsible for its achievements. Failing to achieve its goal, it is termed as evil. If it makes something of itself in the time for self-development, it is regarded as good.

Novelty is not taken by Whitehead to be a synonym for chance. He is not suggesting that the indeterminist position would founder a world in unpredictability. Novelty is (or may be) a positive and constructive fact of the world. As Whitehead suggests, indeterminism has its best example within our own moral experience.

> In the case of those actualities whose immediate experience is most completely open to us, namely, human beings, the final decision of the immediate subject-superject, constituting the

> ultimate modification of subjective aim, is the foundation of our experience of responsibility, of approbation or of disapprobation, or self-approval or self-reproach, of freedom, of emphasis. This element in experience is too large to be put aside merely as misconstruction. It governs the whole tone of human life.[76]

This freedom is the line of demarcation of the new life from the old; it proceeds to new realms of value and purposiveness at the perishing of the old, thus producing freedom within the process.

Recapitulation

God as primordial stands independent of history; however, history is not independent of God. The ultimate purpose of history is initiated by God as He intervenes in the historical process. Whitehead seems to be contending that God orders these movements which are internally determined, yet externally free. Novelty has significance within the organic and moral fields; likewise, it seems to be Whitehead's analysis of the purposiveness of human history.

The primordial nature of God seems to be at the very base of things within the universe. Whitehead suggests a purposiveness running through the process which exposes the observer to new vistas of his cosmos. It also reveals a God whose plans are only partially knowable to the observer. The scientist can study the process of the actual world, and this may lead him to claim contact with the eternal order of things. Whitehead holds this eternal order to be the source of potentiality, both ordered and novel, which is fulfilled by the complexity of the process. As primordial, God is the beginning, the source, from which the process begins to flow and develop.

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[76] Ibid., p. 74.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONSEQUENT NATURE OF GOD

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONSEQUENT NATURE OF GOD: The Progress of God is Partially Dependent on the World

In the last chapter we discussed the primordial nature of God. For many who would embrace natural theological findings and correlate these with the natural sciences, God's primordial nature would appear to be quite sufficient for their interpretation of reality. Whitehead, however, is not willing to settle for this approach, nor does he accept the primordial nature as sufficient for a total explanation of God. Whitehead's God is not only involved in the structure of the cosmos; He provides the basis for objective immortality, religious purpose, and a teleological explanation of the universe. The Whiteheadian view of God makes room for changes in the actual world, and in addition, this God preserves the valuable things which arise during the process. Whitehead describes his cosmological vision as "the story of the dynamic effort of the world passing into everlasting unity, and of the static majesty of God's vision, accomplishing its purpose of completion by absorption of the world's multiplicity of effort."[1]

Traditional theologians have contented themselves through the years to consider the "other-worldly features" of God. Whitehead attempts to

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[1]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 530.

point out the injustice of this view by calling the traditional theists to consider the damage they are performing against the "here-now." Whitehead's God is rebuilding a world and purging it of evil in order that men can behold God at work to accomplish His teleological aim within the actuality of this world order. Whitehead does perform a considerable service to contemporary philosophical theology by suggesting that someone so bent on "other-worldly" things is probably of little earthly good either to God, his fellowman, or himself. More affirmatively, Whitehead presents us with a notion of the consequent nature of God which supplements the primordial nature.

Attempt at Definition

At no single place in his writings does Whitehead give us a precise definition of the consequent nature of God. He does present the functional equivalent of a definition of the consequent nature of God as "the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe."[2] He characterizes the consequent nature in several ways. The consequent nature is "the reception into God's nature" of "each actuality in the temporal world."[3] It is viewed as "the reaction of the temporal world on the nature of God."[4] Further, it can be described as the "representation in the divine nature of the organic actualities of the world."[5] God's consequent nature is the "objectification" or "realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature."[6]

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[2]Ibid., p. 134. [3]Ibid., pp. 530-531. [4]Ibid., p. 19.

[5]Ibid., p. 18. [6]Ibid., pp. 523-524.

The previous chapter described God's primordial nature as an attempt at philosophical consistency within Whitehead's philosophy of process. God's consequent nature is likewise important to this philosophy of process. There are some basic notions that will clarify this point, namely, the ontological principle and the principle of relativity.

Whitehead claims that nothing "can float into the actual world out of non-entity . . . . Everything must be somewhere; and 'somewhere' means 'some actual entity.'"[7] We have discussed this ontological principle, and we agreed tentatively that unrealized possibility, due to its link with reality, necessarily must be a facet of some actual entity. This actual entity we discussed as being at least partially non-temporal itself since it conceptually views the plethora of eternal objects. This actual entity, Whitehead refers to as "God." "It is . . . termed 'God'; because the contemplation of our natures, as enjoying real feelings derived from the timeless source of all order, acquires that 'subjective form' of refreshment and companionship at which religions aim."[8] So much for the ontological principle at present.

The principle of relativity requires an actual entity to influence and/or to be influenced by other occasions of experience. It is characteristic of an actual entity "to be present in every other actual entity."[9] If this be the case, Whitehead contends that this actual entity, God, must have in addition to his primordial nature, that which is

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[7] Ibid., p. 73. [8] Ibid., p. 47. [9] Ibid., pp. 79, 43, 252.

consequent upon God's connection to the world of temporality.[10] If God is an actual entity, then, like other actual entities, He must be in part consequent.[11]

Contrast in Natures of God

It should be noted that for Whitehead the contrasting natures of God involve more than the primordial and the consequent. Whitehead states that the primordial side of God is changeless and complete, while the consequent nature evolves and is incomplete.[12] The primordial is eternal, but the consequent is everlasting.[13] God's primordial nature is unconditioned, but the consequent is conditioned by the nature of God's subjective aim in the gradation of intensity (which ultimately comes from the primordial nature).[14] The consequent nature is also conditioned by finite actual entities. The data of God's primordial envisagement are eternal objects. The data of his consequent nature include (but are not limited to) finite actual occasions.[15]

Whitehead has attempted to be philosophically consistent by trying to interpret the basic character of reality via the ontological and relativity doctrines. To summarize, we have found that God is an actual entity which prehends each past occasion of experience. Whitehead's contention for the consequent nature seems consistent with other of his metaphysical principles.

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[10] Ibid., p. 524. [11] Ibid., p. 532. [12] Ibid., pp. 19, 524.

[13] Ibid., pp. 524, 527. [14] Ibid., pp. 523-524. [15] Ibid., pp. 530-531.

Just as actual occasions have objective immortality in God, so God has objective immortality in the world.[16] In this manner God's creative purpose is effected. "For the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world, and qualifies this world so that each temporal actuality includes it as an immediate fact of relevant experience."[17] God's superjective nature is therefore a more complete expression of how subjective aims and novel eternal objects derived from God are relevant to the world in which they are prehended by particular occasions. This is the expression of God's love for the world in the form of "the particular providence for particular occasions."[18] "It is God's conceptual realization performing an efficacious role in multiple unifications of the universe, which are free creations of actualities arising out of decided situations."[19]

As remarked earlier, a once-for-all-time definition of the consequent nature of God is not to be found in Whitehead's writings. One must salvage the bits and pieces of statements in order to arrive at the meaning of this notion. There do seem to arise some basic ideas which one becomes more aware of due to the repetition and restatement of them in Whitehead's works.

Basic Ideas of the Consequent Nature

Recurring Complements

Completing the actual world.--One of these basic ideas of Whiteheadian repetition is that of the consequent nature of God viewed as

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[16] Ibid., p. 47.

[17] Ibid., p. 532.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 530.

completing the actual world. "The fluent world becomes 'everlasting' by its objective immortality in God,"[20] is one of Whitehead's statements of the consequent nature. "Fluent world" refers to a world of actual occasions, and "objective immortality" emphasizes the superjective character of the concrescing actual entities. "God" refers to the retention of all actual occasions of the past and the source of the evolving world of process. There is an elastic concept within the primordial nature referred to as the "unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects." Separated from the primordial nature, eternal objects have no significance, and removed from the consequent nature actual occasions perish.

The consequent nature's relation to the actual world is set out in fine fashion in the following passage:

> In it [God's consequent nature] the complete adjustment of the immediacy of joy and suffering reaches the final end of creation. This end is existence in the perfect unity of adjustment as means, and in the perfect multiplicity of the attainment of individual types of self-existence . . . . The sense of worth beyond itself is immediately enjoyed as an overpowering element in the individual self-attainment. This is the notion of redemption through suffering which haunts the world.[21]

The consequent nature becomes the telos realized through the process. The extremes of life, e.g., pain and sorrow, joy and success, are seen pulled together by God to achieve a purpose beyond the individuality of actual occasions. The actual entity is caught up in the immortality of the consequent nature. Within the consequent nature transcendent purpose

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[20] Ibid., p. 527. [21] Ibid., pp. 530-531.

evolves through the natural processes of the world; therefore, the consequent nature gives immortality to the actual entity and makes it significant for actuality beyond itself.

A facet of Whitehead's notion of truth is exposed within the consequent nature. He states:

> The truth itself is nothing else than how the composite natures of the organic actualities of the world obtain adequate representation in the derivative nature. Such representations compose the 'consequent nature' of God, which evolves in its relationships to the evolving world without derogation to the eternal completion of its primordial conceptual nature.[22]

Whitehead holds a theory according to which the abstract, human-controlled world may not be the final one; there appears a purposive world within the consequent nature of God which is beyond man's abstractions. Likewise, there must be an alignment between the consequent nature and the primordial nature of God. The progression is to this effect: the meaning of an actual occasion ultimately extends beyond itself to merge with God.

The consequent nature of God supposedly completes the fluent world. No lasting purpose is discoverable within this natural world without transcending the immediate world for a complete and ultimate expression of that purpose. Without the concept of God, Whitehead continues, the actual world could only be construed as a meaningless multiplicity of occasions without any purposive unity. Nothing is lost in Whitehead's process philosophy; therefore, individuated moments of defeat are ultimately redeemed within God's consequent nature.

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[22]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

God as fulfilled by the world.--Another finitistic aspect of the consequent nature is that God is continually fulfilled by the world. The consequent nature is "the fulfillment of God's experience by His reception of the multiple freedom of actuality into the harmony of His own actualization."[23] God, as actual entity, is among other actual entities; as such, God's nature is dipolar just as every actual entity is dipolar. God's subjective aim responds and reacts to other actual entities of this actual world. This is God's actualization. According to Whitehead, without the actual world, God would be no more than potentiality or, rather, the objects would be mere possibilities, unrealized eternal objects. Through interacting with the actual world, God realizes Himself as actual, and this realization is God's consequent nature. As such, the progress of God is [at least] partially dependent upon the world. The world continues to be instrumental in God's evolution in relation to the actual world.

As discussed in the previous chapter, God is an actual entity, but He does not share precisely like other actual entities. As consequent, God's nature is

> composed of a multiplicity of elements with individual self-realization. It is just as much a multiplicity as it is a unity; it is just as much immediate fact as it is an unresting advance beyond itself. Thus, the actuality of God must also be understood as a multiplicity of actual components in process of creation.[24]

The gist of the consequent nature, thus stated, is that God really evolves, His nature is expanding in complexity, and this progressive

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[23] Ibid., p. 530. [24] Ibid., p. 531.

evolution of God enhances the whole world. As Whitehead says, "God's derivative nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world."[25] God is (partly) what God becomes in this process philosophy, and He is being fulfilled by the actual world.

Valuation and Consciousness

In discussing the characteristics of the primordial nature, it was stated that God has a conceptual phase. But that does not necessarily entail that God is conscious at the primordial level. For Whitehead, conceptual valuation is below the level of consciousness. This raises the problem of what Whitehead means by consciousness. He describes consciousness as "the feeling of the contrast of theory, as mere theory, with fact, as mere fact."[26] "There is no consciousness without reference to definiteness, affirmation, and negation."[27] Further, he states that the most simple case of consciousness "is the negative perception, namely, 'perceiving this stone as not grey.'"[28] Apparently, according to Whitehead, there is consciousness only where there are alternatives--or, more accurately, only where there is apprehension of alternatives.

Whitehead distinguishes between valuation and consciousness. "The subjective forms of propositional feelings are dominated by valuation, rather than by consciousness."[29]

> . . . conceptual feelings, apart from complex integration with physical feelings, are devoid of consciousness in their

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[25] Ibid., p. 523. [26] Ibid., p. 286. [27] Ibid., p. 372.

[28] Ibid., p. 245. [29] Ibid., p. 402.

> subjective forms . . . . [God] is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things; so that, by reason of this primordial actuality, there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation.[30]

In His primordial nature, God is unconscious; however, in His actuality as consequent, He is conscious. God's consciousness of the world, or His objectification of the world, is derivative from the actual world. As consequent, God distinguishes between actuality and possibility, registers a difference between actual entities and eternal objects, and distinguishes between alternatives. Further, God distinguishes between the actual and the possible within His own being, as well as between the attained and the unattainable. Through His consequent nature God becomes like a person. God "is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom."[31]

As consequent, God is partially dependent upon the world, for He is fulfilled by the actual world; however, God is further distinguished from the actual world. "God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world."[32] The reaction of the world to God does make a difference.

God and the World Interact

God and the actual world interact upon each other. It is not a one-way relation in which God directs all toward the world; rather, there

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[30] Ibid., pp. 521-522. [31] Ibid., p. 524. [32] Ibid.

is a re-direct in which the world influences God. Whitehead suggests that the actual world attains its ultimate goal in God. At the same time, Whitehead insists that God is different as a result of the impact of the actual world upon Him. While the permanence and purpose of God are inseparable from the world, yet the flux of the world leaves its imprint upon the character of God. As consequent, God is conscious of His relation to the world. As a result, God makes the distinction between the possible and actual for the purpose of realizing greater objectives within the actual world through greater depth and intensity of experience.

God as Dipolar

Another link of the finite with the infinite can be seen in Whitehead's contention that the consequent nature of God is related to his primordial nature. Recall from an earlier section that every actual entity is dipolar, physical and mental. By its physical pole, the actual entity prehends its own actual world. Through its conceptual pole the actual entity feels the eternal objects. It was stated that God is an actual entity. God's consciousness of the world is His awareness of the multiplicity of the world's physical objects in their concurrent "unison of becoming." His mental pole is His conceptual valuation of the set of eternal objects. The physical pole is his prehension of finite occasions. Through the primordial nature, God reserves in unconditioned conceptual valuation the whole multiplicity of eternal objects. Through His consequent nature, God prehends the whole actual world. The natures of God are only aspects of a concrete being.

Possibility and Actuality

Viewed from a general point of vantage, the primordial nature of God is that of possibility and that of the consequent nature is actuality. It is at this plane where the consequent nature becomes the realization of the primordial nature. The consequent nature "is God as really actual, completing the deficiency of his mere conceptual actuality."[33] "God's consequent nature is the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts."[34] "The perfection of God's subjective aim, derived from the completeness of his primordial nature, issues into the character of his consequent nature."[35] Therefore, it is an injustice to consider the two natures as completely separate, because they must synchromesh; they are interdependent. Anyone who forgets this fact is bound to misunderstand the Whiteheadian conception of God.

What God as Consequent Does

Perhaps the best way to understand what Whitehead means by the consequent nature is to demonstrate what it does. If God were only primordial, the traditional static God would be the outcome, and all the world would be fully determined by His programmed course of fixed laws. If this were the case, the world would have no purpose nor be productive in and of its own ability. The consequent nature of God is necessary to account for the significant, purposive and everlasting world.

From comparison of the functions of the primordial and the consequent natures, we may draw several brief conclusions. The primordial

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[33] Ibid., p. 530. [34] Ibid., p. 524. [35] Ibid.

envisagement may be characterized as aesthetic--but it is only potential. It is the consequent nature which adds the aesthetic character and objective immortality to the process. The primordial nature is the skeletal basis, and the consequent places sinew and flesh upon the bone. The primordial nature supplies the foundation of the actual world in the eternal, complete, primordial and unconscious character of God. The consequent nature introduces necessary goodness, the everlasting, God as conscious of His infinite possibilities and His actual achievements, and the assurance that God does the best he can--with our help. By this interacting supplementation of each contrasting nature, the full character of God is made available to the actual world. God is (partly) what He becomes, just as an actual entity is what it becomes, and the temporal world has meaning and significance for God. God, as has been suggested, is like a person by virtue of his consequent nature. But God is like a person in his primordial side, too--only in much greater degree. Just like any other person, God changes but remains the same. God is never to be identified with the world, yet He is different from the Absolute of the Idealistic systems. He also differs from the personalist's conception of God as finite, for Whitehead's God is both finite and infinite. He is not just a product of the world process, nor just a part of that actual world; but at the same time, God is the foundation for and the purpose within the temporal world. Along this same trend of thought, without the world, God is "deficient in actuality." He becomes greater because of this world.

We conclude that God's consequent nature can best be described as purposive, conscious, and personal. His purposiveness posits the ultimate goal of the temporal world. This actual world obtains its objective immortality in God. The consequent nature of God gives direction to the world, a decision amid the multiplicity of possibilities, and a purpose with God as consequent to its realization.

Further, we can conclude that God is conscious. This can be seen from dual perspectives: one, the distinction of the consequent nature from the primordial, and, secondly, that the consequent nature is distinguished from the temporal world in order to bring to the fore the facet of God as an actual entity. As conscious, there is an awareness within God of what He has been and presently is, as well as the awareness of what He may possibly become.

As consequent, God is analogous to a person; He is not to be considered as being less than the highest order of experience in humans. However, God is dissimilar to the analogate in that He is infinite and is the basis of all other experience. God is consequent because He is primordial.

The Notion of Transmutation

It has not been our intention to oversimplify the consequent nature of God as discovered in Whitehead's philosophy. In fact, Process and Reality discusses the complexity of this consequent nature within itself, as well as its relations to other of Whitehead's doctrines. Whitehead complicates the problem by contending that God's prehensions

of each actual occasion produces a "transmutation" of that occasion, both objectively and subjectively. This objective phase of transmutation of temporal occasions in God is presented in the following quotations:

> The consequent nature of God . . . is the realization of the actual world . . . through the transformation of his wisdom.[36]
>
> The perfection of God's subjective aim, derived from the completeness of his primordial nature, issues into the character of his consequent nature. In it there is no loss, no obstruction . . . .
>
> The wisdom of the subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system--its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy--woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling, which is . . . never perishing. The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve in individual joy, in individual sorrow, in the introduction of needed contrast, is yet saved by its relation to the completed whole. The image--and it is but an image--the image under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost.
>
> The consequent nature of God is his judgment on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved. It is also the judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage.[37]
>
> The problems of the fluency of God and of the everlastingness of passing experience are solved by the same factor in the universe. This factor is the temporal world perfected by its reception and its reformation . . . . In this way . . . the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves, purged into conformation with the eternal order which is the final absolute 'wisdom.'[38]
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> In [the consequent nature] the complete adjustment of the immediacy of joy and suffering reaches the final end of creation. This end is the existence in the perfect unity of adjustment as means, and in the perfect multiplicity of the attainment of individual types of self-existence.[39]

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[36] Ibid., p. 524. [37] Ibid., pp. 524-525.

[38] Ibid., p. 527. [39] Ibid., pp. 530-531.

> Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception in God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into living, ever-present fact. An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors. The correlate fact in God's nature is an even more complete unity of life in a chain of elements for which succession does not mean the loss of immediate unison.[40]
>
> In [the consequent nature] the many are one everlastingly, without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity.[41]

The third of the four phases in which the universe accomplishes its actuality is the phase of perfected actuality, in which the many are one everlastingly.[42] Whitehead is showing that "endurance" and "transformation" are a couple of the characteristics which share in the transmutation of each actual occasion.

Endurance

Every actual entity is "remembered" by God as a fact which cannot be changed or deleted. Likewise, each temporal occasion is transmuted into a "living, ever-present fact."[43] There seems to be an enduring quality to temporality. Whitehead is further intent upon showing that in temporal succession an actual entity prehends a predecessor by objectifying one of the eternal objects it (the predecessor) exemplifies.[44] "There is no reason, of any ultimate metaphysical generality, why this [that process entails loss] should be the whole story,"[45] says Whitehead

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[40] Ibid., p. 531. [41] Ibid., p. 532. [42] Ibid., p. 531.

[43] Ibid. [44] Ibid., p. 517. [45] Ibid.

when he discusses an occasion's temporal existence evolving into its objectively immortal existence in God. God is aware of each occasion's complete "individual identity," as well as its "completeness of unity."[46] Moving from its becoming to objective immortality in God, Whitehead sees "no loss of immediate union" of the feeling which each actual occasion achieves in its satisfaction. The whole complexity of positive and negative feelings, elements of a temporal synthesis, endures in the consequent nature of God.[47] As William Christian says, "God conforms to every feeling, and he conforms perfectly to each feeling."[48]

Feeling and Subjective Immediacy

Whitehead has gone to great lengths to state clearly that every feeling within each temporal satisfaction endures in its completeness; however, he is not so clear on each occasion's subjective immediacy and its endurance. Again, we turn to Christian for a solution to this problem.[49] Note how the following passages from Whitehead suggest a positive answer to the question of the preservation of subjective immediacy.

> There is a unison of becoming among things in the present. Why should there not be novelty without loss of this direct unison of immediacy among things?[50]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In it [the consequent nature of God] there is no loss, no obstruction. The world is felt in a unison of immediacy.

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[46]Ibid., p. 532. [47]Ibid., pp. 517, 524.

[48]William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 351.

[49]Ibid., pp. 340-342.

[50]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 517.

> The property of combining creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy is what in the previous section is meant by the term "everlasting."[51]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Thus the consequent nature of God is composed of a multiplicity of elements with individual self-realization.[52]

Christian challenges the apparent position of Whitehead on the endurance of subjective immediacy. He says:

> Several comments on these passages are in order. (a) The "unison of immediacy" referred to in the first two passages is God's own immediacy, as the second passage makes clear . . . . (c) In the third passage it might have been better to say the consequent nature of God "unifies" a multiplicity of elements. These elements, actual occasions, do have individual self-realization in their own immediate experiences. But God's own immediate experience is not a multiplicity but a unity, in which the multiplicity of occasions is objectified. (d) The suggestion that actual occasions retain their immediacy when objectified in God, which these passages might permit, is not consistent with some fundamental principles or with the plain meanings of other texts.[53]

The "other texts" suggested are:

> Actual occasions "obtain adequate representation in the divine nature. Such representations compose the 'consequent nature' of God."[54]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> God's physical experience is "initially derived from the temporal world."[55]

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[51] Ibid., pp. 524-525.

[52] Ibid., p. 531.

[53] William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 341.

[54] Ibid., pp. 18-19. (Emphasis added by and quoted in Christian, p. 341.)

[55] Ibid., p. 524. (Emphasis added by and quoted in Christian, p. 341.)

> The nature of God "receives into its unity the scattered effectiveness of realized activities, transformed by the supremacy of its own ideals."[56]
>
> Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception into God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact. An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors. The correlate fact in God's nature is an even more complete unity of life in a chain of elements for which succession does not mean loss of immediate unison. This element in God's nature inherits from the temporal counterpart according to the same principle as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past. Thus in the sense in which the present occasion is the person now, and yet with his own past, so the counterpart in God is that person in God.[57]

From this, Christian states the following conclusions:

> It appears from these passages that when actual occasions are prehending into the consequent nature of God they do not retain their own immediacies. They obtain "adequate representation" in God's experience. They are "transmuted." The "living, ever-present fact," the "even more complete unity of life," is not the collective immediacies of the individual actual occasions. It is the everlasting subjectively immediate experience of God. The "correlate fact" in God's nature "inherits from the temporal counterpart according to the same principle as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past." This means . . . that actual occasions do not persist into God's experience with their own subjective immediacy. They are objectively immortal in God's own subjectively immediate experience.[58]

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[56]Alfred North Whitehead, "Immortality," (Quoted from Paul Schilpp, Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, pp. 697-698; emphasis added by Christian, p. 341).

[57]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 531-532. (Quoted in Christian, pp. 341-342.)

[58]William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, pp. 342-344.

It might appear that Christian has produced the final word on Whitehead's notion of God's objective immortality. However, if we follow his commentary on the three initial quotations, it is not clear that the "'unison of immediacy' referred to in the first two passages is God's own immediacy" and not that of objectively immortal occasions. Again, Whitehead's position that temporal process always involves loss is meant to be an empirical observation, as well as a consequence of his theory. One is hard put to discover a metaphysical principle in Whitehead's system which entails that conclusion. However, it is strongly suggested by Whitehead's account of concrescence as the appropriation by the living of the dead. Further, with regard to "other texts," it would appear that only the fourth of those mentioned (above) offers evidence negative to the endurance of subjective immediacy in God. The distinction between "temporal actuality" and the "transmutation of that temporal actuality" might possibly refer to a difference traceable to the disappearance of subjective immediacy; however, this appears to be inconclusive.

Perhaps more to the point is the example which Whitehead uses between the person now and the person's past, the "correlate fact in God" and the past "temporal counterpart" from which it stems. Our past moments of experience are deprived of the immediacy of the present. If Whitehead intends to equate the past temporal occasion with one's personal past on the point of subjective immediacy, perhaps Christian's approach is correct.

Whitehead may be contending that the succession of occasion to occasion (based on purely temporal succession), is quite different from the shift from occasion to God. The shift from occasion to God gives an even more complete unity of life, in which succession does not mean a loss of immediate unison.

One of the major hindrances in gaining the proper interpretation on this problem is the fact that Whitehead suggests no final notion on the matter. It does seem possible that Whitehead considered the endurance and the non-endurance of subjective immediacy to be open metaphysical possibilities; and if so, the only method of deciding the issue is the empirical way. There is a quotation from Whitehead which seems to indicate the possibility: "The doctrine here developed is entirely neutral on the question of immortality [the ordinary sense of "immortality"]. There is no reason why such a question should not be decided on more special evidence, religious or otherwise, provided that it is trustworthy."[59]

Transformation

Along with the idea of endurance, transmutation in its objective phase includes what Whitehead refers to as "transformation." Whitehead states that through each occasion's objectification in God, the value acquired in that occasion is infused with the growing whole of value to which each actual occasion in objective immortality contributes. Similar

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[59]Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 110.

to the unification of the past by each becoming occasion, God synthesizes the sum of given data in the most perfect form of experiential unification possible. Although the past determines what is to be synthesized in temporal succession, it is the prerogative of the present immediate moment of experience to choose which possible mode will be synthesized. This is analogous to God, in that God is conditioned by the fact that He must prehend this actual world; however, God is unconditioned or free to infuse it experientially in the manner He chooses. God is free from external determination in his decision as to how the given shall be felt. His decision is conditioned by the fact that the outcome is an inevitable expression of His own primordial vision.[60] The consequent nature of God produces this experiential unification via transformation, and it allows through this unification the greatest possible intensity of aesthetic feeling. Even if we were to view the "mere wreckage" in the temporal world, Whitehead contends that it is salvaged for the purpose of enriching the quality of God's feeling by adding to the ordered contrast present in the consequent nature.[61]

Objective in Character

Both from the level of endurance and from that of transformation, we note that transmutation is objective in character. Transmutation is produced by God's own enjoyment regardless of the partial "awareness" of

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[60]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 523.

[61]Ibid., p. 517.

that enjoyment on the part of that which is transmuted. But there is also a subjective side of transmutation. "The sense of worth beyond itself is immediately enjoyed as an overpowering element in the individual self-attainment. It is in this way that the immediacy of sorrow and pain is transformed into an element of triumph."[62]

From the last quotation, it might be argued that it is within the scope of actual occasions to realize their worth beyond the immediacy of momentary experience. As Whitehead states, "The immediacy of defeat might be subjectively transmuted into triumph."[63] Whitehead does not make it clear as to whether this actual occasion's transmutation adds to the consequent nature of God and/or to the future of the temporal world. Apparently, Whitehead is suggesting that actual occasions make differing additions to the value of the temporal world. What does seem inevitable is that Whitehead contends for a subjective kind of transmutation, a projection of hope, which is, in part, produced by an occasion's alertness to its own potential contribution to God's vision of the whole of actuality.

Religious Intuition

The question of the place of transmutation within Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature of God must be raised. Are there reasons of metaphysical necessity which require Whitehead to consider this redemptive aspect of the consequent nature? Why must the notion of transmutation hold such a key position in his thought? There seems to be no

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[62] Ibid., p. 531. [63] Ibid.

experiential necessity for the concept of transmutation. Rather, it appears that this is a particular kind of experience, which Whitehead calls "religious intuition."

> . . . objective immortality within the temporal world does not solve the problem set by the penetration of the finer religious intuition. 'Everlastingness' has been lost; and 'everlastingness' is the content of that vision upon which the finer religions are built--the 'many' absorbed everlastingly in the final unity. The problems of the fluency of God and of the everlastingness of passing experience are solved by the same factor in the universe. This factor is the temporal world perfected by its reception and its reformation, as a fulfillment of the primordial appetition which is the basis of all order. In this way God is completed by the individual, fluent satisfactions of finite fact, and the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves . . . .[64]

As a Metaphysical Necessity

Let us restate our contention, that if we are open to Whitehead's ontological principle, then we must accept his notion that eternal objects are included in a partially non-temporal actual entity. Based upon the principle of relativity, we agree that this actual entity objectifies all past occasions to the degree that every occasion prehends its past. Depending upon the foregoing dual premises, Whitehead's doctrine of the consequent nature of God is viewed as the relatedness of temporal occasions in God's nature, thus making the consequent nature a metaphysical necessity.

That each temporal occasion is transmuted in God's nature does not appear to be required by Whitehead's position. The important question

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[64]Ibid., p. 527.

seems to be whether that which is logically necessary "imposes the belief that it [the temporal world conceived as a self-sufficient completion of creative act] is the whole truth."[65] Whitehead contends that it does not, for considerably more than the necessary may be presented, and the doctrine of transmutation is but one such possibility. Based upon this religious concern or intuition, Whitehead adopts this metaphysical possibility. He states:

> There is nothing here in the nature of proof. There is merely the confrontation of the theoretic system with a certain rendering of the facts. But the unsystematized report upon the facts is itself highly controversial, and the system is confessedly inadequate . . . . Any cogency of argument entirely depends upon elucidation of somewhat exceptional elements in our conscious experience--those elements which may roughly be classed together as religious and moral intuitions.[66]

It would seem that one would share Whitehead's notion of the transmutation of the temporal world in God only if he accepted Whitehead's religious intuition.

The prehension of the actual world in the consequent nature of God involves the reformation of the world defined in terms of His subjective aim. The world as prehended in the consequent nature of God "is the temporal world perfected by its reception and its reformation, as a fulfillment of the primordial appetition which is the basis of all order."[67] Therefore, the consequent nature of God can be said to be a metaphysical truth about the actual world. However, this prehension of the world, while it clearly involves the valuation of the world from the standpoint

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[65] Ibid., p. 519. [66] Ibid., p. 521. [67] Ibid., p. 527.

of God's subjective aim, is not an arbitrary valuation. It is a valuation of the world informed by a complete primordial envisagement of eternal objects and the inclusion of all physical data. It is therefore a prehension which is both impartial, adequate, and truthful.[68]

God and Satisfaction

This introduces the problem of God's concrescence in its later phases. God's eternality precludes the possibility of his concrescence attaining "satisfaction" in the same sense in which actual occasions do. Satisfaction, Whitehead asserts, is the final phase of concrescence in which an actual entity becomes fully determinate. "It is determinate (a) as to its genesis, (b) as to its objective character for the transcendent creativity, and (c) as to its prehension--positive or negative--of every item in its universe."[69]

On several occasions Whitehead suggests that God experiences satisfaction.[70] The question arises as to what degree this phase of concrescence can be applicable to God. God attains satisfaction in the sense that his consequent nature involves "the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom."[71] This unity of satisfaction, however, must not be considered a static perfection, but rather a unity of satisfaction involving the harmony of his primordial valuation with the world as it is at any stage

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[68] Ibid., p. 525. [69] Ibid., p. 38.

[70] Ibid., pp. 48, 135. [71] Ibid., p. 524.

in its process. This is a satisfaction relative to any given state of the world. Furthermore, insofar as this harmony of conceptual appetition and physical prehension is an integration of every datum in the universe, God's satisfaction is determinate relative to the temporal world. But the satisfaction of God is forever incomplete, in the sense that it is relative to the present state of the world. God's satisfaction is not complete in the sense that it is a final phase beyond which no further perfection is possible. The "finality" of God's satisfaction is therefore relative to the data given in his concrescence; it is not "final" in the sense of a chronological termination of God. God's everlastingness precludes that kind of finality of satisfaction.[72] Whitehead can assert that God's consequent nature "originates with physical experience derived from the temporal world, and then acquires integration with the primordial side. It is determined, incomplete, consequent, everlasting, fully actual, and conscious."[73] God's satisfaction, therefore, is unified, determinate, and relatively perfect, but it is incomplete. It is incomplete both because it contains unrealized potentialities relative to his primordial nature, and because it is relative in physical prehension to the creative advance of nature. As a result, God's consequent nature is dynamic and in process.

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[72]William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 299.

[73]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 524.

Relativity of God's Perfection

The relativity of God's perfection in the sense of its incompleteness is precisely what motivates his continual action in the world. He seeks the "fulfillment of his own being."[74] But his own becoming requires reference to the world of actual entities in which his primordial ordering of eternal objects finds finite realization. His purpose of self-realization is not merely the evocation of actual occasions, but also "the evocation of intensities."[75] God seeks creative advance in the world. This suggests that his relative perfections or satisfactions have a superjective aspect. "God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world."[76] The superjective nature of God "is the character of the pragmatic value of his specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal instances."[77]

As Ground of Adequate Representation

Another metaphysical reason for introducing the consequent nature of God is the need for an "impartial nexus" or a "ground of adequate representation" of the creatures.[78] We have noted that the metaphysical method of empirical generalization rested upon the presupposition of a real ground of analogy in the world, i.e., the ontological principle. It

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[74]Ibid., p. 161. [75]Ibid. [76]Ibid., p. 524.

[77]Ibid., p. 135. [78]Ibid., pp. 19, 352.

appears impossible to speak of the "truth" of a metaphysical interpretation apart from its relevance to actual entities, past, present, and future. But questions do arise with this approach. How can the actuality of occasions of the past be adequately given in the present? Even the possibility of metaphysical truth itself would appear to rest upon an "adequate representation in the divine nature" of the organic actualities of the world. For, "there can be no determinate truth, correlating impartially the partial experiences of many actual entities, apart from one entity to which it can be referred."[79] Metaphysical truth in connection with the method of empirical generalization requires a consequent nature of God for its full intelligibility.

Within the exposition of the relation between God and the actual occasions we have raised the question of how any nexus could have the status of an "unalterable fact." This is unintelligible apart from a consequent nature of God. No other actual entity can have the breadth of conceptual vision or everlastingness of duration to perform such a metaphysical role. If there are unalterable facts which function as realized elements in the world's actual constitution, they must find their ultimate ontological status in a consequent nature of God. The argument that a consequent nature of God is necessary to account for adequate representation of actual occasions as achieved facts or an impartial nexus, pertains to the unity of occasions as such and not necessarily to those occasions of unique achievement of value. This

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[79] Ibid., p. 19.

illustrates a basic metaphysical function of the consequent nature of God in connection with which God's preservation of the higher values is a special instance.

Preservation of Higher Values

God's consequent and superjective nature gives metaphysical expression to how God may be said to preserve the higher values achieved in the world's advance. God's consequent nature as a comprehensive transmutation of the world whereby the world "is felt in unison of immediacy"[80] means that he "prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system."[81] This prehension of the world is unified by a "wisdom of subjective aim" which judges occasions destructive of intense harmony as "triviality of mere individual facts" and even "uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage." His conceptual nature is a judgment of love "which loses nothing that can be saved" and redeems "the turmoil of the intermediate world by the completion of his own nature."[82] This valuation of the realizations of the occasions of the world is the way God in his consequent nature preserves values. God's consequent nature is thus a beloved community, the multiplicity of particular occasions woven into the immediacy and harmony of the universal feeling. The values of the world are objectively immortal in the immediacy of God's consequent nature.

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[80] Ibid., p. 524. [81] Ibid., p. 525.

[82] Ibid.

God's superjective nature further means that the valuation of God's consequent nature is effective with respect to the creative advance of the world. "What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world."[83] In this way the values achieved in the world are not merely preserved in God's consequent nature, but are further effective lures whereby the world is persuaded to ever greater perfections. By virtue of God's objective immortality in the world, the values achieved in the world are guaranteed a continual relevance to the world despite the perpetual perishing of finite occasions.

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[83] Ibid., p. 532.

CONCLUSION: A Comparison of the Finite-God Concepts of William James and Alfred North Whitehead

Exposition of the finite-theisms of James and Whitehead has been completed. If the presentations of each man's philosophical position have been accurate, then it would seem that the following conclusions would be justifiable.

The nature of the differences between the finite-God positions of James and Whitehead on the one hand, and the infinite or absolutist theories of God which they oppose, really reduces to a question of motive based upon evidence and implications. A philosophical motive is not tersely stated, as the foregoing chapters will show; yet it conveys a basic understanding of the extent to which James and Whitehead consider reality open to our understanding. For instance, one who views the question of reality as beyond the realm of speculative conceptions, would develop a theory of God and/or man in an extensively different way from the idealist. Motive and the degree to which reality appears philosophically intelligible seem to correlate.

The infinite-God theories present a problem for James and Whitehead because of a conflict in basic doctrines. The infinite-God position accepts propositions about the nature of God as necessarily true; probability does not enter the picture because truth is necessarily demonstrated. A philosophical position which holds that we can know with certainty that God exists as an infinite being has read a great deal into human experience. Absolutist theories interpret basic facts of experience and try to

show a necessary connection with God, who is positioned as infinite above nature. What is accepted by the infinite-God theorists will have to stand the attack of the finite approach. The finitistic approach to the problems of the natural world is of a different nature from those of the infinitistic. Evil, for example, would have to be explained by the infinite theory in reference to a God already established as infinite. It could have no purpose nor evidence any worth for the finite position. The meaning of evil must be controlled by that which has already been accepted as necessarily true.

James' finite-God theory was developed in reaction to both traditional theism and the philosophy of the Absolute. I have tried to show that James considered the Absolutist's position intolerable. The Absolutist's position was popular at the time of James' writing, and it posed a formidable threat to the value-structure which James held.

Whitehead is critical of the traditional Christian approach, which claims a deity who supposedly rules the world by fiat. Since the idea of a personal God is not among the intuitive insights of man's religions, and since the idea of a Divine Ruler who disposes of the world according to his own whim and fancy is neither metaphysically intelligible nor reconcilable with the insights of moral sensitivity, then Whitehead sees no reason to embrace the idea of a God who transcends the world in such a radical way as to create it ex nihilo. However, Whitehead does insist upon the doctrine of God as indispensable to religion, for the doctrine of God has an apologetic function to perform.

Basic differences between James and Whitehead have come to the surface as we have viewed the reasons and the philosophical motives employed in their finite-God theories. For James, the problem of evil is one of the evidences for the finitistic approach. However strong this impulse might be, it is basically the preservation of select life-giving values and the satisfaction of personal needs which lie at the core of James' theism. Speculative areas of development become secondary to him.

For Whitehead, any discussion of God must occur within the context of a total metaphysical scheme. Therefore, the analysis of Whitehead's concept of God includes how God functions in relation to other metaphysical entities and principles of his scheme--entities such as actual occasions and eternal objects, and principles, such as creativity and valuation. God is an actual entity distinctive by virtue of his primordial valuation of all eternal objects, everlasting by virtue of his physical prehensions of all occasions of the world as they come into being, providential by virtue of his luring of the world toward more creative ends and by virtue of the weaving of the creative achievements of the world into a unison of immediacy. Whitehead, by virtue of the metaphysical scheme he employs, is quite open to the speculative areas of development, whereas James was less inclined toward them.

The philosophical motives which actuate James and Whitehead in their theistic approach show some basic differences. The emphasis on voluntarism is stronger in James than it is in Whitehead. James' reasons for such strong voluntaristic motives stem from his desires. He suggests that one

should take a position in which he is aligned with the most satisfying idea of God. James has questioned the veracity of the intellect and found it to come up wanting. His finitistic approach, he suggests, can deal more decisively with the real world.

Voluntarism is not so strong within Whitehead. Instead, the significance of Whitehead's motives involves a combination of the following tasks: the empirical study of religious phenomena, the analysis of religious intuition, the coordination of the distinctive insights of religious intuition with other sorts of insight, the ultimate incorporation of religious intuition within a metaphysical scheme, and the testing of the adequacy of the motives by their illumination of perennial problems of religious understanding and a comparison with alternative theories concerning God.

James suggests that our desires could provide us with evidence, but for Whitehead this form of desire does not enjoy the primacy which James gives it. Like James, Whitehead views the intellect as inadequate, in the sense that it can give no clear-cut, conclusive and final answers to all questions. For James, no necessary truth is possible; therefore, all matters pertaining to God are considered inductively as evidence which could change our conception of God.

In addition to the empirical evidence for the finite nature of God, Whitehead is concerned with how religious intuitions, clarified by metaphysical definition and analysis, can be applicable to the civilization of man. By "civilization" Whitehead means not only human culture as it

has existed historically, but human life ideally as it might become. Like James, Whitehead agrees that religion can contribute creatively to the moral and aesthetic civilization of man. Whitehead believes he has formulated a more adequate concept of God than the infinite-God approach. God is that factor in the world which lures the world toward civilization and is a final cause urging each creature toward that good which is possible for it. God becomes the source of peace, and the unity of adventure beyond the mere activity of adventure, without which civilization would be incomplete.

In our present consideration, the finite theisms of James and Whitehead, I have attempted to make explicit the boundaries regarding philosophical intelligibility discovered in their respective motives. I have contrasted briefly their boundaries with the infinite-God positions, in order to show how these boundaries sometimes limit conceptions of God, either finite or infinite. By comparison, it has been possible to demonstrate that the problem of limitations arises both with respect to the scope of overt evidence offered for this finitistic concept of God, as well as a discovery of what directions are open in one's attempt to formulate a theory of God.

As a pragmatist, James presents a finite-concept of God which is basically empirical. His open system shows that God will in some very definite ways be connected with this concrete world. Some of these ways are discovered in terms religiously meaningful to man. I have shown one to be the place of religious experience which stresses the immanence

of God. James expected some practical demonstration of God in a person's life.

Whitehead chooses to develop an organismic philosophy in which creativity becomes the ultimate metaphysical principle. To account for the process of change, novelty, and creativity, Whitehead has claimed two natures for God. We have demonstrated how both natures, the primordial and the consequent, are necessary to give a full explanation of what Whitehead means by a finite-God concept. Like James, Whitehead has an open system in which not all answers have been given, because not all the questions have yet been raised. Whitehead shows a relationship between God and the empirical data of concrete experience. While Whitehead retains the transcendence of God through the primordial nature of God, he emphasizes the immanence of God particularly through the consequent nature.

When faced with the question of why we should believe in God, James presents evidence based on practical lines of thought. His pragmatic tack is shown when James states that he believes in God because he <u>needs</u> God. I have shown this as an option for the will-to-believe. James feels that volition can produce relevance in the meaning of life. He feels that it is rational to believe; it is part of human nature. Through the continued use of volition, man can align his present-day situation with his intentions for the future. Perhaps another way of stating this would be to say that James feels that volition can produce a more meaningful dimension for the rest of one's life.

Whitehead uses his ontological principle as justification for the nature of God. This principle states that to be is to be some real facet, or an unrealized possibility of experience, of some actual entity. Another similar principle is that of relativity. The relativity principle requires an actual entity to influence and/or be influenced by other occasions of experience. These metaphysical principles suggest that God is necessary for any interpretation of experience and reality. Whitehead sees God as an integral notion for framing the system of reality. Within this system fact and interpretation are inseparable, for both belong to the world of experience. This finite God, then, is part of the world under explanation. God is an element in the analysis of experience.

For James, the works of God are empirically verifiable. From a psychological point of view, God brings comfort and encouragement to believers; He produces converts and saints. James uses intuitions and consciousness as the experiential ties one has with this finite God. Akin to the discussion of the psychological dimensions, James suggests the possibility of mystical fulfillment. He is open to the mystic's experience because of its apparent workableness--its pragmatic fulfillment. This mystical experience is accepted by James as being empirically verifiable; thereby, James presents it as further proof of God's existence. Let me remind the reader that James uses the term "experience" in a very broad sense. Through this expanded use of the term, James is able to accommodate both the traditional and the mystical segments of experience as empirical data. God is real because he produces real effects.

For Whitehead, the dual natures of God, the primordial and consequent, are essential parts of an adequate explanation of reality. God is presented as an actual entity. We have demonstrated how God is like and how He is different from other actual entities. Of importance is Whitehead's view that God (as actual entity) explains the paradox of permanence and flux. God is shown as the evolving actual entity; therefore, the progressive evolutionary theory is compatible with Whitehead's thought. Whitehead's principle of concretion emphasizes God as an actual entity. It supports the doctrine that God is an actual entity by his supplying initial aim to each temporal concrescence. The principle of concretion is a reflection of the fact that the final real things are really processes.

Whitehead states that God's primordial character is the solution to the problem of process: God is in organismic relation to the world. Underlying all occasions is God's relation to the world of process. Further, Whitehead shows that God is the antecedent of particular occasions. Whitehead demonstrates this in two ways: God is the substantial activity underlying all occasions; and God is the antecedent limitation of actual occasions. Without God, there would be no succeeding occasions. God, as both infinite and finite, is involved in the present situation.

James has developed his finite theism on the pragmatic hypothesis that men "need" God. His use of the psychological constructs, as well as the moral incentives, reflect his use of the human model. James holds that persons are "fused" with God. God experiences limitations like man;

God exists in a finite environment. As a temporal being, God "has a history" like that of man. James appears to be more "person-oriented" in his finitistic explanations of God, while Whitehead appears to be more concerned with developing a finite-God theory within a metaphysical scheme.

Whitehead presents his theory of God as allowing God a dual nature. The primordial nature of God is a view of God as unified, omniscient, exclusively good--but "deficiently actual"--requiring the world for its concretion. The consequent nature of God shows the world as integrated into God's vision of perfection. Let me summarize some of the implications which come from a study of the consequent nature of God. God is conscious of the world, a fact which implies the objectification of the world in God. Occasions of the world become immortal, just as God is immortal. God is immanent in each occasion, supplying it with initial subjective aim, and instilling in it the desire for perfection (within its immediacy). The subjective aim of the occasion is part of God's overall vision for the world. God's consciousness of the world is the mental pole of the multiplicity of the world's physical objects in their concurrent "unison of becoming." Further, God's consciousness of the world achieves an integration--God's vision of the world. This vision is being completed by the eternal relationships of all eternal objects which form God's primordial nature.

Having analyzed the finite-God theisms of James and Whitehead, I would like to make a few final comments on their theories. Both men have

broad views of "experience." The experience of God can come to man from many levels. Both men have strong theories of individuation: for James it is individual subjectivity, and for Whitehead it is selectivity. Although the models which they use differ, both men recognize a teleological factor within reality. For James, the teleological factor is demonstrated through decision-making. Whitehead stresses the subjective aim of the actual entity. The teleological emphasis is directed toward making the future relevant to the present. James accomplishes this by allowing a finite God to meet and help man in his existential predicament. Whitehead emphasizes the real order and fulfillment in nature.

Both theisms make a definite appeal to religious consciousness. This is due mainly to the fact that each makes God a temporal being. God has always existed, but He is still in the process of a temporal development. The goings-on in the world affect God; He reacts to our situations, sympathizes, suffers, and rejoices with man. Man's relationship to God is based on a human model--like the relations between persons. James points out that this is the way the ordinary religious person thinks of God. God is meaningful to our everyday experience; therefore, He is eminently appealing.

Both James and Whitehead agree that a finite God is easier to understand than the God of traditional theism. God is similar to man and can be thought of in analogous terms. Particularly James sees no need of struggling with the reconciliation of God's omniscience with the possibility of future contingency, or God's goodness with the presence of

evil. Man can experience and understand God in ways other than analogically.

The moral incentive note of James' theism seems delightful to some contemporary men. Perhaps out of a mixture of humanism and pragmatism, James has sought for man a more creative role in man's course of action. God has been declared finite by both writers for the purpose of God's living in a stimulating world.

The empirical element found in both theisms likewise make them acceptable to modern man. Whether it be from the existential approach or from the metaphysical, both writers are trying to throw light on certain elements of our "lived" world. Both men attempt to reawaken in man a sense of responsibility for his own life, thus trying to tie philosophical reflection to our everyday experience.

The finite theisms of James and Whitehead have attractive features for the contemporary mind. I have attempted to show that a deeper question than attractiveness of theory has prompted both men to write. Both of them see reality as intelligible; therefore, the need of a finite God. As it is so well put in the study of Whitehead's two natures of God: the progress of the world is partially dependent on God, and the progress of God is partially dependent on the world.

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DISSERTATION

A STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF A FINITE GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF WILLIAM JAMES AND ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

The finite-God theories of William James and Alfred North Whitehead have received great consideration as alternatives to the more traditional infinite-God theories. In his major volumes, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Pragmatism, and A Pluralistic Universe, William James gives a concept of God which develops the pragmatic approach. Alfred North Whitehead, in Process and Reality, describes two natures of God through which the imminent and the transcendent characters of God are presented.

The first part of this study is a presentation of the theistic views of both James and Whitehead in an attempt to discover the evidence which each presents for the existence of God and the nature of the divine limitation. A coordinate task will be the delineation of the basic conflicts which both James and Whitehead have with the infinite-God position. Special emphasis is given to the philosophical motives of James and Whitehead in relation to their philosophical methodology. Although James and Whitehead differ in their philosophical methods, both men consider their philosophical approach to God as partially an empirical one.

This dissertation is predominantly expository. Its major purpose is to explicate both James' and Whitehead's theories of a finite-God. Further, it will attempt to clarify some of the terminology used and to

elucidate the conceptual issues encountered. Both men are intent upon discussing God in terms which are religiously meaningful to man, namely, the area of religious experience. With neither James nor Whitehead do we find the certainty of knowledge about God which is claimed by the traditional theist's position.

Considerable exposition is given to James' ideas of the special need man has for God. Further, it will be shown that God has need of man, because God, too, has limitations. Whitehead gives us two notions of God: the primordial and the consequent natures. An examination of both of these natures of God and their finite implications will be pursued.

Finally, this dissertation will attempt a comparative study of the finite natures of God as given by both James and Whitehead. Implicit within this summary will be the motives which each man has suggested for the position of God as finite.

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