

REAL RELATIONS AND CONTINGENCY IN GOD: A CRITIQUE OF THE BASIC STATEMENTS OF WHITEHEAD'S DIPOLAR THEISM

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The work is concerned with Whitehead's dipolar theism, which, among other things, makes a case for real relations and contingency in God. It undertakes this task using the methodological tools of analysis and hermeneutics. Alfred North Whitehead, in his works, especially Process and Reality, makes some strong statements that underscore and reiterate the creative nature and freedom of actual entities. For him, this is simply a given, a fact of experience. This affirmation of the self-creative nature of all levels of actualities permeates and influences his process philosophic system. He moves, therefore, to posit a dipolar theism, which he feels does justice to the reality of self-determination of actual occasions, a movement that favors the affirmation of the real relationship between God and the world from both perspectives of the world and God. Maintaining this dipolarity in God, he establishes that God whose nature is both primordial and consequential-superject and the world are, in some sense, infinite and in another finite. God, in this scheme, would, in some sense, be characterized by contingency. This position evidently counters Thomistic-classical theodicy which denies any real relation between God and creatures from the standpoint of God. He writes about a dipolar God and creativity that is the ultimate for which God and actual entities are its creatures. In doing this, there appears to be a direct contrast between what God within the classical system can accomplish and what God within the process system cannot do, and in this case, an undermining, at least in the context of classical philosophy, of the classical notion of God. Conversely, there is also the disparity between what the process actual occasion can achieve and what the classical creatures cannot do. With this, an undermining of the process of actual entities. Thus, in classical philosophy, there is an asymmetry in the divine-cosmic connection, while in Whitehead and process philosophy, the relationship is symmetrical. It is with this God-world relationship that the work is concerned and is poised to evaluate this from the standpoints of Whitehead and classical philosophies.

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INTRODUCTION

Alfred North Whitehead, in his works, especially *Process and Reality*, makes some strong statements that underscore and reiterate the creative nature and freedom of what he refers to as actual entities. For him, this is simply a given, a fact of experience. This affirmation of the self-creative nature of all levels of actualities permeates and influences his process philosophic system. Regarding human freedom, he asserts that our encounter with this phenomenon is undeniably authentic and cannot be disregarded. This aspect of our experience is too significant to be simply dismissed as a misconception. It dictates the whole tenure of human existence. Whitehead moves to construct a system that would make sense of this reality. That would, among others, mean a system that would depart from classical theism, for as he observed, certain medieval and modern thinkers have a regrettable tendency to bestow metaphysical praises upon God, ascribing to Him qualities that appear to enhance His worthiness of devotion, but are in fact inconsistent with metaphysical logic. Emboldened perhaps by what could be perceived as paradox and even contradiction in at once asserting creaturely freedom and denying real relation in God, Whitehead made a move contrary to Thomistic–classical theodicy to build a process system that affirms both true freedom of the actual entities and real relation in God. Real relation here would mean whether God is affected by his relationship with the free actual entities. The major concern of the paper is to interrogate this divine-cosmic connection. In order to do this, the work is set into a number of subsections. The first pertains to an assessment of the overall framework of the Thomistic-classical perspective on the relationship between God and the world. It shows that the Thomistic-classical characterization of the relation from the standpoint of God is, in the main, logical. While looking at the merits, paradoxes, and contradictions involved in such an assertion of logical relation, the paper shows how Whitehead's process philosophy strived to surpass such contradictions. In doing this, it x-rays Whitehead's dipolar theism, which, in positing the primordial and consequential nature as well as creativity immanent among what he termed actual entities, affirms real relation in God such that God becomes affected by this relation. Following this, the discussion critically examines the two aspects of God in Whitehead's philosophy, emphasizing the balanced and equal connections between God and the World. This view contrasts traditional metaphysics that acknowledges an unequal and asymmetrical link between the two. Of course, the section on creativity as the ultimate is important to show how Whitehead tries to ensure the creaturely freedom while unfortunately making God a creature of creativity. The paper nevertheless observes that the said freedom is never absolute and so questions why the God–creativity divide was fostered in Whitehead in the first place. The paper would not conclude without highlighting that positing of real relation, though more in sync with real experience, appears to undermine the notion of divine omnipotence and omniscience of God, though it must be acceded that most of what we know about these two notions and God, in general, have been wired in the categories of the classical metaphysics. Therefore, there must be a conversation between classical and process metaphysics to ensure a notion of divine power and omnipotence that would not trivialize the reality of human freedom and the

relationship between God and the real but not absolutely free human being as well as the world.

WHITEHEAD'S AND PROCESS PHILOSOPHY'S SHIFT FROM THOMISTIC-CLASSICAL THEODICY

There is no doubt that the views of Whitehead and process philosophers, in general, are a marked shift from Aquinas and classical theism. In fact, process philosophy arose as a reaction to this, among others. Aquinas posits that the relationship between God and creatures is asymmetrical, a concept that has deeply influenced the development of philosophy and Christian theology throughout history. Aquinas (*Summa I, Q13, a.7*) states that the relation between creatures and God from the creature's standpoint is genuine since they depend basically on God. But he noted that on the part of God, no reality exists consequent upon His interaction with creatures. God's relation to creatures is not real. It is only a logical relation. This is where the difficulty of the process philosophers lie, and of course Whitehead, hence he wrote in terms of the dipolarity of God where God, in his consequential nature, really relates with the actual entities and the world, a relationship which, because it is real and because of creativity of immanent in the actual entities renders God vulnerable, finite, passable, etc. The cornerstone of the no-real relation of classical theism hinges on the fact that God is the unmoved mover, a pure act. God as pure act, *actus purus*, simply means that there is no potency in God, for He is already all He could be. The idea of the Unmoved Mover expresses this asymmetry and the rejection of the reality of relation with beings that impact God. Of course, this is the foremost generator of paradox, incoherence, and contradiction in classical theism. There is certainly a difficulty with regard to an *actus purus* whose attribute is, for instance, goodness when the attribute of divine goodness is held together with divine impassibility. Anselm's response in his *Proslogion* to the notion of a merciful God who feels nothing while the creatures feel the effects of divine compassion (See Dombrowski 2006, 140) is hardly a settled matter. How compassion can be non-sympathetic or love insensitive or passionless is really a little too much to conceive.

The same paradox is evident in asserting, for instance, divine absolute knowledge of a contingent and changeable world while insisting that God is *actus purus* who could not be other than it is. Yet contingency means the possibility of being otherwise. Obviously, Whitehead's system affirms the freedom and contingency of creatures. As Palmyre Oomen (2015, 277-292) observes, "Whitehead sees God's functioning as a luring influence." This indeed, and as such, births a new occasion. The capacity to respond establishes the creature in its subjective immediacy and so could determine itself until it reaches objective immortality. In this way, Whitehead could argue that God creates each actual entity by making it really possible, imbuing it with its potentials and initial subjective aim. He does this without any form of determination.

Whitehead's metaphysics here differs significantly from Aquinas's. For Whitehead, God's awareness of all possibilities is eternal and unchanging. This describes God's primordial nature. But His knowledge of the world is somehow

dependent on the actual entities. According to Whitehead, divine prehension of actual entities is actual. God's primordial nature is complete, but his consequent nature is conditioned, determined, and incomplete in as much as the world and actual entities continue to exist. Could this not be far from presenting God as an imperfect being for he prehends what is possible according to His nature? For instance, the human being cannot be considered imperfect simply because it could not, for instance, fly like a bird. It is not in his nature to fly like a bird. The view portrayed here obviously departs from Aquinas' view of God's understanding and knowledge as creative, which appears to impose necessity and so no contingency is possible and, with it, lack of freedom. Aquinas (Summa Ia, Q.14, 5) argues that God knows all things other than himself, actual and possible. This is because there is no possible knowledge that can elude the subject of absolute knowledge. In expounding the implication of this proposition, Aquinas (Summa Ia, Q14,13) writes:

God knows by his knowledge of vision what are called future contingencies, that is, things that will exist or will happen in the future, dependently on the action of non necessitated causes. For instance, God knows what I shall say or do, or what persons I shall meet, at a given moment a year or ten years hence. These things are contingent (or dependent) upon humanly unforeseeable action of free wills and upon fortuitous circumstances; they are future things, and they are contingent; hence they are rightly called future contingencies. These things are not merely what may happen; they are what will happen. Hence they are knowable as facts, and God knows them by his knowledge of vision.

Aquinas rejects any notion of passive potency in a God who is *Ipse Essendi Subsistens*, the subsistent act of being. This, for Aquinas, is unthinkable. This is true even with respect to divine knowledge of future contingencies. There is absolutely no becoming in God and with it, no potency to be affected by the future actions of voluntary agents. His knowledge is not passive but creative. There is no going far to see how deterministic the above position could be. The Boethian solution, in which he proposes a divine gaze in the eternal now of all history, has been criticized as involving epistemic passivity in God. At the same time, it renders divine providence ineffectual and ultimately destroys the notion of divine impassibility and immutability. Divine providence, Hugh McCann (2012) argues, demands a divine knowledge that metaphysically precedes all contingent acts, and this is done from all eternity as their eternal cause. There is no doubt that this makes the notion of creature-contingency in the light of the reality of creaturely freedom a difficult and ambiguous notion to grasp in classical theism.

Where the decision of the actual entity is creative and really free, the present researchers do not think that real relations can be denied in God, and with it, one cannot but accept that in some respect, God is infinite, and in another it is finite and this is true in the attributes in which God relates with creatures. This includes being omniscient and deficiently omniscient. This is true in the case of knowledge of the future of a free and creative actual entity. It remains partially indeterminate because one cannot

recognize as totally actualized that which is yet merely conceivably to be actualized. An omniscient God in the process thought thus knows the past as completely defined or immortally objective, the present as yet evolving (concreasing) and the future as partially indetermined. And this is not a case of limiting God. The logic here is that there is nothing that God should know that he does not know: a determinate future is not anything to know, and a perfect knower ought to know as much as this. It is ascribing God to know beyond this that made Whitehead (1925, 258) remark that some medieval and modern philosophers got into the unfortunate habit of paying God metaphysical compliments, attributing to him properties that seem to make God more worthy of devotion but are contrary to metaphysical reasoning. Another of such compliment is the claim, which reads more into the omnipotence of God that God can cause any state of things to happen as long as those are not contradictory. For Griffin (2004, 263), this is an instance of "the omnipotence fallacy." This is the fallacy of supposing that if any state of circumstances is logically possible, then an all-powerful being could singlehandedly cause it to happen.

The present researchers would think that what happened in history has been the absolutization of the primordial nature and its absolute grip upon all that exists. It is in the light of this that divine interaction with the world has been interpreted. One would suppose that this interaction is real and so should have implications on divine nature and attributes. Oomen's (2015) alignment with the Greek's concept of *pantokrator* comes to mind, for according to him, the Greek concept of *pantokrator* expresses without the notion of 'absolute *alleinmacht*.' that everything falls under the supremacy of divine governance and sustenance. This view, though it preserves the freedom of creatures, flies in the face of classical notions of God and divine omnipotence. In the Aquinas-Aristotelian category, our experiences are held as a matter of necessity to be grounded on the existence of God. God, in this category, is perceived as the absolute, transcendent, unconditioned ground of the world. To say otherwise is to compromise God's supremacy. The notion of absoluteness of divine power has been a consistent position of classical philosophy. Augustine of Hippo in *Enchiridion* 96 (St. Augustine 1955) upholds the notion of unlimitedness of divine power, which, according to him, could cause any logically possible events, including volitional acts of rational agents. He argues that the will of any creature cannot render the divine will ineffective. Aquinas, following Augustine, argues that the divine power being rooted in divine infinite existence cannot be limited (*Summa* I.25.3) and that divine will being the universal cause of all beings cannot for whatever reason be rendered ineffectual (*Summa* I.19.6), though God being the cause of volition in agents ensures they act according to their nature as free agents who cannot frustrate the transcendental will (*Summa* 83.1) Of course, a consistent drawing to logical conclusion has some unfortunate effects on issues bordering on the freedom of creatures and evil.

Whitehead claims to offer a formidable basis for creaturely freedom and the question of evil in his metaphysical system, wherein Creativity is given as the Ultimate and God as a creature of creativity. According to Whitehead, medieval and modern philosophers, in their bid to establish the religious importance of God, unfortunately, conceive God as the ultimate foundation of all metaphysical contexts. Whitehead's piece, *Science in the Modern World* seems to offer reason for this move. He contends

that such an approach automatically makes God the source of all good and all evil. God, therefore, becomes "the supreme author of the play, and to Him must therefore be ascribed its shortcomings as well as its success" (Whitehead 1925, 258). This is the view of many process philosophers. Augustine and Aquinas make a distinction between permissive will and causative will, where evil, instead of being divinely caused is rather permitted for the purpose of midwifing a greater good. Yet this hardly sounds convincing to the process philosophers, especially when the universe is claimed to be made *ex nihilo*, and so they do not see how creaturely decisions that God permits are not such as orchestrated to fulfill God's purposes for them. In order to avoid this unfortunate situation, Whitehead, in his system, develops the position that God is not the foundation of the metaphysical situation with its ultimate activity. He pushes the view that God is not the absolute creator of the universe and is not the transcendent origin of its creativity. God and temporal actualities become, therefore, co-creators of each other. Both operate within the principle of creativity, the ultimate metaphysical activity which, though is conditioned by them, is, nevertheless, unidentifiable with either of them alone. In such a system, God is not the origin of evil. The freedom of actual entities which are self-creative and whose Creativity does not arise from God involves the possibility of evil. An occasion may select a possibility of a very low order of value instead of one of a high order of value. In this way, a possible good has been excluded from being actualized, and an evil has been actualized.

WHITEHEAD'S DOCTRINE OF GOD AND THE WORLD IN THE PROCESS OF CREATIVE ADVANCE

Whitehead's theology of God is dependent on the rule that God is not to be viewed as an exception to all metaphysical rules, invoked to avert the collapse of the metaphysical principles. On the contrary, Whitehead writes that God is their exemplification (1957, 405). Whitehead, affirming a dipolarity in God distinguishes between primordial and consequential aspects of God. The former describes the boundless and unconditioned conceptual realization of the infinite abundance of potentiality (Whitehead, 405). It is otherwise, divine mental pole or God's conceptual prehensions which embrace the entire variety of eternal objects, the entire envisagement of eternal objects. He accomplishes this with oneness of feeling. An eternal object, in itself, as conceptually felt, is always a potentiality for actual beings. With regard to actuality, God, in His primordial nature, does not directly envisage actuality, though, by virtue of the envisagement of all possibilities, it presupposes actuality and the course of history.

Whitehead conceives of God's conceptual prehension as also having subjective forms of feeling. In other words, God does not just envisage these eternal objects; he subjectively reacts to the worth or value of the possibilities. In this way, the eternal objects gain their internal connection with value. The primordial nature, therefore, becomes the ground of the ordering of possibilities and ordering value. This ordering of potentialities in the primordial nature of God makes it possible for various types of social order to emerge. However, the unity of God's eternal vision implies an eternal harmonization of all possibilities and values. And this ordering presupposes God's

subjective aim, for all valuations involve an adjustment of appetite in the form of aversions and adversions. The primordial appetite is all-encompassing in the sense that no eternal object is excluded; all are valued. The valuation is a graded valuation, though in themselves (that is, the eternal objects) as mere possibilities. All possibilities are equally relevant, but as valued, they have graded relevance.

In this way, the eternal objects become lures for feeling, effective lures for novelty in the actual world. (Honsiski 1993, 171) It must be noted that this primordial valuation of pure potentials ensures that eternal objects are relevant to each concrescing process in a definite and effective way. Otherwise, there would simply be disorder in the realm of eternal objects, and, with it, the inconceivability of any meaningful novelty. (Whitehead 1978, 40) Thus Whitehead (1978, 247) writes that "apart from the intervention of God, there could be nothing new in the world, and no order in the world. The course of creation would be a dead level of ineffectiveness, with all balance and intensity progressively excluded by the cross-currents of incompatibility."

This effective relevance to each concrescence constitutes God as the initial object of desire, the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire. It is this that establishes the initial phase of each subjective aim in the actual entity. Thus, God is the metaphysical underpinning for the subjective aim of actual entities. He is, accordingly, the principle of concretion, the principle whereby a definite outcome ensues from a situation rather plagued with ambiguity (Whitehead 1957, 406). An actual occasion is, as a result, established in its subjective immediacy and so capable of its own determination. The initial subjective aim is actual but not final. It is not a mere pure passive receptivity, it is also an active grasping, a prehension. This is why Whitehead speaks both in terms of ingression and prehension. He writes that "the primary element in the 'lure for feeling' is the subject's prehension of the primordial nature of God." As God endows the new occasion with its living immediacy as a subject, the subject grasps its subjectivity for itself by prehending God. At first, the prehension is conformal but not deterministic, for included in the subjective aim is the freedom of self-constitution (Whitehead 1978, 224).

God's primordial nature, according to Whitehead, is deficiently actual. In His consequent nature, God's physical feelings are enmeshed upon his primordially (Whitehead 1957, 407). It is consequent because it derives from the interaction between the primordial nature and the actual entities. God, as we have seen, is at the beginning of the process of becoming actual entities by virtue of their hybrid prehensions of God's primordial nature. This immediately establishes a relationship of God with the actual world. Whitehead argues that God like any other actual entities must illustrate the principle of relativity and so God must be related to all actual entities by physically prehending what they have become. God, under the primordial aspect, is indifferent to creatures in their concrete individuality, unloving as he is unloving, unconscious, and oblivious of actuality. In the consequent aspect, God journeys with the world and with each actual entity, both of whom mutually affect each other. He is, therefore, conscious and knows, and so becomes a fellow sufferer. In this process of divine concrescence, there is no perishing in the course of the creative advance. Divine concrescence is everlasting, meaning that he has "the property of combining creative

advance with the retention of mutual immediacy" (Whitehead 1978, 346). This means that God is continually receiving new physical prehensions as the occasions in the world actualize themselves, and it also highlights that the consequent nature of God continually concretes. In this way, the unchanging, immutable God develops. He is unchanging because he is not subject to time. But he must also feel the creatures in their togetherness (Kraus 1998, 171). In this way, the primordial one becomes consequently many, and the world which is primordially many becomes one in God (Whitehead 1957, 407).

Whitehead conceives God and the world as dynamically standing against each other. Both the world and God have differing relations with permanence and flux. With regard to God, permanence is primordially divine as flux is a cosmic derivative, while with regard to the world, it is vice versa. While the world is primordially a given for God, God is, for the world, a primordial datum. Each constituting instrument of novelty for the other does not escape the gripping hands of creative advance, and so none ever reaches perfect completion.

This dynamism between the world and God is found among Process philosophers. Hartshorne and Reese (1963, 2), for instance, would refer to the classical theists' exclusive assignation of God as in all respects creator, active, infinite, eternal, necessary, independent, immutable, and impassible while inveterately denying the respective opposites about God as monopolar prejudice: monopolar for assigning one side of each pair to God and prejudicial because the contrasts are discriminatory as one side is held to be excellent and eminent and the other inferior which must not be assigned to a supremely excellent Being. But for Hartshorne, the pairs of metaphysical contraries cannot be talked about in terms of superiority and inferiority. Both sides manifest excellent and deficient qualities. This is an adumbration of Hartshorne's principle of the non-invidiousness of the metaphysical contraries (Hartshorne 1970, 268). Thus, instead of speaking about God in monopolar terms, dipolarity should be the preferred alternative such that in God and as in the world, there are respects where they mirror the two poles. We have already seen the absolute and consequential natures of God, which are expressions of this dipolarity. Whitehead (1978, 348) expresses this dipolarity unmistakably and boldly in the following lines:

It is as true to say that God is permanent and the world fluent as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that in comparison with the World God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God.

The above lines must be very senseless to the classical mind but depict reality for Whitehead and process philosophers in general. Here, permanence for God is predicated on divine envisioning of possibilities, and the world's permanence ensues

from its being preserved as objective immortality in God's consequent nature. In the fact of God's constant acquisition of new experiences of the world and the world's rhythm of coming to be and going out of existence of actual occasions, both the world and God are fluent. Being an actual entity, God is one, but "God is many in His valuation of eternal objects relative to each actual occasion. The world is also one and many, one because of the divine experience of it and many because it consists of myriads of occasions.

The above mirrors the fundamental view of process philosophers, namely the symmetry in divine-cosmic relations, which runs in contradistinction with classical metaphysics, which recognizes the asymmetry in that relationship. The process thought argues for God and the world in mutual creation. This is not to say that divine existence *per se* is precarious or dependent on other entities. Yet it creates something in God, not existence *per se*, because it is the essence of God to exist but God's experience of the creatures. And here it is the consequential nature of God. This understanding of the God-world relationship as a symmetry must have been behind Whitehead's notion of Creativity, for which, according to Whitehead, both God and creatures are its creatures. To the notion of creativity, we turn.

CREATIVITY AS THE ULTIMATE IN THE WORLD-GOD DYNAMISM

Whitehead's Process Metaphysics sees actuality as a process of becoming. Whitehead holds the view that what an actual entity is is also intricately constituted by how an actual entity becomes. That is to say that its being is constituted by its becoming. This means that for Whitehead, there is no underlying permanent stuff inoculated against the process of becoming, whether as the micro-process of concrescence or macro-process of transition. Accordingly, actuality is caught up in a creative advance in which many become one, and the one becomes incremental to the many. He sees in creativity an ultimate explanation for the creative advance into novelty that is observed in reality. For him, this creativity, while not being actual, is, however, real. All there are, are creatures of creativity, including God. God is there merely as the ground for eternal objects and the originator of subjective aim, thereby acting as the principle of limitation. Whitehead was so convinced that he had discovered the fundamental principle that is the ground of the process of becoming, and this he thought he found in the principle of creativity. He sees creativity as the ultimate of ultimates. He reasons that it is creativity that is displayed in the process of becoming or concrescence of an actual entity. It is creativity that is displayed in the process of transition from one perished occasion to a novel concrescence. It is creativity that is displayed in cosmic process, the dynamic interaction between God and the world. Every actual entity is a concrete illustration or instance of creativity, as is the interaction between all actual entities (See Honsinski 1993, 209).

Whitehead's conceptualization of creativity is original to him. In his *Science and Modern World*, which he published in 1925, the term 'creativity' was used. It was in his *Religion in the Making*, published in 1926, that he first used the word. However, it is in *Process and Reality* that he gives an extensive treatment and application of the

term 'creativity' to mirror the understanding of the pervasive nature of novelty within existence. The basic presumption here is that the fundamental structure of actuality is that it is always advancing, always becoming. Thus, he is poised to give a formidable and systematic account of the emergence of new things, ideas, entities, and processes within existence. "Why a next?" is the specific question that borders him. Whitehead gives the etymological meaning of the word thus: "in the abstract language here adopted for metaphysical statement, 'passing on' becomes "creativity" in the dictionary sense of the word *create*, "to bring forth, beget, produce."

According to Whitehead, "'creativity,' 'many,' 'one' are the ultimate notions involved in the meaning of the synonymous terms' thing,' 'being,' 'entity.'" While the one stands for the singularity of an entity, the term many conveys the notion of disjunctive diversity. Whitehead sees the process of becoming as the dynamic interplay between the one and many wherein the disjunctive diversity is conjunctively united in the 'one,' which in itself becomes incremental to the 'many.' The 'many' themselves continue to enter into complex unity. This is simply the ultimate principle of creativity in operation as novelty is churned out. In the process of transition, the past having perished in its subjective immediacy becomes data for the new concreting entity, which prehends the past (the many) into itself (the one) and once it attains satisfaction in objective immortality, it has become part of the many and so the process continues. He explains that an actual occasion in relation to the singularity of the many it unifies is a novel entity. Explaining further, Whitehead writes that the ultimate metaphysical principle is the advance from disjunction to conjunction, meaning that the novel entity is unique in its own right while it is also part of the many in conjunctive unity. He calls this principle of creativity, the universal of universals when Whitehead (1969, 25-26) writes:

Creativity is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that they enter into complex unity.

Whitehead (1969, 26) submits that the 'creative advance' is the application of the ultimate principle of creativity to each novel situation in which creativity itself originates. He refers to creativity as the principle of novelty. In the earliest part of *Process and Reality*, Whitehead describes Creativity as actual only *per accidens*. He refers to God as its primordial, non-temporal accident. Both God and the world are under the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Again, in discussing the derivation of the actual entity's initial subjective aim and its relevant potentialities, Whitehead writes that "in this sense, God can be termed the creator of each temporal actual entity." He immediately observed that the phrase could be misleading in seeming to ascribe ultimate creativity of the universe to God's volition. He clarifies that the true metaphysical position is that God is the primordial instantiation of this creativity. Emphasizing the ultimateity of creativity independent of God, Whitehead avers that it is to be noted that every actual entity, including God,

is a creature transcended by the creativity that it qualifies. What has been explained about creativity leaves one imagining what, ontologically speaking, is creativity or if it is merely a work of literary personification.

It would not be fair not to mention Whitehead's position to the effect that the meaning of creativity lies with its creatures. In other words, Creativity is made manifest in the process of the becoming and concrescence of actual entities. This obviously sounds like an effort to be consistent with the ontological principle. It is along this line that Thomas Hosinski maintains the position that Whitehead does not see creativity as God above God, the ultimate metaphysical ground. He tried, but he could not go any further before he fell again to the same inevitable conclusion of a Creativity that is above God. His statement that "Whitehead certainly wanted to avoid giving the impression that all creativity belonged to God" begs the question of where comes the Creativity. Is creativity in God and in creatures of different origin? In explaining the statement that God and actual occasions are creatures of Creativity, Hosinski (1993, 210) writes that for Whitehead, every actual entity is the result of its own self-creative process. In other words, actual entities are as it were creatures of their own self-causation. Granted that this is one understanding that can be gleaned from *Process and Reality*, the nagging question that remains is how the emerging entity becomes creative. What is the ground, especially given that the movement is always from objectivity to subjectivity? He did not go far to land again to the assertion of certain independence of Creativity. For, he writes of Creativity, that "it is not to be identified with God or temporal actualities since it transcends its every actual embodiment. Although intimately related to both God and temporal actual entities, creativity has an important metaphysical "independence" of them both." There is no going far to see in this submission, an assignment of superlative role to the metaphysical creativity, a metaphysical activity and not that of passivity like the Aristotelian matter. It is this varied position that has engendered varied interpretations. It may be necessary to make some statements concerning the ambiguity surrounding creativity as the ultimate principle, which has generated varied interpretations.

ON AMBIGUITY SURROUNDING THE NATURE OF CREATIVITY AS THE ULTIMATE

Whitehead does not refer to creativity as actual, for that would be to involve oneself in what he refers to as the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Concerning, therefore, the nature of this creativity, Whitehead (1969, 37) writes:

...creativity is without a character of its own in exactly the same sense in which the Aristotelian 'matter' is without a character of its own. It is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. It cannot be characterized, because all characters are more special than itself. But creativity is always found under conditions, and described as conditioned.

Whitehead (1926, 202), however, adds that "there are not two actual entities, the creativity, and the creature. There is only one entity, which is the self-creating

creature." One already sees some difficulty here. First of all, it must be remarked that comparison with Aristotelian matter is a near commission of category mistake, for Aristotelian matter is a passive principle while creativity is more an active principle, and one wonders why such a principle could not be defined. Nevertheless, it shows some uneasiness. Besides, one seems to have difficulty reconciling the reality of the undetermined creativity and assertion of self-creativity of an actual entity. Whitehead's creativity is unstructured and unbounded, without a character of its own. To use a term specific to Whitehead's system, it is real but not actual. This is because creativity is the ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. This is obviously an assignment of agency to something that is unbounded and without a character of its own. It is really an incoherence of the highest order. How could something that is merely real and not actual be given as the ground for the creative advancement in the world in a system that has always insisted that no reason could be given apart from an actual entity? This is all the more given a lack of sync with the ontological principle and this shows the inability of Whitehead's own system to pass the litmus test of coherence and logical perfection. There is, therefore, a certain falling apart at the seams and a certain contradiction in thought that manifests itself here. Yet it is this creativity that is real but not actual that Whitehead assigns the metaphysical ultimacy.

Some scholars have given a pluralistic interpretation of creativity. These scholars see Creativity as existent only in a plurality of instances. This interpretation often ties Creativity to the element of self-creation and self-determination characterizing every concrescence. William Christian, Ivor Leclerc, Charles Hartshorne amongst others, champion this interpretation. But this interpretation sidelines the importance of the past, making it irrelevant and stresses the *causa-sui* character of an occasion. While this explanation flies at the ontic level, it is deficient at the ontological. Such interpretation that limits Creativity to self-determination of concrescence creates an explanatory deficit in accounting for the coming into existence of a new entity, the why of on-goingness (See Cloots 2001, 36-55). This line of thought hardly does justice to the macro process of transition, smacking thereby, the impossibility to pass on the drive of creativity from one actual entity to another.

Definitely, this is indeed a problem that stems not just from interpretation but also from the ambiguity of the presentation. It is in reaction to this problem that John W. Wilcox (1991, 162-174) adumbrates a monistic interpretation of Creativity in Whitehead. The monistic creativity, according to Wilcox, would imply the existence of "process which gives rise to differentiations through a sequence of stages or episodes." According to him, without these multiple manifestations, "a monistic creativity would not be creativity." Well, this argument is sound, even from an analytic standpoint. If monistic creativity must be creative, something novel must arise, otherwise, it would not be creative. What had been merely remains. Here, Wilcox brings in the God factor. For God must provide the initial subject aim so that the plurality of stages derived from monistic creativity becomes ontologically separate individual and not diverse aspects of a single all-encompassing actual entity. This is interesting, but it sounds like creativity is not really absolute. It is even the God-factor that is the principle of novelty with its provision of subjective aim and ingression of

the general possibility that Whitehead calls eternal object. Well, Whitehead would argue that all these are manifestations of creativity. They are all in the grip of the metaphysical principle of creativity. But then the question that remains is how creativity that in Whitehead's system is merely real and not actual could be an activity and not merely passivity. This free-floating creativity is indeed a departure from the ontological principle, a great inconsistency and internal contradiction, for as Whitehead avers, all agencies must be resident in some actual agency or entity. Is this not guilty of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, which Whitehead had accused earlier metaphysics?

The difficulty here is palpable. But one could see it as arising from making too much of the fact of the actual entity being creative. It is making nominal what is rather adjectival and, upon that, giving it an overwhelming agency. Whitehead, by making nominal this fact of becoming being creative, thought he could go beyond the fact that there is becoming to why there is becoming, and this he saw in creativity, which he designates the ultimate of ultimates. This is in fact a jump from creativity as a tool for description to creativity as a tool for explanation. What can be observed about the process of becoming is that it is creative, and this is adjectival. In fact, every process of becoming must be creative; otherwise, it does not become what it continues to be. There is, therefore, the failure to see the 'being creative' and the becoming as at least synonymous, and so creativity cannot be offered as the explanation, as the why of becoming or why of the fact of being creative. That is an untold tautology until one can prove that there is any becoming that is worth its name that does not engender new reality.

What Whitehead seems to say is that creativity in itself is not actual but is actual only in virtue of its accident, as it were. Thus, it is not substantial, yet it is the ultimate. One wonders if it really exists, even if, actually, in Whitehead's terms, it does not exist, or is it just a mere flatus vocis to use the expression of nominalists with regard to the universals? The disturbing thing is that it is not actual and determinate, yet it is active. For Whitehead, God provides the subjective aim and what he termed eternal objects. The question that remains is whether, without subjective aim, a subject would ever emerge and without the ingression of eternal objects, any novelty would ever exist. This only serves to question Whitehead's claims concerning his all-too-creative creativity. The question is, does Creativity founded on God be a diminutive and erosion of freedom creatures?

CREATIVITY, FREEDOM AND THE QUESTION OF EXISTENCE IN ITS RADICAL SENSE

An earlier section noted that Whitehead's creativity-God divide is simply to ensure the freedom of the creature as well as to deal with the theodicy question. But the above move to subordinate creativity to God appears to ride roughshod on the creaturely freedom and the question of imputing evil to God. Langdon Gilkey (1976), arguing in favor of subordinating creativity to God, continues to speak in terms of creation *ex nihilo* but reinterpreted in the process terms. He, therefore, emphasizes God as the ultimate and transcendent ground of all but, at the same time, holds that God is

influenced and affected by what is done in the world. His striking contribution is that in being creator God does not determine what the creature shall be and so emphasizes the self-limitation of God in God's creative and providential activity. In other words, God, as it were, limits God's own power so that the creature can be genuinely free to respond to God's lures or free to become even what God does not will. The creature's creativity and freedom are, therefore, founded on God's creative gift and gift of self-limitation, not in some ultimate metaphysical ground apart from God. One may ask why such limitation has led to untold evil in the world. Why the limitation to a power that could have led to the control of at least the worst evil in the world? But the question that needs to ask is: Of what essence is freedom and dynamism? Freedom is important for the otherness of creatures and obviously makes the world and creation richer and more dynamic than a monolithic divine power where all are pawns in his hands. If Whitehead would not accept this, then it becomes difficult to accept his view that the actual entity, on receiving the initial subjective aim, makes it its own to chart its course. If such a move is possible, then creativity received from God could also be real creativity for the creatures.

This notwithstanding, the big question is whether creativity is actually the ultimate of ultimates. If it is, can it account for the existence in its radical sense? Obviously, it cannot. Even Whitehead's system does not take note of this. One would not have raised the question of existence in its radical sense if Whitehead had concentrated on the question of why a next without getting back to the question of ultimate creativity as well as making God a creature of creativity. There is here a certain taking for granted that there is already something rather than nothing. He seems to have made ontology out of a system that is cosmological. But two levels of the process of becoming are distinguishable, namely the ontological level, that is, existence in its radical sense, where the sole ultimacy lies in God, and the existential level, where the creative actual entity charts its part in interaction with other actual entities. In both, there is obviously a manifestation of creativity in such a way that God is the ultimate ground of ontological creativity that makes possible the existential creativity in as much as the self-creative actual entity could not have arisen without the ontological creativity that is grounded in God. It must, however, be sounded that the distinction is not a separation, for ontology is made manifest only existentially. And the existential is ultimately made possible by the ontological. In other words, God, in creating, creates existentially. He creates *ex nihilo* as a self-causative actual entity by providing it with a subjective aim that is, as it were, a lure for feeling that enables it towards self-determination amidst varied possibilities unto satisfaction. "Self-causative" here expresses the fact that the new concrescence creates its own identity by choosing among many possibilities.

It is within this framework that the freedom and contingency of creatures are affirmed and are explicable. The view expressed here is in tune with Franklin's revision of Whitehead with regard to the notion of creativity and God. Stephen T. Franklin (1990, 237-307) sets out to defend the premise that God is the source of creativity. But he does not do this as one outside the circle but as faithful to the Whitehead's scheme, claiming that his revision is more in sync with the logic of Whitehead's system than does his [Whitehead's] doctrine. Whitehead had

dichotomized God and Creativity. The actual entity is self-creative so God in Whitehead is not God –creator but the ultimate source of eternal objects. God, in generating these eternal objects, accounts for novelty and order. He observes that Whitehead appears not to have dealt with the question of creation at its most radical level. He therefore argues that the separation of creativity and God cannot be considered well-established until that radical question has been raised. He first observes that an analysis of actual entity reveals a number of factors, namely particularity, creativity and eternal objects. This is found in the Whitehead's scheme itself. However, Franklin was quick to add that another factor is evident; namely the actual entity's "being here," the sheer existence, the 'thatness' of a really real thing. This is characteristically Franklin's input in the Whitehead system, and this is at the heart of his revision project. He compares this with Aquinas' notion of *esse* and links it up with creativity, referring to this new hybrid as creativity-*esse*, which, according to him, is like Aquinas' *esse*, a novelty in the most radical possible sense.

Explaining further, he writes that this radical novelty is way beyond occupying a new region in the extensive continuum. Rather, this is fundamentally and entirely the first time that that actual being has ever existed. It is also, of course, the last time it will ever exist. Creativity-*esse*, according to Franklin, is distinguishable from what Franklin calls creativity-characterization. While creativity-*esse* is the reason for the very existence of the concrescence in its particularity and as a real agent, creativity-characterization expresses the fact that this existence creates its own identity by its ability of charting its path among many possibilities. He, however, draws a caveat regarding the fact that there is one creativity. For Franklin, the reality of freedom, despite divine power, can be factored at the level of creativity characterization; God's decision, though genuinely novel, cannot be absolute, for both God and the creatures create new forms from the retinue of pre-existing facts and possibilities. It is at the level of creativity-*esse* that God creates *ex-nihilo*. Wilmot (1979, 66) shares the same view when he observes that in the *Process and Reality*, "the category of the ultimate, Creativity, is now clearly hypostatized and treated as itself a purposive agency." The diremption of God and creativity remains a mistake of the highest order and this singular mistake "precludes process thought from providing a truly adequate systematic metaphysics." (Berthrong 1998, 62) In this wise, Robert C. Neville (1992, 94) notes that "for all its brilliance and legitimating force, Whitehead's conception of systematic philosophy is limited by its inability to ask the basic ontological question, why there is something rather than nothing." Neville sees this as an unfortunate move from cosmology to ontology or at least a confusion of the two. Ontological creation deals with the question of existence in its radical sense. God is, therefore, beyond the cosmological. In other words, he is not closed within the natural system. This "divine enclosure" (Neville 1991, 25), as is found in Whitehead, he argues, restricts God to the cosmos. Without going far, one would immediately see that it is at the second level that Whitehead discusses his metaphysics and the process of becoming. Little wonder he is between two positions: creativity as real indeterminate and self-creativity of actual entities. But it must be observed that even in this second level, the actual entity is not self-sufficient, for it requires other entities as well as the divine agency to achieve this. It is even here that Whitehead's principle of contemporary independence appears

to be out of the experiential, and yet this is the basis of his metaphysics. With the factoring of the ontological level, God is seen as the explanation for creativity, which in itself is merely descriptive, and so describes the predominant characteristic feature of all forms of becoming.

That there is a need for this indeterminate can even be elicited from the Whitehead's system. Otherwise, what is actual about creativity? Yet he gives it a purposive agency. And this is also an acknowledgment of the fact that the actual requires an indeterminate reality. The only problem is that creativity in Whitehead's system is too real to be ultimate, and indeed, it is astonishing that God could be its creature. The present writers think this is just an unfortunate exchange of baton. He denies God the indeterminacy and gives it to its creativity. He limits God and then exalts Creativity, but unfortunately, Creativity does not have all it takes to be the ultimate. Even in the real sense of it, it is God in Whitehead's scheme who actually provides the subjective aim and new possibilities that bring novelty to the process of becoming. Physical prehension of the immortalized object is merely repetition. It is really surprising that his entire description and explanation of the process of becoming shows a process in which Creativity as the ultimate plays itself out in the interplay between God and other actual entities. Creativity is said to be actualized in the actual entities, and God is the ground for possibility, order and novelty, and subjective aim. So, there is, so to speak, an ultimacy of interaction in the becoming of actual entities. There is obviously no problem with this scheme if the ontological question were raised even if not answered but nevertheless acknowledged. Otherwise, how can the new actual entity evolve as it were, and with the radical ability for feeling, which is the driver of the process of concrescence and transition? Well, one wonders whether God, seen as the ultimate metaphysical ground, could be just determinate, an actual entity among other actual entities. Perhaps the same reason that made Whitehead speak, though wrongly, of the ultimate creativity as indeterminate could be adduced to advance the same view about God.

Metaphysical grounds cannot just be an entity among other entities in the bid to ensure that it obeys like other entities the same ontological principle. The inadequacy of such divine closure, as has been noted, is seen in Whitehead's inability to conceive of creativity, though wrongly, as the ultimate of ultimates in terms of an actual determinate entity. That seems to indicate the urgency of the indeterminate as ground for determinate. The question of why there is something rather than nothing demands the God-factor as an ontological explanation. Besides, there is nothing in the Whitehead's system that has secured the absolute freedom of an actual occasion, for the latter remains limited by a definite number of eternal objects it canprehend and objective immortality. Such an alternative is hardly groundbreaking in its substitution of God-factor with creativity as an ultimate ground, more so when it cannot account for existence in its radical sense. This notwithstanding, there is a Whitehead's and process philosophers' insistence that decisions made by actual occasions are creative, meaning that the universe, at least in its becoming, not in the radical sense of its existence, is a joint product of God and creature. We do think there is a sense in Hartshorne's position that in creating a creature, God actually plays dice in the true sense of it. This is simply to counter Einstein, for whom God never plays dice with the

universe, unless in the sense of the idea of a dice-throwing God who only permits a dice to fall as and where he desires it to fall. This is obviously not freedom for Hartshorne (1967a, 113).

CONCLUSION

Well, if for no other thing, the exposition here serves to show that the age-long question concerning freedom and determinism still rages, and no system has been able to deal with it exhaustively. This, of course, shows that the classical system and Process system need to be brought into dialogue for a more realistic and formidable account. What Whitehead's line of thought may be adducing is that God is primordially absolute, but stepping out of Himself to create relates with the creatures who are really free and must make sense of this "stepping out" that establishes a relationship. In this, Whitehead's conceptualization of divine action in the world and it seems to follow the interaction model of action. This interaction model is hinged on the performative theory of action rather than on the subjective theory of action. In the latter, consciousness is made sovereign, being attributed, as it were, to having an unfettered power to direct the action flow. The performative theory of action, on the other hand, while not undermining the particular import of meaning, value, volition, and consciousness, in addition, emphasizes the three elements of embodiedness, sociality and situation in such a way that action becomes in Hans Joas (1996, 133) words, situated creativity. According to Lawrence Nwankwo (2014, 24), performative theory may be more apt and profitable for the appreciation of divine action. According to him, one of the advantages is that performative theory allows one to affirm both divine agency and human freedom as well as maintain the regularity of nature while dealing with the problem of evil in the world. Nwankwo (2014, 24) shares the view of Soren Kierkegaard for whom human freedom is the function of omnipotence. For Kierkegaard, making a being independent is far beyond the capacity of a human being. Kierkegaard (Batut 1999) reasons that forming a clear understanding of omnipotence shows that "it includes just this property of recovering itself in the manifestation of this omnipotence, so that the creature can, for this reason, be independent by means of omnipotence." This, according to him, is lacking in a human being who would always "have a false relation towards the other whom he wants to make free." Thus, "Only omnipotence can recover itself in giving itself, and this relation constitutes the independence of the receiver."

Obviously, Kierkegaard's view of other beings as incapable of allowing another real freedom may not be consistent with Whitehead's system, and this well is not purely the major concern of this work as the divine omnipotence in the light of divine-world interaction is. The interaction model seems to make sense of life as it is lived despite numerous religious projections that often arise from the Thomistic-classical system. There is no doubt that the need for a redefinition of omnipotence and freedom beckons, a redefinition that would shift from the classical model. Besides, there is, of course, an obvious problem with the process of an omnipotent and omniscient God, for it appears that the creation is likely to slip off God's hand and makes divine providence a difficult task, for how would God tend the world to its purpose and provide for the creatures if

it is deficient in knowledge of the future and finite in some sense with its power as a result of his consequential nature. It is either God must have the power to make every action freely placed by free actual beings in accord with his will or the power to integrate all contradictions or power to alter the creaturely purposes even if it restrains itself from using them. In all, there must be something about God that is likely to work beyond the logic of creative creatures and creative creators.

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