Recent Advances in the Creation of a Process-Based Worldview

Recent Advances in the Creation of a Process-Based Worldview:

Human Life in Process

Edited by

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Human Life in Process
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FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

Process thought is a broad and multifaceted component of contemporary philosophy and system-building. A unique trait of this branch of philosophy is its constant contact with all disciplines of science and the humanities – to the degree that work in basic process-oriented metaphysics seems to be dwarfed by the disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research it inspires. Process philosophy also becomes, probably more often than many abstract and theoretically oriented philosophy out there, basis for an actual worldview: a deeply humanistic, rich, "organic" one. This unique blend of a deep-reaching philosophical superstructure with a large community of people devoted to building a unified view of life and a way of living, leads to process philosophy being a very complex phenomenon, one that is difficult to understand for both members of Academia and the general public.

The purpose of this book is to present a selection of articles that discuss various aspects of a process-based worldview and how this branch of philosophy can be applied to actual human life. The book shows that the process community is actively rethinking almost all basic concepts underlying both our societies and our individual lives in this age of rapid changes, uncertain future, and great challenges for humanity. We hope that the Reader will appreciate how a completely new perspective on life can emerge out of philosophical principles. Such a volume has never been published and we are very excited to present it: a monument to the fact that philosophy can in fact inspire human lives in a deep, meaningful way.

The book is divided into three sections, each opened by a separate introduction written by a world-class scholar: section one entitled "Society and Politics" with an introduction by **Michel Weber**; section two entitled "Education and Language" with an introduction by **Maria Teresa Teixeira**, and section three entitled "Theology and God" with an introduction by **Philip Clayton**. Each introduction contextualizes and summarizes the chapters, so we – the editors – don't feel obliged to duplicate the exquisite job they did. Instead, we have decided to give the Readers a quick birds-eye perspective on the content of the sections, and refer them to the Introductions of the respective sections for more information.

Section 1: Society and Politics

This section focuses on, first and foremost, the ways in which process thinking may better the lives of human beings at the level of politics and social organization. Its purpose is also to show how "social organism" can become a modern, viable metaphor for society. One recurring theme is our harmonious co-evolution with Nature – or rather the obvious lack thereof and the need for it. Among the issues discussed by the Authors in this section are: peace as a social and personal phenomenon; system thinking as a basis for society-building; Nature as a subject of written laws.

Section 2: Education and Language

The seven chapters that make up this section are inspired by Whitehead's dream that his process metaphysics become a theory of actual, everyday human experience. Elementary components of life, such as education, appreciation for art and literature, or even the simple act of reading, are presented in this section as examples of a more profound metaphysical structure. The Authors in this section are active in the field of education and their chapters attempt to convey to the Readers just how important it is to have a thoroughly structured system of education, based in the appreciation for the lived human experience. This section is a monument to the deeply humanistic aspect of process philosophy.

Section 3: Theology and God

The final section of this volume attends to one of the most inventive elements of Whitehead's original process ontology: God. The multitude of perspectives expressed in this section (from Christianity and Buddhism to panentheism) is a tribute to his intuition of how an abstract metaphysical category can become alive and meaningful. Here some sections are more abstract than other, but all attest to the importance of religion and God as parts of human life. It is important to note that Whiteheadian God is not simply a theological construct, and this section was intended to show how it can be interpreted in a number of relevant, thought-provoking ways to further the interreligious dialogue.

The editors are happy to express their gratitude to Bogdan Ogrodnik, President of the Whitehead Metaphysical Society, for, among other things, his great enthusiasm and unending energy which ultimately led to the creation of this volume. Many thanks go to our colleagues, Miroslaw Patalon, Janusz Maczka SDB, and Kleofas Grodek OFM, who were the

co-organizers of the 9th International Whitehead Conference – the event that inspired the process community to gather its considerable intellectual resources and contribute to this book. The Center for Process Studies and the International Process Network in Claremont, California contributed greatly to this event in a number of ways.

Special thanks go to our wives – Zuzanna and Katarzyna – who inspire us every day to do better and better things and who are very kind and understanding when the thing is philosophy.

— Łukasz Lamża & Jakub Dziadkowiec
Bedzin-Lublin, November 11th, 2015

SECTION ONE:

SOCIETY AND POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

MICHEL WEBER

According to philosophers such as Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651) and Vico (*Principi di una scienza nuova*, 1725), politics is the queen of sciences in so far as we only know what we manufacture ourselves. "Verum et factum convertuntur" (i.e., the true and the made are convertible), what has not been made by reason cannot be unmade—read: analyzed, interpreted, inhabited—by reason. Citizens, in the Periclesian sense of the word, craft their City in a way that leaves wanting even a mechanical engineer framing a steam-engine from the general blueprint to the very last bolt. More precisely: the point of political action is indeed to create, in an eventful manner, a shared world—not to actualize the potentialities of a pre-existing matter. Liberty, as Bergson will later argue, manifests itself in creation, not in actualization. In other words, there is a thread going through the entire history of (Western) philosophy, giving to politics, rather than to epistemology or even metaphysics, a more fundamental access to the principle ("arche"). It is not difficult to see that the historical turning point was Abrahamic: *volens nolens*, philosophy has completely reframed its agenda with the irruption of the purported evidence of monotheistic revelation.

Leaving aside questions of principle, the same argument can be made on the basis of pragmatics. Of all three sections structuring this collective work—social issues and world peace, education and aesthetics, theology and religion—the first one is arguably the most important because it grants the existence of the two others. Of course, only the systemic interaction of these three archetypal dimensions of human existence can approximate the complexity of life as it is lived, be it in our early twenty-first century or in the third century BCE when Alexandria was thriving. But without a pacified, yet open, social tissue, neither education nor religion, and even less the arts, could ever flourish and thereby grant individual growth and social solidarity.[1]

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[1] This correlation also means that as long as some form of creativity is at work, in the sciences as well as in the arts, we are still dealing with a political regime that

Although socio-politics are clearly central in philosophy as well as in the history of culture, the polymath Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) has not been as productive in this area as he has been in most others… or as he could have been in light of the dramatic events that punctuated his life. As a result, Whiteheadian scholars are partially left on their own to speculate on the political meaning and significance of Whitehead's *Nachlass*. Interestingly, there is a consensus of sorts amongst scholars to enforce a "leftish" (or liberal, as one says in the Anglo-Saxon sphere) reading of his most suggestive texts, such as *Adventure of Ideas* (1933). But Whitehead himself, to repeat, was far more reserved, if not plain conservative.

It might seem paradoxical for a process philosopher to show some restraint when it comes to advocating deep social changes. This is however a trait that is shared by most citizens. In this day and age, it is fair to claim that virtually no-one is happy with the current state of affairs and yet really few people are actively working at some form of revolution in their own lives, families, communities or countries. The very same paradox holds in psychotherapy *sensu lato*: patients feel miserable, seek psychological advice, invest time and money in the process, obviously hoping for an epiphany and a rebirth, and yet they cling to their existential burden as a shipwreck-survivor to a life-boat and pull out of the therapeutic process as soon as their burden is endangered.[2] At one point or another, we most definitively embody our ailment and removing it would amount to emptying our very lives. So we drag our feet, pretend to work for an utopia and eventually balk at doing anything that would bring change. Recent elections in Europe have shown this in various ways.

Now, the questions of action, change, human perfectibility, social progress, economic growth are to be reassessed in the context of a global systemic crisis that increasingly looks like a terminal crisis. In the past, socio-political entities have vanished out of history but humans managed to survive the collapse and to start anew. One suspects that this will not be

shows some openness. Nazi Germany, for instance, is usually depicted as the archetype of the totalitarian regime, but there were still creative niches of the highest importance for the oligarchs. Predynastic Egypt is also a case in point. Full totalitarianism, as both Huxley (1932) and Orwell (1949) have foreseen, would entail a completely frozen society in which even scientific innovation is prohibited.
[2] See also my account of the conditions of possibility of change in "The Art of Epochal Change," F. Riffert and M. Weber (eds.), *Searching for New Contrasts. Whiteheadian Contributions to Contemporary Challenges in Neurophysiology, Psychology, Psychotherapy and the Philosophy of Mind*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2003, pp. 252-281.

possible anymore. The global systemic crisis is above all ecological, with a massive extinction of species: due to human activities (pollution, deforestation,…), the death of oceanic life and the depletion of agricultural land make it impossible to contemplate dispassionately the expected demographic evolution (9 billion humans are due in 2050). Some claim that the peak of water demand (in 2025, two billion people will be living with absolute water scarcity) could be averted, that the geopolitical stakes are still manageable—cf. the *race for what's left* that has been codenamed "responsibility to protect"—, but if climate change is running as fast as it seems, the human habitat will not have the time to adapt and with the death of the species upon which we feed will come ours. It is thus fully justified to speak of a terminal crisis in order to foster the awareness of the collapse of cultural and natural systems and especially the probability of near term human extinction (by 2030).

All these questions, and many more, are evoked in the following seven chapters, directly inspired by the papers given during the ninth ICW, that try to assess Whitehead's political relevance.

Michel **Weber** "Oldthinkers unbellyfeel Whiteheadian socialism" provides the broadest contextualization of the stakes, both historical and conceptual, as well as a reasoned criticism of Whitehead's commitment to political thinking.

In "Practices of Solidarity: the Entangled Cosmopolitics of Becoming," Catherine **Keller** frames a sweeping argument: in a process world, individual becoming is the rule in the very same way that in an entangled world, solidarity is the Ur-value. Cosmology and politics, nature and culture, object and subject, are inseparable.

Anderson **Weekes**'s "Intersubjectivity, Species-Being, Actual Entities. Social Ontology from Fichte to Whitehead" specifies this by questioning the apparently paradoxical nature of actual entities that are both unique (monotypical) and multiple (plural), both segregated from the cosmic tissue (*qua* concrescing subject) and fully part of it (*qua* transitional object). The political import is obvious: human beings are both fundamentally one and many, free and bound by the duty to respect one another.

According to Zhihe **Wang** in "The Deep Convergence between Constructive Postmodernism and Chinese Marxism," Whitehead's postmodernism constitutes the most promising vector to reconcile, in a process atmosphere, China's traditional culture and its own 20th century blend of Marxism.

Shigeyuki **Itow**'s "Political Theory of Systemism. Beyond the Organism of A. N. Whitehead" argues for a systemic worldview benefiting from Whitehead's systematic—i.e., organic—philosophy.

Roland **Faber**'s "Process, Progress, Excess: Whitehead and the Peace of Society" contrasts the Teilhardian view, arguing for the *inevitability* of a mutual ecological immanence of all populations, and Whitehead, according to whom "progress" is always paired with "decadence." Is the Great Peace hoped by most of us now within the reach of the nations thanks to the planetization of humankind? One has to read Faber's argument for oneself to answer the puzzle.

Last but not least, Roland Leonard **Gibson**'s "Peace in Society and in Psychotherapy" evokes the question of peace from the dark standpoint of trauma studies. Peace is a social ideal but also a psychological one: history and anamnesis sometimes carry the same traumatic burden while diplomacy and psychotherapy have to deal with similar conundrums. In a Whiteheadian universe, the continuity between the approaches is anchored in the same ontological structure: any event is actually part of a string or society of events. Could the therapist act as a cosmic diplomat?

PROCESS, PROGRESS, EXCESS: WHITEHEAD AND THE PEACE OF SOCIETY

ROLAND FABER

Abstract: Teilhard de Chardin speaks of the "planetization" of humanity, implying that this not only renders peace within and of society possible, but inevitable. The considerations of this article are my Whiteheadian comments on this question: How can we, or can we, in any meaningful way, dare to say, from a Whiteheadian perspective, that world peace is inevitable? Engaging the intricate network of Whitehead's three concepts of process, progress and excess, I will make a case for this claim, that it could not only be desirable, but articulating the inherent motive force of Whitehead's understanding of peace.

Keywords: process, progress, access, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead, peace, mutual immanence, life, pattern, canalization, aesthetic, perception, consciousness, world-loyalty, energy

I begin with a statement from which I will formulate the question I want to discuss today:

The Great Peace towards which people of goodwill throughout the centuries have inclined their hearts, of which seers and poets for countless generations have expressed their vision, and for which from age to age the sacred scriptures of mankind have constantly held the promise, is now at long last within the reach of the nations. For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet, with all its myriad diversified peoples, in one perspective. *World peace is not only possible but inevitable*. It is *the next stage in the evolution of this planet*—in the words of one great thinker, "the planetization of mankind."[1]

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[1] This Baha'i Document "The Promise of World Peace" of The Universal House of Justice quotes from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man,* ch. 7. New York: Harper and Row, 1964 as cited in The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, 681; italics added.

My question is this: *How* can we, or *can* we, in any meaningful way, dare to say, from a Whiteheadian perspective, that world peace is inevitable? Given the state of our world affairs, wouldn't it be more reasonable to maintain that peace on a planetary scale is impossible? Doesn't even trying to imagine its mere possibility leave us in the claws of a bloodless idea?

The "great thinker" of the statement, who with fervor believed in the inevitability of world peace as a consequence of the "planetization" of humankind, is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He was arguably a sojourner in articulating the progress of human society toward a civilization motivated by, and fulfilled in, peace—a peace organically related to the planet as a whole and beyond, the universe at large—an idea daringly labeled in Whitehead's *Modes of Thought* as a "civilized universe." (1968, ch. VI) Yet, as students of Whitehead recognize, inevitable "progress" distinguishes Teilhard from Whitehead for whom the creative "process" inherent in all cosmic and human endeavors is only *ambiguously, if at all,* progressing toward any destined end. "Process" seems always to win out over any purposeful "progress," be it toward civilization or any final state of harmonization, associated with planetary peace of humanity and biosphere.

We may also recall that the remaining traces of "progress"-language, for instance, in Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas* (1967, 9)—a lecture-series that also famously ponders the concept of peace (1967, ch. XX)—have, especially from a postmodern perspective, been thoroughly criticized. What more do they express than Whitehead's lingering rationalist leanings or his inability to extricate himself from the Enlightenment roots manifest in *Process and Reality*. Besides Whitehead's sentiment to recapture "that phase of philosophy which began with Descartes and ended with Hume" (1978, xi), the first sentences of *Process and Reality* were received as a slap in the face of postmodern sensitivities: that this "course of lectures is designed as an essay in Speculative Philosophy" and for the exposition of a "coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas." (1978, 3) The magnitude of the fragmentation of thought and reality as experienced in post-World War I society, in a sphere of social exhaustion and mirrored in its nihilistic, pluralistic, existentialist and thoroughly critical atmosphere, fundamentally banned such a possibility.

Yet, let's backtrack for a moment: Teilhard's "planetization" first appeared even later, after the physical, cultural, social and psychological devastations of World War II. In consciously counter-acting them, Teilhard hoped for planetary peace despite the horrors of its absence and

against its assumed impossibility. It is generally assumed that this "optimism" is due to Teilhard's religiously motivated belief in a destiny of humanity. Although far beyond our ability to grasp its contours, humanity was inevitably approaching an "omega point" of unification shaped from the very beginning by a divine agency. To Whitehead-scholars, this might have only confirmed the gap between Teilhard's linear teleology and Whitehead's denial of linear progress in light of an infinite cycle of cosmic epochs without beginning and end.

Yet, it can easily be overlooked that Teilhard's thought was hardly that simple either. Rather than assuming a naïve progression that we might tend to brush aside, let us listen again more carefully. In the following passage from *The Phenomenon of Man,* Teilhard counters any assumption of a smooth progression with profound crises and their implications.

> The two-fold crisis whose onset began in earnest as early as the Neolithic age and which rose to a climax in the modern world, derives in the first place from the mass-formation (we might call it a 'planetization' of mankind). Peoples and civilizations reached such a degree either of frontier contact or economic interdependence or psychic communion that they could no longer develop save by interpenetration of each other. But it also arises out of the fact that, under the combined influence of machinery and the super-heating of thought, we are witnessing a *formidable upsurge of unused powers*. Modern man no longer knows what to do with the time and the potentialities he has unleashed. (2002, 252)

Unlike evolutionists—biological or philosophical—who have assumed that *scarcity* of resources causes the pressure for the expulsion of various segments of populations, which again assures only the survival of the most powerful and adapted, Teilhard reverses this perspective. There is a *global pressure*, to be sure, but instead of the inevitability of total conflict, it brings to physical consciousness the *inevitability* of a mutual ecological immanence of all populations. And instead of scarcity, it is the surge of an *excess of free energy* in the form of unrealized *potentials* produced in the realization of global human and ecological interdependence that facilitates progress. Confirming this implication, he goes on to ask:

When we consider the increasing compression of elements *at the heat of free energy which is also relentlessly increasing*, how can we fail to see in this two-fold phenomenon the two perennial symptoms of a leap forward of the 'radical'—that is to say, of *a new step in the genesis of mind*? (2002, 253; italics added)

Sure, the awareness of excess energy needs not necessarily lead to optimism regarding civilization and peace. This is well documented by a

similar approach of George Bataille who, in his *Theory of Religion*, craves for a consummation—or destruction—of this energy. Humanity is destined to abandon its unfortunate existence, (1992, 103-4) forfeiting it for the state of nature, the immanence of animals, like water in water. (1992, 23) Instead, for Teilhard, the "excesses" of energy and potential, produced in the heat of mutual global immanence, become the moving force of "progress." These "radicals," in Teilhard's view, not only evoke "the genesis of mind," but devise a new *awareness* of universal mutuality, which is ecological in character and spiritual in nature. They become the very forces that bring the impossible into focus: "Peace" and "joy," which are, Teilhard concludes,

> waiting for us beyond the line where empires are set up against empires, in an interior totalization of the world upon itself, in the unanimous construction of a *spirit of the earth*. (2002, 253)

It is with the appearance of this "spirit" that Teilhard believes that the "maturation and the paroxysm leading ever higher into the Improbable from which we have sprung" will also regenerate humanity so that, "however improbable it might seem, [it] *must reach the goal*, not necessarily, doubtless, but infallibly." (2002, 276) In other words: "Progress" finds it "teleology" not in inevitable pre-conceived aims, but in a cosmological genesis that unfolds under the pressure of global mutual immanence and the release of free energy in the process. Hence, we should not be content with an exhaustion of purpose, but could surf on the waves of *excess* as they might harbor a counter-movement in which the impossible—peace—could also become inevitable.

For Whitehead, the situation is different, as mentioned before, since his cosmology does not imply any "end of the world." (Teilhard 2002, 276) Within the framework of an endless renewal of worlds, that which becomes "inevitable" is not the course of nature or society *towards* peace. Whitehead is keenly aware that "progress" is always paired with "decadence." (Whitehead 1967, 15) Even if it was true that whatever happens is *inevitably* the realization of mutual immanence, the "radicals" of free energy and unrealized potentials only *ambiguously* "succeed": either as progress or as degradation. Yet, this shift from Teilhard's planetary teleology to an infinite worlds-scenario has another astonishing implication, namely, that the evolutionary crises of mutuality and its radicals offer the beings under pressure *three* options: they will, says Whitehead,

either cease to exist, or lose the delicacy of perception which results in that pain, or develop a finer and more subtle relationship among its bodily parts." (1996, 96)

This is the central idea to grasp here: *If* the mode of integration of free energy and unrealized potentiality can avoid both mutual destruction and disintegration into that which Whitehead in *Adventures of Ideas* calls "anaesthesia," (1967, 256) it takes on the form of a progress toward a transformation that may be understood as peace. It would be *inevitable* since it is the *only* alternative left. ◇◇

Let me slow down again and unfold some elements of this thesis. If Whitehead's universe is not of linearity, but of infinite openness, "peace" cannot be the final aim of any society or of the universe at large, except as an "initial aim" (1978, 244) in Whitehead's technical sense. Yet, as an aim that in its mere potential always generates anew the release of the forces of self-constitution, it can only be fulfilled by the *singular* events that harbor them as means of realization. Since no microcosm of any event encompasses the world so as to bring it to a halt, no initial aim is either "final" or literally an "end"; rather it is always a new *beginning* and *finiteness in the midst of, and as a new beginning.* (1967, 276) And since the macrocosm of the universe only mirrors the infinity of these finite processes of realization, it is all the more endlessly open to ever-new realizations without end or an everlasting final state.

In this sense, the inevitable "peace"—as devised before—cannot be a final product of generation, but must, if it has meaning at all, indicate the *generative principle itself* in the mutual immanence of all events and societies in one another. Rather than being its "end"—the end of "process"—it is the *motive-force accompanying* the process, as expressed in Whitehead's concept of "Creative Advance." (1967, 286) Peace, it seems, is neither aim nor end, but a *withness*, similar to Whitehead's "withness of the body." (1978, 81) Peace, in this sense, is the inevitable withness of a success *if it succeeds* in the realization of mutual immanence as it progresses through excess. It must be both: *be-with* this *process as progress* toward the integration of excess into the refined appearances of mutual immanence, and *be-with* this *progress as process* of a global society, which through excess avoids to eradicate this excess, but instead heightens its inevitability.

Another element worth highlighting is that the appearance of free energy and unrealized potential is central to Whitehead's "organismic" cosmology. It maintains that, at the heart of the constitution of any series of events that form structures and orders—or societies—lingers a creative excess that allows the evolutionary emergence of forms of life and

consciousness, arts and sciences, reason and imagination, love and worth. (1967, ch. XIII) In Whitehead's post-Kantian understanding of the connectivity of events and societies, it signifies their mutual entanglement through experience and feeling. This *aisthesis* (1978, 103) has a twofold nature: it reflects the Greek philosophical term for *perception*—a term with which Whitehead experimented in his early works such as *The Concept of Nature*. And it develops upon the awareness of 19th century philosophy, for instance, of Romanticism and Nietzsche, of the "art of life"—appearing in later works such as *The Function of Reason*. In the first sense, aesthetics counters the substantialist ontology of solipsism by insisting on a fundamental relationality of all experiential appearances. (1978, 51) In the second sense, it describes the cosmological motive-force of a creative advance that counters entropic reduction through an excess of abundance liberating from, and transcending, any social character. (1967, ch. XVII & XVIII) Hence, this *aesthetics* of the appearance of actual happenings and their orderings in ever more complex forms of life and consciousness constitutes reality *under the pressure* of its connectivity and its excesses. (1967, ch. XIV)

Let me give you three examples of this aesthetic pressure in Whitehead. In *Religion in the Making* Whitehead delineates the evolution of the human mind and the organization of human societies with regard to their biological and cultural appearance. If we ask: What is the force through which this whole "progress" of the appearance of humanity is triggered and renewed?—we find this answer: through the "gradual appearance" (1996, 19) of *rituals* that free the *radicals of excess energy and unrealized potentials from mere repetition*. "Ritual," Whitehead writes,

> goes back beyond the dawn of history. It can be discerned in the animals, in their individual habits and still more in their collective evolutions. Ritual may be defined as the habitual performance of definite actions which have *no direct relevance to the preservation* of the physical organisms of the actors. … Ritual is the primitive outcome of *superfluous energy and leisure*. It exemplifies the tendency of living bodies to repeat their own actions. Thus the actions necessary in hunting for food, or in other useful pursuits, are repeated *for their own sakes*; and their repetition also repeats *the joy of exercise* and the emotion of success. (1996, 20-1; italics added)

"Superfluous energy and joy" are also the main players in the second example, taken from *Adventures of Ideas*. It harkens back to the last quote and harvests its reference to *life beyond necessity*, that is, to the *artistic* nature of the progress toward civilization.

In some mode of repetition we need by our personal actions, or perceptions, to dramatize the past and the future, so as to re-live the emotional life of ourselves, and of our ancestors. … Thus art has its origin in ceremonial evolutions from which issue play, religious ritual, tribal ceremonial, dance, pictures on caves, poetic literature, prose, music. In this list each member in its simpler forms enshrines some Effort to *reproduce a vivid experience flashed out among the necessities of daily life*. But the secret of art lies in its freedom. The emotion and some elements of the experience itself are *lived again divorced from their necessity*. The strain is over, but *the joy of intense feeling* remains. Originally the intensity arose from some dire necessity; but in art it *has outlived the compulsion which was its origin*. If Odysseus among the shades could hear Homer chanting his Odyssey, he then re-enacted with free enjoyment the perils of his wanderings.

The arts of civilization now spring from many origins, physical and purely imaginative. But they are all sublimations, and sublimations of sublimations, of *the simple craving to enjoy freely the vividness of life which first arises in moments of necessity*. (1967, 271-2)

The third example, from *The Function of Reason,* takes up the reference to Odysseus. In this reading, however, it "renders purpose effective" and is only "concerned with keeping alive." (1929, 37-8) Since practical functionality is prisoner to a "slavish conformity [that] pervades all nature," it can "stretch out no arm to save nature from its ultimate decay." Entropy overtakes nature, as it were. But its pressure of mutuality also leads to the appearance of excess beyond functionality, that is, of "a sheer element of anarchy," without which "nature is doomed to slow descent towards nothingness." However, its lasting impact only results from a process of civilizing "the brute force of anarchic appetition." This, for Whitehead, is the function of "speculative reason"—the "the special embodiment in us of the disciplined counter-agency which saves the world." (1929, 36) In other words: *Progress arises when the excess beyond the pressure of survival and the heat generated by the mutuality of necessity reconnect*.

At this point, another host of questions arises: If "peace" as being-*with* the process of becoming-civilization is conditioned by mutual immanence and the anarchic movement of excess-energy and -potentiality, in what sense do these forces facilitate the *progress toward* a global peace? And if there is such progress, could civilization eventually remain without global peace? If there is no *final* Dar-es Salam, an Abode of Peace, how can we *measure* progress, discern degrees of approximation, instead of being confined by infinite deferrals, by *différance,* mocking the concept of peace as it meaninglessly falters onto itself?

We have, however, already gathered one hint from the last example: Granted that the radicals of free energy and unrealized potentials do condition the rise of civilization, they can only do so if they are, at the same time, tamed by speculative reason. In other words: What Whitehead is saying is that entropy is not only induced slowly by dull repetition of the same, but paradoxically also hastened by merely isolated lighting strikes of excess-anarchy. To "save the world" from eventually slipping into utter nothingness, something else is needed by which the heightened paroxysms of intensity are patterned into networks and pathways of sustained novelty. To be sure, Whitehead is not saying that reason must be enthroned as an encompassing aim of civilization—the rationalist fallacy. What Whitehead is saying is that only a web of mutuality of anarchic life, which expresses itself in a sustained mentality of freedom of thought and curiosity, (1929, 38) realizes the counter-agency to decay. It is not an aim, but a medium in the service of the "art of life." (1929, 5)

Astonishingly enough, this conception of the genesis of humanity and its evolution toward civilization is evocative of Teilhard's rendering of the emergence of the thin fragile layer of mentality, a *noosphere,* covering the planet. (2002, 286-9) Still, the question remains: How does this noosphere, this physical realization of a mental network harboring the excesses of life and consciousness in mutual physical and mental immanence with the biosphere of the planet become a sign of an emerging civilization that would imply or release the peace of its societies?

Here, we must look again at the general metaphysical picture: How does Whitehead articulate the reintegration of excess with mutuality such that it releases energies and potentials conductive of peace in a global society? Sure enough, Whitehead holds the conviction that such anarchic excess needs, for its own intensity and perpetuation beyond short flashes of originality, not only "causal independence" (1967, 198), but a *medium* by which it can *sustain* its "freedom of enjoyment derived from the enjoyment of freedom." (1967, 258) He speaks of the *canalization* of freedom apart from which "depth of originality would spell disaster for the animal body" (1978, 107) or any form of social organization. The heightened *potential for* life, mediated by excess, can only *become life*, if its radicals are more than "the mental spontaneities of occasions [that] … thwart each other." Hence, even the very appearance as well as the sustained organization of life *is* already a *civilizing* process pervading the universe. As diverse forms of social organization learn to *pattern* excess through a "teleological introduction of novelty," they also enhance the ability of repetitive social organizations to create and sustain a living anarchy "diffused throughout a society, though not necessarily including

all, or even a majority of, the occasions of that society." Excess transmutes into civilized life the more "the coordination of the mental spontaneities throughout the occasions of a society" (1967, 207) does neither destroy the *patterns* on which this freedom of anarchy is built nor the *life* that this society functions to canalize and intensify.

This conception may answer the question of how civilization arises, namely, as a progression of highly fragile but somewhat stable integrations of patterns with excess-radicals that release and intensify these patterns. But we should still be puzzled as to why this civilizing process should *necessarily* be progress of, in, and toward peace, because in a very real sense excess-freedom seems to work *against* it. Excess of life is *primarily destructive* of the very patterns it needs to sustain its freedom. Living societies are—as Whitehead so aptly recognizes—built on "robbery." (1978, 105) And this robbery is necessitated by the entropic problem, namely, that any structure, especially as it disintegrates by its internal anarchy of life, is in need of other organisms, which it reduces to fuel in the regeneration of its structural functions as a society. Life is nasty. It is always life and death. The sustenance of life is built on a graveyard.

How, then, does the civilizing process counter-act this deadly game? And how at any point does "progress" towards peace enter this picture? Obviously, *neither* mutual immanence—intimating connectivity and patterning—*nor* the excess of radicals—demanding freedom within and from such structurings—can *by itself* generate civilization or peace. Due to certain characteristics, or the lack thereof, each of them exhibits counter-productive tendencies. Yet, as already indicated, *some* kind of integration of both mutuality and excess is *inevitable* and may hold the key to the thesis that they further the progress of civilization and its peace. Let's look closer again.

Mutual immanence, a key concept in *Adventures of Ideas,* invokes Plato's *khora*, the place and "medium of intercommunication" (1967, 134) of cosmic existence. In its foundational nature, it is ultimate in Whitehead's cosmology, because its emptiness forces no specific characteristics on the universe, except that any organization, or the freedom from its compelling synergies, must exhibit *this* fundamental relationality. (1967, 201) In this sense—being indifferent to, but fostering, any kind of modulations of more specific characteristics of the mutual functioning of events, structures and societies—this "cosmological constant" *profoundly lacks* the ability to promote gradations of civilizing processes or any necessity of their peaceful togetherness. It can sustain robbery or theft, gift or harmony, discord or annihilation. And yet, Whitehead uses precisely this concept of mutual immanence to *also* indicate not only the progress of civilizing

processes, but—even more stunningly—the progress of peace within the civilizing efforts of societies. In the threefold scheme of the chapter "The New Reformation," Whitehead crafts (1967, 166-9) the idiom of civilization around mutual immanence as progressing awareness of persuasiveness over coercion in society, culture, politics and religion, by which the sublimations of Darwinian powers of competition, destruction and displacement is countered by "love, sympathy and peace." (1967, 167)

How about the other element of the pacific equation: the excessiveness of life? It names "the exact opposite" (1967, 295) to, and that which, mutual immanence is lacking: namely, creativity and adventure. As is true for mutual immanence, it is as essential for the civilizing process in Whitehead's universe, but as was also already elaborated before, its anarchic nature is neither necessarily civilizing, not inevitably peaceful. In its most intense form, or better: formlessness, it constitutes an "entirely living nexus," that is, a nexus devoid of social characters. What is more, it is supervening on, and must but harbored by, a highly sophisticated organization of societies without which it cannot survive. (1978, 105-6)

If there is progress in civilization, it seems to lurk at the interstices of both social organization and liberated life. Yet, how can that which is formless become civilized? And how can that which lives off of the destruction of structures become peaceful? In this regard, another hint may not be overlooked: both, mutual immanence and an entirely living nexus, have something in common: their *formlessness*. In a sense, the very ground of being and the highest expression of creative processuality concur in that they are *not* structural phenomena; in that the very basis for any structuring and that in which cosmic patterning and social organization express their highest intensity of living refer to the same reality; in that their formlessness is the non-difference of receptivity and relationality, on the one hand, and of activity and energy, on the other. The progress in, with, and toward civilization, then, might just reflect *a gradation of the realization of one in the other*—where peace becomes the *symbol* of an excessive life being but an expression of mutual immanence beyond any revolts of individuality, contrariness, and anarchy, *and* of mutuality being but the place of the mutual creative excess, or transcendence, of life.

Like Teilhard's "interior totalization of the world upon itself," (2002, 253) giving birth to the spirit of the world, receptivity and creativity co-inhere as the mutuality of life and the life of mutuality. Symbolizing this co-inhering, we could say: this spirit pervades and encompasses all of their structural actualizations, and is *the very medium* by which any social organization *can* release a creative advance that might hold the promise of

peace—as maybe hinted at in Whitehead's phrase: "the mystery of the creative passage of nature." (Whitehead 1993, 73)

In marked difference from Teilhard, however, Whiteheads concept of "creative passage" knows of no "totalization" of the process in an eschatological fact of arrival. Yet, its *mystery* might well be *the progress toward itself:* both toward the mutuality of connectivity and excess *and* toward an excess, or transcendence, of any closed totality of mutuality. As their movement is always before and beyond "form," Whitehead's readily conceptualizes them as modes of *immanent excess*: as the mode of "creativity," which is "the ultimate behind all forms," (1978, 20) and of creativity's "primordial, non-temporal accident" (1978, 7) indicating its inherent saving activity. Similar to the relation of speculative reason to anarchic excess, which in Whitehead's words "saves the world," (1929, 36) this saving activity symbolizes the creative sublimation of excess in a mutual immanence beyond the wreckages of formation. (1978, 346)

If anything, it is the global realization of *this spirit*—and not any political pacification or religious totalization—that motivates Whitehead's notion of peace. It is not a state—primordial, utopian or ideal—but a "sense" (1967, 295) *within* the processes of the world. Its progress is not an aim of civilization, but the very motivation of progression toward its global mutual immanence. Already a cursory review of some of the markers of Whitehead's notion of peace in *Adventures of Ideas* will suffice to corroborate this thesis: that with peace the "real motive interests of the spirit are meant, and not the superficial play of discursive ideas" (1967, 285); that it "is the understanding of tragedy, and at the same time its preservation" (1967, 286); that it appears only beyond the trappings of the "self" where "interest has been transferred to coordinations wider than personality" (1967, 285); that it is, for all these reasons, "essential to civilization" (1967, 286); yet, that its "experience … is largely beyond the control of purpose [and] … comes as a gift." (1967, 285)

Now, in the best of all cases, you might say that this preponderance of such metaphysical renderings indicates or induces deep experiences of the spirit of the earth; in the worst of all cases, you may also say that they are prone to the mere "spiritualization" of earthly matters of utmost urgency, defying any real consequences for society. The fact that Whitehead was writing these thoughts in the wake of the Great War and in the anticipation of an even darker reenactment of brutal inhumanity without even mentioning them, might even heighten the impression of his utter disconnect from real political considerations. But in light of a conversation Whitehead had with Charles Lindbergh in his Cambridge apartment during the second Great War, putting his trust in the future of a civilization of "gentleness," (Faber

2012, 6) might help us to draw a different picture: that of a man who counters barbarism not with words of hate, but with the true virtue of civilization, namely, as Whitehead notes in *Science and the Modern World*, with the invocation of an "aesthetic harmony [that] stands before it as a living ideal moulding the general flux in its broken progress towards finer, subtler issues." (1967, 18)

Henry Corbin has named this mode of metaphysical operation "the Imaginative." Its power is that of symbolization. As reality in between the intelligible or ideal and physical actualizations, *symbolism* might well hold a clue for the importance of the *metaphysical* procedure of "speculative reason" that Whitehead in articulating peace prescribed for civilization. It is deeply misunderstood, if it was reduced to operations of seeking the truth of facts and principles. It is rather prescribed as means for the attraction of interesting feelings evocative and conductive of a *different* social world. (1978, 259) It is meant as a procedure that reconstructs the language with which we imagine and pre-structure social reality *differently*. As a nexus of "metaphors mutely appealing for an imaginative leap" (1978, 4) evoking different, creative, alternative, imaginative patterns of actualization, such symbolizations are not futile or abstract or merely defer to a distant future, but they *are* real potentials for patterns constructive of different social realities. Take, for instance, Whitehead's bold statement on the contingency of cosmic patterns:

> There is no difficulty in imagining a world—i.e., a cosmic epoch—in which arithmetic would be an interesting fanciful topic for dreamers, but useless for practical people engrossed in the business of life. In fact, we seem to have been only barely rescued from such a state of things. (1978, 199)

The sheer metaphysical insight that human society is an instantiation of a vast crossing of cosmic societies that *can* be different, can *progress* to be different, might strengthen our ability to symbolize a new reality replete with excess energies to actualize it. It is in this sense that Whitehead in *Adventures of Ideas* insisted that it is not facts or politics or science or religion, but a "metaphysical understanding [that] guides imagination and justifies purpose" so that "[a]part from metaphysical presupposition there can be no civilization." (1967, 128) It is through these metaphysical symbolizations that, for instance, we "trust in the material permanences, such as telescopes, observatories, mountains, [and] planets" (1967, 128); "ethical intuitions [because they] are a direct application of metaphysical doctrine for the determination of practice" (1967, 18). Through it "the sociological concept of human freedom has been" (1967, 24) invented, and

"Plato's metaphysical concept of the soul [demonstrated] its influence on religion, and on social theory, [and] carries this moral decisively." (1967, 24) Hence, any attempt to generalize mere facticity

> history devoid of any reliance on metaphysical principles and cosmological generalizations, is a figment of the imagination. The belief in it can only occur to minds steeped in provinciality,—the provinciality of an epoch, of a race, of a school of learning, of a trend of interest—, minds unable to divine their own unspoken limitations. (1967, 4)

Hence, Whitehead's the "sense of peace" acts through the metaphysical awareness of alternative symbolizations of civilization. I call its awareness and activation the *subtractive affirmation of processual reality without totality*. This sense of peace *subtracts itself* always from any totalization, which is the "provincialism" that is unable to recognize its "own unspoken limitations," but also *affirms* the motive-force of peace to change society into "a finer and more subtle relationship among its … parts" (1996, 96) by "moulding the general flux in its broken progress towards finer, subtler issues." (Science 1967, 18)

These two directions of subtraction and affirmation mirror the task of metaphysical symbolization for society. On the one hand, the metaphysical criticism of totalizing provincialism reminds society of its lingering prejudices. To render conscious its own "undiscovered limitations are the topics for philosophic research," (Adventures 1967, 245) which again allow for a purposeful actualization of different social patterns. On the other hand, it also widens our sensitivity to the fast, undiscovered network of mutual immanence beyond our conscious reach—the repetitive social imperatives deeply engrained in the "magical force [of] 'prejudice'" (1985, 72) and enacted again and again by the "secure instinctive response" to "social conformity." (1985, 66) In order to escape these mechanisms, a power of alternative symbolization is needed. Yet by carrying meanings of peace, these symbolizations cannot be reduced to a critical assessment of society's failure to recognize its false unifications and the oppression of its undisclosed multiplicities. Instead, the power of symbolizations of peace enables social forces to *flood* this "anesthesia"— this "bastard substitute" (Adventures 1967, 285) for peace—with the "the removal of inhibition," resulting "in a wider sweep of conscious interest" and "field of attention." (1967, 285) This sense of peace *affirms* the hidden multiplicities and infuses a new "quality of 'life and motion'" (1967, 285) into the social process.

Another example can corroborate this observation: the way Whitehead employs religion as a mode of symbolizing peace. Without going in any

detail, Whitehead understands religion as the "great social ideal … that … should be the common basis for the unity of civilization" and to that extent "justifies its insight beyond the transient clash of brute forces." (1967, 172) In maintaining the notion of God, Whitehead widens the symbolization of mutual immanence and excess to encompass a cycle of life in which "what has been lost [transmutes] into a living fact within [God's] own nature" and again "enters into the actual world by reason of the inclusion of the nature of God." (1996, 155) In such symbolizations, the sense of a "kingdom of heavens" (1996, 72) *with* the universe counters its "physically wasting" entropy with "spiritually ascending" (1996, 160) intensities. Such symbolizations give societies a chance to perceive the "passage of time" differently, namely, as "the journey of the world towards the gathering of new ideas into actual fact," thereby counteracting the slow decent upon the "path of decay." By refusing to only transmit into a heritage "slighter occasions of actuality," (1996, 159-60) symbolizations of peace become expressive of the very *essence* of civilization, that is, of its spirit of "world-loyalty" (1996, 60) and global maturity.

A last thought. In his book *Symbolism,* Whitehead directly comments on the way the symbolic characters of the interaction of mutuality and excess contribute to the negotiations of human societies to create a civilized future. In this book, the interference between mutuality and excess constitutes the *symbolic transference* between them. And at its end, Whitehead leaves us with an important warning reflective of the failure to recognize the *inevitability* of a sense of peace for the survival, imagination, and future of any civilization.

> [M] mankind by means of its elaborate system of symbolic transference can achieve miracles of sensitiveness to a distant environment, and to a problematic future. But it pays the penalty, by reason of *the dangerous fact that each symbolic transference may involve an arbitrary imputation of unsuitable characters*. It is not true, that the mere workings of nature in any particular organism are in all respects favorable either to the existence of that organism, or to its happiness, or to the progress of the society in which the organism finds itself. … No elaborate community of elaborate organisms could exist unless its *systems of symbolism were in general successful*. (1985, 87; italics added)

Success, here, is neither a matter of correspondence of thought and reality, nor necessarily of internal harmony, but of an "imaginative experiment" (1978, 5) that harbors the judgment of its own success in itself. "Symbolism," says Whitehead, "can be justified, or unjustified." Its

"test of justification" always awaits itself in a future in which it either has led to a "fortunate evolution" or not. (1978, 181) It is up to us—employing new ranges of aesthetic perception, imaginative conception and artistic affection—whether our symbolic negotiations of peace will be successful! That their creative invocation and realization is *inevitable,* if a civilization shall successfully rise on a planetary scale, *is* their very justification since the alternatives are either decline and destruction or anesthesia. Their facilitation—awakening a global "the spirit of the earth"—may be the only "planetization" worth our time!

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