

A PROCESS ANALYSIS OF QUALITY:  
A.N. WHITEHEAD AND R. PIRSIG ON EXISTENCE AND  
VALUE

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Abstract

This thesis is divided into two portions. **Part One** is a sympathetic exploration of the philosophies of Alfred North Whitehead and Robert Pirsig, with special emphasis on theories of value. The basic outlines of the Metaphysics of Process and the Metaphysics of Quality are presented in the first two chapters respectively. The third chapter is an examination of points of

fundamental agreement and difference between the two systems. Chapter IV consists in the presentation of specific arguments criticizing traditional philosophico-scientific thought.

**Part Two** ([click here](#)) is this writer's attempt at synthesizing a meaning of 'value/quality' and a new value theory from the works of Pirsig and Whitehead. The resultant system pays special attention to the balancing of tension between intensity of experience within individual value contexts and communal diversity of content of experience. Aesthetics is treated as an examination of the texture of individual experience; art is seen as deepening the harmonies and contrasts within a participant's value context. Ethics concerns the relations between contexts. Individuals are responsible firstly for their own intensity of experience; 'respect' characterizes inter-contextual relations. The thesis concludes with a brief look at Constructive Postmodern Philosophy.

## ACRONYM KEY

AI = Adventures of Ideas

FR = The Function of Reason

MT = Modes of Thought

PR = Process and Reality

RM = Religion in the Making

SMW = Science and the Modern World

SYM = Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect

ZMM = Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

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## **A Process Analysis of Quality:**

### **A. N. Whitehead and R. Pirsig on Existence and Value**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This is an attempt to provide a firm foundation for the consideration of value issues. In a way, it is a cosmological consideration of valuation: that is, I am attempting to fit quality into an account of the way things are. The synthetic value theory and analysis of quality presented in Part Two are intended to be useful in the examination of aesthetic and ethical issues. Alfred North Whitehead and Robert Pirsig have also approached this task, and I think their respective theories are mutually supportive in essential details. In brief, Pirsig analyzes the world in terms of Quality. Value is the ultimate substratum of the macroscopic world for him, but he sees it as an event or process, not a substance. Whitehead's account of process involving valuation at a fundamental level provides a sound basis for Pirsig's macroscopic evaluation.

The two aspects of this project--the metaphysics, or the account of the way things are, and the theory of value--are related to two different fields of current research. A group of people who see themselves as doing work in Constructive Postmodernism consider value matters in a fashion similar to the one here worked out. Since it is the details of this thesis that are of interest with respect to these thinkers, I shall wait until the end of the project to address them in detail (v. EPILOGUE). The other type of research is being performed by cosmologists and theoretical physicists, and consists in an attempt to construe the world as fundamentally in process. Two thinkers in particular, Ilya Prigogine and David Bohm, are worth noting.

Ilya Prigogine won the 1977 Nobel Prize for chemistry for his work on dissipative structures. Although he has been influenced by Whitehead, he is first and foremost a chemist with a lifelong interest in introducing a sophisticated notion of time into science. Prigogine writes about a world in process--change and disorder are fundamental. The world is made up of systems which are in contact with their environments. These systems exchange energy with the environment. A stable system--one that is not suffering dramatic change--is said to be at equilibrium. Once upon a time, it was thought that equilibrium was the rule and disorder the exception. Prigogine thinks the reverse is true, and shows how change actually produces order.

A system that is disrupted from its history of order--due, perhaps, to some change in the environment--moves from equilibrium to a state 'far from equilibrium. Equilibrium functions as an attractor state, meaning systems move from one state of equilibrium to another--systems far from equilibrium are caught up in the process of the change. At a point far from equilibrium position, a system is at a 'bifurcation' point--its future cannot be predicted from what is known about its history. It can jump to a new, higher (because more complex, and requiring more energy) state of equilibrium, or it can drop to a condition of less order, and hence less complex. In other words, the choice for the system is one between order and chaos. The ordered choice is the production of a dissipative structure--the introduction to the science of thermodynamics that won Prigogine the Nobel Prize.

A chemical clock is an easy-to-picture example of the unexpected order that can arise from increased disorder of a system. A chemical clock involves a situation of cross-catalysis--two chemical reactions mutually stimulate each other. That is, the product of one chemical reaction participates in another chemical reaction, and the product of the second reaction participates in the first. To produce disorder in such a system, the concentration of one element is increased. At a certain point, a critical threshold is reached, and the concentrations of the products, instead of remaining mixed in a mutual equilibrium, oscillate at a specific period. Prigogine, in Order Out of Chaos (1984, 147-148) describes the phenomenon:

Suppose we have two kinds of molecules 'red' and 'blue'. Because of the chaotic motion of the molecules, we would expect that at a given moment we would have more red molecules, say, in the left part of a vessel. Then a bit later more blue molecules would appear, and so on. The vessel would appear to us as 'violet', with occasional irregular flashes of red or blue. However, this is not what happens with a chemical clock; here the system is all blue, then it abruptly changes its color to red, then again to blue. Because all these changes occur at regular time intervals, we have a coherent process.

To the layman, this new state of order resulting from increased disorder might just sound 'neat'. But one has to remember that at issue is the behavior of millions of molecules. Prigogine (1984, 148) states that it would never have been believed if it had not been observed, and draws the following interesting conclusion: "To change color all at once, molecules must have a way to 'communicate.' The system has to act as a whole."

Research into this matter of dissipative structures has developed this idea of communication. At the bifurcation point, for example, particles separated by macroscopic distances become linked: Events that happen in one portion of a system thus have repercussions throughout. Prigogine speculates on this 'becoming' linked:

Even before the macroscopic bifurcation, the system is organized through these long-range correlations. We come back to one of the main ideas

of Order Out of Chaos: nonequilibrium as a source of order. Here the situation is especially clear. At equilibrium molecules behave as essentially independent entities; they ignore each other. We would like to call them 'hypnons', 'sleepwalkers'. Though each one of them may be as complex as we like, they ignore one another. However, nonequilibrium wakes them up and introduces a coherence quite foreign to equilibrium. (Prigogine & Stengers 1984, 180-181)

This is Prigogine writing at his most Whiteheadian. Apart from the emphasis on process, the important term to notice is 'coherence' in the final sentence. Understanding this new 'order' is the key to understanding the apparent communication and not vice versa. David Bohm has gone even further than Prigogine to devise a cosmology of process. Bohm argues that there is a different type of order-in-process supporting the macroscopic order as described in everyday experience, including this chemical clock example. In George Lucas' words:

The apparent or explicate order of the phenomena, described in classical and Cartesian terminology, masks an underlying or implicate order, which is a property of function of the arrangement as a whole and not of any discrete part thereof. (Lucas 1989, 193)

Applying this to the 'hypnons', the novel coherence is more readily handled. Instead of acting through communication, in a strict, macroscopic sense of the word, the molecules are expressing this implicate order through their activity. Communication presupposes entities merely externally related, whereas this implicate order is a new manifestation of the Whiteheadian concept of internal relations. Communication takes place in time, and is constrained by physical limits on the transfer of information (the speed of light). Internal relations, however, are atemporal. To use a poor example merely to illustrate, the spatial relation between myself and the centre of the moon changes automatically as we move closer and--further from each other--there is no lag of time as information moves from one side of the relation to the other. Thus, the ordered activity of the molecules is not the result of incredible macroscopic communication, but rather an expression of the internal relatedness of the system. Each molecule is an expression of the system as a whole, at a fundamental level. This is a contemporary development of Whitehead's theory of 'microscopic' process. These actual entities, called events or actual occasions, are defined by their relations to each other actual entity in the universe. They admit these relations as data, synthesize their feelings or 'prehensions' of these entities into a unified feeling, and finally take a definite character to be used by future occasions in their own moments of process. Thus it is the nature of each individual character to include the entire universe in its own constitution--the implicate order of David Bohm. Enduring objects, such as molecules, are societies of these occasions, and are already inter-related at the process level. The unusual order observed in a chemical clock is really merely a specialized example of the fundamental state of reality, rather than a surprising exception.

Prigogine, however, sounds like Pirsig in his discussion of the movement from order to disorder. Pirsig divides Quality into Dynamic and static quality--static quality is Dynamic Quality frozen, seized upon and used--as a platform for further development. In other words, Pirsig's primary division into the world is into a process that produces order from an undifferentiated state.

Whitehead and Pirsig, however, have much more to say about value phenomena than Prigogine or Bohm. These scientists have been introduced merely to indicate the relevance of the type of worldview Pirsig and Whitehead are proposing. Much more will be said about order and disorder, **stasis** and **dynamis**, as the discussion progresses. Rather than proposing an eccentric view of the world, these men are to be taken as being on the cutting edge of developments of the ways in which we conceive of ourselves and the world in which we live.

## Part One

### Alfred North Whitehead

#### Process and Reality...

The ultimate concept in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead is creativity:

‘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. (Process and Reality: Corrected Edition [PR], 21)

He says much the same thing on page 179 of Adventures of Ideas [AI], stressing that creativity “...is the actualization of potentiality.” Whitehead goes on to unpack this word by using many other words. Creativity is not an unusual word in English, and neither are many of the terms (examples: subject, object, process, actual, potential) he uses to explain his thought. However, Whitehead has to rework language to suit his concepts and these ordinary words take on rather specialized meanings. This does not mean that ‘creativity’ becomes something completely other than what it means in normal usage: Whitehead cannot take completely unrestrained liberty with language, or he would defeat his own aim of communication of ideas. Rather, he reworks some terms to make himself particularly clear about his philosophy. And this means that when he uses a term such as ‘creativity’, his reworking is a reworking of all the baggage that comes along with any word.

In normal usage, creativity is typically applied to a person--some types of people are creative. These people are creators, and they create something through the exercise of their creativity. Creativity is a doing a process. So it is with Whitehead, construing creativity as an ontological principle rather than a peculiarly human activity: “Thus nature is a structure of evolving process. The reality is the process.” (Science and the Modern World [SMW], 72) We speak of creativity as if it is something that people can have, when it really is just a description of activity that

suggests something about that activity. What is created by a creator is something new--something original, different from what was present before the act of creation. Artists are creators, in common parlance. And the role of artists in society suggests something else about creativity. Artists are sometimes odd--they do things that other people do not do. Non-artists sometimes have a mixed attitude towards these people. To them, artists are odd enough to be scorned sometimes but, in general, what they do is valuable. This "activity in general" is creativity and its results. There is something special about this activity; indeed, the Biblical stories of creation (which talk about the creator and the creation but not much about the creativity itself other than the schedule involved) have been an important part of one of the most important influences on the development of Western society.

All of this is buried, shallowly, in the word 'creativity'. Whitehead wants to adapt this word to his own thought--he has a specialized meaning for the word to bear. This means that what he wants to refashion for his writing is exactly that which has been described already--the conventional trappings of 'creativity'. Keeping this in mind can help to clarify Whitehead's metaphysics and also to isolate exactly those aspects which are particularly new.

Creativity is the ultimate principle in Whitehead's universe, but he makes it clear that the creativity does not exist outside the creator and creation of the process. What is interesting is that, essentially, the creator and creation in Whitehead's creativity are the same thing. Rather, they are 'phases' in the particular manifestations of the process--there is an impulse of sorts to create something before something is created. But the object and subject of the process are the same thing, loosely speaking. Obviously, Whitehead is moving away from common connotations of creativity in this notion, and it is going to require use of Whiteheadian terms to get the idea across. The manifestation of creativity is an 'occasion'; creativity does not actually exist in any other form than the occasions. To refer to the occasion as a manifestation of the process is to risk misconstruing Whitehead's philosophy. The process an occasion goes through can be described as a moment of 'concrecence' the occasion makes itself concrete. The occasion is the fundamental unit of reality, but it is characterized by change--it is not something static. On the contrary, when the occasion acquires the 'phase' of creation, or finished product, it is no longer in the process of creativity, and it ceases to be an occasion. It becomes history, eternally unchanging in the form it has taken. Developing an ontology based on these events as a replacement for traditional subjects and objects is Whitehead's fundamental novel contribution to philosophy. In its role as creator, an occasion is an active subject:

An occasion of experience is an activity, analysable into modes of functioning which jointly constitute its process of becoming. Each mode is analysable into the total experience as active subject, and into the thing or object with which the special activity is concerned. (AI, 176)

An occasion is concerned with those forms of data in its past, yet these forms are nothing more than finished occasions. Thus, as a creation, the creative subject becomes an object:

Thus subject and object are relative terms. An occasion is a subject in respect to its special activity concerning an object; and anything is an object in



respect to its provocation of some special activity  
within a subject. (AI, 176)

It has been noted that occasions are the fundamental units of reality. Macroscopic objects, such as ourselves, are societies of occasions. Whitehead's generic term for such a grouping is 'nexus': "...a nexus is a set of actual entities in the unity of the relatedness constituted by their prehensions of each other" (PR, 24). The occasions in a social nexus 'feel' compelled to carry on the defining character of the society--there is an order involving self-sustainment of character.

Creativity is a process, and process involves sequence: temporal matters have to be accounted for. For Whitehead, creations fall into the past; the future awaits determination. This leaves the present to house the occasion. Briefly put, the occasion starts as a collection of 'feelings', which arise from the occasion's history and its relationship to potentiality in general. These feelings are the 'special activity' referred to in AI, and Whitehead most commonly calls them 'prehensions'. Then the creation proposes or projects a unity to itself regarding its own future unity. Put another way, the occasion sees a possible unity of these feelings, and this seeing results in a feeling of appetite. The occasion is, by nature, compelled to move from a diversity of prehensions to a unity called 'satisfaction': "Each actual entity is conceived as an act of experience arising out of data. It is a process of 'feeling' the many data, so as to absorb them into the unity of one individual 'satisfaction'" (PR, 40). The phase of unity or satisfaction finishes the process of creation, naturally enough, and the occasion perishes, leaving only the created form in history.

This character or unified form is now available for future, or newly present, occasions toprehend as a datum in new moments of process. Since the internal process of the past occasion has indeed 'passed', its nature has changed. During its period of actualization, the occasion acts as a subject, acting on itself to develop its own character. Once satisfied, this subject character is done, and the finished datum exists as an object for new occasions. Sorting out this relation of subject and object is important to interpreting reality thoroughly. This relationship has been a traditional area of conflict for philosophers. Normally, the division refers to epistemological matters: 'objects' exists out in the world, and 'subjects' experience them. Whitehead's philosophy involves a metaphysical interpretation of experience--reality experiences itself in these events called occasions--and as a consequence, this traditional subject-object relation is given a metaphysical interpretation also. For Whitehead, process is reality: "...the term 'real' refers to the creative activity." (AI, 179) Process and Reality could have been titled Process is Reality. Thus, when an event finishes its process in satisfaction, it passes from process-reality into a role as datum-potentiality for future realities. The creative subject is the life of the world; created objects have spent their moment of process-actuality. However, stepping away from the individual occasion and looking at reality as a macroscopic whole, these objects are the foundation for the creative process.

Thus viewed in abstraction objects are passive, but  
viewed in conjunction they carry the creativity  
which drives the world. The process of creation is  
the form of unity of the Universe. (AI, 179)

Given a unified term, an occasion can be called a 'subject-superject'. The 'subject' is the becoming, and the 'superject' is the objectified datum thrown forward for future use.

An actual entity is at once the subject experiencing and the superject of its experiences. It is subject-superject, and neither half of this description can for a moment be lost sight of. (PR, 29)

There is a little more to a prehension than the mere relation of object to subject. Firstly, there is how the subject feels the object. This is the 'subjective form' of the prehension. This subjective form is central to the freedom of becoming of the occasion. Without this quality of feeling, data would be at best merely repeated. But, through the subjective form of prehensions, the occasion can freely project its own satisfaction. This projected goal is the 'subjective aim' of the occasion. Briefly put, from the diversity of prehended objects, the occasion projects a unity, or unified state to actualize. The process that then goes on is the harmonizing of feelings in accordance with this target:

“The ‘subjective aim’, which controls the becoming of a subject, is that subject feeling a proposition [on propositions below] with the subjective form of purpose to realize it in that process of self-creation” (PR, 25).

The rational and emotional aspects of this creating are important to note. The occasion is nothing more than its prehensions--these are feelings, or, to use a term out of specifically human experience for the analogy, emotions. In the 'beginning' phase of creativity, the diversity of these prehensions in their particular combination in this occasion conjures up a desire for unity/satisfaction. This desire is very real, in that it takes the form of a specific projected goal. This is a rational or mental aspect of the process. But the rational arises out of the diversity of emotions:

Each actuality is essentially bipolar, physical and mental, and the physical inheritance is essentially accompanied by a conceptual reaction partly conformed to it, and partly introductory of a relevant novel contrast, but always introducing emphasis, valuation, and purpose. (PR, 108)

Whitehead typically uses 'physical' and 'mental' instead of 'emotional' and 'rational'. His reason for this is to preclude the mistake of conceiving the occasion as a 'mind', as opposed to a 'body'. The occasions are everything, and to divide between mind and body is to make a rather superficial distinction. But 'emotional' and 'rational' are closer to the ideas more commonly involved in creativity. They can take the place of Whitehead's terms, at the risk of the aforementioned mistake, adequately.

The kind of creativity at issue for Whitehead is not ex nihilo, rather, it is a process of actualization of possibilities. Whitehead calls these possibilities 'eternal objects'. The eternal objects are deficient in actuality--they are real, but not actual or concrete in the sense that occasions are. They are the forms potentiality takes for the occasions. When an occasion prehends past events, it feels a welter of diverse eternal objects. These data are thrown forward for future creativity. This has not just pushed the ex nihilo factor one step back--the eternal

objects are eternal potentiality. Apart from actual occasions, these eternal objects reside, available for creativity, in what Whitehead names **the 'primordial nature of god'**. Each occasion is in contact with this primordial nature. This 'mingling' of potentiality with actuality provides both the full extent of potentiality for each occasion, as well as the drive or urge towards actualization.

Creativity is the action of the present, but both the past and the future are intrinsically important to the process. The future is a lure, devoid of actuality. To actualize is the challenge 'motivating' each occasion. The past is history; what has been actualized fades from the activity of the present into the eternal stability of the past. Separating the past, present and future clears the matter up, but introduces new problems as well. It must be understood what kind of process is taking place, and the role of the past in the present activity is particularly important. The occasion is its prehensions of history and of the primordial nature of god. Whitehead stresses that occasions cannot affect each other contemporaneously, and his reason for this is part of the explanation of the process. It has been stated that the creator and creation in this activity are phases of the same thing. In more familiar philosophical terminology, 'subject' and 'object' can replace creator and 'creation'. The occasion is the subject in the process that turns its diverse life into an object. This object then ceases processing, and fades into the past as form. And it is as objects that 'things' interact in the historical environment. History is, essentially, a static bank of data for the activity of the present. History is 'static' because, as has been noted, past occasions have spent the life that is their internal process, and all that remains is the superjected satisfactions. These objectified forms are related to each other as objects; occasions arise 'on the edge' of this web of relations, with an urge to become something. At this 'moment' of unrest, the occasion is a subject projecting a goal for itself, but, as far as actuality is concerned, it is only an undefined meeting place of prehensions. The passage of the occasion from subject to object involves the rejection of some prehensions as relevant to the proposed unity, the taking up and synthesizing of the remainder, until diversity is gone and what has become is a unity.

Some subtle unpacking of 'creativity' is now occurring. Creativity is a matter of keeping some data, rejecting other data, and then unifying what has been kept into a felt whole. This activity goes on every fraction of a second, according to Whitehead, and yet the term 'creativity', as commonly taken, might mislead. Things stay the same--we see that, to a very large extent, in our environment. But Whitehead is saying that change is fundamental to the universe. Moreover, he is saying that the occasion, the creator in creativity; determines the end result. Is there an arbitrariness built into his metaphysics that observation does not support? Whitehead's answer is 'no'. Past form exerts a claim on the present. Occasions of low complexity of vision, so to speak, will repeat past form. The conceptual novelty, introduced through the subjective form of the physical prehensions, is virtually negligible in many occasions. Occasions of higher complexity will change to a greater extent, but data for change is still obtained from the past, implying some sort of probability of continuity.

Difficulties regarding creativity must here be faced. Whitehead says (PR, 21) that creativity is the principle of novelty in the universe. 'Novelty' has to be treated carefully because it has subtle shades of meanings buried in it. Whitehead means primarily novelty of instance, not of kind. Novelty of instance means new occasions repeat previously actualized data; novelty of kind means the introduction of novel data into the stream of process. However, since the primordial

nature of god contains the eternal objects, which constitute infinite potentiality differentiated already, it can be argued that novelty of kind is impossible, since realization always involves what is already conceptually, albeit deficiently, actual. In this light, novelty of kind is, at best, a special kind of novelty of instance--the datum involved might never have been actualized, but it was certainly conceptualized. There is merely a lesser degree of repetition involved. Now, this has serious implications for creativity in general that will subsequently be explored. What it is important to recognize is that creativity, in common parlance, contains connotations that involve both novelty of kind and novelty of instance. Creators supposedly dabble in both repetition and in more 'pure' creation, if there is such a thing. Moreover, there are subtle problems regarding process that have to be examined for both connotations, especially if one is going to pick one side over the other, as Whitehead has (seemingly) done.

The particular problem Whitehead must sort out is this: creativity draws from the past. Even at the macroscopic level of things, it is possible to look at the past and draw connections between events. But where does all this start? One possibility is that it has been going on forever; another is that there is some kind of source of information that constitutes some kind of beginning. Apart from traditional problems involved with speculation on the origin of the universe, Stephen Hawking's work in cosmology (his 'no boundary' model of the universe) suggests that the concept of a 'beginning' might not apply at all to this matter. The solution is to allow the occasions direct access to the primordial nature of god all along and not just once at the 'beginning' of the universe. Now the matter of 'when' it all began is irrelevant. The term "source of information" is important because the process involved is ultimately self-determining. To suggest a creator in the biblical sense is to risk undermining the power of the individual occasions. Rather, what is needed is some kind of reservoir of material that somehow informs, or has informed, the world of experience.

Whitehead's solution, as already noted, is one aspect of god. The way it works is this: amongst the data occasions really actualize are those described by 'descriptive words' such as 'yellow' and 'car'. There is an infinite number of these descriptions--the eternal objects. These eternal objects 'exist' as potentialities, but they are not actualized as individual eternal objects. Rather, each occasion realizes particular combinations of these objects--a yellow car, for instance, which could probably be described in many other terms. Presumably, if one could use words to describe an instance completely (which one cannot), then one would have pointed out all of the eternal objects taken up by the occasions making up the particular car. 'Physical' prehensions constitute the initial phase of process. A physical prehension involves feeling the objectified past. In the next phase of concrescence, abstraction of eternal objects from the particular past occasions takes place. Prehensions of eternal objects are conceptual prehensions. The occasion is moving from past fact to relevant potentiality, and the possibility of practical novelty is arising. Occasions of particularly high complexity can go one step further and propose to themselves eternal objects that have not been merely abstracted from the past.

In PR, Whitehead often cites Hume's example of a person being able to imagine a colour never experienced. Given a sampling of shades of blue, Hume and Whitehead think a person could successfully imagine a shade never before experienced by that person. For Whitehead, this shade exists as an eternal object, but it has not been actualized in the historic route of occasions leading up to the present subject. The consideration of this colour, then, is the introduction of novel data

into the actual world. This is taken by Whitehead as evidence for the direct connection of each occasion to the primordial nature of god. Accordingly, a distinction in types of potentiality must be introduced by Whitehead to reinforce the distinction between the activities of the physical and conceptual prehensions. The past which the physical prehensions feel is 'real' potentiality, the realm of eternal objects is 'general' or 'pure' potentiality.

It was mentioned earlier that the subjective aim was the prehending of a proposition with the subjective form of purpose to realize it. A 'proposition' takes on a special metaphysical character in Whitehead's philosophy. Instead of merely being conceptual descriptions of elements of reality, propositions operate as 'lures for feeling' (v. PR, 25), and a verbal description can never exhaust such an entity. The logical subject of a proposition is an actual nexus, and the predicate is some eternal object. A proposition is a sort of bridge between actuality and potentiality. Formally defined:

A proposition is the potentiality of the objectification of certain presupposed actual entities via certain qualities and relations, the objectification being for some unspecified subject for which the presupposition has meaning in direct experience. The judgment is the conscious affirmation by a particular subject--for which the presupposition holds--that this potentiality is, or is not, realized for it. (PR, 196-197)

Take, as an example, the entertainment of the perfectly mundane statement, "The car is yellow." 'Car' is a definite nexus, identifiable in history as an existing object. 'Yellow', in this case, is a tentative description--the linking of a descriptive word, or eternal object, with a society of occasions. Whether or not the car is in fact yellow takes some degree of examination--there is creative activity based upon the proposition, 'the car is yellow.' Important to note here is the possibility of error. If there can be error at the metaphysical level of creativity, then there can also be novelty of data. Mere repetition of physical prehensions precludes both error and novelty.

But now new problems are arising and Whitehead remains unfortunately vague on some of these matters. Eternal objects need some place to exist as eternal objects, and Whitehead puts them in the 'primordial nature' of god. God is an unfinished occasion, meaning that god exists in the present always, never fading into the past as finished, but moving into the future as the actual world progresses. The occasions that are becoming the actual world get their data from history, but it would seem that at one time in the past god would have to have been accessed for some initial information. The problem with this is that things interact as objects; that is, when an occasion looks to the past to take up some prehensions, the past is completely objectified in that it is the form remaining from occasions that have spent their creative power. God is never objectified. There is no unified form of infinite eternal objects for some ancient occasion to access. Whitehead's solution is the activity of two different kinds of prehensions: physical and conceptual. The physical prehensions feel past data--the objects referred to above. Conceptual prehensions, however, directly draw on the primordial nature of god. They do not need 'objects' for their activity. In this way, potentiality resides throughout the world, and not 'somewhere or 'somewhen' else', as the somewhat metaphorical language of religion might suggest. This

continuous tapping of potentiality provides the opportunity for occurrence of novelty of kind, or at least for the looser novelty of instance discussed earlier.

Whitehead discusses a second aspect of god--god's consequent nature. The consequent nature of god has physical prehensions of the world. The reason given for this development is fairly straight-forward: Whitehead's philosophy is one of ultimate relativity, and this means that god and the world must be inter-related and defining. What the world is to god is actuality of the conceptual side of god's nature--the eternal objects. What the consequent nature of god is to the world is unity.

Thus, analogously to all actual entities, the nature of God is dipolar. He has a primordial nature and a consequent nature. The consequent nature of God is conscious, and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom. The primordial nature is conceptual, the consequent nature is the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts. (PR, 345)

If the world is self-defining but atomistic, why should there be any unity to history and the progression of creativity in to the future? Whitehead's answer is an appeal to the consequent nature of god. But conversely, god attains a diverse actuality from the process being realized in the world.

All of this is somewhat confusing in its quasi-mysticism, but some sense can be made of it by relocating the discussion in the familiar territory of common connotations of creativity. God and the world exist in the throes of creativity. They are both creator and creation for each other. To separate them is to misrepresent the relativity built into Whitehead's thought. Process is fundamental to this metaphysic, and to focus on the manifestations of the creativity is to risk getting lost in confusing puzzles involving things or beings. But the process unifies the particular workings because they are workings of the process--they have to be unified.

A speculative note on creativity is warranted. The discussion has been quietly concerned with dualities, and the interaction between poles in process. Creativity, at its most general level, suggests change and an end to change. The universe is in process--is it moving towards completion? The answer is both yes and no. Completion and change are built right into every occasion. The universe is complete at every moment--this is, perhaps, the unity attained through connection with the consequent nature of god. And yet, since everything is still fundamentally process, there is an inherent impulse to further actualization. New occasions will arise and suffer the unrest of diverse prehensions, and they will be satisfied in due process. "The many become one, and are increased by one." (PR, 21) To ask why this happens is to ask why creativity is creativity--it is an odd question. At some level of reality, as Whitehead fully knows, language is going to be unable to deal with matters without further reworking.

I have been writing about the world around us, yet there has been discussion of phases of concrescence, and of eternal objects in the primordial nature of god. It must be remembered that

reality *is* the world around us, fully and completely. For Whitehead, actuality requires potentiality--this is the reason for the discussion of god's primordial nature. They require each other, by definition. There is a certain element of abstraction in description--reality must be remembered as unified. In a paper entitled "Process and Reality," Whitehead (1948, 89-90) reminds us of this very point:

Enlarge your view of the final fact which is permanent amid change. In its essence, realization is limitation, exclusion. But this ultimate fact includes in its appetitive vision all possibilities of order, possibilities at once incompatible and unlimited with a fecundity beyond imagination...

The key to metaphysics is this doctrine of mutual immanence, each side lending to the other a factor necessary for its reality. The notion of one perfection of order, which is (I believe) Plato's doctrine, must go the way of the one possible geometry. The universe is more various, more Hegelian.

### ... and Value

Whitehead drops all sorts of hints about value through his writing, but he never explicitly formulates a theory of value. He does make it quite clear that value phenomena are rooted in reality at the process level, but the relation between his theory of prehensive occasions and valuation is left unclear. In SMW, he cites the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century as champions of the insistence on the reality of value.

Both Shelley and Wordsworth emphatically bear witness that nature cannot be divorced from its aesthetic values; and that these values arise from the cumulation--in some sense, of the brooding presence of the whole in its various parts. Thus we gain from the poets the doctrine that a philosophy of nature must concern itself at least with these six notions: change, value, eternal objects, endurance, organism, interfusion. (SMW, 87-88)

That is what Whitehead's work was--an attempt at a philosophy of nature. To greater or lesser extent, I have introduced Whitehead's treatment of all of the notions listed except for value. Now, in this section on his treatment of value, I will have to bring all of the others to bear on the matter. In PR, Whitehead stressed that when dealing with the ultimate notions of a philosophy, one must beware of using terms of high abstraction to describe concepts or aspects of the world that support such abstractions. Rather, the thinker must use the fundamental terms interwovenly, explaining each other and needing each other. Thus, in this treatment of value, the fundamental notions will illuminate each other.

In one of his later books, Modes of Thought [MT], Whitehead writes fairly clearly about the role of value in his process philosophy. The first chapter is entitled “Importance”, and therein Whitehead reaffirms the link between reality and value. “We may well ask whether the doctrine of perspective is not an endeavour to reduce the concept of importance to mere matter-of-fact devoid of intrinsic interest. Of course such reduction is impossible.” (MT, 15). ‘Importance’ seems to be the term Whitehead uses most consistently with those aspects of his thinking that could be seen as constituting a theory of value. In common parlance, ‘importance’ is a more aggressive, and perhaps more relative, term than ‘value’. Antiques have ‘value’, quietly sitting in corners of rooms or in museums, whereas matters of ‘importance’ thrust themselves upon us, demanding attention. I say this can be construed as a more relative status, because today’s things of ‘importance’ tend to fade, whereas the ‘value’ of the antique is a longer lasting ‘quality.’ ‘Value’, in both philosophical circles and in common speech, seems to be some aspect of an item that helps define, it; ‘importance’ sticks to something for a while, then passes. By using ‘importance’ as his term for value, I think Whitehead is stressing two aspects of value and his process philosophy:

- 1) the presence of value in that ephemeral yet vital spark that is the process of the occasion, and;
- 2) the throwing forward into the future of the satisfied occasion as something to be reckoned with by new moments of concrescence.

Whitehead says much the same thing on the next page of MT. This thesis about reality and value is meant as a prolegomenon to future work on value issues--ethical and aesthetic matters, for instance. ‘Value’ is here used as a fundamental term. Whitehead gives to ‘importance’ this position:

Importance is a generic notion which has been obscured by the overwhelming prominence of a few of its innumerable species. The terms ‘morality’, ‘logic’, ‘religion’, ‘art’, have each of them been claimed as exhausting the whole meaning of importance. Each of them denotes a subordinate species. But the genus stretches beyond any finite group of species. (MT, 16)

This makes sense, for the macroscopic items with which ‘morality’ and ‘art’ are concerned are societies of occasions. That is, their existence is a matter of realized potentiality in the forms of nexuses.

Correspondingly, their particular types of value should be products of the same process. Now, both finite realms are different ‘shapes’ of the same ‘material’ (to use a crude analogy). More specifically then, and most briefly, Whitehead (MT, 16) defines importance as follows: “The generic aim of process is the attainment of importance, in that species and to that extent which in that instance is possible.” In other words, value, in some form or other, is the motivation of creativity in its metaphysical roles (the ‘movement’ of the world as a whole, and the life of each actual occasion). This is my starting point. In order to make clear what I think the role of value in process is, four aspects of the description of the occasion in process are going to be central:



- 1) the prehensions, both physical and conceptual,
- 2) the subjective aim of the occasion,
- 3) the satisfaction of the occasion, and;
- 4) god's primordial and consequent natures.

As always with Whitehead's view of the world, these divisions are somewhat artificial, and I hope they will blend into each other as the description of valuation develops.

It should be noted that by drawing out four elements of Whitehead's analysis of atomized process as forming the foundation of valuation, I am differing from other commentators on this matter. William Hendrichs Leue, in his Harvard thesis, Metaphysical Foundations For a Theory of Value in the Philosophy of A N Whitehead (1952), provides a concise critique of attempts to dismiss Whitehead ideas about value as constituting:

- 1) a psychological theory of value, or
- 2) a formalistic theory, or
- 3) a self-realizationalist theory, or finally
- 4) merely an inconsistent theory.

I think Leue is correct in seeing more in Whitehead than these options provide, and I do not intend to repeat his criticisms here. Moreover, Leue then presents a two-tiered theory involving 'absolute value' and 'relative value' as being best suggested by Whitehead's metaphysics. By so doing, Leue starts out bravely trying to balance the value of each entity against the absolute value he sees in god's primordial valuation of the eternal objects, but in the end he largely fails, in my opinion, to stick with his two types of value. Absolute value ends up being the value that really matters, so to speak, making relative value largely unimportant. And if one sticks to Whitehead's use of 'importance' as the generic term for value, if something is not important, then it is not valuable and is definitely not valued per se.

Leue's error lies in ignoring the already cited warning of Whitehead about describing reality in dualistic terms and subsequently adhering too literally to Whitehead's dualistic treatment of value in the lecture "Immortality" (1948, 60). In this lecture, Whitehead discusses the universe in terms of two abstracted aspects--the World of Activity, and the World of Value. The first is the world of transience, and the second of permanence. Leue's analysis of Whitehead's thought about valuation stresses exactly this duality. Yet, in "Immortality", Whitehead is very careful to make clear at the outset that he is dealing with a description that uses abstracted notions:

The two words ['immortality' and 'mortality'] refer to two aspects which are presupposed in every experience which we enjoy. I will term these aspects "The Two Worlds". They require each

other, and together constitute the concrete Universe. Either World considered by itself is an abstraction. For this reason, any adequate description of one World includes characterizations derived from the other, in order to exhibit the concrete Universe in its relation to either of its two aspects. These Worlds are the major examples of perspectives of the Universe. The word “evaluation” expresses the elucidation of one of the abstractions by reference to the other. (1948, 61) [emphasis mine]

In his treatment of Whitehead’s thought, Leue ran afoul of the degree of abstraction in Whitehead’s discussion of evaluation. In my approach to this matter, I am going to attempt to present a more unified theory, supported on four metaphysical pillars. These four topics for discussion are, of course, abstracted from the unified process and presuppose each other. For clarity’s sake, cross-reference will be avoided as much as possible, but will not be eliminated entirely.

1) The Prehensions: By and large, the prehensions, both physical and conceptual, constitute the entire life of an occasion. The physical prehensions have past occasions as their objects--they feel the past and bring that data into relevance for the present concrescence. Conceptual prehensions have eternal objects as their objects. These are either abstracted directly from the past, or they are ‘suggested’ by, although not contained in, the past data. In this latter case, novelty enters the world if the new eternal objects are admitted into the occasion’s concrescence. Occasions of low complexity issue in very little conceptual novelty; from past to present there is virtually complete reproduction of data. At the macroscopic level, objects such as stones can be understood as being societies of such reproductive occasions. In human experience, the conceptual entertainment of novelty is of dominating importance. For this consideration of value, both physical and conceptual prehensions have vital roles.

Physical prehensions provide the basis for ‘physical purposes’--the lure of the mere reproduction already introduced. Such repetition is a testimony to the value already present in the data. Such physical reproduction reckons with the superjected value shapes presented by the past. Without physical prehension and reproduction--the satisfied occasions would have no real presence in the world--merely their spot in the objective immortality provided by the consequent nature of god.

The conceptual prehensions, however, provide the seed of new value for this occasion, as opposed to mere sustaining of value thrown forward by the past. Even in the physical purposes derived from the physical prehensions of past data, there is a process of ‘consideration’, resulting in emphasis or denial to the process. What is emphasized or denied access is the form of the datum--the potentiality, or the eternal object. These potentials are dealt with by conceptual prehension. This matter of examination and consideration, to use anthropomorphic terms, is the first glimmering of the conceptual abilities of the occasion:

In a physical purpose the subjective form has acquired a special appetite--adversion or aversion--in respect to that eternal object as a realized element

of definiteness in that physical datum. This acquisition is derived from the conceptual prehension. (PR, 184)

Emphasis and denial, adversion and aversion--this is valuation at work in the most basic form of concrecence.

More complex mental activity consists in the introduction and entertainment of propositions. Here, a physical object--a social nexus--is felt as maybe being in a certain state. This is the association, rightly or wrongly, of eternal objects with the physical world. The resultant process of action upon this feeling can result in confirmation, error, or the introduction of novel content into the world. In this third role, conceptual prehensions accomplish something the physical prehensions lack. The physical prehensions have to do with the 'perished' world only; conceptual prehensions [evaluate?] this data and abstract those forms of definiteness from it. This can result in the consideration of eternal possibilities not actually present in the past, and hence a new datum for further prehensions can be realized.

By introducing novel content into transcendent creativity, conceptual prehensions increase the variety of data, and therefore of value-forms, in the world. The possibilities for future occasions become more varied--'deeper' unified feelings can be achieved, intensifying value-experiences on a microscopic scale.

2) Subjective Aim: To a considerable extent, the prehensions are focused on the past, and not nearly so much on the future. They are the feeling and analysis of the entire world for that occasion, but they are not constitutive of that occasion, for and in itself. From the prehending of data and the admittance of new possibilities comes a unified ideal for the end result of the concrecence. This is the subjective aim--a projected concrete form into which to resolve the diversity of feelings of the primary phases of the process.

The subjective aim is a lure for the occasion's process. Through admittance and denial, emphasis and demotion of relevance, the data and possibilities are resolved into a unity that is the satisfied occasion. The subjective aim is the projection of this unity before it has been accomplished. The aim is an ideal of harmony--the diversity of feelings must be resolved into a unified function.

Consider a proposition in its form of such a lure. The result of entertainment of a proposition can be accuracy, error, or novelty. But these states only arise in the satisfaction of the occasion's concrecence. Before it is anything, it is a lure--an aim or goal felt as interesting (i.e., valuable). The proposing of an end is the beginning of self-constitution in actuality. The subjective aim of an occasion is the proposing of a form of value for itself. This lure is felt as value before it is actually realized.

This is the germ of those theories of valuation that suggest that value is the result of a want, or deficiency. For example, in Principia Ethica, G. E. Moore comments on an example involving a glass of wine, criticizing the value theory of John Stuart Mill. At issue for Mill is pleasure: he holds that the value of a glass of wine consists in the pleasure to be had when the wine is experienced. In terms more appropriate to the Whiteheadian comparison, the proposing of a goal

to be actualized is a source of value in the world. Moore does not agree. Rather, he thinks there is a pre-wine pleasure that results in wanting the wine, and that this pleasure disappears with the obtaining. This is the function of the subjective aim--the value felt before the goal is attained, or the value that makes the goal a goal at all. In other words, by Moore's analysis there is a genuine value in the desire for the wine, before the wine is had, and for Mill there is, strictly speaking, no real value until the wine is possessed.

It is important to notice that the subjective aim is the mark of individuality (and hence of unity) on the original diversity of feelings. It is self-proposed as a reaction to the data, making it doubly valuable. This self-relevance is key to the actuality Whitehead sees in process. "An entity is actual, when it has significance for itself. By this it is meant that an actual entity functions in respect to its own determination." (PR, 25) In this brief passage, Whitehead is as much as equating actuality and value.

3) Satisfaction: Satisfaction consists in achievement of the unity self-proposed in the subjective aim. The process is finished--all felt aspects have been reconciled in a unity of feeling involving either emphasis and involvement or 'negative prehension'--denial of access into the satisfaction.

The final phase in the process of concrescence, constituting an actual entity, is one complex, fully determinate feeling. This final phase is termed the satisfaction. It is fully determinate (a) as to its genesis, (b) as to its objective character for the transcendent creativity, and (c) as to its prehension--positive or negative--of every item in the universe. (PR, 25-26)

With the satisfaction, the occasion is 'done'--it was motivated by a diversity of feelings which have now been unified. What remains is the fixed form of the resultant unity. To a large extent, the satisfied occasion loses its actuality as it passes into history as fixed data. However, inasmuch as it is the form proposed as, and now achieved as, significant to itself, it is actual according to Whitehead's definition as cited on the previous page.

The satisfied occasion is now thrown forward as historical data to be reckoned with by new occasions. As such, it is a form of past value to be considered in its relevance to new processes of concrescence. If compelling enough, the future may wish to reproduce this form of value, thereby re-enacting the process of charging this form with this actuality of an occasion. Thus, in itself the satisfied occasion is of positive value. If it is re-enacted in the future, it is of new positive value. But if it is dismissed in a negative prehension, then its value in transcendent creativity is down-graded although whatever is left of its self-significance remains.

This throwing forward of the finished occasion on a macroscopic scale is essential to the understanding of human value matters. On one side, the ethical notion of responsibility involves the manner in which we, as self-determining organisms, 'throw' ourselves into the world:

Further, in the case of those actualities whose immediate experience is most completely open to us, namely, human beings, the final decision of the

immediate subject-superject, constituting the ultimate modification of the subjective aim, is the foundation of our experience of responsibility, of approbation or of disapprobation, or self-approval or of self-reproach, of freedom, of emphasis. (PR, 47)

On the other side, aesthetic creation and experience involve both the receiving and throwing forward of something in all of its objective value nature.

**4) God's Primordial and Consequent Natures:** It has been stated that the primordial nature of god is the 'home' of the eternal objects--the realm of possibility. God, in Whitehead's scheme, is not to be omitted from the metaphysical description. God is the archetypal occasion, involving process, physical and conceptual prehensions, and aim. The primordial nature of god is not merely a warehouse of forms of possibility: it is god's conceptualization of all of possibility. These conceptualizations Whitehead deems 'valuations'. However, value is tied to actuality, and the occasion that is god is never satisfied, i e., god is never unified in a harmonized form of value. The valuations of god's primordial nature are directed towards the realm of microscopic process:

The conceptual feelings, which compose his primordial nature, exemplify in their subjective forms their mutual sensitivity and their subjective unity of subjective aim. These subjective forms are valuations determining the relative relevance of eternal objects for each occasion of actuality. (PR, 344)

Thus, potentiality 'geared' towards realization God's primordial nature, Whitehead stresses, is neither conscious nor physically actual. This conceptual valuation of possibility relative to the actual occasions is directed completely toward the microscopic process Whitehead describes as constituting reality. God participates in actuality, in its full sense, derivatively--the consequent nature of god is, "the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature." (PR, 345) God, in this sense, is the 'irrational' principle of concretion that 'saves' the world at each moment of creation. He is actuality's glue, in his consequent role. In this role, god preserves the superjected value-form of each occasion, protecting the moment from eternal dissolve.

Eternal objects, in the concrescence of an occasion, function as conceptual lures. Typically, such a lure is only a sub-section of the entire class of eternal objects. God's primordial valuation, however, orders them all, relative to all 'creation.' This primordial valuation is also the primordial lure to concretion for the universe. God's primordial nature constitutes the appetite towards realization at the 'basis' of the universe. "He is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire." (PR, 344) Deficient in actuality, god is, in his primordial nature, the precondition for each actual occasion's value-charged and value-achieving actuality.

God, in his two natures, makes possible the value functions of the world of occasions. But god's actuality is entirely derived from the world of process, and that is where value actually is and

why value god actually has is derived from the world of actuality. God cannot be said to provide a different--e.g., absolute--kind of value than that present in the world. Rather, god cannot be understood apart from the flux of occasions. His natures are aspects of the universe, logically necessary according to Whitehead, but neither superexistent nor actually valuable. God's primordial valuation of the eternal objects stands as a sort of external ideal standard of value for concrescence. However, this is to be understood not as something reality always fails to reach, and therefore as being lacking in ultimate value--this is an ideal standard, meaning that the actual world realizes these eternal value-forms after entertaining them as conceptual ideals. It is a standard only in the sense of being what actuality has at its disposal to accomplish at its widest and deepest level of contrasted feeling. The eternal objects are the never-changing, and thus standard, forms of possibility for reality in process.

In this brief discussion, terms central to Whitehead's conception of value (such as 'variety', 'contrast', 'novelty') have been introduced without much comment. They will be dealt with in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER II

### Robert Pirsig

#### Reality=Value

In his two books, Zen and The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values [ZMM] and particularly Lila: An Inquiry Into Morals, Robert Pirsig outlines his Metaphysics of Value, or, to use the word he prefers, his Metaphysics of Quality. The basic tenet is what the name suggests--reality is quality. A preliminary note about this identity of value and reality is warranted. Obviously, this is a problematic identity, not least of all because it appears to be dramatically counter-intuitive. This problem is taken up in some detail in this chapter. Robert Pirsig is not a rigorous philosopher and I do not wish to chastise him for loose logic when he is not pretending to employ such a tool. I see Pirsig as a process philosopher: in his exploration of Quality, he develops a portrait of a universe that fundamentally experiences itself. I am taking his work to be an examination of the role of value in process. This largely accounts for my studying Pirsig in connection with Alfred North Whitehead. Furthermore, even though the identity of value and reality might be problematic, the use of value as a fundamental term in the analysis of existence could very well be accurate. To this end, Pirsig's philosophy stands as a revealing attempt. Thus, I am suspending judgment on the accuracy of the identity because rejecting it for a more careful relation does not erode this philosophy at all seriously.

In ZMM, which deals with the development of Pirsig's thought over roughly twenty years, he reports that when he was first considering the matter he wrote, "Quality is the continuing stimulus which our environment puts upon us to create the world in which we live. All of it. Every last bit of it." (ZMM, 245) As the present narrator, he comments, "He began to see that he had shifted away from his original stand. He was no longer talking about a metaphysical trinity [subject, objects, quality] but an absolute monism. Quality was the source and substance of

everything.” (1974, 245) He expands upon this first thought of quality as a stimulus to experience in Lila (168-169) when considering the basic assumptions of evolution:

It [traditional evolutionary theory] goes into many volumes about how the fittest survive but never once answers the question of why... If life is strictly a result of the physical and chemical forces of nature, then why is life opposed to these same forces in its struggle to survive? If it's against physical nature then there must be something apart from the physical and chemical forces of nature that is motivating it to be against physical nature. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that all energy systems 'run down' like a clock and never rewind themselves. But life not only 'runs up', converting low energy sea-water, sunlight and air into high-energy chemicals, it keeps multiplying itself into more and better clocks that keep 'running up' faster and faster.

Now, instead of seeing quality and experience in merely human terms, Pirsig is broadening the scope of his examination to consider the stimulus upon nature as a whole to perform in the ways that 'she' does. By criticizing scientists for not asking 'why' the fittest survive, Pirsig is, of course, invoking the old distinction between 'why' and 'how'. Some scientifically minded people think that by 'how', e.g., by describing the mechanisms of evolution, that they are answering the question 'why'. But 'why' is an appeal for reasons for the changes in question, meaning reasons for the mechanisms involved. The Second Law of Thermodynamics is quite clear about what does occur in the universe at large: systems have a tendency to 'run down', to move from states of high complexity and energy to states of lower complexity and energy. However, Pirsig is inquiring about the reasons for the existence of systems to run down, and why it is that these systems, apparently, continue to run up, even though one would think the universe is sufficiently old enough to have at least ceased to run up. The Second Law of Thermodynamics tells only one part of a story; what principle accounts for any running up that occurs, on a small scale? This localized running up does not alter dramatically the general character of the running down of the universe. Stephen Hawking (1988, 152-153) provides an example of localized running up that involves running down when a wider perspective is taken:

If you remember every word in [A Brief History of Time] your memory will have recorded about two million pieces of information: the order in your brain will have increased by about two million units. However, while you have been reading the book, you will have converted at least a thousand calories of ordered energy, in the form of food, into disordered energy, in the form of heat that you lose to the air around you by convection and sweat. This will increase the disorder of the universe by about twenty million million million million units--or

about ten million million million times the increase  
in order in your brain--and that's if you remember  
**everything** in this book.

But the running up alone still seems to oppose the interpretation of the nature of things given by the Second Law of Thermodynamics. A second principle is required. Pirsig's answer is an appeal to a 'new' principle in nature:

The reason atoms become chemistry professors [Pirsig trained in chemistry the first time he was in university, and in Lila invokes his old career choice as an example of a system that has evolved] has got to be that something in nature does not like laws of chemical equilibrium or the law of gravity or the laws of thermodynamics or any other law that restricts the molecules' freedom. They only go along with laws of any kind because they have to, preferring an existence that does not follow any laws whatsoever. (Lila, 172-173)

This is Pirsig's view of the world in brief--the universe consists of quality in process (as suggested by the theory of evolution), and its movement is stimulated by 'feelings' of potential increases in quality.

It is on the basis of this sort of evolutionary consideration that Pirsig makes his first metaphysical division of reality (much of his work is an attempt to replace 'traditional' subject-object metaphysics, with 'subject and 'object' constituting what he conceives as the first metaphysical division of reality, and a very poor one). In his first book Pirsig resisted defining 'quality' out of sympathy with mystical attitudes towards explaining reality. By the time he wrote Lila, obviously, he had changed his mind and after what sounds like considerable agonizing he chooses to split reality--Quality into static quality and Dynamic Quality [Pirsig capitalizes 'Dynamic Quality' but not 'static quality']. Dynamic Quality is the undefined stimulus to change--the feeling that drives upwards evolution. Static quality consists in patterns of behavior that 'work'--'shapes' of quality that satisfy the upward urge for the moment and function as platforms for the next response to the Dynamic stimulus.

The development of 'newer, better clocks' Pirsig portrays as the working of Dynamic Quality; the existence of recognizable species such as humans and, more specifically, chemistry professors, is static quality:

A Dynamic Advance is meaningless unless it can find some static pattern with which to protect itself from degeneration back to the conditions that existed before the advance was made. Evolution can't be a continuous forward movement. It must be a process of ratchet-like steps in which there is a Dynamic movement forward up some new incline and then, if the result looks successful, a static



latching-on of the gain that has been made. (Lila, 176)

Dynamic Quality is purely undifferentiated--the present moment responds only to a feeling, without knowing where it is going. In ZMM, Pirsig describes thought as being like a train. Consciousness consists largely in the boxcars of information and analogues that shape thinking. By 'analogues,' Pirsig is implying that the mind constructs a picture or theory of reality. Our objects of consciousness are not to be taken to be necessarily accurate representations of the world, but as icons or tools. They are not less real for being analogues. The whole thought process is 'forward' moving with the front of the train being the undifferentiated edge of experience. Expanding the metaphor to describe the Dynamic-static mechanism, the cars of the train can be seen to be static positions and the untravelled track as being the lure of Dynamic Quality. Strictly speaking, the train should have track behind it only, since Dynamic Quality is an undifferentiated lure.

Pirsig cites Ernst Mayr's claim (Lila, 170) in Scientific American that teleological theories of evolution fail because of the lack of evidence for mechanisms [Mayr's term] that demonstrate the 'finalism'. Rather, biological evidence suggests that evolution works through 'spur of the moment decisions. Pirsig (Lila, 171) responds: "It seems clear that no mechanistic pattern exists toward which life is heading, but has the question been taken up of whether life' is heading away from mechanistic patterns?"

Dynamic Quality is value that is not contained in static patterns, such as mechanisms and forms of life. An example of a 'form of life' would be the human species--a specific, repeated pattern of biology. A 'mechanism' is a pattern of function 'life' has worked out to take care of some sort of problem or accomplish some end. Examples would include the workings of the immune system, or the formation of scabs where skin has been broken. By proposing an undifferentiated lure for evolution, Pirsig sees his theory as unifying evolution and teleological theories that consider life to have purpose. The 'spur of the moment decisions' that Mayr cites (as does Prigogine) are Dynamic Quality at work. Being the future as undifferentiated lure; it has to appear as a 'spur of the moment' factor.

Pirsig continues his analysis of evolution in Quality terms by looking for the chemical mechanism supporting his hypothesis. He settles on the carbon atom as being the dynamic doorway for evolution. Carbon is common to every element of life. But why is carbon the key Pirsig says that the only special ability carbon has is an ambiguous bonding tendency:

One physical characteristic that makes carbon unique is that it is the lightest and most active of the group IV of atoms whose chemical binding characteristics are ambiguous. Usually the positively valenced metals in groups I through III combine chemically with negatively valenced non-metals in groups V through VII and not with other members of their own group. But the group containing carbon is halfway between the metals and non-metals, so that sometimes carbon combines

with metals and sometimes with non-metals, and sometimes it just sits there and doesn't combine with anything, and sometimes it combines with itself in long chains and branched trees and rings. (Lila, 175)

The chemical and biological result has been a myriad of carbon compounds--according to Pirsig, about 20 times more than all the other chemical compounds taken together (Lila, 175). Pirsig interprets this variety as being the result of Dynamic Quality taking advantage of carbon bonding flexibility.

As already noted, Pirsig thinks evolutionary development is 'ratchet-like'--a progression, then a hardening of a position into static patterns of quality to preserve the gain. There is no carbon molecule, apparently, that is both resistant to the strains of its environment and flexible enough to try new developments. Nature's solution to the problem is not just one molecule but two:

A static molecule able to resist abrasion, heat, chemical attack, and the like; and a Dynamic one able to preserve the subatomic indeterminacy at a molecular level and 'try everything' in the ways of chemical combination. (Lila, 176)

The static molecule in this case is protein, and the Dynamic one is DNA. Pirsig describes protein as the 'chemically dead house for DNA. DNA tells the static shell what to do and even transforms itself under new stimuli. Not only is this DNA-protein interchange the Dynamic-static mechanism for complex human bodies but, "These two kinds of molecules, working together, are all there is in some viruses, which are the simplest forms of life." (Lila, 176). From this fundamental level, up through more complex biochemical systems (and beyond), static and Dynamic mechanisms can be identified. Pirsig includes the following in his list of static, protective developments: semi-permeable cell walls, bones, shells, clothes, houses, rituals, laws, and libraries. Dynamic functions include the sexual choice rooted in meiosis, the 'metazoan societies called plants and animals', symbiosis, death and regeneration, communication, speculative thought, and art. (Lila, 176-177). Now evolution, interpreted in Dynamic-static Quality terms, encompasses biology, but also inorganic matter and the highest form of human 'mental' behavior.

It is fairly easy to come up with examples of Dynamic attraction followed by static latching in human experience. In Lila, Pirsig describes a scenario in which a person falls head-over-heels in love with a song on the first listen. This song weakened, "...for a moment your existing static patterns in such a way that the Dynamic Quality all around you shone though. It was free, without static forms." (Lila, 142) Through repeated listening, the feeling of wonder faded until one's infatuation with the song passed. It is recognizable as a good song but the enthusiasm has disappeared. The song has not changed, but the whole listening experience has. Now the song-listening-experience is a matter of static good--patterned, recognizable, communicable. "The second good, the kind that made you want to recommend it to a friend, even when you had lost your own enthusiasm for it, is static quality. Static quality is what you normally expect." (Lila, 142) You cannot really 'expect' Dynamic Quality, because it is undifferentiated, or unpatterned,

in form--strictly speaking, it is formless. To expect Dynamic Quality is to expect a surprise, and nothing more. To expect a describable form of experience is to be dealing in static patterns of quality.

Another example is this dissertation. I have been attracted to a subject and to two writers--there is something agreeable about the undertaking. It started with a favourable response to a little exposure followed by some 'static latching' achieved through repeated reading. Now, instead of the excitement of consideration of new ideas, there is the somewhat different experience of familiarity. With any luck, this familiarity sets the stage for new exploration and excitement. Moreover, the undertaking of the writing after the reading is a different type of dynamic-to-static evolution. The whole process of reading and thinking was a matter of pattern building--the development of patterns that I can use towards several ends (enjoyment, knowledge, status through the achievement of a degree). But the actual writing crystallizes the ideas that earlier existed in much more vague form only. Moreover, as I progress, matters that seemed distant in importance and clarity come into focus, and the whole thinking-stage is set for new experiencing. Finally, when I am finished--a thesis in philosophy is a very static form for these ideas to take--there will be a new freedom both of time/energy and of ability. I will have a static foundation for new Dynamic response. A human life is an evolutionary series of static patterns and Dynamic lures.

The same notion is buried in everyday language. The platitude, 'Familiarity breeds contempt', can be construed as a negative portrayal of the response to Dynamic Quality. What is now familiar was once brand new. To become familiar, it was probably attractive, resulting in the situation of spending time with whatever is now familiar. The contempt is the present lack of Dynamic Quality, which apparently has not been replaced with static good ('quality' is positive or negative).

Dynamic Quality is energizing, luring, and undifferentiated. In other words when Pirsig was worried about violating reality by defining "Quality", it was Dynamic Quality he really had in mind. The other factor for consideration is static quality, which is essentially unmoving and divided--defined in essence, and definable for thought.

Pirsig defines an expanded form of the concept 'life' that includes the entire static-Dynamic process as follows: "All life is a migration of static patterns of quality toward Dynamic Quality." (Lila, 167) Looking over the array of phenomena that constitutes the static world, Pirsig divides static quality into four systems or levels: inorganic patterns, biological patterns, social patterns, and intellectual patterns. "If you construct an encyclopedia of four topics--Inorganic, Biological, Social and Intellectual--nothing is left out. No 'thing', that is. Only Dynamic Quality, which cannot be described in any encyclopedia, is absent." (Lila, 179) This arrangement is to be seen as hierarchical and varied. For example, inorganic 'standards' of value are different from intellectual 'standards', meaning that there are both inorganic 'goods' and intellectual 'goods', and they may conflict. However, Dynamic Quality is the forward/upward lure of evolution and the closer something is to this goal--the more complex a system is--the more valuable it is. In times of conflict, intellectual goods are to be chosen over inorganic goods. Pirsig sees the world as morality in flux:

Because Quality is morality, make no mistake about it. They're identical. And if Quality is the primary reality of the world then that means morality is also the primary reality of the world. The world is primarily a moral order. But it's a moral order that neither Rigel nor the posing Victorians had ever, in their wildest dreams, thought about or heard about. (Lila, 119)

To call the world primarily a 'moral order' means in brief that some things are by nature to be chosen over others; some behavior is better than other behavior. As Pirsig cautions here, he is not reheating a social morality of polite conduct that seems to have little to do with the world as a whole. This passage occurs during reflection on an attack from a fellow boater. The other sailor, Rigel, pours on a 'Victorian' (Pirsig's analysis) attack of Phaedrus' 'value relativism', as presented in ZMM. Much of Lila is clarification of the reality of value experience as Pirsig understands it. The world is value in process to him, and presents conflicting but real types of value.

This division goes a long way toward solving a potential criticism of the Metaphysics of Quality i.e., by saying everything is 'value', isn't Pirsig robbing that term of its current use? 'Value' is used to differentiate and motivate--if everything is 'value', then there is essentially no differentiation, 'and certainly no basis for choosing one thing or action over another. W. H. Leue cites R. M. Millard as leveling this very claim against Whitehead. Leue chooses to adopt the more careful relation of existence being the source of value. (Leue 1952, 247-252) As noted at the beginning of this chapter, something like this is probably appropriate with the philosophy of Robert Pirsig. But he certainly tries to stick with the identity himself, and this over-emphasis may serve the purpose of changing the way we think about our own value experiences. By first dividing value into static and Dynamic quality, and then further dividing static quality into four categories, Pirsig is both providing a basis for motivation and differentiation. Instead of something being valuable, and something else not, things are different levels of the four categories of static quality. Every experience is a value experience, although likely not a momentous one. In common parlance, 'value' seems to be used only for the 'great' experiences, when even the matter of choosing one glass over another in the cupboard is really a value choice. Moreover, Pirsig provides the basis for two types of motivation. There is the standing 'surprise' of Dynamic Quality--we are predisposed to yearn for novelty in some form or another. And then there is the motivation based on the differentiation of static quality. Some things are better than others because of the type of quality they are--they are to be chosen over lesser static values.

The word [value] is too vague. The 'value' that holds a glass of water together and the 'value' that holds a nation together are obviously not the same thing. Therefore to say that the world is nothing but value is just confusing, not clarifying.

Now this vagueness is removed by sorting out values according to levels of evolution. The value that holds a glass of water together is an inorganic pattern of value. The value that holds a nation

together is a social pattern of value. They are completely different from each other because they are at different evolutionary levels. (Lila, 183)

Obviously, although he has stated that these levels of static quality are all inclusive of existing phenomena, he cannot hold them to be isolated from each other. A glass of water might be explicable completely in terms of inorganic patterns, but a human involves all of the levels in one 'system'. Pirsig is trying to avoid the kind of reductionism involved in scientific materialism--the reduction of values to mere interaction of units of 'stuff', for example. But he has presented us with a hierarchy of patterns of static quality, the lowest of which is inorganic. He must explain the interaction/interdependence of these types of patterns without reducing everything to inorganic patterns. If he does not avoid this type of reduction, then he is in the same position as the world-view he is attempting to replace.

In Lila, Pirsig explains the relationships amongst his four levels by describing an analogy involving the relationships in a computer between hardware and software. He divides the computer into four levels of activity--the circuitry, low-level programming, high-level programming, and the application. Take the relationship between the circuitry and the low-level programming. The circuits of computers (at that time at least and I assume largely today also) consisted of 'flip-flops'--circuits which stored a '1' or a '0'. This was the aspect of computer technology about which Pirsig learned first, and it seemed so important and all-encompassing to him at the time. He reports his surprise when he started to work with programmers:

Even advanced programmers seldom knew how a flip-flop worked. That was amazing... If you don't know how a flip-flop works, what do you know about computers?

The answer was that it isn't necessary for a programmer to learn circuit design. Neither is it necessary for a hardware technician to learn programming. The two sets of patterns are independent. (Lila, 180)

Electronic circuits support the programs of the computer but the programs are not reducible to electronic pulses. A program is not an expression of electricity but a system of logical relationships designed to produce a specific behavior. The program is reducible to ones and zeros but as such it is functionally useless--one might describe it as infinitely clumsy. That is why there are programming languages and applications 'supported' by electricity and ones and zeros--this is a 'better', more flexible form for achieving various ends. Again, these higher ends are not reducible to their foundations. As an example of an application, Pirsig cites a novel being written with a word-processing program: "And what amazed him most of all was how one could spend all of eternity probing the electrical patterns of that computer with an oscilloscope and never find that novel." (Lila, 182). A novel can exist in a computer, or on paper and ink, or in one's imagination, but it is not reducible to any one of these supporting patterns.

The types of patterns of static quality are analogously related. Biological quality is linked to inorganic quality, but it is not reducible to the lower level. None of the levels are reducible:

Trying to explain social moral patterns in terms of inorganic chemistry patterns is like trying to explain the plot of a word-processor novel in terms of the computer's electronics. You can't do it. You can see how the circuits make the novel possible, but they do not provide a plot for the novel. The novel is its own set of patterns. (Lila, 182)

Analogously, the biological patterns that are 'life' share carbon as an inorganic component. Life is not reducible to some behavior of carbon, however. The activities of carbon and the activities of life are different--carbon bonds with itself or other elements, while biological life concerns itself with finding nutrition and reproducing whatever form it has. Society is neither cells nor electrons; ideas are not created by any of the three supporting levels. Each level is a different 'shape' of quality.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Pirsig relies heavily on explicative efficacy to support his view of the world. His basis for this approach is dissatisfaction with the explanatory powers of 'traditional' subject-object metaphysics. Not only value matters but other issues, according to Pirsig, are poorly explained with a substance based, subject-object metaphysics and Pirsig makes sure that his Metaphysics of Quality is up to this task.

First, a note about explicative efficacy is warranted. Even though the utility of a metaphysic--its application--is important, it probably is not the steadiest of foundations. In terms of satisfying the 'pure' understanding, explicative efficacy is somewhat of an aesthetic requirement. That is, if the metaphysic can explain things clearly, simply and more thoroughly than do other systems, then that is a point in its favour. For example, to explain everything by saying 'God wants it that way' is unsatisfying for a variety of reasons. For one, the existence of this new entity now has to be taken up for examination for this line of explanation to make any sense. Secondly, the number of entities involved in the explanation has been multiplied. There is nothing really wrong with this; it is just that the fewer the entities, the simpler the explanation is, and the more aesthetically satisfying the explanation. It is the principle of economy of logical explanation--Occam's Razor. Pirsig is, in Whiteheadian terms, pursuing a penetrating idea. In ZMM, Pirsig started developing this path by re-interpreting subject-object metaphysics and the first step was not one of an absolute metaphysics of Quality. "The world now, according to Phaedrus, was composed of three things: mind, matter, and Quality... He knew the metaphysical trinity of subject, object, and Quality would sooner or later have to be interrelated." (ZMM, 232-233) He left this trinity alone in his thought until it just could not be ignored any longer.

Although there's no logical objection to a metaphysical trinity, a three-headed reality; such trinities are not common or popular. The metaphysician normally seeks either a monism, such as God, which explains the nature of the world as a manifestation of one single thing, or he seeks a dualism, such as mind-matter, which explains it as two things, or he leaves it as a pluralism, which explains it as a manifestation of an indefinite

number of things. But three is an awkward number. Right away you want to know, Why three? What's the relationship among them?' (ZMM, 233)

After considering the role of value in human perception, Pirsig came up with Quality as the source of subjects and objects--a monism more satisfying than his original trinity.

The problems that a Metaphysics of Quality handles better than a subject-object metaphysics Pirsig calls 'platypi.' A duckbilled platypus is an 'odd' animal that has hair and suckles its young, yet also has a beak and lays eggs. Such physical behavior flies in the face of the way biology was/is divided under a certain view of species and genera. Here was a world view, designed to facilitate insight into the world around us, but it could not handle all of the phenomena. The result, in this case, was the unsatisfying (because comprehension becomes clumsier with new additions) invention of a new order, 'monotremata' (Lila, 124), with only two members. The platypus was merely going about its business--it certainly did not intend to create a problem. By dividing the world up in that specific way, the world-view created the problem of the platypus. For a subject-object metaphysics, value has been a traditional platypus--something experienced, yet something that does not fit comfortably into that scheme of things.

And Quality isn't the only such platypus. Subject-object metaphysics is characterized by herds of huge, dominating, monster platypi. The problems of free-will versus determinism, of the relation of mind to matter, of the discontinuity of matter at the sub atomic level, of the apparent purposelessness of the universe and the life within it are all monster platypi created by the subject object metaphysics. (Lila, 125)

One important platypus Pirsig claims to handle is 'substance'. Substance, in brief, is whatever there is holding our sense data together as objects. Describing objects in terms of their properties (e.g., colours, smells, measurements) seems to exhaust what we can find out about these objects, yet they seem more 'substantial' than these properties. Moreover, there does not seem to be any reason for these properties to 'stick' together. Substance has been posited as the solution. It is the foundation of things. The problem is, substance is an entity invented for explanatory purposes. You cannot see it or measure it in any way--it comes about as a result of postulating the deficient reality of the data of sensation. How can the information I see, touch, etc., hold together in such a unified object? There must be something holding them all there--substance!

Pirsig cites a couple of problems with substance. First, as John Locke noted, if you try to think of substance without any properties, you cannot do it; to postulate substance 'beneath' properties is to propose a metaphysical glue of nothingness. (Lila, 127) Secondly, quantum physics throws a more 'substantial' spanner in the works. Sub-atomic particles, which are assumed to be the physical foundation of everything there is, appear and disappear in the bundles called 'quanta'. "These bundles are not continuous in time, yet an essential, defined characteristic of 'substance' is that it is continuous in time." (Lila, 128) Sub-atomic particles are not substance. But, to date scientifically, they are the foundation of the physical world. But there still is order instead of

chaos, and the sub-atomic particles do not seem to explain that as well as substance was designed to. Substance is a problem concept--a platypus, created by a system of thinking.

Pirsig's solution is a matter of conceptual replacement:

Strike out the word 'substance' wherever it appears and substitute the expression 'stable inorganic pattern of value'... The difference is linguistic. It doesn't make a whit of difference in the laboratory which term is used. No dials change their readings. The observed laboratory data are exactly the same. (Lila, 128)

Pirsig is relying on part of the meaning of the word 'value' to carry this replacement. When humans choose something, they can be said to 'value' that object or activity. Things that are chosen repetitively can be deemed to be of great value. Interpreting 'value' metaphysically involves re-interpreting this repetition also. Something staying the same--a glass of water, for example--is to be seen as a more valuable state than chaos. The world has evolved so that these valuable states exist--they have been metaphysically chosen in the Dynamic-static quality process.

If one accepts this conceptual replacement, Pirsig thinks one gets a monumental realignment of the humanities and sciences. Value has been reintroduced into science, and the humanities have gained new relevance in terms of 'reality' of data examined. One problem area of particular interest to Pirsig is anthropology. Much of the earlier part of Lila is an analysis of anthropology as a field of inquiry--a work in meta-anthropology, I suppose--stemming from Pirsig's unhappiness with the discipline. In brief, he thinks it fails as a revealing science: the findings of anthropologists do not enhance our understanding of ourselves. Anthropology studies human cultures, which would seem to be value-laden systems. However, anthropologists go about their business scientifically, and a substance-centric science cannot allow values in to 'cloud' the 'objective' data. The result is a great deal of statistical data about specific people in specific places and a monumental lack of insight into cultures which have recognizable values.

But if science is a study of stable patterns of value, then cultural anthropology becomes a supremely scientific field. A culture can be defined as a network of social patterns of value. As the Values Project anthropologist Kluckhohn had said, patterns of value are the essence of what an anthropologist studies. (Lila, 129)

Linked to the substance platypus is the problem of scientific reality. This is a platypus Pirsig draws from Henri Poincaré, a historical figure whom Pirsig holds in high regard. Poincaré wondered if it was acceptable that the reality that scientists were 'revealing' was something for specialists only--no child, and many less specialized people, could ever be expected to understand reality in the terms the scientists used to explain phenomena. The highly complex mathematical background necessary to understand the world 'revealed' by scientists is something held by very few people. Pirsig notes that one broad conception of insanity is 'failing



to understand reality'. "By this criterion shouldn't all but a handful of the world's most advanced physicists be locked up for life?" (Lila, 126) Moreover, there is a hint of a further danger. There is a slight risk that, when absorbed in complex descriptions of reality, the world of common experience will be forgotten. Yet this everyday aspect of our existence is the most real, the least abstract, to us. Surely it is this aspect of our lives that we wish to enrich by investigating the world. Treating explanations as more real than the rest of our lives is a slight to everyday experience. The point is that people are real and they participate in complex, real activities every day. Insight into reality might be expected to throw light on the everyday activities of all sorts of people. Science, as this kind of insight, fails completely. Pirsig's *Metaphysics of Quality* replaces mathematical reality with the common value experience and separates the descriptions of reality and the real patterns themselves. "Reality, which is value, is understood by every infant. It is a universal starting place of experience that everyone is confronted with all the time." (Lila, 126)

### CHAPTER III

#### **Comparison and Contrast of the Metaphysics of Process and the Metaphysics of Quality**

The first two chapters of this essay presented the metaphysics and theories of value of Whitehead and Pirsig respectively. This chapter is the beginning of an examination of the similarities and difference between the two world-views, as well as of a more pointed consideration of value matters themselves.

Three topics are to be brought forward for examination. The first is an outright similarity and the third is an unmistakable difference. The second matter, however, seems at first to be an issue of difference between the thinkers but closer examination will, I think, betray a more subtle similarity between the theories. The topics are: 1) the importance of 'process' to both theories, 2) the differences in the analysis of final cause between the writers, and 3) the differences in conceptions of standards of value.

#### 1) The Importance of Process

In large part, Pirsig and Whitehead were attempting the same task when they undertook their philosophical writings: they were trying to expand a prevailing world-view to accommodate more data in a satisfactory way. For Whitehead, 'scientific materialism' was the enemy--the conception of the world as fundamentally consisting of 'dead' matter, inert and intrinsically valueless. Pirsig's opponent is 'subject object metaphysics'--the idea that the world can be exhaustively described in tens of hard unquestionable data on one side, and unreliable, personal experience on the other. Value, of course, is taken to be on the subjective side of the division, relegating it to the 'unreal' and therefore 'unimportant' slice of the description of the world.

An interesting point results. The two writers started from slightly different perspectives. Whitehead was unhappy with a scientific description of reality, and he started by trying to describe reality in a new, more satisfying manner. Pirsig started by noting value differences,

became more involved in trying to solve value problems and then came to describe the world in value terms. In brief, Whitehead thought that the world could better be described as being founded in events of experience; the universe fundamentally experiences itself. This creative activity incorporated the human experience, value-laden as it is, nicely. Pirsig, wrapped up in examining value-differences, eventually arrived at the idea of a universe in process. It is important to note that it is in Lila, Pirsig's second book, that he is really clear about value-as-an-activity. In ZMM, value is discussed almost exclusively in terms of human experience; process terms creep in, rather than being employed with explicit purpose. It is this analysis of human value experience that leads to the conception of the universe as consisting fundamentally of value experiences.

The most important aspect of this similarity between Whitehead and Pirsig is the effect on the meaning of the word 'value' (or 'quality', or whatever synonym) Whitehead starts with process and reaches value; Pirsig starts with value and reaches process. The terms, in explication, require each other (this will be expanded upon in Chapter V). Whitehead's process is motivated by value: "The generic aim of process is the attainment of importance." (MT, 16). For Pirsig to accommodate value differences, first he must make value, fundamental to reality and then he must make it evolutionary. The static patterns of value evolve by limiting Dynamic Quality. Pirsig reluctance in ZMM to define quality is his wrestling with value's Dynamic nature. Once he recognizes its status as a process, as opposed to some static absolute, he can dig a little deeper and say something about the world. This is what makes Lila the more important book; ZMM now stands as an existential, epistemological treatise on dealing with the world as a response to Dynamic Quality.

## 2) Difference in analysis of Notion of Final Cause

Process is change. Even in those macroscopic objects that apparently remain the same from moment to moment, or for years at a time, there is process. Whitehead describes these objects as being societies of form continually renewed by waves of pulsing actuality. Each wave chooses to renew the forms of its historic environment. Pirsig sees stasis as an island or plateau in the sea of Dynamic Quality. Patterns have taken shape and they will hold for a while; then Dynamic Quality will beckon, so to speak, and these patterns will be given up for new shapings of Dynamic Quality.

Both Whitehead and Pirsig place great stock in the notion of final cause. On the surface, however, they seem to differ greatly on the details involved. Briefly put, Whitehead seems to describe the process of an occasion as motivated by specific final causes, e.g., the choosing of specific eternal objects for actualization Pirsig, on the other hand, seems to describe fundamental process as moving from definition into lack of definition The movement from static quality to Dynamic Quality is a response to an undifferentiated lure. Obviously, both descriptions cannot be accurate.

The problem lies in taking too simplistic a view of the philosophies of Whitehead and Pirsig. A clue to a solution can be found, on Whitehead's side, by examining the internal process of occasions. It was noted in Chapter I that an occasion moves from the physical prehensions of its history to a new individuality either by repeating data or by actualizing a proposition. The mere

repetition of data is rightly termed 'blind' data is received, valued up or down in feeling, and process rolls along:

In general, consciousness is negligible, and even the approach to it in vivid propositional feelings has failed to attain importance. Blind physical purposes reign. It is now obvious that blind prehensions, physical and mental, are the ultimate bricks of the physical universe. They are bound together within each actuality by the subjective unity of aim which governs their allied genesis and their final concrescence. (PR, 308)

Propositions arise in a phase supplemental to this repetitive activity. The word 'proposition' is greatly misleading. The type of propositions we tend to think of (e.g., 'The cat is black', 'All men are mortal') are merely the linguistic species of the genus, 'proposition'. In Whiteheadian terms, a proposition is a feeling of the possibility of a certain actuality being in a specific way--a relation between the actual world of process and the potential world of the eternal objects. He describes the propositions as being 'lures for feeling.' Feeling does not necessarily involve verbal form--in fact, it rarely involves it at all. Rather, the propositions are felt as potential ways of being for specific occasions. The experience of a proposition is a feeling of lack of definiteness. Propositions arise out of a combination of the blind reception of past data with omnipresent potentiality. The realization of a proposition involves definite forms but the initial lure is a somewhat blind impulse towards novelty. Propositional feelings are only the beginning of a rise out of the blind feeling of past and future, a residue of blind feelings remains. There is thus an element of an undifferentiated lure within the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.

On Pirsig's side, the idea of a completely general, undifferentiated, standing lure for process must be eliminated. I have already introduced the passage from Lila in which Pirsig describes the softening of static patterns and the response to Dynamic Quality through the example of being stricken by a new song. This is an example with which I, and I imagine most people, can empathize because they have had such experiences. A song strikes one, immediately, as wonderful. Now, no song I have ever heard and been stricken by has been unlike anything I have ever experienced. More than likely, such a song involves instruments I am familiar with, perhaps musicians I admire and quite possibly formal elements, such as key and chord changes, that are involved in other pieces I already admire. There is certainly something 'new' in such an experience, something to which I respond, but the Dynamic lure is not entirely, radically undifferentiated. I am placed, by my history, in a position to respond to whatever novelty is present in this experience. The novelty relies on my static patterns for its effectiveness. Understanding this is to comprehend a point Pirsig works out all through Lila there is no novelty without familiarity, no **dynamis** without **stasis**.

Once again, Whitehead and Pirsig's descriptions reach a crossroads of agreement. The positing and fulfilling of goals is an intrinsic function of value process. Such a function is an interplay of familiarity and novelty, of history and future, of form and lack of differentiation. What appears to be a difference of opinion turns out to conceal a subtle point about the nature of quality.

### 3) Difference in Conceptions of Standards of Value

The previous discussion helps to resolve an apparent difference between Pirsig and Whitehead at the level of Whitehead's occasions, but in another way only highlights another difference between the two philosophies. Whitehead provides a differentiated potentiality to which the realm of actuality has access at least once. Pirsig does not describe any such reservoir of forms. Now, inasmuch as both can be understood as describing the present value-experience as drawing on the relevant past for data, and allowing for differentiation within Pirsig's scheme and blindness within Whitehead's, the two value-theories are compatible. The difference in conceptions of ultimate potentiality remains. This becomes important because Whitehead seems to want this reservoir of eternal objects to be some kind of standard for value realization.

Restriction is the price of value. There cannot be value without antecedent standards of value, to discriminate the acceptance or rejection of what is before the envisaging mode of activity. Thus there is an antecedent limitation among values, introducing contraries, grades, and oppositions.  
(SMW, 178)

By 'standard', I mean, and I think Whitehead also means, something that reality or each individual reality refers to or depends upon for value, or for making value obvious. A standard here cannot mean an actual value by which things are compared. The standard in question is the primordial nature of god, which is not actual. This functions as a standard not by being a fixed value but by providing a yardstick for measuring different aspects of the process of occasions. In discussions of disagreements of value, people often argue by asking, "By what standard?" There seems to be a need, be it innate or a cultural predisposition, for some kind of measuring stick to evaluate things and events. Since Pirsig provides no similar reservoir, he provides no such 'external' standard either.

I addressed the matter of Whitehead's external standard in Chapter I and I want to return to that issue here. The notion of an external standard of value has to be qualified carefully so as not to be misunderstood. Firstly, the primordial nature of god is deficient in actuality. To be actual is to be a definite shape of value. Thus, the realm of eternal objects is not valuable in itself. Just as the eternal objects must be realized in the world of 'occasional' process to partake of actuality, they must also be value-activated in the actual world. In themselves, they are devoid of value **and** actuality. It is rather like the perspective of the angels in Wim Wenders' film, Wings of Desire. The angels can see the world in a way, but their experience is flat, filmed in black and white--merely conceptual. They are not really feeling the world as a interplay of individual value-actualities. When one angel crosses over and becomes an actual human, the world is real and value-charged--and now filmed in colour.

The realm of eternal objects is a standard for value-realization in two ways--it is a standard of detail of form, and a standard of range of finitude/infinity. Firstly, Whitehead describes the aesthetic success of actualization in terms of contrast and variety. The greater the contrast of feelings realized, the deeper is the 'importance' of the occasion. The possibilities for feeling, for contrast, and for realization are the eternal objects. The depth of contrast in an actual occasion

can be measured against the wider array in the primordial nature of god. The array of eternal objects is a standard by being the measuring stick of variety and contrast, and inasmuch as variety of eternal objects and constructive contrast of feelings are tied to value, the realm of eternal objects is a standard of value. It is not a value charged standard--it is not a matter of the value of an occasion not measuring up to the value of the primordial nature of god. Rather, it is a standard by 'standing' as a reservoir of possibilities of greater contrast of feeling--there is always more that can be tapped in feeling.

Secondly, the primordial nature of god is a standard of value in another sense that reveals something more about the nature of value itself. "Importance [value] is primarily monistic in its reference to the universe. Importance, limited to a finite individual occasion, ceases to be important. In some sense or other, Importance is derived from the immanence of infinitude in the finite." (MT, 28) Later in the same book, Whitehead adds,

Thus the forms are essentially referent beyond themselves. It is mere fantasy to impute to them any 'absolute reality which is devoid of implications beyond itself. The realm of forms is the realm of potentiality, and the very notion of 'potentiality' has an external meaning. It refers to life and motion. It refers to inclusion and exclusion. It refers to hope, fear, and intention. Phrasing this statement more generally--it refers to appetition. It refers to the development of actuality, which realizes form and is yet more than form. It refers to past, present and future... Actuality is the exemplification of Potentiality, and Potentiality is the characterization of Actuality, either in fact or in concept. (MT, 95-96)

The realm of the forms, referent to actuality in process, is the realm of infinitude. When an actual occasion shapes itself into a unified value, it limits potentiality--it excludes some forms. And yet, since each occasion draws from the reservoir of internally related eternal objects, each individual actual value occasion is also referent beyond itself. This is 'the immanence of infinitude in the finite'. Even though actuality depends on limitation of form, in order to ensure individuality, value is 'open'--never closed. No individual is 'merely' that individual, in form or in value. Each individual occasion is a perspective of the entire world of forms, and is charged with infinitude of that realm. Thus, by being the infinitude immanent in finite occasions, the primordial nature of god is an external standard of value; reality depends upon the eternal objects for this openness within limitation.

This openness, this immanence of the infinite in the finite, is analogous to Pirsig's undifferentiated Dynamic Quality. Pirsig stresses that the things we experience are static patterns of value, derived from Dynamic Quality. The more Dynamic something is--that is, the more open to possibilities of realizations of new value patterns--then the higher is the quality of that individual object. For Pirsig, Dynamic Quality stands as the vague, over-arching standard of

value. The more flexible the patterns of value of an individual are, then the more value-charged is the existence of those patterns.

Within the realm of static quality, there are derivative standards, each subservient to the Dynamic standard. Each of the four types of static quality is a standard for measurement of value:

What the evolutionary structure of the Metaphysics of Quality shows is that there is not just one moral system. There are many. In the Metaphysics of Quality there's the morality called the 'laws of nature', by which inorganic patterns triumph over chaos; there is a morality called the 'law of the jungle' where biology triumphs over the inorganic forces of starvation and death; there's a morality where social patterns triumph over biology, 'the law'; and there is an intellectual morality, which is still struggling in its attempts to control society. Each of these sets is no more related to the other than novels are to flip-flops. (Lila, 189)

Strictly speaking, biology is more evolved quality than the inorganic patterns, and this means biological 'choices' are more 'right' than inorganic ones, whenever the two clash. There is a 'right' biological choice on the biological scale, and a 'right' inorganic choice on its respective scale, and the 'more right' choice is the more Dynamic one. Society is more evolved than biology and the intellect is higher than society. Evolutionary investment is a major factor in the relations between the types of value. And yet, each can respond to Dynamic Quality itself. Although biology was a Dynamic development of inorganic static patterns of quality, it is possible, although highly unlikely, for there to be a new Dynamic development of inorganic quality. I say this is unlikely because of the existence of three other static types of value patterns 'above' the inorganic level. Dynamic developments are most likely to come from the intellectual level, then the social, then the biological.

Dynamic Quality, it must be remembered, plays the role that differentiated potentiality plays in Whitehead's cosmology. It is the source of new patterns of actuality. Whitehead's eternal objects are deficient in actuality, and Whitehead cannot point out the primordial nature of god. His argument involves a logico-metaphysical necessity he feels to be in the nature of things. About god, Whitehead writes, "We require God as the Principle of Concretion. This position can be substantiated only by the discussion of the general implication of the course of actual occasions--that is to say, the process of realization." (SMW, 174) [my emphasis] Also,

According to this argument the fact that there is a process of actual occasions, and the fact that the occasions are the emergence of values which require such limitation, both require that the course of events should have developed amid an antecedent limitation composed of conditions,

particularisation, and standards of value. (SMW, 178) [my emphasis]

Whitehead thinks that his description of the world requires certain principles. Pirsig's Dynamic Quality is only vaguely felt and responded to--its reality is not demonstrable, whereas (arguably) static patterns of quality are. However, Pirsig is pointing, to some sort of empirical evidence--the feeling of the softening of static patterns that issues in new value situations. Whitehead, however, is relying on his rationalistic faith in the explicative sufficiency of his model. When he does point out some sort of evidence, such as direct intuitive experience of infinitude by humans, it is the same sort of evidence Pirsig points to--a felt openness. This means that despite the complete difference of opinion on the nature of potentiality and of standards of value, Pirsig and Whitehead largely agree on the experience of potentiality and the experience of issuing in new patterns of actuality.

I would like to refer again to the element of 'blindness' I introduced in the previous section. In his book, A Whiteheadian Aesthetic, Donald Sherburne comments on this same point. He points out that, "In the case of a proposition the unqualified generality of a conceptual feeling is qualified by relevance, but by relevance to a bare logical subject, not to an actuality". (1961, 132) In a footnote on the same page he adds that it is a proposition's "...retention of indefiniteness which serves as a lure for conscious feelings." Even for Whitehead, the experience of the external standard of value is a somewhat blindly felt event--and if it issues in genuine novelty, then it is certainly not inaccurate to describe the moment as 'Dynamic' (although, I suppose all Whiteheadian moments are 'Dynamic' in process terms).

In spite of general agreement on the existential experience of value in process, it is the matter of the nature of potentiality which, I think, most divides Whitehead and Pirsig. More subtle examination of this issue will either unite the philosophies or elevate one in degree of truth above the other.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Scientific Materialism, Classic• Formalism, Subject-Object Metaphysics, and Value**

In both of his books, Pirsig asserts that he is attempting to effect a paradigm shift--a major task to undertake! Whitehead is attempting the same thing without being so bold. Commentators have said it of him, and John Cobb in 1964 used the ten 'postmodern to describe the result. In their respective re-interpretations of quality and matter of fact, Pirsig and Whitehead are consciously attacking 'prevailing' views of the nature of the world. I qualify 'prevailing' because many people, even in the time of Whitehead, would deny holding such views. Consequently, Whitehead occasionally characterizes these positions as subconscious tendencies or assumptions people take up without realizing just what they are doing. These world-views are not just opinions about reality. Rather, they have become, more or less, built-in assumptions about the nature of the world through which 'we', in general, filter our experience. 'We' deny holding

them because they go unexamined, working as presupposed structures to our experience rather than as constructions from our experience.

The positions that Whitehead and Pirsig are trying to breach are a collection of assumptions about the world that may be roughly classified as philosophico-scientific positions. Their roots are most easily traced back to Descartes and Newton. With this historical fact in mind, it is important to notice two things. Firstly, the taking up of these positions has taught people an immense amount about the world and they are not to be repudiated as evil and misguided. Rather, they were natural, and perhaps necessary steps to take in the development of human thought. Secondly, it is inaccurate to dismiss these notions as wrong. They are structures of thought about the world, which means they are abstractions. So long as one keeps the degree of abstraction involved in mind, error can be avoided. It is unguarded employment of these assumptions which leads to error. This is the problem that Whitehead and Pirsig are addressing. Whitehead is proposing an analysis of reality at a more concrete level than the scientific paradigms that preceded him. Pirsig sees himself as developing a more adequate explicative framework than the subject-object metaphysics he is trying to dislodge. It is the omissions of these systems they are addressing, after the positive elements have been admitted.

Whitehead calls the position he is replacing 'scientific materialism'. It is the chief target in his first major philosophical work, SMW. Within the first chapter, he characterizes the world-view succinctly.

There persists, however, throughout the whole period [of the development of modern science] the fixed scientific cosmology which presupposes the ultimate fact of an irreducible brute matter, or material, spread throughout space in a flux of configurations. In itself such a material is senseless, valueless, purposeless. It just does what it does do, following a fixed routine imposed by external relations which do not spring from the nature of its being. It is this assumption that I call 'scientific materialism'. (SMW, 17)

The consequences of the assuming of this view, as has been noted, are both fortunate and unfortunate. A great deal has been learned, but much has been ignored or even viciously slighted. In the final chapter of SMW, Whitehead alludes to the basic problems.

The independence ascribed to bodily substances carried them away from the realm of values altogether. They degenerated into a mechanism entirely valueless, except as suggestive of an external ingenuity... The doctrine of minds, as independent substances, leads directly not merely to private worlds of experience, but also to private worlds of morals... Also the assumption of the bare valuelessness of mere matter led to a lack of



reverence in the treatment of natural or artistic beauty. (SMW, 195-196)

Scientific materialism, and the assertion of the independence of the 'types' of matter that seems to be part of this view of the nature of things, cannot deal with value. This seems to be a minor problem if one is describing the movement of the planets or the constituents of a cell, but when the same scientific perspective is turned on human activity, much is mistreated. Human activity is value charged and to deny this fact is at best short-sighted, and at worst absurd.

Robert Pirsig, seventy years after Whitehead wrote SMW is still attacking scientific materialism. This is why I feel fairly safe in characterizing such a view as 'prevailing'--it is still up for discussion, even though contemporary physics has moved away from a matter based cosmology. In ZMM, Pirsig provides his own description of scientific materialism.

Scientific materialism, which is commoner among lay followers of science than among scientists themselves, holds that what is composed of matter or energy and is measurable by the instruments of science is real. Anything else is unreal, or at least of no importance. (ZMM, 228)

The statement about 'lay followers of science' is important to note. In 1993, I attended a lecture about one philosopher's attempt to expand reason to include an aesthetic or 'lyric' element (Dr. Jan Zwicky, 'Lyric Philosophy: An Introduction', Saint Thomas University, November 8, 1993). One question, posed by a 'lay follower of science', directed to the speaker after the lecture involved a stated assumption that everyone agreed reasoning was reducible to bio-chemical reactions or physical events--in other words, a reduction of mental experience to matter. The questioner seemed rather surprised when the speaker denied that 'everyone' assumed that mental events were reducible to physical ones. Mental events are certainly value-charged, meaning that the questioner's assumption involved either a reduction of value to mere matter, or a dismissal of value matters entirely. This is to be contrasted with the writings of a contemporary scientist, Ilya Prigogine.

Prigogine, discussing the evolution of 'populations' in his book, Order Out Of Chaos describes organisms as being more biologically 'valuable' if they represent a large biological investment. The type of individuals that are the most valuable to date are those which are most flexible--they can learn well from experience and store memories. The biological downside of the development of these abilities has been the necessity of a longer period of individual maturation than less 'valuable' organisms. To counter this extended period of vulnerability, there has been the development of complex groups--families and societies. The social structures that are developed are not experienced merely biologically--they are not reducible completely to cell functions or chemical reactions. Many people would cite their own experience as evidence of the particular type of 'meaning', or value of such structures. Having biological origin is not identical to being exhaustively biological in nature. Although the world view Whitehead and Pirsig are countering is apparently scientific in nature, it is not necessarily held by all scientists, nor is it necessarily representative of the current state of science. Rather, it is a historically engendered tendency that traditionally has been regarded as scientific.

Besides scientific materialism, Pirsig sets up another aspect of the philosophico-scientific cosmology to be resisted. He names this 'classic formalism', which insists that what isn't understood intellectually isn't understood at all. Quality in this case is unimportant because it's an emotional understanding unaccompanied by the intellectual elements of reason' (ZMM, 228).

Both 'scientific materialism' and 'classic formalism' are, for Pirsig, symptomatic of a greater (i.e., more fundamental) problem--the assumption of a subject-object metaphysics. Briefly put, a subject-object metaphysics divides the world primarily into two kinds of entities--the objects, typically taken to be reliable, empirically verifiable, measurable entities, and subjects, which are seen as mysterious, unreliable, ethereal entities. Under this interpretation, subjects are not 'obviously' real as objects are, and so subjective matters are not to be trusted. Value matters are 'subjective'--unreliable. The trajectory of a particle is so reliable that, from basic measurements of position and velocity, both its history and future can be, theoretically, extrapolated. Thus, within this manifestation of a subject-object metaphysics, the movement of particles is real and 'important' for study, even though we seem to have little direct, personal experience of them, and value matters, which we experience every moment, are not seen as reliably real and are not to be scientifically treated. The assumption is that once the objects in the world are completely understood, the nature of subjective experiences will be obvious also, or will have been explained away.

Although this first interpretation of subject-object metaphysics is the more important one in this study of Whitehead and Pirsig, there is another side which they also reject. It is the converse of the first scheme: the objects are doubted, and the existence of one subject, the experienter, is the only certainty. Again, this is a counter-intuitive position to take. Both Pirsig and Whitehead object to the reductions that apparently occur under subject-object metaphysics; their systems are attempts to incorporate more data, not less. To illustrate Whitehead's and Pirsig's objections to this philosophico-scientific cosmology, I will present two arguments from each of them. Since they are objecting to assumptions based on what there is to experience in the world, these arguments are meta-epistemological in nature. They constitute a re-interpretation of experience, human and otherwise, and the evidence therein presented.

### Whitehead

1) Top-Down Explanation: In The Function of Reason [FR], Whitehead chastises modern science for explicit and deliberate rejection of evidence that is contrary to its assumptions about the nature of the world. Under the matter-based cosmology developed over approximately four centuries, everything was supposedly explicable in terms of particles bumping into each other. Efficient causation is the only variety of causation at work in the universe if science is correct. Whitehead thinks this assumption is obviously in error and involves the crudest variety of scientific crime possible--the deliberate rejection of evidence contrary to a hypothesis.

Whitehead's presentation of his objection is brief, condemning, and devastating. He starts on a note of exasperated incredulity:

The point to which I wish to draw attention is the mass of evidence lying outside the physiological method which is simply ignored in the prevalent

scientific doctrine. The conduct of human affairs is entirely dominated by our recognition of foresight determining purpose, and purpose issuing in conduct... The evidence is so overwhelming, the belief so unquestioning, the evidence of language so decisive, that it is difficult to know where to begin in demonstrating it. (FR, 13)

It is the existence of purpose, or final causation, to which Whitehead is pointing in particular. Science, at the time, and philosophico-scientific assumptions still held today, deny the existence of teleology. Evidence to the contrary is easy to produce and difficult to miss. Whitehead points to his own current activities as an example: "As I write this lecture, I intend to deliver it in Princeton University. Cut out the notion of final causation, and this 'intention' is without meaning" (FR, 13). Likewise, I intend to submit these pages as part of my thesis, which is a degree requirement of the program I have chosen in the development of a certain career path I picked several years ago. 'Small' purposes reside within more far-reaching ones, permeating every moment of human existence. Somewhat cheekily, Whitehead points out the efforts of the very scientists he is chastising:

Many a scientist has patiently designed experiments for the purpose of substantiating his belief that animal operations are motivated by no purposes. He perhaps has spent his spare time in writing articles to prove that human beings are as other animals so that "purpose" is a category irrelevant for the explanation of their bodily activities, his own activities included. Scientists animated by the purpose of proving that they are purposeless constitute an interesting subject for study. (FR, 16)

The important thing to note about human purposes is that we conduct them through the instrument of our bodies. Yet a body is a physical/biological structure, the activities of which are supposedly exhaustively explicable in terms of the activities of bits of inanimate matter. So, the objection that the 'scientific' assumption of the non-existence of final cause is not really meant to apply to human activity (FR, 14) just does not hold water. Human activity takes place in the physical realm--purpose obviously and commonly affects the activity of matter. In Whitehead's words, "There is clear evidence that certain operations of certain animal bodies depend upon the foresight of an end and the purpose to attain it." (FR, 16)

Once this evidence has been admitted, there is another step to be taken. The 'typical' tendency would be to assert that final cause as experienced by humans must be reducible to the interaction of bits of matter, no matter what our experiences might be. Whitehead explicitly denies this as the only or necessary step to take:

Again we are told that we should look at the matter historically. Mankind has gradually developed from the lowliest forms of life, and must therefore be explained in terms applicable to all such forms. But

why construe the later forms by analogy to the earlier forms? Why not reverse the process? It would seem to be more sensible, more truly empirical, to allow each living species to make its own contribution to the demonstration of factors inherent in living things. (FR, 15)

It is this top-down route of explanation, as opposed to traditional bottom-up approaches, that Whitehead takes in his interpretation of matter-of-fact in process. At the macroscopic level of existence, purpose dictates some activity; taking the top-down approach, purpose must be present in reality at its fundamental level. It is re-interpretation of reality in terms of experience and purpose that constitutes Whitehead's contribution to science, metaphysics, and the understanding of value, and it leads nicely to the second argument of Whitehead that I wish to present.

2) Re-interpretation of Brute Matter-of-Fact involving Perception and Purpose: Whitehead, in accordance with his idea of top-down explanation of the world, interprets reality as being fundamentally a process of experience. This means that actualities exist through their experiences. Thus, "the organic philosophy interprets experience as meaning the 'self-enjoyment of being one among many, and of being one arising out of the composition of many'" (PR, 145), and "The process of experiencing is constituted by the reception of entities, whose being is antecedent to that process, into the complex fact which is that process itself." (AI, 178) Not all actualities experience equally, however; there are grades of experience that involve slightly different treatments of the experienced data.

The most primitive type of experience involves 'reception' of data, as opposed to 'perception', which occurs in higher occasions (PR, 113). Mere reception implies that the occasion, in its self-deciding process, merely repeats what it experiences. There is no emphasis, no novel content introduced through the later phases of concrescence.

The simplest grade of actual occasions must be conceived as experiencing a few sensa, with the minimum of patterned contrast. The sensa are then experienced emotionally, and constitute the specific feelings whose intensities sum up into the unity of satisfaction. In such occasions the process is deficient in its highest phases; the process is the slave to the datum. There is the individualizing phase of conformal feeling, but the originative phase of supplementary and conceptual feelings are negligible. (PR, 115)

Even though this process is unoriginative, the occasion still 'decides' itself--it moves from a welter of data to a satisfaction of feeling. Thus, primitive occasions and complex occasions 'experience' similarly, but higher occasions handle the data in different ways. The unoriginative response to data is efficient causation at work (PR, 117); any higher occasions involve increasingly more significant degrees of teleology.

In higher occasions, experience becomes perception and ‘perception’ as such takes the primary form of consciousness of the past data responsible for the present moment of experience. This is a very fine line drawn between primitive organisms and slightly higher grades of occasions. In fact, Whitehead wavers slightly about whether there are any organisms that merely receive, without this slight grade of perception. In PR, he explicitly states that there is a difference. The primitive organisms have already been introduced as mere repeaters; slightly more aware occasions undergo ‘experience in the mode of causal efficacy’:

Perception in its primary form is consciousness [my emphasis] of the causal efficacy of the external world by reason of which the percipient is a concrescence from a definitely constituted datum. The vector character of the datum is this causal efficacy.

Thus perception, in this primary sense, is perception of the settled world in the past as constituted by its feeling-tones, and as efficacious by reason of those feeling tones. Perception, in this sense of the term, will be called ‘perception in the mode of causal efficacy.’ (PR, 120)

However, in Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect [SYM] he makes a slightly different claim: “I shall argue on the assumption that sense-perception is mainly a characteristic of more advanced organisms; whereas all organisms have experience of causal efficacy whereby their functioning is conditioned by their environment” (SYM, 5). The experience of causal efficacy is different from the consciousness of such causal efficacy, although the difference in organisms is, in effect, negligible. All organisms are conditioned by their environment.

There is another mode of pure perception characterizing only higher grade organisms, this time involving the present as opposed to the past. It must be remembered that occasions cannot experience contemporary occasions: the past is the only data available for experience. Thus, the present mode of perception cannot be a reception of data. Rather, it is a projection. Consciousness is filled with information from the mode of causal efficacy and emphasis illuminates various regions with this antecedent data.

One type [experience] is the familiar immediate presentation of the contemporary world, by means of our projection of our immediate sensations, determining for us characteristics of contemporary physical entities. This type is the experience of the immediate world around us, a world decorated by sense-data dependent on the immediate states of relevant parts of our own bodies. (SYM, 13-14)

These projected sensa are different from the feeling tones experienced in causal efficacy, although derived from them. This is a new mode of experience, vivid in present significance. The ‘external’ data of the past have been combined with other ‘past’ data from the experiencing

body. Thus, the information expressed or experienced in perception in the mode of presentational immediacy is external data rife with bodily interpretation. Causal efficacy is past data work; presentational immediacy is as much about the present bodily environment as about the entire world.

The main facts about presentational immediacy are: (i) that the sense-data involved depend on the percipient organism and its spacial relations to the perceived organisms; (ii) that the contemporary world is exhibited as extended and as a plenum of organisms; (iii) that presentational immediacy is an important factor in the experience of only a few high-grade organisms, and that for the others it is embryonic or entirely negligible. (SYM, 23)

Perception in the mode of presentational immediacy is Whitehead's interpretation of everyday, human sense-experience. Things are illustrated for us in their spatial dimensions, in relation to ourselves.

Finally, there is one impure mode of perception, also confined to the higher organisms. This is the mode of symbolic reference, the interplay between the modes of causal efficacy and presentational immediacy. In human terms,

...the human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its experience. . . . The organic functioning whereby there is transition from the symbol to the meaning will be called 'symbolic reference'. (SYM, 7-8)

The array of examples of different types of symbolic reference is staggering once one to list them. For example, In SYM, Whitehead discusses all three of the following in terms of symbolic reference. Firstly, there is fairly normal, unexceptional experience. For example, when we encounter an array of data in particular spatial relationships and understand it as being a 'chair'--when we use a chair--symbolic reference is at work (SYM, 3). Notably, this symbolism is subconscious--a near automatic process of perception, albeit confined to the grade of creatures that can experience in the mode of presentational immediacy. My house pet can recognize and use a chair as a chair--it is not that special. Secondly, there is the obvious symbolism of language. Here, a sound or a pattern on a page represents or symbolizes some type of external object, or experience, or other words--there is an obvious symbolic reference. Whitehead goes so far as to expand this symbolism as necessary to, and constitutive of, all expression: "Indeed, 'expression' is 'symbolism'." (SYM, 62) Finally, there is the social symbolism, perhaps most easily demonstrable through reference to action. Whitehead discusses the various levels of symbolism designed to produce action in the armed forces. On one level, there is a trained automatism--instantaneous, 'reflex' response to the symbolism of orders. On another level, there is a symbolism of respect--the whole range of flags, stripes, and medals designed to permeate the forces with a sense of importance.

What does perception, in all of its various modes, have to do with value? Value is integral to the process of concrescence of an occasion. An occasion consists in feelings and treatment of data. Perception is how the occasion feels its data and how it projects for itself a goal of satisfaction. Perception is, on one side,, the feeling of the past as relevant to this moment of concrescence--the mode of causal efficacy--and, on the other side, is the more active business of selection and emphasis--presentational immediacy and symbolic reference. To return to SYM:

We must conceive perception in the light of a primary phase in the self-production of an occasion of actual existence. In defense of this notion of self-production arising out of some primary phase, I would remind you that, apart from it, there can be no moral responsibility. The potter, and not the pot, is responsible for the shape of the pot. (SYM 8-9)

Perception, for Whitehead, is not merely the passive reception of sensa--it is how reality experiences, values, and produces itself anew. Continuing, Whitehead stresses exactly this point: "Thus, for the percipient at least, the perception is an internal relationship between itself and the things perceived" (SYM, 9). Perception is how the past is taken up into the present with reference to the immediate future.

Symbolic reference in particular has a value function. While perception in the modes of causal efficacy and presentational immediacy has to do with direct illustration of past and present data, symbolic reference has the active function of emphasizing data, and making our experience of them deeper. "The object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized." (SYM, 63). This mode of perception selects and enhances data in ways which the data themselves need not particularly suggest. As Whitehead states early in this work on perception, there need be nothing about the perceived data in either pure mode of perception that suggests itself as symbol or meaning. He illustrates through reference to the process of poetic creation and subsequent experience of the inspired poem (SYM, 12).

Perhaps the poet finds inspiration for a poem about trees by going into a forest. Here, the trees suggest the words in a symbol-meaning relationship. Later, the inspired poem conjures up the images of trees for the reader. The symbolic relationship has now been reversed--the words function as symbol for the enhanced reference to the 'meaning'; the images and remembered experience of trees. The status of 'symbol' and 'meaning' depends upon the constitution of the percipient, not upon the data. Symbolic reference is a synthetic mode of perception--data from the pure modes are brought together in new relationships of enhanced significance. Since this relating is the function of the percipient, error is possible. Perception in the mode of symbolic reference is the foundation of error in the world. Error in this sense merely means that subsequent direct perception of the world might not agree with the synthetic product of symbolism. This can have unwanted consequences, but it also plays an important role in the introduction of novelty into the world of actual process:

We must not, however, judge too severely of error. In the initial stages of mental progress, error in symbolic reference is the discipline which promotes imaginative freedom. Aesop's dog lost his meat, but

he gained a step on the road towards a free imagination. (SYM, 19)

Increased potential for novelty, as a free imagination provides, is essential to a world of evolving value. A final note about subjective aim is warranted. As presented in Chapter I, the subjective aim of an occasion is what it projects for itself as a harmonized feeling to realize. This comes about once the data have been felt and simplified--repetition eliminated, inconsistencies harmonized. The subjective aim of an occasion is the over-arching value goal that is posited once all of the primary valuations of data have been made. Obviously, the notion is very important for this discussion of value and matter-of-fact. As has been noted, Whitehead has stated that the aim of process is importance, and the subjective aim of occasions is the primary occurrence of aim for process. The three modes of perception can be ranked in reference to direct involvement in subjective aim. Symbolic reference, being most relevant to future possibilities as opposed to past data, is the most important mode to the development of a subjective aim. Presentational immediacy, although an 'active' mode of perception, merely illustrates the present through extrapolation from the immediately past data, there is no important future reference perception in the mode of causal efficacy merely sets up the other two modes in its reception of the past as relevant. Now, since subjective aim is particularly important to the depth and range of the value proposed by an occasion to itself for realization, occasions which experience in the mode of symbolic reference have greater potential for significant value realization. The synthetic activity of symbolism both enhances the significance of felt data and provides new possibilities for actualization. In human experience, language emphasizes those aspects of the world that we take to be important. Skillful use of language, as in poetry or in oratory, can push this function one step further and make us see as valuable something that did not seem valuable before. This symbolic function then significantly alters the manner in which we go about our lives. New possibilities for actualization have been provided, mainly through shifts in value perspective. Symbolism makes the old new.

### Robert Pirsig

1) Reductio Ad Absurdum: It is in ZMM that Pirsig presents and takes on the related views of scientific materialism and classical formalism with appeals to epistemology. He reports his first attempts at a philosophy of Quality while teaching at Bozeman College, and he faces this opposition primarily from other faculty members. Reacting intuitively to the dynamic nature of the subject matter, he initially refuses to define Quality. Bristling academically, his colleagues pose an attack from the classic formalist camp—"If you can't define it, what makes you think it exists?" (ZMM, 210) Considered as a response to the provocative assertions Pirsig/Phaedrus was making at the time, such a blunt question was not out of line at all.

The response Phaedrus makes, is, perhaps uncharacteristically, thankfully down-to-earth. To ground his mystical leanings, Phaedrus self-consciously proposes a realist answer to this problem "A thing exists... if a world without it can't function normally. If we can show that a world without Quality functions abnormally, then we have shown that Quality exists, whether it's defined or not" (ZMM, 210). He goes on to construct an existential reductio ad absurdum description of the world--a world without Quality is nothing like the world we know, so this world involves Quality. In essence, this is the flip-side of Whitehead's appeal to top-down



explanation. The Quality-free world is the world of scientific materialism--a world implied by the materialists' strident elimination of evidence. The world with undefined Quality is the 'normal' or 'real' world precisely because it admits so much data that the philosophico-scientific cosmology ignores.

It must be remembered that ZMM predates Lila considerably. It is in the latter book that Pirsig discusses inorganic and biological patterns of quality. In ZMM he is concerned primarily with the human experience of value. To subtract Quality from Pirsig's Lila world would leave nothing at all, but to do so within the context of the discussion in the earlier book is a more rewarding exercise.

The first implications of such a subtraction are obvious:

The first casualty... would be the fine arts. If you can't distinguish between good and bad arts they disappear. There's no point in hanging a painting on the wall when the bare wall looks just as good. There's no point to symphonies, when scratches from the record or hum from the record needle sound just as good. (ZMM, 210)

Other noticeable differences would be the elimination of poetry, comedy, and sports. Interestingly, the marketplace would be changed even more dramatically.

Since quality of flavour would be meaningless, markets would only carry basic grains such as rice, cornmeal, soybeans and flour... and vitamin and mineral supplements to make up deficiencies... We would all use public transportation. We would all wear G.I. shoes. (ZMM, 210)

Finally, the work force would also be substantially changed. All sorts of jobs would disappear completely. He thinks science and technology would change, but "...pure science, mathematics, philosophy and particularly logic would be unchanged." (ZMM, 211) In sum, even a casual consideration of a Qualityless world should be enough to demonstrate the existence of Quality in this world.

I want to make several comments about this construction, starting with Pirsig's final claim about mathematics, philosophy, and logic. All through ZMM Pirsig is quite open about his animosity towards the faculty he calls 'reason'. He sees this as being a purely manipulative, valueless technique of the intellect, to which the Western World has somehow become enslaved. The reason he thinks mathematics, logic, and philosophy would not suffer by the elimination of quality is because he construes them to be acts of pure reason already--quality-free by definition. Ultimately, he thinks he is proving that reason is fundamentally incomplete, or even 'sick', because it fails to recognize quality.

I think this is an example of being correct in theory and in error in application. Even if one allows Pirsig to define 'reason' as being purely manipulative, one could still hold that he is

incorrect in seeing the human activities of mathematics, philosophy, and logic as being purely activities of such a manipulative faculty. All three are participated in often primarily for the quality 'rush' achieved through the heady delights of speculation or pursuit. With regard to reason and quality, Whitehead avoids this sort of error by connecting intellectual functions of an occasion's process to quality at a fundamental level.

To be fair to Pirsig, one should note he subsequently corrects the reflex hatred of reason. At base, Lila is his attempt to define Quality--an outright reversal of his previous position. His reason for this 'change of heart' is that he recognizes a type of quality peculiar to intellectual pursuits--the pursuits of reason. He goes on to analyze these differences of quality in terms of definable, static patterns of fundamentally indefinable Dynamic Quality, thereby achieving a more adequate account of the world. He does begin to allude to this sort of Quality in ZMM but he does not explicitly pursue the metaphysical implications. Also, there is Pirsig endorsement of Jerry King's 1992 book, The Art of Mathematics:

The Art of Mathematics is a fascinating and important book, especially to someone like me, who flunked third grade arithmetic once and calculus twice I wish King had been teaching those courses when I took them. (King 1992)

The Art of Mathematics is an exciting testimony to the Quality element in pursuits of reason and is specifically, as its title states, an attempt to portray mathematics as an art form. As such, the participation in mathematics is a matter of aesthetic creation and appreciation--quality-rife experiences. Really, The Art of Mathematics is an addition to the corpus of works on aesthetics and a direct refutation of Pirsig's claim in ZMM. I would suggest that the pursuits of logic and philosophy are similar to mathematics in being (at least) analogous to art forms, and that Pirsig's slighting of these pursuits in ZMM is unwarranted.

Secondly, I think Pirsig is too generous to the Quality-free world. I see no reason why there would be any life at all without Quality. He describes people as wearing practical shoes and consuming practical foods only. But, at the very least, he is neglecting the aspect of health. For instance, in a Quality-free universe, there would be no reason to avoid pain. Illness would be as valueless as health and, ultimately, there would be no reason to prefer life to death. He mentions that there might be milk provided for the weaning of infants. In a Quality-free universe, there would be no reason to want children and no reason to engage in sexual activity; there would be no infants to wean. Again, Pirsig corrects this error in Lila by recognizing the biological species of Quality and by commenting on sexual activity in particular to illustrate his point.

In ZMM, Pirsig concludes:

The world can function without [Quality] but life would be so dull as to be hardly worth living. In fact it wouldn't be worth living. The term worth is a Quality term. Life would just be living without any values or purpose at all. (ZMM, 211)

He does not go on to draw the conclusion that there would not be life at all without Quality. The matter I wish to emphasize is his momentary recognition of the Quality-import of terms such as 'worth.' In the first passage in the reductio ad absurdum description, Pirsig describes a valueless world using the term, 'just as good.' In such a world, a symphony and an electronic hum would have the same lack of value import. But they would not sound 'just as good' in a quality-free world, unless the respective experiences were compared from a perspective within a world with quality. They would merely 'sound.' In fact, I think that a Quality-free world would be such an absurd place that there be as much chance of there being symphonies to listen to as there would be of electronic hums. There would be no reason to prefer the ease of producing the hum compared to the labour involved in composing and orchestrating a symphony. If there were a quality-free universe, it would be empty. If quality were to be subtracted from our world, people would have no reason to stop listening to symphonies if, inexplicably, people kept engaging in daily activities. Strictly speaking, a quality-free world cannot be described in Quality terms at all.

2) Analysis of Moment of Perception: Pirsig sees classical formalism and scientific materialism as typical symptoms of a bigger problem--subject-object metaphysics. The division of the world into objective reality and subjective experiences seems to place value on the subjective side, which is defectively real and of secondary importance within a scientific paradigm. Classic formalism tries to eliminate the unreliability of the subjective side of the division through an appeal to valueless, objective reason. Scientific materialism is an emphasis on the objective world, consisting of reality unspoiled by subjectivity. Quality just does not figure largely or positively within this type of metaphysics, so Pirsig's impulse is to go after the source of the problem and suggest a new metaphysics.

The weakness Pirsig attacks is the division of the world into subjects and objects. These categories, he thinks, are not fundamental, but rather are constructs of experience and derivative from more fundamental categories. The mistake that leads to making the subject-object division fundamental is ignoring the time lag between received physical information and experienced world information:

...at the cutting edge of time, before an object can be distinguished, there must be a kind of nonintellectual awareness, which he called awareness of Quality. You can't be aware you've seen a tree until after you've seen the tree, and between the instant of vision and instant of awareness there must be a time lag. (ZMM, 241)

The result is quite Whiteheadian in tone: the 'thought' world of subjects and objects ('trees') exists in the past. The past is 'history', both literally and in the colloquial sense of 'being dead'--its actuality has perished, in Whiteheadian terms. Pirsig is, intuitively, accusing subject-object metaphysics of committing the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

Subjects and objects are abstracted interpretations of the moment of reality, which Pirsig identifies as a moment of Quality experience:

The past exists only in our memories, the future only in our plans. The present is our only reality.

The tree that you are aware of intellectually, because of that small time lag, is always in the past and therefore is always unreal. Any intellectually conceived object is always in the past and therefore unreal. Reality is always the moment of vision before the intellectualization takes place. ... This preintellectual reality is what Phaedrus felt he had properly identified as Quality. Since all intellectually identifiable things must emerge from this preintellectual reality, Quality is the parent the source of all subjects and objects. (ZMM, 241)

The assumption that reality is divided into subjects and objects is not necessary then, but a habit. Pirsig, in this early, anti-intellectual work, sees trained intellectuals as being the most susceptible to subject/object rigidity, and suspects children, uneducated people, and people from non-Western (i.e., non-Greek heritage) cultures as being the most open to recognizing the moment of undifferentiated Quality (ZMM, 241)

As already noted, this has a distinctively Whiteheadian tone. For a newly arising occasion, its past world of objects is finished, their intrinsic process spent. Objects are merely information for the reality of present process, and are entirely in the past. To assign them a distinctive actuality is to miss the spark in the present moment in confused intellectual abstraction. Once an occasion reaches the phase of satisfaction, it ceases to function as a subject and takes its role as an objectified datum for future subject-functions (v. Ch. I, pp. 12-16). Interestingly, an early Whiteheadian influence, William Wordsworth, in his 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', describes the preintellectual experience Pirsig describes, but in imagery perhaps more suited to Whitehead's view.

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore; Turn  
wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no  
more.

Also:

The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction: not indeed  
For that which is most worthy to be blessed--

Delight and liberty...  
But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet a master light of all our seeing.

Here is the appeal to the openness of childhood, but with the reference to a divine source of possibility (perhaps not particularly well evidenced in these passages) closer to Whitehead's philosophy than Pirsig's.

One objection to this dismissal of subjects and objects consists in looking a little further into the past. It can be argued that the experience must be 'of' something, and that it is always of an object--Pirsig just has not looked far enough back into a history of perception. The response to be made to this objection consists in continuing the backwards extrapolation. Each moment of perception can be traced to a present of preintellectual reality. Either one gets into an infinite regress, chicken-and-egg argument, or one ends up with undifferentiated Quality as the starting point, the precondition for all experience. I suspect that Pirsig leans towards having the undifferentiated origin, but the analysis of Quality in evolution in Lila suggests that the two aspects require each other--no dynamis without stasis.

Pirsig finishes his reply to his questioners with a formal description of the experience of Quality. He speaks with a dramatic tone both because he is relieved to have been able to answer their objections and because he is aware he is stepping outside of the bounds of typical thought:

The easiest intellectual analogue of pure Quality that people in our environment can understand is that 'Quality is the response of an organism to its environment'... In our highly complex organic state we advanced organisms respond to our environment with an invention of many marvelous analogues. We invent earth and heavens, trees, stones and oceans, gods, music, arts, language, philosophy, engineering, civilization and science. We call these analogues reality. And they are reality. We mesmerize our children into knowing they are reality. We throw anyone who does not accept these analogues into an insane asylum. But that which causes us to invent the analogues is Quality. Quality is the continuing stimulus which our environment puts upon us to create the world in which we live. All of it. Every last bit of it. (ZMM, 244-245)

That reality is identical with the invention of human analogues seems implausible. But when, in Lila, Pirsig broadens his sense of creation to mean that the evolutionary process of actualities is a

‘migration of static patterns of value towards Dynamic Quality’, it becomes more reasonable. It is hard to hold humans solely responsible for the creation of the universe; it is also difficult to hold that the analogues in which the universe is interpreted are somehow merely a human creation. But having the entire world subject to the same categorical conditions is feasible. Then one requires a Whiteheadian micro-analysis of experience to complement Pirsigian macro-analysis. They are describing the same universe from different perspectives and with different emphasis. It is true that humans experience in terms of analogues, but, in Whiteheadian terms, so does the rest of the world. Reality lies in the Dynamic moment, which is shaped in a myriad of forms, but is never exhausted. The static patterns that are assumed as a response to the Dynamic lure are ‘deficiently actual’ since the Dynamic moment has moved on, but they are real if the appropriate degree of abstraction is recognized.

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Nexuses’ is the word I have chosen for the plural of Whitehead’s technical term, nexus. I cannot reproduce the character he chose for the plural.

I am using a specialized meaning for ‘valuation’ and ‘value’. By these I mean ‘to charge with value’ and ‘the process of charging with value.’

One result of Pirsig’s original thinking about quality was a period of insanity and institutionalization. Looking back on his notes of the time, he sees a sign of this in the words ‘All of it. Every last bit of it.’ In his defence, it should be noted that Whitehead, who was never institutionalized for insanity, employs similar over-emphasis on page 167 of PR: “Finally, the reformed subjectivist principle must be repeated: that apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness.”

Central to the work of Ilya Prigogine is refinement of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, including description of self-ordering, ‘running up’ processes in nature. Whitehead pursues a similar line of inquiry in FR.

It is in connection with his description of Dynamic Quality that Pirsig makes his only reference to Whitehead in Lila: “When A N Whitehead wrote that ‘mankind is driven forward by dim apprehensions of things too obscure for its existing language,’ he was writing about Dynamic Quality.” (Lila, 140)

Meiosis, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary is the process of division of cell nuclei whereby diploid number of chromosomes is halved, to be combined with another half set at fertilization; metazoan are multi-cellular with differentiated organisms tissues; symbiosis is an association of two different organisms-living attached to each other, or one within the other are multi-cellular with differentiated organisms tissues; symbiosis is an association of two different organisms-living attached to each other, or one within the other.

I think, however, that a similar objection could easily be leveled against a substance-centric conception of the world. Instead of worrying about mental substance and bodily substance, one could argue that the term ‘substance’ has become meaningless because of the wide application. The result would be a return to the things themselves. There are mental phenomena--according to a metaphysics of substance, they must be ‘stuff’, or they don’t exist. Their existence seems obvious--worrying about what sort of substance isn’t going to change that.

After his period of institutionalization, and concurrently with the writing of ZMM, Pirsig worked as a writer of technical manuals, and learned about computers by working with both electrical engineers and programmers towards the end of writing manuals.

Whitehead also addresses this matter, particularly in Chapter XI of AI, 'Subjects and Objects': "No topic has suffered more from this tendency [to assume that the more fundamental factors will be clear in experience] of philosophers than their account of the subject-object structure of experience." (AI 175)

Of course, this is nothing new. Aristotle, in his analysis of ordinary processes which is presented in the Physics identifies four causes including final or teleological ones.

Although this type of assumption is probably widespread, Pirsig has invented this label for it.

On the back cover of King's book.

This an implication of Whitehead's analysis of matter and value Since to be actual is to be a definite shape of value, then a valueless universe would be entirely devoid of actualities.

In SMW (51), Whitehead presents the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness as being the mistake of taking the abstract for the concrete.

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Please also note that Dr Sneddon has published the following:  
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## CHAPTER V

### A Process Analysis of Quality

There is a very simple problem to face at this point. If one wants to hold that reality is value, or at least that value is a fundamental term in an analysis of reality, then the meaning of 'value' or 'quality' must be made very clear in order to avoid asserting empty platitudes. Those who assert that 'everything is valuable in its own way,' run the risk of arguing with an empty term, perhaps betraying serious naiveté. Robert Pirsig wrestles openly with this problem in ZMM:

Quality... you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things **are** [emphasis is mine unless stated otherwise] better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes **poof!** There's nothing to talk about. But if you can't say what Quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists. If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really **does** exist. What else are the grades based. Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others in the trash pile.' Obviously some things are better than others but what's the 'betterness'? ... So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding anyplace to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What **is** it? (ZMM, 178)

This chapter is a first step towards an answer to this question. By drawing together some of the clearer statements made by Whitehead and Pirsig about quality, I shall outline the value dynamics that have been hinted at all along. I will make clear how, in what functions and relations, reality values itself, or how value manifests itself. By undertaking such a task of analysis of the passages from the respective writers, I am actually working towards a synthesis--a comprehensive understanding of 'value'/'quality.' Some pertinent elements have already been discussed, such as the fundamental association of 'value' and 'process.' Other matters brought up in this chapter will merely be condensed forms of what has been discussed all along, and little further comment will be necessary. Paradoxically, in spite of the extensive citing of passages involved in this analysis, by undertaking this task I am actually moving away from the texts I have been examining. Several passages will be presented, followed by commentary on the pertinent aspect of 'quality' I think is illuminated by the selection. The synthesis will be built up in 'aspects', to use a Whiteheadian term.

#### Aspect A: Repetition

The Proto-Indo-European root of **aretê** was the morpheme **rt**. There, beside **aretê**, was a treasure room of other derived 'rt' words: 'arithmetic,' 'aristocrat,' 'art,' 'rhetoric,' 'worth,' 'rite,' 'ritual,' 'wright,' 'right (handed),' and 'right (correct).' When the morpheme appeared in 'aristocrat' and 'arithmetic' the reference was to **firstness**. **Rt** meant first. When it appeared in 'art' and 'wright' it seemed to mean **created** and **of beauty**. 'Ritual' suggested **repetitive order**. And the word 'right' has two meanings: **right-handed** and **moral** and



**esthetic correctness...** **Rt** referred to the ‘first, created, beautiful repetitive order of moral and esthetic correctness.’ (Lila, 441)

One of Phaedrus’ old school texts, written by M Hiriyanna, contained a good summary ‘**Rta**, which etymologically stands for “course”, originally meant **cosmic order**, the maintenance of which was the purpose of all the gods, and later it also came to mean **right** so that the gods were conceived as preserving the world not merely from physical disorder but also from moral chaos The one idea is implicit in the other and there is order in the universe because its control is in righteous hands...’

The physical order of the universe is also the moral order of the universe Rta is both This was exactly what the Metaphysics of Quality was claiming It was not a new idea It was the oldest idea known to man. (Lila, 444)

**Dharma**, like **rta**, means ‘what holds together.’ It is the basis of all order. It equals righteousness. It is the ethical code. It is the stable condition which gives man perfect satisfaction.

**Dharma** is duty... **Dharma** is beyond all questions of what is internal and what is external. Dharma is Quality itself, the principle of ‘rightness’ which gives structure and purpose to the evolution of life and to the evolving understanding of the universe which life has created. (Lila, 446)

The root fact is that ‘endurance’ is a device whereby an occasion is peculiarly bound by a single line of physical ancestry, while ‘life’ means novelty... The characteristic of life is reaction adapted to the capture of intensity, under a large variety of circumstances. But the reaction is dictated by the present and not by the past. It is the clutch at vivid immediacy. (PR, 104-105)

But values differ in importance. Thus though each event is necessary for the community of events, the weight of its contribution is determined by something intrinsic in itself. . . Empirical observation shows that it is the property which we may call indifferently **retention**, **endurance**, or **reiteration**. This property amounts to the recovery, on the behalf of value amid the transitoriness of

reality, of the self-identity which is also enjoyed by the primary eternal objects. (SMW, 104)

The urge towards preservation of that which is valued is easily pointed out in human affairs. Much of the current interest in the development of an environmental ethic centres on this notion of preservation of that which is in danger. On the aesthetic side of value matters, a cursory survey of the history of art shows the development and exploration of styles or 'schools' of art which start as novel explorations, become rote, static ways of approaching things and wither because of a lack of change. Similarly, it has been my own experience that most people, in a purely unreflective attitude towards art, enjoy and actively seek repetition of their favorite songs, often to an extent that involves deliberate exclusion of novelty or freshness from the routine.

Whitehead has made this tendency into a metaphysical principle. Those forms, or complex eternal objects, which are valued are repeated by new actual occasions. This is a large part of the role of the physical prehensions in the process of concrescence. The result of such reiteration of pattern in the actual world is endurance of form, or order. Interestingly, Whitehead sees this as derivative from the conceptual order of the eternal objects, as envisaged in the primordial nature of god. Some sort of intuitive sense of this order seems to constitute the religious impulse for Whitehead.

For Pirsig, such repetition of actualized form is not derived from a deficiently actual state, rather, the primary quality dynamic is the development of patterns. If these patterns are felt to be successful, i.e., embody a more complex value state than relevant previous patterns, then they are repeated or preserved. Instead of being derived from a potential order, Pirsig's stasis is the result of a fundamental urge from lack of differentiation *to* differentiation. Order is the product of actuality. The past is ordered because it is data that was once actual. The direct experience of the past, e.g., memory, retains the order already created.

### Aspect B: Novelty

The Metaphysics of Quality translated **karma** as 'evolutionary garbage. **Karma** is the pain, the suffering that results from clinging to the static patterns of the world. The only exit is to detach yourself from these static patterns, that is, to 'kill' them. (Lila, 463)

The good life is attained by the enjoyment of contrasts within the scope of the method. In its lowliest form, Reason provides the emphasis on the conceptual clutch after some refreshing novelty... Fatigue is the antithesis of Reason... Fatigue means the operation of excluding the impulse towards novelty. (FR, 22-23)

Aesthetic destruction is a positive component in subjective form, and is inconsistent with perfection.

The subjective experience of aesthetic destruction will be termed a 'discordant feeling.' (AI, 256)

There are in fact higher and lower perfections, and an imperfection aiming at a higher type stands above lower perfections. The most material and the most sensuous enjoyments are yet types of Beauty. Progress is founded upon the experience of discordant feelings. The social value of liberty lies in its production of discords. There are perfections beyond perfections. All realization is finite, and there is no perfection which is the infinitude of all perfections. Perfections of diverse types are among themselves discordant. Thus the contribution to Beauty which can be supplied by Discord--in itself destructive and evil--is the positive feeling of a quick shift of aim from the tameness of outworn perfection to some other ideal with its freshness still upon it. Thus the value of Discord is a tribute to the merits of Imperfection. (AI, 257)

Evil is positive and destructive, what is good is positive and creative.

This instability of evil does not necessarily lead to progress. On the contrary, the evil in itself leads to the world losing forms of attainment in which that evil manifests itself. Either the species ceases to exist, or it sinks back into a stage in which it ranks below the possibility of that form of evil. (Religion in the Making [RM], 96)

As hinted at in the previous section, mere repetition is not an ideal value state. This condition results in destruction of value rather than extended enjoyment. Both Whitehead and Pirsig see 'life', in a very broad sense of the term, as being the embodied impulse towards novelty away from stale patterns of existence. Both recognize that such movement towards novelty ushers in new forms to repeat, and both assert that this is not an evil state. It is the nature of value-actuality to proceed by these 'ratchet-like latching.'

Ultimately, evil and good are to be defined in vague, evolutionary terms. Evil is that which hinders the achievement of deeper forms of quality-existence. Thus, the evil state in itself is a form of quality, but its social result is this destruction which is more evil than good. A good form of existence, by contrast, is not only deeply good in itself, but allows the development of further equally good conditions and even higher states.

The urge to novel value arrangements is an empirically demonstrable fact of human existence, albeit a difficult matter for value theorists to handle. This has probably been the source of the tendency to dismiss value matters as being 'merely' subjective. Take Pirsig's example of the

song. At first exposure, it is wonderful--the value experience is highly intense. But repeated listening decreases the experience of value. Everything 'objective' about the song remains the same--the key, the length, the instrumentation, the words.

And yet, the value experience has undeniably changed. For both Pirsig and Whitehead, the solution is noting the process or self-experiencing nature of reality. The real situation that is 'me-listening-to-this-song' has changed in its fundamental constitution. In Pirsigian terms, the original static patterns softened in the face of a Dynamic lure, then formed new static patterns of value. In Whiteheadian terms, one nexus or society, the song, introduced novel content for experience to the members of another society--myself. The resultant experience was new forms of existence in one sense, the society that is 'me' was changed. In another sense, a new nexus was formed, consisting of myself and the song, unified by the elements of data involved in experiencing the song. But once experienced, all future arrangements of the society 'Andrew' have this song, or this experienced-nexus, as part of their relevant history. Subsequent listenings introduce no new value content to this society. In both explanations, it is the objective world that has reconstituted itself in such a way so that this song is no longer such a value charged experience.

Of course, it is also empirically demonstrable that change is not univocally good. The assumption of a conservative attitude towards value matters is defensible because of a history of failures due to the adoption of novelty over repetition or order. Ultimately, such an attitude is self-defeating. Whitehead denies the existence of any substantial **stasis** because of the process nature of reality. Refusal to work with change is to accept decay, not **stasis**. Pirsig sees the matter of progress purely pragmatically. It is not reliably identifiable until after the matter. Some clue can be derived from analysis of the evident details, interpreted within his inorganic-biological -social-intellectual framework. But a truly Dynamic advance can be extremely hard to identify.

Finally, it should be noted that the introduction of novel content into an occasion, for Whitehead, is the function of the conceptual prehensions. The mental pole, somehow, is directly linked to the infinite potentiality found in the primordial nature of god. This allows the internal process of occasions of high complexity to transcend the data of the physical prehensions. For Pirsig, novelty is merely the general tendency the universe has--there appears to be no evidence for a realm of definite potentiality.

### Aspect C: Definition

Quality is not a **thing**. It is an **event**.

(ZMM, 233)

But 'decision' cannot be construed as a casual adjunct of an actual entity. It constitutes the very meaning of actuality. An actual entity arises from decisions for it, and by its very existence provides decisions for other actual entities which supersede it.

(PR, 43)

Satisfactions can be classed by reference to 'triviality,' 'vagueness,' 'narrowness,' 'width.'... Triviality arises from lack of coordination in the factors of the datum, so that no feeling arising from one factor is reinforced by any feeling arising from another factor... Harmony is [the] combination of width and narrowness... 'vagueness' is due to excess of identification... vagueness is an essential condition for the narrowness which is one condition for depth of relevance. The right chaos, and the right vagueness, are jointly required for any effective harmony. (PR, 111-112)

Remembering the poetic rendering of our concrete experience, we see at once that the element of value, of being valuable, of having value, of being an end in itself, of being something which is for its own sake, must not be omitted in any account of an event as the most concrete actual something. 'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. (SMW, 93)

Realisation therefore is in itself the attainment of value. But there is no such thing as mere value. Value is the outcome of limitation (SMW, 94)

The 'perfection' of subjective form means the absence from it of component feelings which mutually inhibit each other so that neither rises to the strength proper to it. (AI, 256)

Value is inherent in actuality itself. To be an actual entity is to have a self-interest. This self-interest is a feeling of self-valuation, it is an emotional tone. The value of other things, not one's self, is the derivative value of being elements contributing to this ultimate self-interest. This self-interest is the interest of what one's existence, as in that epochal occasion, comes to. It is the ultimate enjoyment of being actual.

But the actuality is the enjoyment, and this enjoyment is the experiencing of value. (RM, 100)

Depth of value is only possible if the antecedent facts conspire in unison. Thus a measure of harmony in the ground is requisite for the perpetuation of depth into the future. But harmony is limitation. Thus rightness of limitation is essential for growth of reality. (RM, 152)

These passages present some of the themes that have been recurring throughout. Of special interest are those passages in which Whitehead uses 'value' as a fundamental term, usually to describe the internal process of an occasion working towards a satisfaction.

The emphasis on the 'decision' or 'satisfaction', in these passages is very important. Once decided, the internal process of an occasion is spent and the finished form, or superjected character, is all that remains. Both Pirsig and Whitehead recognize that not all 'decisions' are equal. There are two aspects of the satisfaction to be taken into account here: the internal 'depth' of the satisfaction and the social value. In the preceding section, the social nature was discussed. For internal quality in the Whiteheadian scheme, it is required that the occasion pull as wide as possible a diversity of aspects together into one harmonized feeling. Other alternatives for an occasion faced with a multitude of possibilities include banishing the majority into irrelevance through negative prehensions, or ignoring the details through the activity Whitehead describes with his category of transmutation. When experiencing the occasions that make up a nexus, an occasion can 'transmute' the multiple data into one datum of feeling that, supposedly, is an expression of the unifying principle of that nexus. However, such an activity runs the risk of dismissing important differences from the source data into irrelevance. Such an activity of transmutation is a second-order application of negative prehensions and the result is the same--a reduction in the variety of data to be unified. The resultant satisfaction can be classed according to the data it does unify. A high complexity, or high value, occasion actualizes many diverse eternal objects--'width' of data--and does so in a manner that allows each element to contribute a significant measure of 'information' or 'potency' to the satisfaction-- 'harmony.' That is, the data are admitted in their full effectiveness and not as trivial elements in the decision.

In general for Pirsig, there is no significant division between internal and external complexity or value. Objects are macroscopic shapes of the generic value-process, classification according to static levels and Dynamic readiness is the most concrete analysis he provides. And yet, for an individual existing through time, there is a significant aspect in which internal constitution does contribute to the overall value status. A person can be flexible, open to Dynamic softening of static value patterns, or a person can be rigid, opposed to change. The individual in the more dynamic position is in a position of higher value. This **dynamis**, however, means primarily intellectual development, if not the development of a new static form (e.g. a state such as Samuel Alexander's 'deity'). This kind of internal determination of value applies to humans in particular because of our participation in intellectual patterns--the highest static level of evolution by Pirsig's reckoning.

In spite of this difference about the relevance of internal/external differences to value matters, one highly significant matter is agreed upon: it is the 'final' shape--the satisfaction or the identifiable patterns--that largely constitutes some entity's quality.

Moreover, this 'shape' is necessarily a 'limitation', for both Whitehead and Pirsig. Whitehead's statement that 'all value is the outcome of limitation' is typical. The internal process of an occasion works towards a decision. Any analysis of the aspects of such a process--subjective form, physical and conceptual prehensions--deals with the value-charged activity that results in the final value shape--the satisfaction. In Pirsig's scheme, enduring objects are defined primarily through the static levels of quality evolution they exemplify. Internal Dynamic readiness is

defined largely by the state the world as a whole has reached. Once, before the development of intellectual static patterns of quality, a social or intellectual advance would have been highly Dynamic, and hence of more value than such an exemplification would be at present.

#### Aspect D: Contrast

Neither static nor Dynamic Quality can survive without the other. (Lila, 146)

But Dynamic Quality is not structured and yet it is not chaotic. It is value that cannot be contained by static patterns. (Lila, 171)

Thus ‘contrast’--as the opposite of incompatibility--depends on a certain simplicity of circumstance; but the higher contrasts depend on the assemblage of a multiplicity of lower contrasts, this assemblage again exhibiting higher types of simplicity. (PR, 95)

‘Contrast’ is probably best understood by drawing an analogy to a television picture’s contrast: differences contribute to and result in a unified, pleasing whole.

The experience of wider and deeper contrasts is integral to the whole process Pirsig describes of Dynamic Quality being shaped into static patterns. The higher patterns require the lower ones in order to come into existence and yet are different from them. Whitehead describes the higher contrasts as requiring lesser ones. Process-reality evolves--occasions do not start from ‘absolute zero’ at every moment. Instead, they depend upon past forms of experience to put them in a position for new, higher levels of evolving process.

#### Aspect E: Limitation

There’s a principle in physics that if a thing can’t be distinguished from anything else it doesn’t exist. To this the Metaphysics of Quality adds a second principle: if a thing has no value it isn’t distinguished from anything else. Then, putting the two together, **a thing that has no value does not exist.** (Lila, 121)

The fundamental basis of this description is that our experience is a value experience, expressing a vague sense of maintenance or discard; and that this value-experience differentiates itself in the sense of many existences with value-experience; and that this sense of the multiplicity of value-experiences again differentiates it into the totality of value-experience, and the many other value-experiences, and the egoistic value-experience. This is the feeling of the ego, the others, the totality. This is the

vague, basic presentation of the differentiation of existence, in its enjoyment of discard and maintenance. (MT,150-151)

There is no such thing as bare value. There is always a specific value, which is the created unit of feeling arising out of the specific mode of concretion of the diverse elements. These different specific value-feelings are comparable amid their differences; and the ground for this comparability is what is here termed 'value.'

This comparability grades the various occasions in respect to the intensiveness of value. The zero of intensiveness means the collapse of actuality. All intensive quantity is merely the contribution of some one element in the synthesis to this one intensiveness of value.

Various occasions are thus comparable in respect to their relative depths of actuality. Occasions differ in importance of actuality. (RM, 103)

Each occasion, in its character of being a finished creature, is a value of some definite specific sort. (RM, 109)

The essence of depth of actuality—that is of vivid experience—is definiteness. Now to be definite means that all the elements of a complex whole contribute to some **one** effect, to the exclusion of others. (RM, 113)

Everything that in any sense exists has two sides, namely, its individual self and its signification in the universe. (MT 151)

Before discussing 'limitation', the passage from Lila needs attention. At face value, this passage runs the risk of merely being nonsense. How can the 'things' in the second principle have no value if having no value equals non-existence? Apart from the clumsiness of the presentation, I think this passage does serve a purpose. It has already been noted that Pirsig is aiming for conceptual replacement with his scheme of a Metaphysics of Quality (v. treatment of 'substance', Chapter II)

This little passage is an example of this shift of conceptions taking place. In essence, he is saying that if one takes the common-sense understanding of distinguishing objects and then tries to analyze the value dynamic in this conception, one will realize that quality is central to the activity in a moment of perception. Then, returning to the principle from physics, one can formulate a new principle with Pirsig's terminology. Instead of being dismissed as nonsense, this



passage should be interpreted in light of Pirsig's claim that his metaphysics satisfies demands of empirical evidence.

The relationship of limitation and value has already arisen, this section expands on that relationship. There are several implications to be noted, the first being that value is the result of limitation. The second point is that quality always has a character--briefly, there is no generalized 'good' but, rather, specific 'goods'. Not only is limitation a function necessary to the actualization of value, but the resultant value-shape is an individual of some sort. The process of value-evolution produces things of individual character. Any differentiation of one from another is a result of the value process of the world at large. This is an extension of a common sense attitude to the world. Although I am describable in general terms, there is also something that can only be classed as individual in character. This individual character is my value context--what I hold as important, what I have made to be important, and those attitudes and actions that inflict value judgments on the world. Or, in a more specialized example, within the world of popular music, plagiarism is 'frowned upon.' Not only is outright copying punished, but excessive similarity of composition detracts from the value experience for a 'knowing' listener. If a song has the same rhythm, melody, and chord changes as another song, then the later song has few characteristics to differentiate it from the earlier composition. If the words are also the same, then there are no formal differences--only accidental ones, such as the individual characters of the musicians executing the performance. As a casual reviewer of popular music, if I think a song is too similar to an earlier piece, then my enjoyment is lessened, and in my review I actually condemn the piece.

In Whiteheadian terms, an occasion unifies data into 'one' satisfaction. Not only is this satisfaction particular and unified, but it is individualized, in the sense of being different from all other such drops of process in the universe. An occasion springs from a specific past--its 'actual world'--and posits its own future. This temporal breadth of an occasion of experience is integral to the development of individual character.

The process of the experience of self-valuation produces 'selves', in the sense of autonomous, free individuals. Robert Pirsig's description of objects, including people, as consisting in collections of different sorts of patterns also involves individualization. Each particular pattern or collection of patterns is in a position to experience the rest of the universe from a perspective of an individual character, and the way such a collection responds to the Dynamic lure can be absolutely novel.

Whitehead points out that the fundamental 'sense' one has, the primary division one makes of the world, is a value division of self, others, and the world at large. I interpret this as one of Pirsig's metaphysical principles--Quality evolves, resolving itself into patterns. Common sense will corroborate this. Value experience necessarily involves limitation--differentiating one thing from another, favoring one and rejecting the second. In one sense, the point of making value judgments is to individualize the world further--to define the characters of objects, ideas, people from without.

This aspect of 'value' also illuminates an ambiguity in the term 'quality'. Pirsig notes this ambiguity but does not make much of it, and Whitehead seems to utilize it without comment in

MT. It is an old philosophical approach to describe things in terms of primary and secondary (and even tertiary) qualities. These qualities 'define' the object in terms of sense, or measurements, etc. In this expanded, synthetic sense of 'value', quality-reality differentiates itself using 'qualities' Qualities, or differentia, are the result of value in process, and they express the individualization central to the evolving process.

#### Aspect F: Final Causation

The statement that values are vague and therefore shouldn't be used for primary classification is not true. There's nothing vague about a value judgment. When a voter goes to a polling booth he's making a value judgment. What's vague about that? Isn't an election a cultural activity? What's so vague about the New York stock exchanges? Aren't values what they're dealing in?

How about the U.S. Treasury? Who in this world is more specific than the Internal Revenue Service? Values are not the least vague when you're dealing with them in terms of actual experience. It only when you bring back statements about them and try to integrate them into the overall jargon of anthropology that they become vague. (Lila, 78)

**Quality! Virtue! Dharma! That** is what the Sophists were teaching. **Not** ethical relativism. **Not** pristine 'virtue'. But **arête**. Excellence. **Dharma!** ...those first teachers of the Western world were teaching **Quality**, and the medium they had chosen was rhetoric. (ZMM, 371)

At the base of our existence is the sense of 'worth'. Now 'worth' essentially presupposes that which is 'worthy'. Here the notion of worth is not to be construed in a purely eulogistic sense. It is the sense of existence for its own sake, of existence which is its own justification, of existence with its own character. (MT, 149)

An entity is actual, when it has significance for itself. By this is meant that an actual entity functions in respect to its own determination. Thus an actual entity combines self-identity with self-diversity. (PR, 25)

**The Category of Subjective Intensity.** The subjective aim, whereby there is origination of conceptual feeling, is at intensity of feeling in the immediate subject, and in the **relevant** future... The

greater part of morality hinges on the determination of relevance in the future. (PR, 27)

The focus is beginning to shift from generic value to human activity--the traditional area of examination for value matters. Both philosophers express unhappiness with previous attempts to handle human activity scientifically--the problem seems to have been lack of an adequate metaphysic, and it is exactly that aspect of the endeavour to describe the world that Whitehead and Pirsig have taken on. Humans are 'just' part of the scheme for both Pirsig and Whitehead. We exemplify some aspects of value-process particularly well, but not all. And, of course, some aspects of this process are of particularly high interest to us-- the traditional domains of ethics and aesthetics. Thus, everything said about the value activity of occasions and about evolving patterns of quality applies, with qualifications, to humans.

Much of what has been discussed involves the proposing of an end to achieve--a teleological interpretation of reality. This is all part of the re-interpretation of nature to accommodate a wider range of data. Final-causation seems to be an important part of human activity and if this metaphysic is to unite human value contexts with the rest of the world, then such activity must be explicable in terms applicable to all reality.

In brief, Whitehead makes the internal process of an occasion teleological. Moreover, such 'microscopic process does take into account its effects on the immediate and relevant future beyond the bounds of the individual occasion. There is a whole world to be reckoned with. Pirsig's scheme is all future oriented--introducing differentiation into the world as a response to the Dynamic lure of Quality in process. The important element to be worked out yet is the relationship between internal self-causing/self-valuation and value in the world at large.

The key to this problem, as with many problems in the hands of Whitehead and Pirsig, is the eliminating of many of the bifurcations of the past. Both philosophers insist that there is no sharp division between one's self and the entire world. The problem with early attempts (v. Paul Schilpp's 'Whitehead's Moral Philosophy' in The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, 1961) to characterize Whitehead's metaphysic as involving an ethic of private or self-interest is the narrow, and inappropriate, interpretation of 'self'. Pirsig's treatment of quality started with an attempt to transcend traditional subject-object divisions, and the resultant description of the world places the human at the front edge of the creative process responsible for the existence of the world. Our experiences, seemingly personal, take place within an expanded value context. Subjects carry the process, reacting to objects and a feeling of potentiality.

As both Pirsig and Whitehead point out, they are re-interpreting old ideas from a modern perspective. The idea of unification of self-valuation with activity in the world at large is *aretê*, the ancient Greek concept of excellence of character dictating one's activity, and, conversely, this activity conditioning such 'individualized' quality. It is exactly this dynamic that will be examined in the final chapter.

#### Aspect G: World-Orientedness

I like the word "gumption"... The Greeks called it *enthousiasmos*, the root of "enthusiasm," which

means literally “filled with theos,” or God, or Quality. (ZMM, 296)

But the sense of importance is not exclusively referent to the experiencing self. It is exactly this vague sense which differentiates itself into the disclosure of the whole, the many, and the self. It is the importance of the others which melts into the importance of the self. Actuality is the self-enjoyment of importance But this self-enjoyment has the character of the self-enjoyment of others melting into the enjoyment of one self. (MT, 160-161)

The purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world. (RM 100)

He noted that although normally you associate Quality with objects, feelings of Quality sometimes occur without any objects at all. This is what led him at first to think that maybe Quality is all subjective. But subjective pleasure wasn't what he meant by Quality either. Quality **decreases** subjectivity Quality takes you out of yourself, makes you aware of the world around you. Quality is **opposed** to subjectivity. (ZMM, 233)

I disagree with them about cycle maintenance, but not because I am out of sympathy with their feelings about technology. I just think that their flight from and hatred of technology is self-defeating. The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower. To think otherwise is to demean the Buddha-- which is to demean oneself. (ZMM, 18)

I interpret Whitehead's god, which he claims to be linked to the attainment of value, as being primarily a source of potentiality, a primitive urge upwards--to live, to live well, to live better, as he states in The Function of Reason--and an irrational principle of concretion. Whitehead's god is not a personal god. According to this scheme, acting full of 'gumption' or 'zest' (Whitehead's term) in the world is to participate in the god character much more than any inward directed prayer or worship to a personal god will accomplish. Such activities lack the world-directedness for real value accomplishment and transcendence of self. The analysis of ethics and aesthetics that follows will focus on concrete activity, with no exhortation to turn away from the world towards some hyper-real realm of value.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Art of Life

In a subject-object metaphysics morals and art are worlds apart, morals being concerned with the subject quality and art with object quality. But in the Metaphysics of Quality that division doesn't exist. They're the same. They both become much more intelligible when references to what is subjective and what is objective are completely thrown away and references to what is static and what is Dynamic are taken up instead. (Lila, 141)

The metaphysical doctrine, here expounded, finds the foundations of the world in the aesthetic experience, rather than--as with Kant--in the cognitive and conceptive experience. All order is therefore aesthetic order, and the moral order is merely certain aspects of aesthetic order. The actual world is the outcome of the aesthetic order, and the aesthetic order is derived from the immanence of God (RM, 104-105).

After all these pages, have we now reached a crossroads? In the first of these opening passages, Pirsig seems to be suggesting that the traditional division between ethics and aesthetics is a mistake. In fact, in his discussion of the matters, he focuses much more on morals, as if he thinks he has made aesthetics disappear. Whitehead seems to be suggesting the opposite, that moral issues are reducible to aesthetics. As they stand, these suggestions are irreconcilable.

Ultimately, this thesis is an attempt at a synthesis of the respective studies of existence and value made by Whitehead and Pirsig. The resultant synthetic value theory will be useful for interpreting and guiding human activity. By emphasizing 'human activity', I am taking one step back from the typical division between aesthetics and ethics. In fact, by studying the metaphysical systems of these two writers, I have been taking one step further back than 'this, away from the division between human activity and reality 'writ large.' My current examination of human activity is not an isolated starting point, but a position I have built my way towards from more fundamental categories. Thus, this analysis of human behavior will initially stress what is common to aesthetic and moral matters. Differences will follow as is deemed appropriate.

At its briefest, this synthetic theory of value can be described by pointing out its most fundamental Whiteheadian aspect and its most fundamental Pirsigian aspect. From Whitehead, I wish to stress the matter of universal relatedness, from Pirsig, the analysis of the macroscopic world in terms of value in process, with emphasis on the independence of the differing levels of static value. There are secondary points concerning the dynamic particulars to be attributed to each author also I wish to preserve Whitehead's emphasis on the achievement of an immediate, aesthetic value by each actual entity. From Pirsig, the concentration on a human as a locus of

value activity, analogous to Whitehead's societies of occasions, but with more emphasis on the unified activity of the whole.

I see the following as being the position of a human in the world I have arisen from a specific context of value experiences and judgments and I add to this value context. This world can be understood as consisting in and as having consisted in value dynamics. My feelings of aversion and adersion are real--they contribute to the general value functioning of the world. And yet, each judgment, each action, word and thought arises from this given value context. As an individual I am unique, yet I do not exist in a vacuum. A history presses in on me which is, in itself, permeated with value. The future, however, promises new intensities and patterns of quality. My position is in the present--the extended moment of reckoning **stasis** with **dynamis**. Thus, when I turn attention to some issue, action, or object as valuable, be it positively or negatively, it is a real state of affairs with which I am dealing. Actuality is produced in this present moment--the essence of existence is value permeated activity. My addition to the world issues in a situation novel in but not strictly novel in kind. But this interest of mine is new--to my limited perspective, there is novelty of kind--and the value context is changed my focus is the world's interest in one matter, and then the historic context is increased by one form of value. This new development now stands to be reckoned with--value presses in on the new present.

Furthermore, my position is primarily a matter of self interest. But, as has been discussed at various times through this thesis, such interest is not to be understood as being necessarily at odds with the rest of the world. From a static view-point, I am a particular version of the process that has taken place and is to be held accountable for the rest of the world also there is universal interconnectedness. From a more dynamic perspective, I am one way in which the world is value actualized and value charged.

Finally, the standard that exists as a perpetual challenge to me in the world is this: *the more I can positively charge this world with value, then the better the world is, and the more developed my character is*. The qualifications introduced in the previous chapter apply here. Most significantly, there is the matter of limitation. Firstly, each human individual is obviously limited in ability and in possibilities of interest. To try to do everything is, in all probability, to accomplish very little. The depth and intensity of quality that can be achieved within narrow bounds is easily overlooked, the adage, "whatever you do, do it well," stands as sound advice from the point of view of this synthetic value theory. Moreover, while it may seem that, from the perspective of an individual person, to have one all-consuming passion is probably to limit oneself excessively and even risk accomplishing more evil than good, the view from the standpoint of the world, universally interrelated and temporally extended, is different. Individuals embracing diverse interests will produce a more varied history than will well-meaning yet unremarkably similar people. The value lies in the details, quality produces individuality, and individuality produces quality. Homogeneity lacks Whitehead's zest.

Finally, the positions suggested by the passages presented at the beginning of this chapter are reconcilable. The world can be seen as primarily an aesthetic order because each actual entity enjoys its measure of value. The realization of such particular quality is the goal of the value-process that characterizes the world at large. Yet this urge towards new realization that is better

than what has passed is a moral urge the fundamental dynamic of reality is, “to live, to live well, to live better.” (FR 18)

Value-reality exhorts each individual detail to conduct itself in such a way as to achieve greater goodness. The moral and aesthetic orders are inextricably interwoven.

With this brief description of the individual within the world, it is time to examine the specific domains of aesthetics and ethics.

### Aesthetics

In this section I wish merely to indicate the dynamics that I see to be the germ of a theory of aesthetics within this synthetic value theory. To the achievement of this end, I intend to discuss both the aesthetic experience and aesthetic creation. This division is not to be taken to be a rigid one I see the acts of experience and creation of works of art as slightly specialized versions of the value activity that constitutes every aspect of the position of the human in the world. Examples of this wider sense of ‘aesthetic’ will be introduced during the course of this discussion. Both aesthetic creation and aesthetic gratification permeate all aspects of life, to a degree, also, there is aesthetic experience within acts of aesthetic creation, and at least an urge towards creation at the heart of such experiences.

In A Whiteheadian Aesthetic, Donald Sherburne argues that art objects have the same ontological status as propositions, and I largely agree with him. A Whiteheadian proposition, as discussed earlier, has a ‘mixed’ ontological status, and it functions as a lure to feeling. In the experience of a propositional feeling, an occasion prehends a particular state of affairs in relation to an eternal object. In other words, a proposition functions as a bridge between actuality and potentiality. The feeling of a proposition directs the process of becoming--there is an investigation of the relation between the nexus and the predicated potentiality. The affirmation or negation--the judgment--on the part of the experiencer brings about a new state of affairs for the experiencer. That is, the degree to which the proposition has ingression into a unity of feeling is an influence on the future of the experiencer, whereas the proposition remains as it was--a lure for other occasions. In more concrete aesthetic terms a work of art stands as a lure to experience for those interested. The experience of a work of art is an activity, and not a passive reception of some sort of information. There is some sort of creative, interactive performance on the part of the experiencer. The aesthetic experience is, in a way, the creation of a Whiteheadian society for a brief period of time. Once the intense aesthetic experience is finished, the work of art stands as it was but the experiencer leaves changed. The actual world from which the experiencer draws for new becoming has new relevant data if the aesthetic experience was significant. Such a process is permeated with value the initial lure is a feeling of value, the process of experience is a novel actualization of value patterns, and future experiences of value will have to reckon with this value data once it passes into history.

Although Robert Pirsig never discusses propositions, and has little to say about art, I think this view is consistent with his system. He sees the world as being value charged to such a high degree that there are fulfilling experiences to be had doing all sorts of things, and the experience of art work fades in special importance under such a scheme. But I am choosing merely to widen

the sense of 'aesthetic' to include the activities Pirsig discusses. For example, in ZMM he spends considerable time discussing the maintenance of a motorcycle. Indeed, the very title of the book suggests that he sees such activity as an art! In this activity, the objective is to produce a situation, involving both the motorcycle and the maintainer, that is of high quality. At stake is an arrangement of the entire world. For instance, in the encountering of a serious problem, the maintainer can draw on the whole world and his/her own imagination for a solution. Ultimately, the quality of the situation is to be evaluated by reference to the maintainer's 'state of mind'--a feeling of satisfaction or peace of mind is the mark of a high quality situation, and feelings of unrest denote lower quality arrangements of the world.

This last point is important. Firstly, to deny that in any activity that is value charged there is special relevance to the experiencer is to slight the human experience of value. Donald Sherburne explicitly sees his Whiteheadian aesthetic as a theory of art for life's sake, as opposed to being for art's sake.

Secondly, Pirsig's motorcycle example expands the temporal framework involved in this discussion. I have been speaking of the aesthetic experience in the singular as if it is something that happens then passes, and that is it. A more adequate description draws out this moment. Firstly, as has been noted, the data reside in the actual world of the experiencer permanently. Secondly, particularly good works of art are not exhausted in one encounter. There can be subsequent experiences which differ from previous ones in the kind of actualization that occurs. For example, the experiencer learns something specifically different from what had ingression before. Or there might be cumulative increase in depth of experience of virtually the same material. The amount of time over which a work of art captivates is, by this scheme, one indicator of the aesthetic value of the work. Thirdly, the experiencing of specific works of art takes place within the context of what both Pirsig and Whitehead designate as an art--the leading of a human life. It has already been pointed out that Pirsig considers motorcycle maintenance to be an art. In one of the most frequently quoted passages from ZMM he states that the real cycle a person works on is him/herself. Whitehead, in FR, claims that reason's function is to promote the art of life, which has already been cited as, "to live, to live well, and to live better". The experience of particular art works influences this ongoing artistic endeavour and as the human changes, so does the relevance of the standing propositions they can become more or less interesting and consequently more or less luring.

The content of the aesthetic experience has yet to be addressed. Since the form of the experience is two-sided, consisting of the experiencer and the object, it is appropriate that there be two aspects to the value-content of the experience. These aspects are specific information or data to be considered by the experiencer and a feeling of heightened importance of the current moment or epoch of the observer. In one sense there is novel content added to the actual world of the aesthetic participant, and in another sense there is emphasis on the current situation.

The matter of novel content is easily illustrated through reference to literature. A novel is particularly suited to the aesthetic enactment of ideas. Particular examples are plentiful. John Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman is a creative treatment of existentialism, writing, and evolution. Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook is about feminism, Marxism, Jungian psychology, writing, and families. In a way, these conceptual aspects are sub-propositions that



can be taken up once the reader is lured in by the over-arching proposition that is the story. Obviously, any significant art work is not exhausted by such sub-lures. If this were all there is to art, then any first year philosophy, sociology, or psychology text would be a work of art, when in fact they obviously are not. Still, these sub-propositions do function as lures to the interested reader, and as such lead to new arrangements of value experience.

The other aspect is probably the more important to the understanding of the aesthetic experience. There is an immediate deepening of the experience of the value of the present. People are caught up in good art; they do not absorb such items or events passively or automatically, like air or sunlight. Instead, art captivates by, metaphorically speaking, adding a third dimension to typical experience. Besides the experiencer and the experienced world, art serves to illuminate this world and our place in it in a manner that emphasizes value depth. Oddly, this seems to happen by making the familiar foreign. For example, Tennessee Williams' Cat On A Hot Tin Roof is about fairly ordinary people over a very short period of time--an evening. A good performance of this play, however, can sensitize an observer to the drama or value-depth of any situation.

Williams' play emphasizes typical tensions and character traits in such a way as to bowl the viewer over with the sheer quality or importance of every aspect. Yet it is merely a dramatic rendering of situations familiar to many--the same qualities exist to be recognized in our own lives. It is one function of art to develop this sensitivity to our own situations, even through the seemingly paradoxical method of portraying foreign situations.

Music has a special reference to the life of the observer. Sherburne, in his analysis of art as proposition, perhaps overstates the need for a logical subject of the proposition in his description of music by giving that function to the listener. I think he is largely correct, but I think he risks misrepresentation of the conceptual element in the experience of music by describing the subject as being "you understood." Certainly, music serves to deepen the immediate present, enveloping the listener as a piece unfolds. But the working of the proposition is not a conceptual matter--the listener does not have to understand him/herself to be the subject at issue. The reference happens in the experience. With this in mind, the novel content introduced through the strictly musical experience must be about the listener or about the music itself.

Pirsig's macro-analysis of the world serves to remind us that we participate with the various art-forms in different ways. For example, he asserts that the medium of film is necessarily a social pattern of value, while his novel is primarily made up of intellectual patterns. (Lila, 303) An activity such as dancing he would probably describe as being biological, and maybe social. As humans, we participate in all of these levels of static quality, so these sorts of responses to works of art are legitimate. There is a measure of value to be enjoyed dancing to music and to deny this would be to slight a rather common human activity. The fact remains that the highest static level in Pirsig's scheme is the intellectual level, the highest quality aesthetic experiences will have a measure of intellectuality about them. At its broadest, this means that the experiencer thinks about the experience. At one level, there is self-analysis as to enjoyment or satisfaction with the experience, and at a different level there is consideration of the components of the aesthetic-proposition--characters, plot, or the enactment of the sub-propositions already discussed. I imagine that the aesthetic experience involved in mathematical work consists largely in this

intellectual sort. Also, this is the role of the critic in the aesthetic experience--deepening the static intellectual response.

Of course, there is still something missing here. If intellectual activity constituted the most significant aesthetic experience, then perhaps mathematics or philosophy would be the peak of the art world. Going to school would be the ultimate treat for an aesthete. Clearly, this is not the case. There is still Pirsig's Dynamic Quality to be considered. By definition, the Dynamic experience is a vertical evolutionary development, as opposed to a horizontal one. That is, instead of an intellectual experience that develops one's static intellectuality, there is a type of experience that stems from, yet throws into question, the intellectuality that is so human. Since this sort of experience is not definable in static terms, its nature cannot be adequately described before it happens. Still, I suspect that it is this element that really makes good art works stand up through time Dynamic Quality functions as a lure, just like Whitehead propositions. Once we engage with an art object as fully intellectual beings with an openness to Dynamic development, the quality of the resultant experiences is to be evaluated merely by assessing how successfully the object holds our interest. Some items are exhausted in moments, and some have captivated people for centuries.

The problem with much popular music is an inability to evoke a Dynamic response, settling for intellectual or social static responses at best. Much of rap and punk music depends upon a virtually uncritical acceptance of certain views of the world to create any interest at all in the listener. Such songs run like lectures or sermons about race relations, drug use, or whatever other problem is a hot topic at the time of recording. Certainly these songs provide a medium for dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions, but the lack of imagination in both the words and the music can be stunning. The result is music without the Dynamic component to elicit repeated aesthetic interest. To be fair, the situation with many songs is a limited measure of 'creativity' tempering the diatribe there is an aesthetic point to the music. But in the vast majority of cases, the sub-propositions are actually the main point, while the over-arching Dynamic aesthetic proposition is given short shrift, to the detriment to the experience.

There is an interesting phenomenon tied to the performance of some types of music--punk in particular. The audience members, largely male youths between the ages of 13-25, engage in 'slam-dancing' or 'moshing'--dancing that involves purposeful violent contact amongst the crowd-members. Frankly, the description makes the activity sound completely pointless and destructive, and I suppose it is to a large degree. But to witness the phenomenon, with this and other aesthetic theories in mind, evidences a goal. The result of the continuous bumping is overload of the sense of touch; the individual is enveloped in a barrage of information from all parts of the body. Typically, the music accompanying the activity is literally ear-splitting in volume--overload of the sense of hearing and the use of indulgent lighting effects such as intense strobe lights overwhelms the sense of sight. The result is the short-circuiting of biology to imitate a Dynamic aesthetic experience. I say 'imitate' because, firstly, the basis of the experience, the level of static patterns that constitutes the foundation of the experience, is biological, not intellectual, Secondly, no novel content, no sub-propositions, are taken up for consideration. In other words, neither aspect of the aesthetic experience, as I have been describing it, is fulfilled.

This idea of a Dynamic experience being created in the participation in a work of art is not a new concept. Immanuel Kant, in his Critique of Judgment described part of aesthetic experience as that of the 'sublime': "We call **sublime** what is **absolutely large**" (103) and "**Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense**" (105) [Kant's emphasis]. Kant discusses his 'sublime' mainly in connection with the aesthetic contemplation of nature, but I think the concept works here as well. Kant further divides the experience, or mental agitation, of the sublime into mathematical and dynamical components. In other words, the experience of being overwhelmed has an external static aspect and an internal Dynamic aspect. This kind of aesthetic experience both overwhelms the participant and fills the participant with aesthetic power so to speak. My punk slam-dancers are trying to find a quick substitute for this experience. I suppose drug use could accomplish the same effect. Also, I suppose frenzied religious ceremonies are attempts to evoke the same kind of static dissolving. Under the scheme here proposed, I think the immediate deepening of the experience of present quality is analogous to- the Kantian sublime. There is an awareness of present surrounding quality emphasized through the beholding of an art object.

I suspect, although I am not willing to assert the point, that aesthetic creation is largely the response to a Dynamic lure. The reason I present this as a hypothesis rather than an outright claim is that it would be rather easy to discredit. There are plenty of people who work as artists every day; surely their work becomes less Dynamically captivating and more merely workmanlike as their careers progress. The degree of static, cool-headed craft that must go into many poems, paintings, etc., surely weakens the stereotypical image of the artist consumed by aesthetic passion and working under the influence of some mystical muse. With all this in mind, I am going to propose that my description contains an important degree of truth. Within even the most controlled act of artistic creation, I suspect that there is a process of Dynamic lure, then static latching, then renewed luring and consequent responding until some sort of plateau is reached. There are important points to be noticed here. In the account of aesthetic experience, the active role of the participant was stressed. Here, the creator is seen as enjoying aesthetic experience in the process. Furthermore, it might be the case that the completion of a work of art is often a provisional end; assuming that the description of steps of lure and response is somewhat accurate, artists sometimes end by stopping themselves. The 'job' of the art object is to function as a lure and the way the artist has been responding up to this point has been to alter the work. This is hardly a radical suggestion. In a related matter, it seems entirely likely to me that people who are given to creating things are spurred to new creation by the aesthetic experiencing of other art objects. Writers, painters, musicians, etc., all influence each other. Stretching this state of affairs to include an artist's relationship to his/her own creations is hardly to strain the bounds of credibility.

This description of artistic creation does not differ much from the working description Whitehead and Pirsig have provided to account for the physical world and all human activity-- there is a value-charged lure to becoming to which every aspect of the universe answers. In Whitehead, the quality-process that is the world is aesthetic creativity: each actual entity, within the microscopic analysis, ends up enjoying its own proposed value nature. There is immediate satisfaction. This is also largely the case with Pirsig's macro-analysis, but there is a difference. I think it is correct to describe the general activity of the world as enjoying its own nature, but I think humans actually forget this. We become distracted, and although we have a tendency to do

things to intensify our immediate experiences, we are very often oblivious to the quality-nature of much of our world. Human aesthetic creativity is, in large part, a reminder of the microprocess Whitehead describes. It is activity directed towards the intensifying of immediate value. In principle, all human activities can be enjoyed or found repellent in themselves--digging graves, selling shoes, teaching philosophy, watching other people die. Aesthetic sensitivity, I suspect, enables us both to enjoy and to recognize the full extent of the positive and negative value in various situations.

There is one more point to be noted before turning the discussion to ethics: I am left with the feeling that much of this analysis of aesthetic creation, and especially of aesthetic experience, is framed in terms of unsatisfactory generality. The problem is that value creates individuality, and individuality enhances quality in return. This means that, whatever can be said about aesthetic experience in general, the highest quality aesthetic experiences should have an extremely high measure of particularity about them. The experiences will be individual. This is due both to the propositional content brought to the experience by the aesthetic object and to the actual world from which the observer arises to the aesthetic lure. This singularity of experience, I suspect, leads to differences of opinion on the quality of various art objects, and some may even dismiss aesthetics on the grounds of being merely subjective and hence of little importance (if not of little reality). This thesis, however, is largely an attempt to debunk this notion as a mistake that slights the depth of individual human value contexts.

## Ethics

The discussion of aesthetic experience focused on one person's context of experience. Consequently, this discussion of ethics will deal with the relationships between people's various contexts and of these contexts to the world as a whole. It will examine the age-old problem of balancing maximum individual enjoyment of value while allowing others to enjoy similar individual value contexts. Rights and responsibilities will also be addressed. Particular ethical problems will be addressed briefly.

In her book, Toward A Whiteheadian Ethics, Lynne Belaief seems to suggest that a Whiteheadian ethic would be very similar to a Kierkegaardian ethic; the individual struggles with ideals of love and goodness, and, failing to realize them, turns to god as a power able to realize ultimate goodness in the forms of love and order. In other words, active religious resignation is the result of pursuing the ethical urge to its end. This sort of view is here rejected for two reasons: 1) In response to Belaief, in strictly Whiteheadian terms, god is construed not as a personal god but as a source of potentiality or appetition and as a principle of concretion. This is not the kind of god to whom religious worship is typically addressed. Moreover, Whitehead's later atheistic (in a narrow sense) position is evident in Lucien Price's book, The Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead:

God is **in** the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts. But this creation is a continuing process, and 'the process is itself the actuality', since no sooner

do you arrive than you start on a fresh journey. In so far as man partakes of this creative process does he partake of the divine nature of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives death to the estate of an irrelevancy. His true destiny as co-creator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur. (Price, 297)

Whitehead's 'god' is not a personal entity but a principle in the universe. The ideals of love and order are not enshrined in this thesis either. 2) It is here held that the religious impulse is neither fundamental nor special, but merely one species of value experience. Robert Pirsig uses 'god' and 'religion' very casually, usually to designate functions of the value process that people necessarily undergo everyday. The synthetic value theory here proposed will do similarly: the religious impulse is not special, but merely one variety of value activity. It is not the end of ethics, nor is it central to this ethic, and it can in fact be immoral. For instance, Pirsig cites the Hindu and Buddhist religious prohibition of the eating of animal flesh. For Pirsig, this is fine in times of agricultural health, since he sees animals as being more highly evolved, in quality terms, than vegetables. But in times of famine, this religious stipulation should be given up: humans are higher up the quality chain than are animals, and it is immoral for any reason to sacrifice humans for animals (*Lila*, 190-191). The point is that Pirsig posits value and responsibility as matters for rational, empirical investigation. Examination of 'the nature of things' should guide conduct, not faith in some supernatural being or realm of value. Such resignation of evaluative powers is treason to Dynamic human nature.

The skeleton of this analysis of ethics can be presented here at the outset. At base, the ultimate responsibility constraining each person is development of individual value. This is reminiscent of the old interpretations (e.g. Schilpp, 1941) of Whitehead's thought as entailing a private interest theory of ethics, but here serious qualifications can be brought in. Firstly, the notion of 'privacy' is rejected, at least as being ethically relevant. 'Privacy' is here understood in a rather narrow sense: that which is neither public in origin nor in consequence is private. There is individual activity and individual interest in this scheme but not private interest. Human affairs are so permeated by biological, social, and intellectual factors that are not particular to one individual that 'privacy', taken in its common sense usage, is rather relative. Each 'private' person is a moment of value-activity: this is the same activity that makes up the rest of the universe. Moreover, the Whiteheadian description of universal relatedness has been explicitly preserved here. The individual is seen as being constituted of relations to the rest of the universe. Thus, by being responsible for individual development, a person is responsible for one value aspect of the entire universe. 'Private' interest is dismissed as naive metaphysics. Secondly, 'interest' is here taken in a positive, active sense. When I hear that something is in 'my best interests', I think of matters that pertain to my biological survival and comfort. In this sense, private interest theories imply a mean, minimal sort of ethics—responsibility for individual survival. More commonly, 'interest' theories of activity are concerned with achieving individual happiness. Both sense of 'interest' are dealt with in this scheme. Subsistence is obviously of direct concern to every one of us, but it is so often achieved and surpassed, at least in civilized societies, that to limit an 'interest' theory to a narrow, 'survival of the fittest' sense seems to ignore obvious evidence. It is

here suggested that individuals actively expand their contexts of value and celebrate the contents of this context. They have an 'interest', related to their sense of self-value, in this expanded context, and this is how individuals care about a portion of the universe. Finally, the rest of the world is to be respected on the basis of the often-mentioned universal relatedness.

There is somewhat of a collision of doctrines to be sorted out here. On the one hand there is Pirsig's objective value-nature of the world, within which one examines matters cool-headedly in order to guide conduct. On the other hand there is the analogy I am making of the individual to Whitehead's occasions which feel the world and admit or dismiss data into feeling. By so doing these occasions (and here people) create a value permeated self-identity. Both the cool-headed and the more passionate activities are human and must be reckoned with in an ethical theory.

There is a tension between these two positions. The description of the world Whitehead and Pirsig provide is 'atomistic'. That is, they accept the evident plurality of 'things' in the world, and they describe this by reference to processes that have local foci. Self-creativity is here seen as the nature of things: items are not manifestations of a supernatural reality. Yet the whole--the web of relations of particular to particular--also has a quality-process-nature. Reality, in this holistic sense, advances through its particulars, yet transcends them by being immensely diverse. The whole is to be judged primarily by the diversity it promotes, and the individuals are to be judged primarily on the basis of the intensity of satisfaction achieved. Of course, to separate the whole from the parts absolutely is to deal in illusion: consequently, the individuals are responsible for promotion of diversity and the whole is to be judged by the respective intensities. Yet this aspect of assessment of the universe seems secondary to that already described. The dynamic tension by which the universe advances through a wave of particulars calls for individual interest before consideration of the whole. Thus the ethical goal is that which has already been described--individual enjoyment tempered by environmental respect. This goal is a balanced tension conducive to further process. 'Order' is involved at every moment, yet it is order that leads beyond itself. An element of unrest is essential--it is as important to the world as order. To hold order and love up as ethical ideals is to develop an ethic of **stasis**: the theory here sketched is a dynamic ethic. At every moment, the tension is balanced, then the new order is destroyed with the next wave of actualization.

Take an individual person for analysis. In times of severe hardship--prolonged periods of hunger, natural disaster, war--I would expect the average individual value context to shrink. Personal survival would be at the core of the context, probably including a small number of other people and possibly some objects. The dominating impulse would be preservation of this value context. Any damage to this minimal circle of quality would be damage to the person's identity. Without some sort of minimum extended or projected self-value, many people would commit suicide. I am presenting this as being the typical case, but I suspect the exceptions would be numerous. Some people seem capable of maintaining a high level of 'selflessness', and are able to think of others, strangers even, when their own survival is directly threatened. I note this type of behaviour with admiration, but I do not think it is to be held up to be an ideal. If every person is saving the world, then other types of behavior--the intense enjoyment of small value contexts, including parts of the world that have been saved--are being neglected. This particular, individual behaviour of enjoyment is more likely to produce the diversity of actuality by which the whole is to be judged than is noble selflessness. Still, crises require heroes, and the behaviour

is pointed out as a special exception. The other sort of exception is that sort of character that seems satisfied with an extremely narrow value context. Extreme self-reliance, even in the most dire of times, characterizes these people. Satisfaction with barely more than their own survival constitutes their typical value contexts. This seems excessively narrow, and it may often be the case, but this type of lifestyle is not to be dismissed as necessarily value-deficient. It is possible that these people experience deep, quietly personal satisfactions. Again, diversity of experience is to be encouraged, on the whole.

As a matter of fact, many people do not live the bulk of their lives in times of extreme crisis. Thus, the extreme narrowing of value-context that comes with emphasis on self preservation is not to be seen to be the rule nor held up as an ideal. Wider contexts of self-projection or interest are possible, and instead of merely preserving the contents of these individual contexts, we can actively celebrate our worlds. 'Celebration' is to be understood as being the wider sense of 'aesthetic experience' discussed earlier: a full recognition and enjoyment of the positive value of any situation.

In ZMM, Robert Pirsig provides a thorough examination of the kind of conduct I have been discussing. His example, of course, is maintaining a motorcycle. This example has already come up in the discussion of aesthetic experience: motorcycle maintenance is seen as an art. Giving all experience an aesthetic aspect, however, blends aesthetics and ethics. Hence, such attention to the value aspect of activity is seen here as being central to an ethical theory. The primary responsibility of any individual is to develop and enjoy a personal context of value. This in turn explicitly and obviously blends the 'subjective' self and the 'objective' world.

The difference between a good mechanic and a bad one, like the difference between a good mathematician and a bad one, is precisely this ability to **select** the good facts from the bad ones on the basis of quality. He has to **care!** ...I think that it will be found that a formal acknowledgment of the role of Quality in the scientific process doesn't destroy the empirical vision at all. It expands it, strengthens it and brings it far closer to actual scientific practice.

I think the basic fault that underlies the problem of stuckness is traditional rationality's insistence upon "objectivity," a doctrine that there is a divided reality of subject and object... This eternally dualistic subject-object way of approaching the motorcycle sounds right to us because we're used to it. But it's not right. It's always been an artificial interpretation **superimposed** on reality. It's never been reality itself. When this duality is completely accepted a certain nondivided relationship between the mechanic and motorcycle, a craftsmanlike feeling for the work, is destroyed... By retuning our attention to Quality it is hoped that we can get

technological work out of the noncaring subject-object dualism and back into craftsmanlike self-involved reality again, which will reveal to us the facts we need when we are stuck. (ZMM, 275-276)

The 'stuckness' to which he refers in this passage is exactly that--the matter of being stuck on a problem. In this example, the specific problem is a tiny 'stuck' screw which interferes with gaining access to the inside of the motorcycle engine. Taking an aloof attitude to the screw will not help it move; rather, involvement is needed. Knowing the bike, knowing about tools and machines, seriously devoting attention to the activity--activities such as these comprise the activity of care. Seeing the stuck screw as an opportunity for leaning, for developing the depth of one's value context, is a good attitude. 'Good' here means practically productive and also advancing up the quality evolutionary chain. The state of mind that results from activity that involves dissolution of self in world-oriented activity is peaceful and exhilarated and ready to take on future challenges. The urge to expansion of the value context is difficult to suppress. Satisfaction gives way to new process.

By analogy, Whitehead describes occasions as undergoing the same development of quality when seemingly contrasting feelings are resolved into a higher, more complex unity. Instead of dismissing some prehension into irrelevance, a good state of affairs is achieved when the self expands, perhaps transcending the data provided by relevant history. Pirsig's analysis of quality approaches to 'stuckness' involves the same activity writ large. Moreover, both Whitehead's and Pirsig's schemes involve transcending historic reality through involvement with the world. It is rigorous attention to detail that is going to allow the mechanic to come up with a way to free the screw, or the occasion to unify the contrasting feelings. Turning away from the world is not going to bring about better states of affairs.

Apart from the positive value involved in any situation, there is the social environment to be considered. Activity that promotes a diversity of value contexts is good on the whole, and activity that erodes this diversity is evil. Activities such as atrocities performed by the Nazis must be awarded their individual measure of positive value because of the immediate experience of performance. But, on the whole, such activity grossly denies other people the opportunity for value actualization, and the world is poorer on the whole because of the reduced diversity of intensity of individual experience. Even the massive uniformity of experience within the Nazi movement is to be questioned because of the suppression of individual development. Inasmuch as each of us is an aspect of the world, it is our responsibility to promote, or at least not to prevent, diversity of experience.

This respect for diversity of individual experience involves refraining from the use of other people solely to intensify our own experience. Depth of value actuality comes about as a result of free, conscious integration with the world. Humans are to be accorded their measure of static, intellectual development and consequent possibility of Dynamic preparedness: in other words, they are to be assumed to be roughly equal to ourselves in ability to develop a value context. Further, since humans have considerable static intellectual development, it is to be assumed that the best activity we can enjoy has a high conceptual component, or a highly Dynamic component. It is to be noted that Dynamic here means self-critical development of intellectuality



and not just something different from intellectuality. Biological experience is different from intellectual experience, but it is not a higher level of evolved quality. Exploitation of other individuals denies them this freedom of activity, and consequently decreases the diversity of intense experience in the world. This means that slavery, rape, torture, and similar abuses of other people are evil on this scheme. However, if entered willingly, some apparently evil situations are good on the whole. Sado-masochistic sexual activity, mutually agreed upon by adults, is more good than evil, providing that the freedom of choice is respected throughout the activity. Employing people for subsistence level wages, if they enter into the project willingly, might not be immoral. Of course, it is easily arguable that no person completely willingly attempts to live on minimum wage, and that such payment is, on the whole, evil.

Current interest in bio-medical issues such as respecting patient autonomy stems from this conflict between individual development of value contrast and the evil involved in using others to this end. A medical doctor performs his/her tasks on other people. Becoming caught up in the joy or Quality rush of intellectual pursuit in the name of medicine is, I assume, a genuine risk. Allowing patients to dictate their own treatment quite possibly decreases the value-development of the doctor's experience. I am sure it can be frustrating to have patients decline certain courses of treatment on the basis of fear or religious belief. Such respect, however, is necessary for the world to develop as a whole.

In some cases, it is obvious that the patient will die, and it is questionable whether diversity of experience has in fact been promoted. Such perishing is, unfortunately, the risk involved in a trial and error evolutionary process. Such a process, on the whole, is probably largely to be trusted. The only step that can be taken to minimize this risk is wide-spread, extensive access to education and information. In other words, it is important to allow people to develop intellectually, which is the highest static aspect of human nature. Decisions about serious, quality laden matters should be made from as developed a position of expertise as possible. On this scheme, although the doctor must respect the decision of the patient to refuse treatment on religious grounds, the patient might be acting immorally if this religious foundation is not intellectually developed and maintained.

Abortion is another difficult bio-medical issue. This scheme advocates legislating the right to choose on behalf of the mother. Such a course of action is obviously not without drawbacks. For instance, it could be argued that a fetus is a paradigm example of an individual in a supremely dynamic state--open to all sorts of positive, creative development. Since Dynamic Quality is the ultimate lure in this metaphysic, abortion should be prohibited. I reject this argument for four reasons which must be considered together. Firstly, it denies the mother the Dynamic position of choice. Secondly, it ignores the mother own static development. Having a child against one's will or in difficult circumstances can have devastating consequences, and legislation, which is a static development at the social level, must protect other static issues (see Chapter III). Thirdly, the fetus is not particularly deeply socially or intellectually statically developed, rather, it has only progressed biologically. In other words, the kind of Dynamic development it is in a position to undergo is social, or a development of and rebellion against the biological patterns. Such development, from the position of the developed adult world, is not Dynamic at all. And finally, one cannot count on the Dynamic development of the child leading to high communal quality. In

the world, the child could turn out to be quite evil. Future static and Dynamic evolution must not be appealed to a high degree because of this uncertainty.

Perhaps the most interesting development this scheme brings to the study of ethics is the re-interpretation it provides of environmental ethics. In this synthetic value theory, understanding the role of the individual in the world is of paramount importance. Pirsig sees Quality everywhere; Whitehead describes an occasion as prehending the entire world and utilizing that data to project a unit of value into the future. Moreover, the data it prehends is already value charged, much like Pirsig's world. The scheme here presented describes the position of an individual human as being responsible for a limited context of value which draws on the value-charged past for data, and being duty-bound to respect the free becoming of the rest of the universe. At its broadest, this ethical scheme is an environmental ethic. The individual is presented as being necessarily world-oriented, and self-interest is broadened to include the world at large.

One of the fundamental issues in typical environmental ethics is whether aspects of the world other than humans are valuable in themselves, or merely in reference to human use. This synthetic scheme accommodates both. The world is seen as self-valuing and self-enjoying. Human experience is one aspect of this general process. Following Whitehead, the human experience of value is taken as direct evidence for the reality of value experience in the universe. Not presuming to separate the human radically from the rest of the world, such self-valuing is taken to exist throughout nature. But the final actuality of the world of particulars is also here preserved. The universe advances through its details. Thus, the individual human experience is not to be drawn into service of the world as a whole.

If each person were to attempt to save the world, a distasteful homogeneity of experience would be the result. By paying serious attention to one's own development, the environment in a wide sense is being served. Maintaining a respect for the free creativity of the rest of the world is not to deny that it is valuable in itself but rather to acknowledge that freedom of development is the essence of its value nature. It seems to me rather obvious that many of the specific problems discussed in environmental debate have been the result of human selfishness and that any restrictions upon our indulgent lifestyles must be seen as the pendulum swinging in the other direction. We are suffering from a backlash of cultural greed. I take this as further evidence of the balance of tension that must be achieved by every individual between self-enjoyment and worldly respect. This thesis is an examination and employment of philosophies that examine this tension. As humans, it is here asserted that we experience and develop an expanded sense of self-identity that includes a value context extended to include parts of the world. Also, the Whiteheadian doctrine of events that unify their entire world in a moment of self-creation has also been presented. Learning about the extent to which we expand our macro-selves to include portions of the world, and about the extent to which we incorporate the entire world in our micro-compositions is central to striking the right balance.

## **EPILOGUE**

## Constructive Postmodern Philosophy

As noted in the Introduction, this thesis, and particularly the details of Chapter VI, places me directly in the midst of considerable philosophical development. Other thinkers have approached value phenomena with a Whiteheadian framework. There is a growing group of writers who subscribe to a kind of thought they call Constructive Postmodern Philosophy. These thinkers see their roots in the works of a handful of late nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers, and Whitehead is probably the most heavily drawn upon. Other major influences are Charles Peirce, William James, Henri Bergson, and Charles Hartshorne. Now, no one has been taking professional notice of Robert Pirsig, primarily because of the manner in which he presents his ideas--in novels produced for mass consumption, with merely slight attention to the rigors typical of academic work. Perhaps he will be held up in admiration as 'Generation X' matures. Whatever the case, I think his writing also fits neatly within the realm of interest of constructive postmodern thought.

The term 'postmodern' has been used for quite some time now. People employ the word to show that they think they are making a radical break with the presuppositions of the thought of the last four hundred years--the modern era. More accurately, postmodern thinkers claim to reject the errors and keep the insights of the modern era. The problem is identifying these errors and insights. The type of philosophy typically referred to as 'postmodernism' is a deconstructive philosophy, but the postmodern thought that draws from Whitehead is explicitly constructive and sees deconstructive thought as, "**ultramodern, hypermodern, mostmodern**" (Griffin 1993, 2). In more detail:

[Deconstructive or eliminative postmodernism] overcomes the modern worldview through an anti-worldview: it deconstructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview, such as God, self, purpose, meaning, a real world, and truth as correspondence. While motivated in some cases by the ethical concern to forestall totalitarian systems, this type of post modern thought issues in relativism, even nihilism. It could also be called **ultramodernism** in that its eliminations result from carrying modern premises to their logical conclusions. (Griffin 1990, x)

Amongst the modern problems the constructive postmodernists see the deconstructionists as accepting and drawing to logical conclusions are the mind-body problem and the acceptance of mechanistic nature (Griffin 1993). The deconstructionists are unhappy with the world as described in terms of these two problems, but their solution is to accept them and show how this situation destroys concepts such as 'self', 'purpose', etc. Both of these problems are thoroughly dealt with by Whitehead in the details of his cosmology. The constructive postmodernists see their project in these terms:

[Constructive postmodernism] seeks to overcome the modern worldview not by eliminating the possibility of world- views as such, but by

constructing a postmodern worldview through a revision of modern premises and traditional concepts. This constructive or revisionary postmodernism involves a new unity of scientific, ethical, aesthetic, and religious intuitions. It rejects not science as such but only that scientism in which the data of the modern natural sciences are alone allowed to contribute to the construction of our worldview. (Griffin 1990, viii)

This thesis has been an attempt to do exactly what this passage describes: posit a new unity of science, aesthetics, and ethics, here under the rubric of an investigation of value. Such a project falls into line with these self-proclaimed constructive postmodern writings quite nicely. Moreover, some of the results are the same. Particularly important to the constructionists are the related Whiteheadian concepts of panexperientialism (experience as the character of the entire universe) and universal relatedness. These concepts are central to the synthetic value theory proposed in this final chapter. Also, the constructionists write with an eye towards worldly matters: their essays discuss political economy, ethics, aesthetics, and religion as matters stemming from and directly important to the human experience in the world. My project in this thesis was to explore a metaphysical view of value in order to provide an adequate conceptual foundation for discussion of human value experiences. Wendell Berry, a thinker whom I would include amongst the constructionists, deals mainly with environmental issues and has re-interpreted the concepts of ‘community’ and ‘good work’ in a manner similar to what I have here presented. ‘Community’ is to be understood as a local recognition of real inter-relatedness, or a group of balanced expanded selves. It is a term that mediates between public and private interests. ‘Good work’ is what I have called the experience of world-orientedness:

And the real name of our connection to this everywhere different and differently named earth is “work”... The name of our **proper** connection to the earth is “good work,” for good work involves much giving of honor. It honors the source of its materials; it honors the place where it is done, it honors the art by which it is done, it honors the thing that it makes and the user of the made thing. Good work is always modestly scaled, for it cannot ignore either the nature of individual places or the differences between places, and it always involves a sort of religious humility, for not everything is known. Good work can be defined only in particularity, for it must be defined a little differently for everyone of the places and every one of the workers on the earth. (Berry 1993, 35-36)

Robert Pirsig’s attention to Quality as portrayed in the analysis of motorcycle maintenance is ‘good work’. I heartily endorse this notion.

Not only does this thesis fall comfortably amongst the works of constructive postmodernism, but I think it makes a positive contribution. One of the aspects of the constructionist writings that troubles me is the overwhelming interest in developing a postmodern religion. For example, one of the first books in David Ray Griffin's SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought was entitled Spirituality and Society Postmodern Visions. Subsequent volumes in the series include much work on postmodern spirituality, including investigations of aesthetics and political economy that refer to the spiritual aspect of experience. Wendell Berry is explicitly Christian, albeit very liberal in outlook. I am not opposed to the project if it is maintained carefully; I do, however, think that such an interest runs a grave risk of slipping back into modern or premodern terms, and becoming an apology merely for traditional religious institutions instead of a conscientious inquiry into human experience.

David Ray Griffin makes clear the task and problem quite well. In his essay, "Peace and The Postmodern Paradigm" he delineates what religious interest involves:

A basic failure of modern thought has been to underestimate the extent to which we are **religious** beings. By this I mean that we seek **meaning** (however unconsciously), and that we do this by trying to be **in harmony with the ultimate nature of the world**, as we perceive it. (Griffin 1988, 143)

I take 'meaning' to mean both understanding and value. By this definition, being religious does not necessarily involve explicit worship or proselytizing. Religion here is an aspect of high quality existence and means taking care of your own business to the best of your ability. This is so unlike typical meanings of religion that the use of the same term borders on equivocation. Moreover, this definition does not invoke any sort of deity; exactly this sort of invocation is the most risky aspect of discussing spirituality:

Postmodern thought would create new attitudes. It again speaks of God, but its God is not the God of medieval or early modern thought. For those who cannot break the connection between the word and this previous image, the word **God** should not be used, at least for a time. Perhaps **Holy Reality** is better. The Holy Reality is our Creator, but not in an external, unilateral sense. This Holy Reality stimulates us from within, urging us to create ourselves in optimal fashion, this Holy Reality moves us by giving us a dream, not a push. To imitate this Holy One is to provide others visions by which they can realize their own deepest potentialities for creativity. (Griffin 1988, 145-146)

I would like to point out that this is how Pirsig describes Quality, and that he even uses religious language on occasion to describe Quality and the experience of it. Now, the risk Griffin runs is a definite threat to conceptual progress. Apart from feelings one might have about religion and one's relation to the nature of things, the only point I can see in the employment of religious

terminology, such as 'God', to describe the human condition is to draw out a certain attitude of respect towards the topic or object in question. The deity seems to be that which deserves respect as a source and standard, yet the word 'God' has meant all sorts of other things as well (e.g., 'judge', 'despot'), and these are not part of the postmodern vision. Using 'God' runs the risk of conceptual confusion because of the baggage involved. Moreover, if one can achieve the same sort of respect with a different term, then religious terminology is probably not necessary.

The positive contribution that I see this thesis as making to constructive postmodern thought is the providing of an analysis of 'quality' or 'value' that can be used in place of religious language without the risk of confusion. Chapter V of this thesis contains most of this examination of 'value'. Moreover, I think 'value' is a term closer to average human experience than 'God'. The world would be a better, higher quality place if more respect or worship were paid through the performance of our own affairs than to the mysterious natures of a myriad mysterious being. No doubt, this is largely what David Griffin intends, but I do not want to accept half-measures in the place of substantial progress. I see value theory as a more profitable and more postmodern pursuit than religion. Alfred North Whitehead went a long way towards creating the postmodern vision of god. Robert Pirsig took a similar concept, although probably not from Whitehead, and developed his notion of 'Quality' as what he took to be a more adequate substitute. In this thesis, I take the works of these two men and attempt to fill out this idea of quality or value. By so doing, I hope to point towards a new type of self and world respect. On that note, I offer this thesis as a tentative postmodern step towards acknowledging and understanding value-charged reality.

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