

The Datum from Which Concrecence Flows: Whitehead's First Analysis of Becoming

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By Whitehead's first analysis of becoming, I refer to the theory of transition and concrecence in part two of *Process and Reality*, which was superseded by the final theory of concrecence in part three.

By becoming I do not here mean simple change, as in "the leaf becoming red." I mean rather the coming into being of an event which heretofore had no being. Enduring substances come into being by some initiatory event. Thus the becoming of a substance is based on the being of an event. In this case, however, we wish to investigate the becoming of an event. This is not the same as its being, which is its happening. Rather, we wish to examine how that happening comes into being. This is rarely undertaken.

In its most radical form becoming means the coming into being of that which had no prior being. Theologians consider this in terms of creation *ex nihilo*. While they reason from the implications of this idea, they tend to treat it as an unanalyzable surd, resisting all further analysis. The coming into being of substances from other beings is sometimes considered, but not the coming into being of events.

Usually no distinction is made between that which initiates a particular enduring substance and that which alters it in some respect during its career. In both cases efficient causes are at work. In Whitehead's case, however, efficient causes are only effective during phases of becoming. Their impact upon the occasion's being is mediated by means of its becoming.

This concern for becoming is idiosyncratic to Whitehead's undertaking. First, we shall consider why he devoted so much of part two to the analysis of becoming (section 1). Next we shall put forth the various phases of this first analysis (sections 4-7). Because these phases differ from the phases of part three of *Process and Reality*, they will be largely unfamiliar to our readers. In particular the datum here refers to a datum for the entire concrecence, not to the datum of an individual prehension. Finally we shall examine a related issue: what led him to revise this theory in the direction of the final theory developed in part three (sections 8 and 9).

1. The Analysis of Being

I suspect that Whitehead turned to the analysis of becoming because the analysis of being turned out to be quite unsatisfactory within the context of his thinking. Initially the problem arose in finding a place in nature for mind. After analyzing the nature of an actual occasion in terms which require no reference to mentality, Whitehead appends four paragraphs to describe a "complete actual occasion"

having the spontaneity and novelty of mentality (*SMW* 170-172). I take this to be something of an afterthought, designating this additional feature in terms of “complete actual occasion” to avoid disturbing what he had already written. In any event, what was an (ordinary) “actual occasion” becomes in subsequent publications a “physical occasion” to be completed by its “mental occasion.”¹

A problem arises when this is combined with the doctrine of the atomicity of occasions. Which is the unit of actuality, the physical occasion, the mental occasion, or their combination? The essay on “Time” (1926) evades the issue in its formulation:

Each occasion supersedes other occasions, it is superseded by other occasions, and it is internally a process of supersession, in part potential and in part actual. One example of the actual internal supersession in an occasion is that the mental occasion supersedes the physical occasion.²

Note the supersession is not differentiated, as in later theory, between the succession of determinate occasions and the succession of genetic phases of becoming. If we consider the way the mental occasion supersedes the physical occasion as like the succession of occasions, then each is the unit of actuality. Each should be regarded as indivisible. On the other hand, if its supersession is like genetic becoming, then the combined occasion would be the unit of actuality. Perhaps this is as it should be, since complex actuality calls for both physical and mental features. But it plays havoc with the indivisibility of actuality. Then we would have an “indivisible” occasion which yet can be divided into physical and mental subactualities.

In the light of these difficulties, why did Whitehead not abandon or drastically revise his doctrine of temporal atomicity? The atomicity of occasions is clearly one of his most peculiar idiosyncrasies. Many readers have sought to minimize its importance, or to eliminate it entirely as unnecessary. I am not one of these. I find it to be an essential doctrine, quite central to his endeavor. It is also an important clue, usually implicit, as to his philosophical development.

If this were a substance theory, then it could be an event which brings the enduring substance into being. At least the first event initiates its being. In process theory events rather than substances are the units of actuality. Analogous to the initiating event of a substance we might suppose that each actual event is prefaced by its act of becoming. Yet since the act of becoming is itself an event requiring its own act of becoming, there would be an infinite regress of initiating events.. To avoid this infinite regress, caused by the divisibility of each event into itself and its predecessor, actual occasions are held to be indivisible (cf., *PR* 68f.). Whitehead presents a version of this argument in Zeno-like terms (*EWM* 307f., *PR* 68f.). Gottfried Heinemann has questioned the cogency of this argument, and he may well be right.³ In any case, however, there are other arguments why occasions should be indivisible.

Indivisible actual occasions may be distinguished from nonactual divisible events. Usually theories of actuality seek to generalize from the kinds of actuali-

ties found in the world. Then there is the danger that some contingent features actualities happen to possess are elevated to the level of metaphysical necessities. In order to avoid these and other difficulties with substance, Whitehead begins with events, as we have seen. Events are spatiotemporal volumes which can be any size whatever. This means that many events are too large (e.g. the last Presidential election, World War Two, dinner last night) to be appropriately designated as individual units of actuality. But if occasions must be indivisible to be actual, we have a general criterion applicable to all events which sorts out the actual from the nonactual.

Occasions are determinate. They are what they are. Individual occasions are unchangeable, although sequences may evince change. This need not mean that an occasion is completely static; it may be dynamic although its components cannot be change about, since this is precluded by indivisibility. In other words, it is a determinate dynamism.

Another way of putting it is to say that occasions are prehensible. In contrast the act of becoming or the concrescence is a process of determination, and insofar as it is in process, it is indeterminate. It cannot be prehended. To be sure, it results in a determinate prehensible.

Now suppose the occasion were divisible. No matter where the division is made, the part-occasion would mark an actual occasion which would be a complete process of determination, resulting in a determinate entity. Simultaneously with the part-occasion, there would be the whole occasion in process. At the point where the part-occasion is completely determinate its process of determination would be incomplete. It would only be indeterminate, awaiting completion. Thus at that point the actuality would be both determinate and indeterminate, which is impossible. To avoid this flat-out contradiction, the occasion must be indivisible.

Temporal atomicity became a constant feature of his philosophy once introduced in *Science and the Modern World* (122-127). Yet Whitehead had difficulty determining just what should be considered atomic: at first it seems to be the actual occasion as whole, if not time itself, then the being of an occasion (its satisfaction) as contrasted with its becoming (concrescence), finally with its act of becoming (*PR* 69).⁴

If temporal atomicity precludes any satisfactory analysis of indivisible being (as being was initially conceived), then the only analysis possible is the analysis of becoming.⁵ Becoming introduces an important contrast with being, particularly when it is combined with the principle of relativity. In direct opposition to Descartes' claim that an actuality requires nothing but itself to exist, which proclaims simple location, Whitehead fashioned a principle of relativity or relationality, that each actuality is constituted by its relations to all other actualities. Each occasion prehends all others, that is, all others that have already come into objective existence. This excludes contemporary as well as future events. According to Einstein's relativity physics, contemporaries cannot causally influence one

another. They do not exist for one another, although they exist for themselves. Whitehead understands the subjectivity of the immediate occasion in terms of such contemporaries.

2. *Datum of Experience*

In *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics*, I assumed that the first theory of becoming underlay the whole of part two of *Process and Reality*. Yet the paucity of material explicitly considering this early theory suggested the hypothesis that these passages are later insertions, and further examination bears this out. This is particularly the case if we differentiate between two uses of "datum" in part two. Datum in these insertions refers to a stage of becoming: first objectification produces the datum, which then initiates the concrescence by means of conformal and supplementary feelings. This is the datum for concrescence (as opposed to the later usage in part three, whereby the datum refers to the individual datum of prehension). Many chapters in part two have "datum," but datum considered apart from any theory of becoming. Such a datum is simply that which is given to us in experience. It is the starting point for epistemological analysis. Phenomenology undertakes its description. As Whitehead remarks, "It is impossible to scrutinize too carefully the character to be assigned to the datum in the act of experience" (*PR* 157).

It may be plausibly supposed that Whitehead was stymied by the difficulties posed by the apparent atomicity of physical and mental occasions. Such occasions seemed necessary to explain the contrasting qualities of the physical and the mental, and yet they would not be necessary if individual occasions were indivisible. Perhaps he then directed his attention to themes he could handle: the nature of the given in experience, the pre-Kantian philosophers, the extensive continuum, causal efficacy and presentational immediacy, propositions, etc. This could include a preliminary analysis of the datum as sketched below in this section.

In short, he could have made an initial draft of part two (except for chapter 10) before he considered becoming in any detail. Later, with renewed insight, he could have made the insertions sketching out a theory of concrescence based on the contrast between being and becoming. At this stage Whitehead may have reasoned that while the being of an occasion was indivisible, it was nonetheless possible to analyze how it came to be.

Thus, before he introduced becoming into his theory, he was already analyzing the nature of experience in terms of what is given, the datum. This analysis is initially undertaken in isolation from the problem of temporal atomicity. It is to be found in the original text of part two.

In such [primitive] 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 phases of supplementary and conceptual feelings are negligible. (*PR* 115).

The characterization of “process” in these early texts could suggest that Whitehead is already affirming becoming, but I think it is more likely that at this stage no clear differentiation between change (the succession of determinates) and becoming (the process of determination) has yet been made.

Another passage mentions datum, process, and satisfaction (*PR* 111). Neither passage shows signs of being a later insertion. If the basic passages concerning the analysis of becoming are insertions, as we shall see, these passages being considered here should be earlier reflections on these topics. The process is analyzed in terms of the various phases of feelings, starting with the first.

. . . the first stage of the process of feeling is the reception into responsive conformity of feeling whereby the datum, which is mere potentiality, becomes the individualized basis for a complex unity of realization. (*PR* 113).

Since, on this account, the occasion does not feel past occasions individually but only in terms of the datum they constitute, conformal feelings are needed to appropriate various aspects of the datum so as to provide material for subsequent unification.. As we shall see, such conformal feelings lack any element of subjective appropriation or valuation.

Besides the “initial phase of conformal feeling” there is supplementation. “Supplementary feeling is emotional and purposeful, because it is what is felt by mere reason of the subjective appropriation of the objective data” (*PR* 165). I take the “objective data” to be the data of the conformal feelings.

The notion of actualization shaping up here gives a central role to the datum of experience. It is patterned on a generalization of perception. External stimuli in the form of past actual occasions cause the datum to be what it is. That datum is then inwardly felt by the mind (subject). Feeling is like prehension except that it was initially conceived as operative only within occasions. Efficient causation is understood (in *SMW*) in terms of complete occasions, later concentrating on the interiority of occasions: first (in part two) in terms of transition setting up the conditions for concrecence, later (in part three) in terms of the phases of concrecence.

3. Implicit Pansubjectivism

Once these phases are understood not merely as parts of an analysis of what we experience, but as a process whereby experience comes into being, the analysis needs to be reconceptualized and supplemented. The problem of change may have prompted this revision. If successive phases differ, such that later phases really come into being after earlier, why is there not change within the occasion? If there were change, then there would be determinate entities in succession. This would imply a division of the indivisible, which is impossible.

Thus individual occasions cannot change. What change there is can only occur between occasions. Change marks “the differences between actual occasions in one event” (*PR* 73, 80). The repetition of this reflection within seven pages of each other suggests that one might be a later insertion when the original had

faded from memory. Or Whitehead could have remembered the assertion but not where it was in his manuscript. There would be little point to the insertion,⁶ however, unless it introduced something novel. It does so; it argues that while an occasion cannot change, *it can become*. As an instance of creativity, participating in the creative advance, the occasion is surely dynamic and active. If change is impossible, some other form of activity must be possible. But what this “becoming” might be may not yet have been worked out.

The centrality of becoming leads to the contrast between becoming and being. Being is not becoming and becoming is not being. This is contrary to the usual designation of being as the all-inclusive category, by which becoming is a kind of being. Basically this is a semantic decision, although being still means, as it does for the tradition, everything that can be objectively experienced. But Whitehead shifts the meaning of becoming. Instead of being included within being, being is the outcome of becoming. This may only be possible for a theory of events.

Several of Whitehead’s metaphysical principles can be understood from the contrast between being and becoming combined with his programmatic assumption that all actuality is constituted by its relations to all other actualities. This assumption is not directly justified, but it guides his construction of first principles, and is justified, at least in part, by the results.

Only the third metaphysical principle is explicitly mentioned (*PR* 212), but in October 1927, Whitehead presented eight metaphysical principles to his Harvard class.⁷ Four of them are directly relevant here.

1. That the actual world is a process and that this process is the becoming of actual entities. [This corresponds to part of the first category of explanation. The world is made up of indivisible events which are all becoming.]
2. That in the becoming of an actual entity, the *potential* unity of many entities acquires the actual unity of the one entity—the whole process is the many becoming one, and the one is what becomes. [This corresponds almost word for word with the second category of explanation. If each actuality is constituted by its relations, its becoming consists in the unification of this many.]
3. That the potentiality for acquiring real unity with other entities is the one general metaphysical character attaching to *all* entities, *actual or nonactual*—i.e., it belongs to the nature of a “Being” that it is a potential for a “Becoming.” [This corresponds word for word with part of the fourth category of explanation. If each actuality is constituted by its relations to all that exists, then they are potentially ingredient in its concrescence.]
4. That *how* the actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* the actual entity *is*, so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent. All *explanation* of an actual entity exhibits its process as the reason for its potentiality, and all *description* exhibits the realized objectifications of that actual entity as a partial analysis of its own process. [This is somewhat reworded as the eighth and ninth categories of explanation. The ninth, the principle of process, follows from the second metaphysical principle, provided that an actuality’s unity is nothing in addition to the unification of its initial multiplicity.]

Whitehead could have drafted these principles once the contrast between being and becoming became clear, since he was already assuming complete relationality among actualities. That they were drafted before October 1927 means that they were available for all the material discussed in the present essay, except for section two. It is important to note that there is here no hint of any identity between subjectivity and becoming, for that would introduce pansubjectivism. Whether that was deliberate or whether he had not yet made the connection may be impossible to ascertain.

Substances and events generally may have subjective interiors. Some do, but others do not. If occasions were only objective beings, they would lack subjectivity. But then they would lack creativity as well, which is expressed by their becoming. Since the becoming cannot be part of the objective indivisible being, it must constitute the subjective interiority of the occasion. This reasoning applies to all occasions. This is pansubjectivism, since all occasions in their concrescences are subjective.

Substances may be thought to have both being for themselves and for others. In contrasting objective being and subjective becoming Whitehead assigns being only the relation of being for others. Occasions have being for themselves only in concrescence, then have being for others only in satisfaction.⁸ This means that subjective existence is a different kind of existence from that which objects have, and justifies the contrast between becoming and being. We exist in the moment for ourselves alone, and not yet for others. The same is true for contemporaries, which have the same sort of subjective existence of becoming.

It is very difficult to ascertain when Whitehead made the connection between becoming and subjectivity. It was made at least by the affirmation of the reformed subjectivist principle, but I suspect it was made long before that, and guided his initial analysis of becoming. He may have been quite reluctant to profess pansubjectivism until he had complete confidence in it. In any case, his initial discussion of the subjectivist principle gives no hint that all occasions enjoy subjectivity (*PR* 157-60).⁹

Descartes endorsed a limited form of the subjectivist principle:

those substances which are the subjects enjoying conscious experiences provide the primary data for philosophy, namely, themselves as in the enjoyment of such experience. (*PR* 159)

If for Whitehead all occasions, at least implicitly, enjoyed subjectivity, then consciousness must be a poor candidate as an essential feature of subjectivity. It must be too contingent to rate a place within the subjectivist principle. Nevertheless his discussion within that initial section leaves it open, whether inadvertently or deliberately, whether “subjects” applies only to conscious subjects or to all actualities. Yet Whitehead can affirm the subjectivist principle as meaning that our way of discerning the metaphysical features of subjective becoming is to seek out the necessary properties of our own immediate experience. This entails at least implicit pansubjectivism.

We see traces of this in the notion of a “subjective satisfaction” (*PR* 52, 88). Although it is explicitly mentioned only in these passages, I take it that satisfaction was conceived subjectively at least through the initial composition of part two. Since he was analyzing concrescence as applicable to all occasions, this entails pansubjectivity, though not stated.

Whitehead never seems to have seriously entertained the possibility of any wholly nonsubjective becoming. In contrast to subjectivity as the capacity for novel response, nonsubjective becoming would be totally inert. Rather than initiating any activity of its own, nonsubjective becoming would be entirely formed by its past, either in terms of a determinism of efficient causes, or by some privileged predecessor capable of providing its organizing principle supplanting any subjective aim. Both are roundly rejected, the second in the form of “inert endurance.” The notion of a dynamic privileged predecessor is never considered.

4. The initial theory of becoming

If such nonsubjective becoming is excluded, all becoming must be subjective and is thus to be determined in terms of the most general features of our own experience. This is the implicit pansubjectivism that guides Whitehead’s endeavor.

a. The “givenness” insertion

This insertion probably represents the first attempt to specify the nature of becoming.¹⁰ Here the focus centers on the process and its satisfaction or termination. “The actual entity terminates its becoming in one complex feeling involving a completely determinate bond with every item in the universe.” (*PR* 44). This entails

that there is a complete determination of “feeling” or of “negation of feeling,” respecting the universe. This evaporation of indetermination is merely another way of considering the process whereby the actual entity arises from its data. (*PR* 45)

Although they function similarly, these “negations of feeling” are not yet negative prehensions, for negative prehensions are not feelings, nor are they used in the correlation of feelings and prehensions.¹¹ Generally speaking, Whitehead initially uses prehensions between occasions, and feelings within occasions, although in this insertion it must be recognized that he does speak of “conceptual prehensions” (*PR* 45.22).

Even though this insertion mentions “datum” only with respect to how the satisfaction becomes a datum for subsequent occasions, the notion of a datum as that which is given in experience becomes a datum from which becoming proceeds once the analysis of becoming is undertaken.

b. Datum, process, satisfaction, decision

Previously Whitehead needed only to describe what was given to us in immediate experience. When this was incorporated into an analysis of becoming, however, it became necessary to explain how the datum could come into being.

The satisfaction of a prior occasion needs to be connected to the datum of its successor. Thus the next passage has four stages, adding “decision” to the previous “datum, process, satisfaction” (*PR* 149f).¹² Decision is not to be understood as a subjective process, for it occurs after satisfaction and before concrescence:

The decision, providing the datum, is a transference of self-limited appetite; the settled world provides the “real potentiality” that its many actualities be felt compatibly; and the new concrescence starts from this datum. (*PR* 150)

This teaching concerning decision and datum are foreign to those of us schooled in the final theory of concrescence found in *Process and Reality*, part three. There we have a single subjective process of unification, unifying the many of the past world into one. Datum later refers to the datum of an individual prehension, whereas in this passage it is the datum for the concrescence itself: “the new concrescence starts from this datum” (*PR* 150). Decision here refers to an objective process whereby what is given has a provisional unity to be experienced.

This theory of “decision” is derived from his theory of actuality which had already been established:

Just as “potentiality for process” is the meaning of the more general term “entity”; so “decision” is the additional meaning imported by the word “actual” into the phrase “actual entity.” “Actuality” is the decision amid “potentiality.” It represents stubborn fact which cannot be evaded. (*PR* 43)

Actuality means complete determinateness effected by decision, in its root meaning as the cutting off of alternatives.

Admission or exclusion of an entity to or from effectiveness—value.

There is no indetermination as to what is actual. There is a decision in regard to every entity.¹³

This characterizes the satisfaction, but not the datum: “The datum is indeterminate as regards the final satisfaction” (*PR* 150). It must be so if there is to be any free input by the subject in the process of experience. A completely determinate datum would entail determinism. But it is the datum, not the actuality, which is here described as the outcome of decision. Thus “decision” effects only partial determinateness; it represents the objective component of determination. The objective interpretation carries over in both cases.

Whitehead’s theory of becoming is based on a generalization from our human experience. It starts from that which is given to us in waking experience, the datum, and proceeds to the completed thought. Datum functions both in phenomenological and metaphysical ways. Much of part two is a general description and reflection upon the given, the initial deliverances of experience. But there is also a metaphysical account of becoming in which the given is inserted. Some account must be given as to the origination of the datum, for which he proposes “decision.” But “decision” must be understood in nonsubjective terms, and standing between the satisfaction of one process, and the beginning (datum)

of another (cf., *PR* 43). Whereas later in the final theory of concrescence there is a single subjective process, the initial theory has a double process, one objective, one subjective: "There is the becoming of the datum ... and there is the becoming of the immediate self from the datum" (*PR* 150). Thus the datum originates apart from the subject, and is not initially part of the subject, although it massively influences the subject's experience.

What is given in experience (especially if thought in terms of presentational immediacy) may have originally been conceived as determinate. Each individual actuality cannot be perceived (prehended) unless determinate. It would seem that the datum constituted by these actualities should also be determinate if it is to influence subsequent phases. On the other hand, unless it is somewhat indeterminate, it cannot allow those phases to make any further determination. "The datum is indeterminate as regards the final satisfaction" (*PR* 150). The analysis of becoming required the datum to be indeterminate in order to accommodate subsequent phases. If so, some justification for this indeterminacy of the given must be found. Eventually in part three, Whitehead eventually finds it to be located in a deficiency of order and unity. The parts are severally determinate, but their ordering requires subjective determination.

c. Objectification

In a previous passage, decision is described:

The final stage, the "decision," is how the actual entity, having attained its individual "satisfaction," thereby adds a determinate condition to the settlement for the future beyond itself. Thus the "datum" is the "decision received," and the "decision" is the "decision transmitted." (*PR* 150).

This account elides one important issue. How do the many determinate conditions transmitted become the one datum received? This may be modeled on prehensive unification as conceived in *Science and the Modern World*, yet even here prehensive unification drives towards determinate unity, while the datum must remain partially indeterminate. "The datum is indeterminate as regards the final satisfaction," otherwise there could be no freedom (*PR* 150).

The way the many conditions become one is once described in terms of concrescence:

No actual entity can rise beyond what the actual world as a datum from its standpoint—its actual world—allows it to be. Each such entity arises from a primary phase of the concrescence of objectifications which are in some respects settled. (*PR* 83)

When Whitehead fixed his terminology for the analysis of becoming, such that concrescence followed from the datum, this synthesis of objectifications could no longer be called a concrescence. Objectifications constitute the efficient causes, conceived as external to the subjective process of concrescence.

The "objectifications" of the actual entities in the actual world, relative to a definite actual entity, constitute the efficient causes out of which that actual entity arises. (*PR* 87)

For these objectifications to constitute a datum rather than a being in its own right, the pansubjectivist presupposition must come into play. For there is no necessary implication from efficient causes to subjectivity. Some substances may have subjects, but not all. Only if Whitehead is analyzing that which must be subjective need there any additional subjective phases, such that what is achieved by objectification is truly just an object for a subject and not itself an independent actuality.¹⁴

Efficient causes are ordinarily conceived as having their seat of causal activity located in a past persisting into the present. Temporal atomicity requires that it be either in the past or in the present activity of the subject. Taking the first alternative, the many actualities outside and prior to the occasion give rise to the datum. Whitehead recognizes that the character of the cause is somehow transferred to the effect, but he is silent with respect to the activity needed to bring about the transfer. It cannot be located in the past, for past occasions have lost their creativity. On the other hand, physical prehensions have not yet been introduced, which would place causal activity in the present.¹⁵

The theory of objectification also contains a reflection on incompatibility and perspective: "The perspective is provided by the elimination of incompatibilities" (*PR* 150).

Every individual objectification in the datum has its perspective defined by its own eternal objects with their own relevance compatible with the relevance of other objectifications. (*PR* 154)

This carries over into the final theory in terms of the perspectival elimination of incompatibilities, and is generalized in terms of the first categorial condition:

The many feelings which belong to an incomplete phase in the process of an actual entity, though unintegrated by reason of the incompleteness of the phase, are compatible for synthesis by reason of the unity of their subject. (*PR* 223)

This may be the final vestige of objective unification in the final theory, which reconceives as much as it can in terms of subjective activity. Subjective activity, it seems, cannot account for the perspectival elimination of incompatibilities in the given.

d. Datum as complex

In some senses the datum initiating the concrescence can be considered to be one. It is one in two senses: as that which is given in experience, generalized for all occasions, and as that which is the outcome of objectification (or decision transmitted or prehensive unification). But this is not a strict or determinate unity, for it remains indeterminate as to the subject's contribution.

Whitehead comes to recognize the complexity of this datum in the following quotation, which describes the concrescence of an occasion:

By this concrescence the multifold datum of the primary phase is gathered into the unity of the final satisfaction of feeling. (*PR* 185)

To anticipate a bit, there is a nuanced interpretation of the datum connecting it to the problem of perspective, drawn from the systematic summary:

The objectified particular occasions together have the unity of a datum for the creative concrescence. But in acquiring this measure of connection, their inherent presuppositions of each other eliminate certain elements in their constitutions, and elicit into relevance other elements. Thus objectification is an operation of mutually adjusted abstraction, or elimination, whereby the many occasions of the actual world become one complex datum. This fact of the elimination by reason of synthesis is sometimes termed the perspective of the actual world from the standpoint of that concrescence. (*PR* 210) ¹⁶

In all this, however, the operation of objectification lies outside and prior to concrescence. This model of objectification followed by concrescence corresponds to his earlier analysis in terms of physical and mental occasions. That model failed because it was couched in terms of being, and therefore faced insuperable obstacles with respect to temporal atomicity. To overcome those difficulties the model was recast in terms of becoming.

While efficient causation could explain the origination of the objective datum, the origination of subjectivity remained problematic. As long as only some actualities have subjectivity, its origination remains a contingent empirical problem. But Whitehead is already at least on the verge of pansubjectivism. Origination of subjectivity for occasions, which are atomic at that, almost defies possible explanation. At this point it is enough to posit some sort of subjective response, given an objective datum:

the elements available for the explanation are simply, the objective content, eternal objects,¹⁷ and the selective concrescence of feelings whereby an actual entity becomes itself. (*PR* 153)

5. *The Chapter on "Process" (II.10)*

Part two, chapter 10, entitled "Process," presents a systematic development of Whitehead's ideas on the process of actualization up to this time. He may have judged his theory to be reasonably complete. At least he considered it sufficiently complete to warrant systematic exposition. But there was more to come, as yet unanticipated.

Initially, he presents two kinds of fluency, one within occasions (concrecence) and one between them (transition) (*PR* 210). Transition marks the way in which one occasion supersedes another, while objectification is the way the past becomes a datum for the latter occasion. Thus objectification is the means whereby transition is effected.

Thus, for example:

The creativity in virtue of which any relative complete actual world is, by the nature of things, the datum for a new concrescence is termed "transition." (*PR* 211)

The first stage of the concrescence

is the phase of pure reception of the actual world in its guise of objective datum for aesthetic synthesis. In this phase there is the mere reception of the actual world as a multiplicity of private centers of feeling. (*PR* 212)

The conformal feelings in this first stage merely feel in the sense that they are devoid of an subjective supplementation. In the second stage “the feelings assume an emotional character” (*PR* 212). This is the familiar objective datum and response we have seen as characteristic of the initial theory of concrescence.

There is one brief passage, however, that conflicts with this interpretation of conformal feeling:

A [any] feeling can be considered in respect to (i) the actual occasions felt, (ii) the eternal objects felt, (iii) the feelings felt, and (iv) its own subjective forms of intensity. (*PR* 211)

Conformal feelings, as we have seen, since devoid of any subjective supplementation, lack subjective forms. Yet if all feelings have subjective forms, conformal feeling must have them as well. Both passages cannot belong to the original text. I regard the sentence just quoted as a later insertion. There is strong continuity of the sentences surrounding it. The sentence would not be missed if it were absent.¹⁸ As this is the only mention of “subjective form” in the chapter, I take the chapter on “Process” to have been originally composed before “subjective form” became part of Whitehead’s conceptuality.

The most notable contribution the chapter makes is its theory of two kinds of fluency.

Transition is the fluency “from particular existent to particular existent” (*PR* 210). We take that now to be from actual occasion to actual occasion, but if this is in conformity with the earlier theory, it would be from earlier satisfactions to the datum initiating concrescence. The paragraphs describing transition in section one (*PR* 210) leave the issue open. This is what is usually quoted in support of the nature of transition. Yet on the very next page we read:

The creativity in virtue of which any relative complete actual world is, by the nature of things, the datum for a new concrescence is termed “transition.” (*PR* 211)

There are two ways of interpreting these two kinds of fluency. In accordance with the final theory constructed from physical feelings, both are based on one kind of subjective activity, which is fundamentally a process of appropriation by occasions coming into being. The only difference lies in the scope of the activity, whether it is between (transition) or within occasions (concrecence).

The other interpretation, adopted by the initial theory, asserts the purely nonsubjective character of objectification. Prior to concrescence, there is no subjective activity. This “macroscopic process is the transition from attained actuality to actuality in attainment” is identified as efficient causation, and there is no indication that efficient causation is understood in subjective terms (*PR* 214). Thus past occasions in concert actively produce the datum which is then actively appropriated by the concrescent subject. The datum is passive in two

ways: it is the passive outcome of its efficient causes and is the passive resource which the subject draws upon through its conformal feelings. Thus the locus of activity in these two kinds of fluency differs: in transition it lies with the past occasions, in concrescence it lies with the concrescing subject.¹⁹

The final theory, which we are shortly approaching, reduces this complexity, for then all activity is conceived as subjective activity. Prehensions between occasions can then be connected to feelings within occasions. The chapter on "Process" makes no mention of "prehension," presumably because Whitehead was uncertain whether the efficient causes from occasions to occasions should be understood by means of a generalization from perception. In *Science and the Modern World* prehensive unity was primarily a description of being. But now prehensive unification is to be analyzed in terms of becoming. This introduces efficient causation, itself devoid of subjectivity, rendering prehension inappropriate.

Let us take note of one other feature of the chapter on "Process." The section on concrescence, with its discussion of many, one, and creativity (PR 211) offers a strong basis for the Category of the Ultimate (PR 21f), once it is suitably generalized.

6. *Anticipating Pansubjectivity*

The chapter on "Process" has a subjective stage:

The second stage is governed by the private ideal, gradually shaped in the process itself; whereby the many feelings, derivatively felt as alien, are transformed into a unity of aesthetic appreciation immediately felt as private. (PR 212)

How does the process shape it, or does it shape the process? Does it function as a subject underlying the process? Whitehead evades these questions as he evades the issue of subjectivity.

As we have seen, the early theory of concrescence presupposes the production of a single datum for the selective appropriation by the occasion itself. This theory is paralleled by an account of the emergence of the "private ideal" or "ideal of itself" (ancestors of "subjective aim"). There is first an objective lure, made up of "eternal objects introduced into the universe by ...the actual occasions forming the datum of the concrescence" (PR 185). Then

the concrescent process admits a selection from this "objective lure" into subjective efficiency. This is the subjective "ideal of itself" which guides the process. (PR 87)²⁰

Although the "ideal of itself" is described in subjective terms, it is not clear whether Whitehead was yet committed to ascribing subjectivity to all actualities, at least explicitly. At any rate, he subsequently explored ways in which this process might be described as much as possible without any explicit mention of subjectivity. Thus the use of privacy and the private ideal. In another place he writes:

The process whereby an actual entity, starting from its objective content, attains its individual satisfaction. . . . expresses how the datum, which involves the actual world, becomes a component in the one actual entity. There must therefore be no further reference to other actual entities; the elements available for the explanation are simply, the objective content, eternal objects, and the selective concrescence of feelings whereby an actual entity becomes itself. (*PR* 153)²¹

The selection involved in this selective concrescence is:

a selection of relevant eternal objects whereby what is a datum from without is transformed into its complete determination as a fact within. (*PR* 154)

Thus process is the admission of eternal objects in their new role of investing the datum with the individuality of the subject. The datum, qua mere datum, includes the many individualities of the actual world. The satisfaction includes these many individualities as subordinate contributors to the one individuality. (*PR* 154)

(The recognition that eternal objects are not only analytic of the datum will lead Whitehead shortly to the introduction of subjective form.)

In an earlier text, prior to the early theory of concrescence, he made allowance for a subjective contribution. In one passage he speaks of “the two earlier prehensive phases—the receptive phases, namely, the datum and the subjective response” (*PR* 117). This second phase is analyzed in more detail elsewhere:

The graduated emotional intensity of the subject is constituting itself by reference to the physical data, datively there and conformally felt. . . . Supplementary feeling is emotional and purposeful, because it is what is felt by mere reason of the subjective appropriation of the objective data. But it is of the essence of supplementary feeling that it does not challenge its initial phase of conformal feeling by any reference to incompatibility. (*PR* 164f)²²

The avoidance of incompatibility mentioned in the last sentence develops into the issue of perspectival elimination discussed above (see subsection 4c on “objectification”). Since the subjective response is subsequent to conformal feeling, conformal feeling is conceived as devoid of any subjective contribution. For the datum is the outcome of a purely objective process of objectification, and conformal feelings simply make that datum accessible to concrescent unification.

Thus conformal feelings lack subjective forms, not only because the notion of subjective form has not yet been proposed, but because the initial phases of concrescence were considered to be devoid of any emotional content. Subjective form differs from subjective response in that subjective characterization inheres in every feeling. In subjective response the subject reacts to purely objective conformal feelings.

The doctrine of conformal feeling and subjective response suggests that Whitehead may have left the sensationalist principle unopposed:

The sensationalist principle is, that the primary [initial?] activity in the act of experience is the bare subjective entertainment of the datum, [devoid of any subjective form of reception]. (*PR* 157)

If the bracketed material was part of the original text, then the original version of this section (II.7.1) would be later than the introduction of subjective form. Since there is good reason to suppose that “subjective form” comes later, arising in part out of reflections on the subjectivist principle. Although section 2 (of II.7) features subjective form prominently in the theory of consciousness, it is noteworthy that there is no mention of “subjective form” in sections 1 and 5.

The issue of pansubjectivism often hinges on the question whether a given assertion applies only to some actualities or to them all. Thus two sentences from “Symbolic Reference” might be assumed to assert pansubjectivism:

The responsive phase absorbs these data as material for a subjective unity of feeling. (*PR* 172)

...the appropriation of the datum by the subject, so as to transform the datum into a unity of subjective feeling. (*PR* 180)

If these referred to all actualities, it would undercut most of this essay, for it would place pansubjectivism at the very outset of his work. There is ample reason for placing this chapter at April, 1927, when the lectures forming *Symbolism* were delivered.²³ Yet these sentences refer to perception, as the subject of the second quotation clearly indicates, and only some occasions have perception. These quotations are important in another sense, for they show how Whitehead generalized his theory of perception into his first theory of becoming.

7. *Subjective Form*

“Subjective response” (e.g. *PR* 117) may have initially simply designated the activity of the occasion itself, in contrast to that (objective) activity made on the behalf of the occasion by others. It arose only in the later phases of concrescence, including the subjective satisfaction (*PR* 52, 88). Subsequently, however, he became more circumspect as he became aware of other connotations of “subject” (and particularly of “subjectivity”) that could give rise to misunderstanding. Subjectivity then is often taken to refer to the interiority of highly complex organisms such as human beings. Insofar as subjectivity is ascribed to non-humans, it is by way of anthropomorphic projection. Pansubjectivity, however, frees us from such anthropomorphisms, since subjectivity is no longer based on any distinctive or contingent features of humankind, but only upon the necessary properties which all actualities have in common. As this becomes more established, subjectivity loses its contingency to become simply the occasion’s own activity. At the same time the scope of subjective activity was extended to the whole concrescence of feelings.

The conceptual device for this extension was the subjective form. Subjective response only designated some feelings and not others, for example, conformal feelings. But if emotional response were a form and not a particular kind of feeling, it could apply to all feelings. For all feelings could be conceived as having subjective forms. They could express the way in which the datum is felt. Any feeling having a subjective form would have to be rooted in a subject. Originally

the subject was conceived as being gradually built up during objectification and concrescence, but now subjectivity permeates the whole of concrescence.

Originally subjective forms were simply eternal objects. He had no term for distinguishing between forms pertaining to the datum and forms pertaining to its subsequent integration in concrescence.

The elements available for the explanation are simply, the objective content, eternal objects, and the selective concrescence of feelings whereby an actual entity becomes itself. (*PR* 153)

The process can be analysed genetically into a series of subordinate phases which presuppose their antecedents. Neither the intermediate phases, nor the datum which is the primary phase of all, determine the final phase of determinate individualization.

Thus an actual entity, on its subjective side, is nothing else than what the universe is for it, including its own reactions. [The reactions are the subjective forms of the feelings, elaborated into definiteness through stages of process.] An actual entity achieves its own unity by its determinate feelings respecting every item of the datum. (*PR* 154)

I take the bracketed sentence to be an interpolation. Once armed with the notion of subjective form, Whitehead worked over this passage in considerable detail.²⁴ The important point is that he had restricted himself to “the objective content” and “eternal objects” in explaining “the selective concrescence of feelings” (*PR* 153). That meant that the subjective activity of the occasion could only be explained by form. But these forms had to be different from the forms by which the datum was analyzed. Thus Whitehead devised a new term, the subjective form.

The process admits or rejects eternal objects which by their absorption into the subjective forms of the many feelings effect this integration. (*PR* 154)

Eventually subjective forms come to be distinguished from eternal objects because subjective forms are internally related to their subjects while eternal objects need not be. Subjective response was no longer to be conceived in terms of special feelings late in concrescence, but as a component of any feeling. This easily led to the conclusion that every feeling possessed its own subjective form, thereby extending subjectivity throughout concrescence. Subjective form is abstract, and cannot exist by itself. It must inhere in its subject, and the subject must exist in all phases that house subjective forms.

There are some thirteen passages mentioning “subjective form” in part two, but all in my judgment are later insertions, including those just discussed.²⁵ The summary chapter on “Process” (II.10) mentions it only once in an enumeration (*PR* 211) and not in contexts where it might be expected, so that chapter can safely be placed before “subjective form” in the genetic order.

“Subjective form” appears to be very late concept in the composition of part two, but one which strongly anticipates part three. The idea that subjective form

pertains to every feeling is pivotal in the transformation which brings us to the final theory of concrescence.

8. *Explicit Pansubjectivism*

Some may think that the section on the reformed subjectivist principle (II.7.5) was written before “subjective form” was introduced. For the section makes no mention of “subjective form,” as if this notion were not yet part of Whitehead’s conceptuality. On the other hand, there may have been no occasion to mention “subjective form.” It makes no mention of “feeling” either. It is more likely that the reformed subjectivist principle was proclaimed after the successful completion of a theory of concrescence with its theory of subjective form. This would justify making pansubjectivism explicit, that “apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness” (*PR* 167).

He already affirmed the third metaphysical principle.²⁶ A being could be a potential for becoming only if it were prehensible, that is, if it were an object for concrescence. All that is needed is to make the contrasting identification of becoming with subjectivity. That followed unless nonsubjective becoming were possible. But that meant that there could be some occasion, some instance of creativity, that was totally devoid of any initiative of its own. It would have to be totally derivative from its past, an instance of undifferentiated endurance which Whitehead rejected.

Another possible line of reasoning leading to pansubjectivism starts from a reflection upon the nature of novelty. We have seen how in “Time” (1926) Whitehead had ascribed a mental occasion (later, pole) to every occasion, thereby collapsing the double distinction of *Religion in the Making*, which had also the contrast between ground and consequent.²⁷ “Ground” and “consequent” were used to explain novelty. Ground represented the old, what an occasion acquired from others, while the consequent represented the new, or at least the potentiality for the new. But where can the new come from? If not from without, then from within.²⁸ If from within, where else than from the occasion’s own contribution? While it may be possible to explain the influence of the old in terms of efficient causes, the new requires some sort of subjective appreciation and appropriation. Since he had already ascribed mentality to all actualities to accommodate the realization of novelty, he was open to the possibility of extending this to subjectivity as well.

The third metaphysical principle is the principle of relativity or relationality. The principle states “that it belongs to the nature of “being” that it is a potential for every “becoming”” (*PR* 166). If so, then each occasion is qualified by other beings. Yet how is this so? This means that every becoming is internally related to all other beings, but it also means that every becoming is affected by other beings the way a subject is affected by its objects. If we suitably generalize subjectivity, such that subjects do not simply characterize a particular class of actualities, no matter how far extended beyond human subjectivity, “experience”

may explain how occasions are qualified by other beings. Whitehead makes that generalization:

The way in which one actual entity is qualified by other actual entities is the “experience” of the actual world enjoyed by that actual entity, as subject. (*PR* 166)

Thus the way a being is a potential for every becoming is as object for every subject. This simplification of theory, relating the principle of relativity to his emerging theory of subjective experience, can only be made by adopting pan-subjectivism.²⁹

The announcement of pansubjectivism most naturally takes its place in an addendum to the earlier discussion of the subjectivist principle. If that principle is suitably generalized to apply both to the modern epistemologists and to pansubjectivism, then Whitehead’s own position can be seen as a specification of it. Smith and Griffin have convincingly shown that this is not the principle presented on the first page of this chapter (*PR* 157), but the more general “subjectivist bias,” best explicated in this statement:

The subjectivist principle is that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experience of subjects. (*PR*166).³⁰

The term “subjects” is undistributed, as they say in logic. Does it refer merely to some or to all?

Modern philosophy has tacitly restricted it to human subjects (or, with Kant, to all rational beings), using the principle epistemologically. When applied to all actualities, however, it takes on a radically different, ontological meaning. Thus the general principle requires further specification.

Unfortunately the subjectivist bias was first expressed in terms of Hume’s version of the subjectivist principle (*PR* 157f). Whitehead does not state Hume’s version fully, but only in terms of those underlying assumptions he found objectionable. In this initial discussion (II.7.1) he adopts the epistemological stance of his predecessors, supplanting their representational sense-data by an “objectivist principle as to the datum for experience” (*PR* 160). We experience real actualities, though in terms of a derivative abstraction, understood as “objectification” producing this datum for experience.³¹ The discussion in this section is limited to conscious, perceiving subjects, even with respect to Whitehead’s own contribution.

Other commentators, however, have identified this objectivist principle with the first version of the reformed subjectivist principle. Yet the objectivist principle lacks any reference to all actualities. As an epistemological principle it is wholly absent from the final section (II.7.5). It is difficult see how an objectivist principle could be part of a subjectivist principle, let alone of any reformed version of it

I think these commentators have been misled by taking two sentences mentioning the reformed subjectivist principle in our present text as part of the original text (*PR* 157,³² 160). They fail to reckon with the possibility that these are later insertions. If original, we should expect “the objectivist principle” here

to be largely the same as (or at least continuous with) the “reformed subjectivist principle” of section five. Can an epistemological principle applying to human subjects only be so easily transformed into an ontological principle exemplified by all actualities? This anomaly is best accounted for by supposing that these early mentions are later interpolations, particularly as there is perfect continuity in the original text, if they are omitted.

9. Experiential Togetherness

What led Whitehead to replace the theory of part two with part three, especially when the former theory introduced efficient causation more explicitly? As I intend to show more fully, the final theory of concrescence adheres to the principle of experiential togetherness, and this transforms our understanding of efficient causation.

Though the notion that all actualities enjoy subjectivity was implicit from the beginning, working out the initial theory of part two emboldened Whitehead to make this claim explicitly: “apart from the experience of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness” (*PR* 167). The initial theory was modeled on a generalization of human perception. Its datum was that which was immediately experienced:

There is the becoming of the datum, which is to be found in the past of the world; and there is the becoming of the immediate self from the datum. (*PR* 150)

Yet while every actuality enjoys subjectivity, it is not the case that every operation within the becoming of the actuality need also be subjective. In particular, there is “the becoming of the datum,” which is conceived in terms of efficient causation, however qualified. It cannot belong to the subjectivity of the concrescence, because it is that which establishes its initial conditions. It is that from which the concrescence starts.

The principle of experiential togetherness makes the step towards a more thoroughgoing subjectivity because it treats all means of synthesis, including the establishment of the datum, in subjective terms. For all the importance of the principle of experiential togetherness, it makes its appearance obscurely, in a passage otherwise discussing propositions with respect to the correspondence theory of truth. After a logical distinction between propositions and judgments (*PR* 189), Whitehead continues:

There is a togetherness of the component elements in individual experience...For intuitive judgment is concerned with togetherness in experience, and there is no bridge between togetherness in experience, and togetherness of the non-experiential sort (*PR* 189-190).

This limns the extent of the passage devoted to experiential togetherness, although the probable insertion to which it belongs extends to the end of p. 192. There is continuity between the following passages:

The former concerns propositions, the latter concerns judgments. (*PR* 189)

and

A proposition emerges in the analysis of a judgment; it is the datum of the judgment in abstraction from the judging subject and from the subjective form. A judgment is a synthetic feeling. (*PR* 193)

Even though three pages separate these passages, they belong together to a greater extent than any of the intervening material. At least this is true compositionally, if not thematically.³³ Whitehead indicates this by the transitional comment made just before the resumption: “We now recur to the distinction between a proposition and a judgment” (*PR* 192).

The inserted material appears to be compositionally complex. There seem to be a number of smaller insertions, introduced mostly in reverse order. The last insertion seems to be first, while the first insertion about experiential togetherness is last, building and extending the conceptuality of the others.³⁴

As Whitehead already noted, theories about the truth of propositions encounter insuperable difficulties if they assume “a disjunction between the component elements of individual experience...and...the component elements of the external world” (*PR* 189). To overcome this disjunction, the components in experience must be of the same sort as the components in the world. They would be, if all actualities are occasions, differing only in temporal modality. Modern philosophy, however, held these components to be disparate, seeking to correlate universals in subjective experience with particulars in the world.

Besides the disparity of components, Whitehead considers the disparity of “components which are *together* in experience” (*PR* 190). Thus, for example, the way intuitions are together in experience as ordered by the categories is different from the way things are in themselves. In Kant’s thought this disparity in modes of togetherness is most obvious. Whitehead believes such difficulties can only be overcome by showing that there is ultimately only one final mode of togetherness.

At the time, “the components which are together in experience” may have been a relatively casual expression. But as Whitehead thought about it some more, the expression took on increased meaning. So much so as to result in these three inserted paragraphs on experiential togetherness.

We are familiar with “togetherness” chiefly with respect to the way several things might be said to be together. “Togetherness” takes on an extended meaning here, as it refers primarily to the way in which various components can be together in an act of experience. As we have seen, “experience” was generalized to give a definition suitable to metaphysical reflection:

The way in which one actual entity is qualified by other actual entities is the “experience” of the actual world enjoyed by that actual entity, as subject. (*PR* 166)

This notion of “experience” is extremely broad, for it refers not only to conscious experience or to animal experience, but to the subjectivity of any actuality whatsoever.

There is a togetherness of the component elements in individual experience. This “togetherness” has that special peculiar meaning of “togetherness in experience.” It is a togetherness of its own kind, explicable by reference to nothing else. (*PR* 189)

In its initial context, the “togetherness of the component elements” referred to the universals postulated as ingredient in experience (*PR* 190), but here the emphasis is on the mode of togetherness, not the components. For here the question of alternative modes of togetherness is raised:

The consideration of experiential togetherness raises the final metaphysical question: whether there is any other meaning of “togetherness.” The denial of any alternative meaning, that is to say, of any meaning not abstracted from the experiential meaning, is the “subjectivist” doctrine. This reformed version of the subjectivist doctrine is the doctrine of the philosophy of organism. (*PR* 189)

Things are ordinarily assumed to be objectively together, as having an order which is independent of subjective activity. The denial of any objective ordering by asserting that all modes of togetherness are subjectively grounded is (one version of) the subjectivist doctrine, since it follows that there are nothing but subjects. This version is Whitehead’s own reformed version.

Eventually he came to realize that this was more than what the reformed subjectivist principle had asserted, leading to the elimination of objectification. That all actual occasions enjoy subjectivity (*PR* 166f) it is quite compatible with the first theory of becoming. By its analysis all occasions enjoyed the subjectivity of concrescence. In fact the reformed subjectivist principle (of *PR* 166f) may be considered the summary conclusion for that first theory. Its theory of concrescence, however, required that it be prefaced by a datum which was the product of objectification, and this process of objectification is wholly nonsubjective. If subjectivity springs from a nonsubjective base, that which produces the base cannot itself be subjective (so it was assumed). Now the limits of the first theory are about to be burst, giving rise to the final and most familiar theory of concrescence in part III.

“Togetherness” takes on a special meaning in terms of becoming. Strictly speaking, the initial multiplicity of past actualities are not yet together. Nor is the resultant unity of the satisfaction to be considered together. Only the many on its way to oneness is together in this dynamic sense of becoming. The final unity will have exhausted its togetherness. To be sure, the satisfaction can be conceived as the togetherness of its components, but this applies only in terms of its being. Togetherness as becoming is the activity of the initial multiplicity becoming one. Then subjective experience is the experience of this togetherness.

If experiential togetherness is the togetherness of concrescent phases, and if there is no other kind of togetherness, it follows that the various phases of becoming themselves must be subjective. If so, there can be nonsubjective phases such as objectification. This calls for a radical reconception of concrescence. Instead of concrescence requiring objectification, concrescence must be reconceived as including a nonsubjective version of objectification.

According to the theory of objectification, the efficient factors productive of the concrescent datum are together prior to any subjective activity, that is, apart from experience. The many past actualities for a given occasion become the one datum prior to its concrescence. The denial of any nonsubjective togetherness means objectification will have to be radically rethought. Part three could well be the outcome of that reflection. Thus the transition from the first to final theories of becoming could hinge on this insistence upon experiential togetherness.

The first theory of becoming has two large phases: the becoming of the datum, and the ensuing concrescence. This means two processes of unification. But experiential togetherness requires that all of its activities be rooted in experience. If so, its concrescence must be coextensive with its act of becoming, and there can be only one process of unification. If there is then no objective activity within becoming, becoming can be strictly identified with subjectivity, to be contrasted with the objectivity of being.

10. Physical Prehension

The fundamental difference between these two theories of becoming lies in the conception of efficient causation. How should we explain how past occasions affect the present occasion coming into being? According to the theory of "objectification" [4c], past occasions actively constitute the datum from which concrescence flows. The concrescing occasion then passively receives this datum for the development of its experience. While these efficient causes are not conceived as all determining, they are nonsubjective. They are the preconditions for that which is subjective. On the other hand, in the final theory the seat of activity lies with the subject. Objectification is reconceived in terms of physical prehension. Past occasions do not actively constitute a common datum, rather the individual physical prehensions apprehend each occasion as its own datum, to be unified with others in the subjective activity of concrescence.

Event theories have special problems with efficient causation. If actualities were enduring substances, causes could originate in the past, yet be active in the present. Event theory, however, especially if it is subject to the strictures of temporal atomicity, must make a painful decision between past and present. While traditional efficient causes can straddle the line between these temporal modalities, occasions must be either past or present. Either way poses problems. If past, then no longer active, but if present, they seem to be cut off from any rootage in the past. There seems to be no way in which the past can cause the present.

Whitehead's two theories explore these options. Efficient causation may be placed either outside or within concrescence, which is the sphere of activity for the subject. Since objectification conceives it as constitutive of the conditions (the datum) for concrescence, it belongs to the (immediate) past of subjectivity. The final theory embraces efficient causation within the subjectivity of concrescence. It is part of present activity.

While these difficulties are not explicitly mentioned in Whitehead's account, there are several difficulties with efficient causation which render the final theory preferable. One has already been mentioned. A past occasion cannot be causally effective unless it has become determinate, and this requires that its activity of determination be complete. Its concrescent activity must perish in order for it to be objectively immortal. Efficient causation, on the other hand, requires activity in the past occasion.

Now we may evade this difficulty by conceding that while individual past occasions are devoid of activity, but a multiplicity of past occasions may together generate its own activity.³⁵ This seems to be the theory of objectification resulting in the common datum. This theory allows for a past activity to be causally influential in terms of nonactive resultant datum. In that case, how can a multiplicity of past occasions converge on an emerging event? On a substance view, the enduring actuality is already there for the various efficient causes to adhere, but on the event view, there is as yet nothing there. What guarantees that the unification of causes will converge on this as yet nonexistent occasion?

There is also a more technical objection. A multiplicity of occasions converging on unity, if not included within one concrescence, violates the ontological principle. The principle puts the reasons for things in individual actual entities, not in multiplicities thereof. The many occasions converging on one may be like a concrescence, but it is not (as yet) the concrescence of any one actual occasion which could serve as its reason.

To be sure, objectification was conceived as part of the becoming of an occasion. The becoming had two phases, nonsubjective objectification and concrescence. The objections just mentioned treat efficient causation independently of the becoming, and hence are not likely to be reasons Whitehead would have entertained. There are other reasons, however, why he might have questioned any theory of nonsubjective efficient causation, leading to a primary shift from the first (part two) to the final theory of concrescence (part three).

As our study of "subjective form" indicated, the idea of subjective response was extended from the concluding feelings to all feelings within a given concrescence. Instead of the concrescence (and its antecedents) giving rise to a subject emergent at the very end, subjectivity in the form of subjective forms was spread out throughout the entire concrescence. Now the drive for generalization could have prompted the question: could these subjective forms apply also to objectification?

Whitehead uses most effectively the practice of unlimited generalization, following the principle: "There is no justification for checking generalization at any particular stage" (*PR* 16). The trick lies in recognizing what belongs together, so that the similarity can be properly exploited. With respect to the first theory of becoming, the elements seem quite disparate. Causal influences have their seat of activity in past occasions, while feelings within the present concrescence have their seat of activity in the subject. Both, however, can be conceived as relations

constitutive of an occasion. Efficient causal influences can be considered as relations if thought of in terms of prehensions between occasions. If so, subjective form can be generalized to apply to all relations constitutive of an occasion.

Alternatively, we should consider possible implications of what had been designated as the third metaphysical principle in the light of the subjectivist principle.³⁶ If it belongs to the nature of a being that it is a potential for every becoming, and if every occasion is a subject prehending past beings, then each becoming is a subject. Subjectivity and becoming are identified. Being, when related to a subject, is an object. In order to be a potential for a becoming, it must be sufficiently determinate to be prehensible. It can be prehended only if there are subjects capable of prehending it.

Now for every becoming to be capable of receiving every being, acts of becoming must all be subjects, capable of prehending. Becoming might have been understood heretofore as the activity of drawing the many into one. If so, in addition to subjective becoming there is also the possibility of a nonsubjective activity expressing efficient causation. Thus objectification brings the many past occasions into the one datum serving as the precondition for concrescence. But if every act of becoming requires the capacity toprehend, such nonsubjective becoming is excluded.

Although he had invented the term “prehension” and used it extensively earlier (in *SMW*), Whitehead had tended to avoid the term for relations between occasions when questions of becoming were being considered. For such relations were originally conceived in terms of efficient causation. As we have seen, the seat of activity for prehensions and for efficient causation differ. Prehensions, when conceived as a generalization from perception, have their seat of activity in the prehender. The present occasion prehends a past determinate datum. Efficient causation, however, was conceived as a nonsubjective activity coming from the past. Thus past efficient causes act upon the present. The seats of the activity in these two different kinds of relations was reversed.

Because efficient causes turn out to be the reverse of feelings, in this respect, the early theory of concrescence required a complex account of transmission. There needed to be a buffer, conceived in terms of the datum, between the two types of relations. Thus the efficient causes constitute the datum from which the concrescence flows. The datum is first appropriated by conformal feelings, from which other feelings follow, some of which make up the subjective response. The final theory effects a considerable simplification. Once efficient causation is reconceived within the context of subjectivity, it becomes possible once again to understand the relations between occasions in terms of prehensions. Those prehensions can be ascribed subjective forms and have their seat of activity, like feelings, in the subject. (Positive) prehensions and feelings can be identified. There is no further need for the buffer datum from which concrescence starts. Henceforth there is only the data of individual feelings, for these feelings as prehensions can reach beyond the occasion itself. This whole series—efficient

cause, datum, conformal feeling and subjective response—can be replaced by a simple physical feeling.

I may have written previously that Whitehead abandoned efficient causes in his final theory. I meant efficient causes as understood in the ordinary sense as objectification, as devoid of all subjectivity.³⁷ It is perhaps better to say that by physical feeling Whitehead reconceived the nature of efficient causation. See his account of causal feeling (*PR* 236). Later he considered efficient causes in this vein:

The “objectifications” of the actual entities in the actual world, relative to a definite actual entity, constitute the efficient causes out of which that actual entity arises; the “subjective aim” at “satisfaction” constitutes the final cause, or lure, whereby there is determinate concrescence . . . (*PR* 87)³⁸

The “objectifications” are here the data of simple physical feelings prehending past occasions.

This is in accordance with the new program, whereby all relations constitutive of an occasion are subjectively activated, having their own subjective forms. Part three is the reformulation of the analysis of becoming in accordance with this principle.

We need not suppose that Whitehead had this reconception of efficient causation in terms of physical feeling, and its concomitant concepts, clearly in mind when he promulgated his dictum of experiential togetherness. In fact, I expect the opposite is more likely. The rule of experiential togetherness is most likely the stimulus for this line of thinking whose full elaboration resulted in part three of *Process and Reality*. Thus I see this insertion as having exceptional importance for the growth of Whitehead’s theory. Most likely it was pivotal, standing at the close of part two and determining the shape of part three.

Whitehead has come full circle with respect to prehension. Originally prehension was a relational concept designed to express the way in which each actuality was constituted out of all others. While this notion was not abandoned in the endeavour to account for prehensive unification as actualization, prehension did not fit the ordinary notions of efficient causation which were deemed necessary as part of this process. Experiential togetherness transformed efficient causation. It requires the persistence of the past into the present. Instead of the persistence of an activity, however, Whitehead conceives of it as the persistence of form (the objectified actual occasion), which could be prehended by the present occasion. Thus prehension as the relation between occasions was revived, and could be conjoined with feelings within occasions. Prehensions not only constituted occasions, as before, but also became the way in which occasions came into being.

References

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Notes

1. See "Panpsychism and the Early History of Prehension," *Process Studies* 24 (1995), pp. 15-33.

2. The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 303f, quoting Whitehead's 1926 essay on "Time."

3. "Zenons Pfeil und die Begründung der epochal Zeittheorie," pp. 92-192 in *Natur, Subjektivität, Gott*, ed. Helmut Holzhey, Alois Rust, and Reiner Wiehl (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1990).

4. See my essay, "Locating Atomicity," *Process Studies Supplements* 1.2 (1999). <http://www.ctr4process.org/PSS>.

5. Later, Whitehead was able to distinguish between genetic divisibility and the indivisibility of acts of becoming. An indeterminate genetic phase is not a smaller act of becoming.

6. This insertion could possibly be *PR* 80.18-46.

7. These are recorded in *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics*, pp. 322f.

8. That the satisfaction was a being rather than part of becoming was only later realized. See the insertion at *PR* 84.40-85.17c.

9. The later insertion referring to the reformed subjectivist principle will be discussed in section eight.

10. *PR* 45. That it is an insertion is best recognized by the final transitional comments.. Here Whitehead tries to get back to his original topic: "Returning to the correlation of "givenness" and "potentiality," we see that "givenness" refers to "potentiality," and "potentiality" to "givenness." Without the interruption, there is good continuity in the original text concerning "givenness," which is only a subsidiary concern in the insertion.

11. I take the phrase "the bond being either a positive or a negative prehension" (*PR* 44.39) to be a secondary insertion from a later conceptuality.

12. It is difficult to ascertain the earlier passage that these four stages refer to: "The four stages constitutive of an actual entity have been stated above in Part II, Chapter III, Section 1" (*PR* 149). No connection with that section seems plausible, but it might fit II.1.3, which includes our givenness insertion. No prior section, however, has four stages. Stages constitutive of an actual entity have been named, e.g. *PR* 111 (II.4.1) and *PR* 115 (II.4.3), but not all four.

13. Whitehead's lecture to his Harvard students for November 17, 1927, as transcribed by Edwin L. Marvin (unpublished).

14. Previously I regarded the datum to be a subjective unity in contrast to the satisfaction as its objective unity. "Physical Purpose and the Origination of Subjective Aim," *Process Studies* 33 (2004), pp. 71-79. If we presuppose subjectivity, however, the datum functions as the object for the concreting subject.

15. I have argued that Whitehead gave up the notion of efficient causation. David Ray Griffin claims that he made it an integral part of his system (*Reenchantment*, pp. 109-117.) We may have been arguing at cross-purposes. I had in the mind the common understanding of an active cause, while Griffin is thinking of Whitehead's special understanding of causation as the transfer of character, abstracting from activity. This makes sense, given the context in which Whitehead was working. The two types of fluency may be thought to give activity to past occasions (*PR* 210). Yet within part two, both are part of the present act of becoming. Transition means the objective activity of objectification as opposed to the subjective activity of concrecence.

16. This passage anticipates the theory of perspectival elimination in part three (*PR* 223).

17. Later these eternal objects are described as subjective forms.

18. It could be an early insertion, made before "subjective form" becomes a standardized term.

19. In substance theory, where actualities persist, efficient causes can be past and present: they come from the past to operate in the present.

20. For a fuller account of "objective lure," see my essay on "Subjectivity in the Making," *Process Studies* 21 (1992), pp. 6-8.

21. This account continues to the top of *PR* 155, but it is interwoven by discussions of "subjective form," particularly in the first and third full paragraphs on p. 154. I take these to be later insertions, made when Whitehead reworked this passage in the light of his new term. If so, the passages in the original based only on "eternal objects" could be: 153.22-154.2; 154.20-24a, 33-38a, 39b-43a (except for the phrase at 154.45 "with its determinate subjective form"). The rest then belong to the "subjective form" insertions, except for 155.1-7, which could belong to either.

22. *PR* 165 is immediately prefaced by three paragraphs using "subjective form" frequently. I take 163.41-164.36 or 39 to be a later insertion. If so, the section (II.7.4) originally began with the final paragraph on page 164, "An eternal object ..." or simply "there are four modes of functioning" of an eternal object. The first sentence and "Hence, to sum up" appear to be transitional material designed to establish continuity between the insertion and the original text.

23. See *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics*, pp. 181f.

24. See note 17.

25. Passages mentioning “subjective form” include 41.15-42.4, 52.8-18, 53.4-5, 69.27-70.4, 85.25-89.2, 141.37-142.4, 153.22-155.7, 160.44-162.31, 163.41-164.35, 168.17-23, 192.2-5, 184.4-24, 190.40-191.10, 211.34-36.

26. The opening of this section is expressed in the language of “the fourth Category of Explanation,” not in terms of its earlier equivalent, which was “the third metaphysical principle.” This is much later language, as it presupposes the contrast between categories of explanation and categorial obligations (originally, categorial conditions). Even as “categorial conditions,” these were probably not introduced until the category of conceptual valuation (*PR* 248). While the opening sentences could then be a late preface, it may be that only the mention of the ninth category of explanation is an interpolation. This seems likely, since the section depends only upon the fourth. If so, the original for the first six sentences may have been simply :

The reformed subjectivist principle adopted by the philosophy of organism is merely an alternative statement of the principle of relativity.... This principle states that it belongs to the nature of a “being” that it is a potential for every “becoming.” Thus all things are to be conceived as qualifications of actual occasions. (*PR* 166)

Then the section immediately continues: “The way in which one actual entity is qualified by other actual entities is the “experience” of the actual world enjoyed by that actual entity, as subject.”

27. See *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics*, pp. 130-33, 153-54.

28. The alternative, that God provides initial aims, was not considered until much later. Besides a good case can be made that while such aims have a source not my own, they nevertheless come from within.

29. For some additional anticipations of pansubjectivism, see

PR 80.1: “The philosophy of organism extends the Cartesian subjectivism by affirming the “ontological principle” and by construing it as the definition of “actuality.” This amounts to the assumption that each actual entity is a locus for the universe.”

PR 113.19 sketching a “critique of pure feeling”: “the first stage of the process of feeling is the reception into the responsive conformity of feeling whereby the datum, which is mere potentiality, becomes the individualized basis for a complex unity of realization.”

PR 156.9: “Thus for Kant the process whereby there is experience is a process from subjectivity to apparent objectivity. The philosophy of organism inverts this analysis, and explains the process as proceeding from objectivity to subjectivity, namely, from the objectivity, whereby the external world is a datum, to the subjectivity, whereby there is one individual experience.”

30. I once thought this was implicitly the [reformed] subjectivist principle, but I am now persuaded that Whitehead meant it as a general subjectivist principle, not restricting it to his particular version.

31. This is the datum for concrecence, achieved by the nonsubjective process of “objectification.” See section four (c) above.

32. *PR* 157 notes parenthetically: “(cf. Sect. V below and Part II, Ch. IX).” As the editors to the corrected edition note for 157.14, this was originally section two, right after the initial discussion of the subjectivist principle. These sections were later separated to include some rather disparate material (II.7.2-4). (Quite possibly the two mentions of the reformed subjectivist principle in II.7.1 to 7.5 were introduced then.) The reference to II.9 primarily intends the discussion of experiential togetherness (*PR* 189f). See section nine.

33. Smith and Griffin, at 19f argue that logically the account of experiential togetherness should be part of the discussion of correspondence theory. That could explain why this passage of experiential togetherness is placed where it is placed, but does not address compositional considerations, such as whether this is an insertion. The abruptness with which the passage begins, rendering the final paragraph a “run-on” paragraph with two distinct subjects (*PR* 189), and the continuity without the larger passage, strongly suggests that it is.

34. The inserted material (*PR* 189-192) may be analyzed most plausibly into one primary, one secondary (an insertion within, or dependent on, another insertion), two tertiary insertions, and two other insertions.

The primary insertion extends over the whole, from 189.30 to 191.22.

The secondary insertion seems to be: 190.16-42, 191.11-21. It starts with the third paragraph on 190:

The difficulties of the subjectivist doctrine arise when it is combined with the “sensationalist” doctrine [concerning the analysis of the components which are together in experience.]

(The bracketed clause was probably added with the tertiary insertion on experiential togetherness.)

“The difficulties” (plural) with which this passage begins do not easily square with “This difficulty” of the previous paragraph, although it fits with the two difficulties set forth in the original text at 189.26. If the experiential togetherness passage is a tertiary insertion which was not yet part of the text, then it seems Whitehead took care to tie the secondary insertion in with the original text. Even so, there is a break in the thought, for the subjectivist doctrine is introduced rather abruptly.

This secondary insertion continues well into the last paragraph 190 and picks up with the first full paragraph on 191:

The theory of judgment in the philosophy of organism can equally well be described as a “correspondence” theory or as a “coherence” theory.... This judgment is concerned with a conformity of two components within one experience. It is thus a “coherence” theory.”

These two parts are separated by the second tertiary insertion (190.42-191.7-10).

It is a correspondence theory, because it describes judgment as the subjective form of the integral prehension of the conformity, or of the non-conformity, of a proposition and an objectified nexus.... for the actualities in the datum of some physical prehension (cf. Part III).

The first sentence analyzes truth or falsity in somewhat later conceptuality (subjective form, integral prehension) to connect this insertion with the secondary insertion, but it continues on to consider a new topic, the origination of a propositional prehension. Propositional prehensions, as opposed to the propositions themselves, do not become a topic of concern until part three, chapter four.

The last bit of this paragraph (191.7-10) appears to be Whitehead's recognition that this discussion of the origination of propositional prehensions really does not belong here:

But the origination of a propositional prehension does not concern us in this description of judgment. The sole point is the synthesis of a physical prehension and propositional prehension into an "intellectual" prehension (cf. Part III) whose subjective form involves judgment.

Rather than simply discarding the discussion of origination, he appends this brief note. The concept of intellectual prehension is first developed in part three, chapter five on "The Higher Phases of Experience" (see *PR* 266-67).

The first tertiary insertion is our experiential togetherness passage, 189.30-190.7, part of the first paragraph and the next two paragraphs:

There is a togetherness of the component elements in individual experience.... For intuitive judgment is concerned with togetherness in experience, and there is no bridge between togetherness in experience, and togetherness of the non-experiential sort.

Whitehead apparently conceived of the togetherness passage to be a further reflection on the subjectivist doctrine, and so made it a preface to the secondary insertion. This required a transitional paragraph on Kant (190:8-15; second paragraph on 190).

For the togetherness passage to fit in, however, something was needed at the other end (189.30) Evidently no smooth transition suggested itself, so Whitehead simply adopted the expedient of a "run-on" paragraph.

As this endnote illustrates, compositional analysis can be very complex. Nevertheless it is an essential means for recovering the progressive insights imbedded within such works as *Process and Reality*. Without the recognition that the experiential togetherness passage is an insertion the speculative reconstruction undertaken in this essay would hardly have been possible.

35. Something like this is operative in *Adventures of Ideas*. When it refers to creativity as coming from the past (cf. AI 176f, 188), I take it to mean the creativity inherent in the many past occasions, each of which individually is devoid of any creativity. While the multiplicity of past actualities can be energized by the inherent creativity of the many, this can only occur within a given concrescence. The initial phase or "the initial situation includes a factor of activity which is the

reason for the origin of that occasion of experience” (AI 179). On this point, see my essay on “Nancy Frankenberry’s Conception of the Power of the Past,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 14 (1992), pp. 287-300, reprinted in part in my *Transforming Process Theism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 181-187.

36. This principle is quoted in section 3 on “Implicit Pansubjectivity.” See also n. 7.

37. Smith and Griffin write: “An especially controversial feature of Ford’s account is that whereas transition in the sense of efficient causation played an essential role in the early theory, efficient causation from the past is said to be eliminated in the later theory” (33, n.16). Griffin proposes that transition, as an activity distinct from concrescence, is responsible for efficient causation. By thus placing efficient causation outside concrescence, one cannot interpret efficient causation in terms of experiential togetherness. See, e.g., David Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 109-117. His panexperientialism, while clearly pansubjectivist, may not be sufficiently experientialist. Rather than a transitional past producing the present, Whitehead conceives of a concrescent present prehending a determinate past.

38. Although this passage belongs to the chapter on “The Order of Nature” (II.3), which belongs to the earlier theory, it is clearly a much later insertion from part three, as the mention of “subjective aim” indicates.