

IDEALISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ORGANIC RELATIONS IN WHITEHEAD

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Abstract. Alfred N. Whitehead's philosophy is grounded on the idea that the world is composed of interdependent processes and events and that this interdependency is significant and profound. In his philosophy the world is not at all the result of the independent material things or objects; in opposition to Russell and to his doctrine of logical atomism. He unveils a conception of "a creative advance of the world" via "becoming and perishing" selecting "the objective immortalities" of the things, constituting "in relatedness" the "stubborn fact". His metaphysics is very far from the logical positivism and a pure scientific philosophy. Whitehead approaches, on the one hand, a central concept of "relatedness" involved in a greater importance granted to feeling, living immediacy and becoming in his philosophy of organic relations. "Relatedness" takes precedence over the Aristotelian "quality". This idealism is relevant in perceiving the world, but also in identifying a "true method of philosophical construction", which involves a "framing scheme of ideas", used to consistently explore "the interpretation of experience in terms of that scheme". Whitehead's idealism is a constructive thought addressing numerous topics of scientific interest with a methodological dominance of this "framing scheme of ideas", which admits the involvement of imagination and is guiding the imagination as well as the experience, interrelated with realism and pragmatism. Whitehead's idealism is in certain aspects close to Spinoza's scheme of thought, as in the philosophy of organism. On the other hand, in Whitehead, the "substance-quality" concept is avoided, the morphological description is rejected and replaced by description of dynamic process, within which the "sheer actualities" are analysed increasing understanding, but not leading to access to a higher degree of reality. "Reality" is the reality of process, concrecence, relatedness and organicity: this is the "solidarity of the world" a beautiful pragmatism that receives its idealistic but not unscientific "explanation".

Keywords: Idealism-Realism-Pragmatism, the Framing Scheme of Ideas, Philosophy of Organism, Creativity, Alfred North Whitehead.

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WHITEHEAD'S IDEALISM: INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE

Alfred N. Whitehead's philosophy follows processes and not ideas. However, there is a paradoxical idealism in Whitehead's realism, which in a way combines an original type of subjective idealism found in Berkley, with the objective idealism found in Schelling and a particular transcendental idealism. The idealist, the humanist, the metaphysician and the realist meet in the work of A. N. Whitehead.

A remarkable mathematician and logician, he was also an educator and a full-fledged philosopher who has built a complex philosophy as a humanist preoccupied with novelty, possibility and value. Fact and value are intrinsically related in Whitehead (*SP*, 88) and here lays in our opinion a crucial motivation and a fundamental *Grund* for the explanation of the encounter of idealism with realism in Whitehead. This improbable encounter gives the scope of his metaphysics and humanism. This is also notable in the literary aspects of his writing and in the profound comprehensive philosophy of totality; and totality is "the organism". His philosophy is wholistic in this sense, aiming at the comprehension of the world, scientific and realistic, but still the world of the human being.

Totality requires all the philosophical resources – the resources of metaphysics, those of idealism and those of realism, too – have to come together in a complete philosophical comprehension of the world. Thought creates thought. His wide range and multi-value metaphysical construction has to acknowledge the knower along with the known brought forth in a common "equation" that involves both and witnesses the creation of both. Somewhat contrary to Bernard Bosanquet (1921), Whitehead proves that philosophy renews out of the mutual necessity of one extreme for another and not so much out of the meeting or the clash of the extremes.

To a certain extent, the philosophical atmosphere and the encounters in his life might offer hints about Whitehead's idealism, but in this study, we concentrate on emphasizing the paradoxical idealism found in his main work, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (PR)*.

PROCESS AND REALITY – INTERDEPENDENCY

Although Whitehead announced his work *Process and Reality (PR)* to be a continuation of the scheme of thought unfolding from Descartes to Hume, and although he stated that all philosophy is somehow indebted to Platon, he also specifies that the main philosopher who can be truly nominated as an anticipator of the main positions of the philosophy of organism is Locke (especially, in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*).

Whitehead's philosophy portrays a world of interdependent processes and events and it is all-encompassing, aiming at a cosmology. Even in the first part, the method and the scheme of ideas for his philosophical architecture is explicitly

presented in order to sustain a cosmology and, in the second part, this “scheme” is introduced as the principal interpretative instrument for ideas and problems fit to constitute the “civilized thought”, the way we understand it, a thought that brings together in philosophy the main problems and ideas and do not disparage those. The elements of our experience are then brought to the fore, as well, in *consistent* interrelation among them (Whitehead’s concept of concrescence), but also against the background of this conceptual scheme capitalizing the philosophical achievements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (mainly Descartes, Newton, Locke, Hume, Kant) which definitely marked the following philosophical developments. The divergences amongst these philosophical perspectives, should not obscure the roots of the philosophy of organism, which is a philosophy of interdependencies, in the pre-Kantian thought. (*PR*, xi)

The main previous obstacles in arriving at a philosophy of the organism are, in Whitehead’s view, the inherited views and a certain rigidity in their systematic work. Whitehead continues in the second part with the inventory of the most important notions of physics and biology, as an unavoidable counterweight to philosophical knowledge, thus adding the main units of knowledge into a comprehensive system of ideas, reuniting the aesthetic, moral, and religious units interrelating those with natural science provenience.

Process and reality re-composes the whole of the universe, in togetherness and interrelatedness, in unity, developing the schemes of ideas for a comprehensive cosmology on the basis of novel categories suitable for the organic philosophy. These are meaningful and more inclusive categories that are to further develop their meaning, too, in confrontation with experience. Experience is in Whitehead’s philosophy a revealing agent for meaning, relevance and interconnectedness. Time, space, perception and causality play important roles in examining the confrontation and the recurrences that shed an explanatory light on the possible interconnections and thus on the traits of his comprehensive cosmology. His speculative scheme shows that logical perfection (restricted to mathematics and natural sciences) is important for his organic philosophy, but it is less important than coherence – “Incoherence is the arbitrary disconnection of first principles.” (*PR*, 6) – since this is at stake for the reliable comprehensive scope of interconnectedness in an organic philosophical conception. This is why, while he places himself explicitly in the company of the English and American Realists, where he undoubtedly belongs, he admits as well an important affiliation to Henri Bergson’s philosophy of duration and intuition, a philosophy of concreteness with an idealism in the ambition to restore absolute knowledge via intuition, although he saw his philosophy beyond the schools of philosophy such as idealism, realism, empiricism and rationalism.

The creative expression of the Bergson’s view approaches duration and the configurations of duration which describe the examining, as Whitehead in a *concrete* philosophy (of duration), ordered multiplicities, or, changing forms of concepts and of conceptual becoming among the planes of meaning. (Jankélévitch

2015; Deleuze 1991) Jankélévitch emphasizes in Bergson four types of problems (intellectual effort, freedom, finality, heroism) which may be situated in tensioned, opposite planes and orient philosophical problems by emphasizing *les lignes de faits* (the levels of fact as levels of thought), thus with a comparable role to that of the speculative scheme in Whitehead. Each tension and each contradiction yield to a new conceptualization, or, in Whitehead's terms, a new "process", a "concrecence", a clearer expression of the fact that any "actual entity" sets in motion "other actual entities". (*PR*, 7) Everything is configured and reconfigured to a "higher grade of reality": concrecence is the next phase of coalescence (*PR*, 7, 226)

There is an entire title dedicated by Jankélévitch to "Organic Totalities" which is as well the chapter's title interpreting this way Bergson's philosophy of duration, centred on intuition, a "primitive fact" of duration, corresponding to the experience of the "infinitely simple", bridging pragmatism and idealism. But perception connects more complex orders of multiplicity, too, hence the organic totality" of experience and duration. Intuition emphasizes the immediate data of consciousness, along with the multiplicity of duration and the becoming of each occasion of experimentation and at the same time the experiment as such, with its finality (Jankélévitch 2015, 18–29).

In Whitehead, consciousness enters into the subjective realm and is the way of feeling that particular real nexus of forms of feelings contrasting with the imaginative freedom associated to a what *is*. The consciousness is however *free* to place importance upon what *is* or upon what the imagination is or upon both (*PR*, 261) which is an expression of the freedom of will in Whitehead. In Bergson, freedom enters into the fibre of the human being via the temporality of the "human being who is time itself (and nothing but time), who is the ipseity of time" (Jankélévitch 2015, 49). It is a very different conception from that of the existentialism where the temporality of the human being is a prerequisite of the very absence of freedom, in our view. In Bergson, freedom is acting and, in a way, marking time and brings along a responsibility of freedom as a nuance that is as well and each personal act is an affirmation of freedom describing "the person in her entirety", for "what is free, is what is total and profound", hence it has to be responsible, too. All that someone *is* gains concreteness in the responsibility of acting. In Whitehead, in the development of *The Speculative Scheme*, the discussion of the *Category of Freedom and Determination* shows that the "concrecence of each individual actual entity is internally determined and is externally free." (*PR*, 27) That is, the emphasis is placed on action for the expression of freedom, too. Whitehead's cosmological construction thrives on the togetherness of the "opposites, joy and sorrow, good and evil, disjunction and conjunction that is to say, the many in one-flux and permanence, greatness and triviality, freedom and necessity, God and the World". (*PR*, 341) The cosmological existence itself counts on the interplay between "conceptual appetite" and "physical realization" which is indebted to the actions of the human being.

In Bergson, “pure perception” lays the foundations of Bergson’s realism, but its double, the “pure recollection” bases a “pure idealism”. Jankélévitch appreciates that Bergson’s “true idealism is conjoined with a scrupulous realism” (Jankélévitch 2015, 81).

This is the case with Whitehead’s philosophy, too, although his theory of perception is very different, more empiricist under the clear influence of Locke and Hume, and more pragmatic, too, rejecting Bergson’s vocabulary and conceptualization of “pure perception” and rather resorting to that of W. James, naming the duration of perception “specious present”. (Klose 1997) The reality of the event perceived and the perception of it have a distinct temporal characteristic. Following Hume, “nothing is to be received into the philosophical scheme which is not discoverable as an element in subjective experience” (PR, 166).

Although Hume surprisingly considered also concepts such as “inheritance” and “memory”, which are deprived of sense impression with impact on the philosophical scheme, Whitehead capitalized Hume’s ideas in his own interpretation and perception and of the self. His vision develops in accordance with both Hume and W. James: like in Hume there is no self, no enduring soulful core identical over time and like in both James and Hume there is something that relates the personal experiences of the self, these individual presentations of self. The “drops of [personal] experience” included early in Whitehead’s categoreal scheme, precisely with this uniting function to connect with the other “drops of experience”: “The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent” (PR, 18). Thus, we can see how perception, objectivity, corporeality, identity and temporality come together in a complex conception of the human being and the world. It is a comprehensive philosophical scheme in which idealness and idealism have their well-founded purpose via the speculative dimension saved in William James’ *speculative pragmatism* (Smith 2010; Weiss, 1980) closely linked to the comprehensiveness (and the interrelatedness) of the world.

Temporality of nature shaped Whitehead’s metaphysics and although indebted to Bergson to a certain extent there is a much more important influence of Locke, Hume, and beyond the British empiricists he related to Dewey and James in an original empiricist-pragmatist-realist direction: “both science and metaphysics start from the same given groundwork of immediate experience”, and is common for both that they “proceed in opposite directions on their diverse tasks” (MT, 108, Klose 1997). The actual occasions are the building blocks of his philosophy of time that does not need a gap between consciousness, which is perceiving reality and reality. Non-temporal events are no longer explanatory, because they are not ingredients of the ultimate reality, while the actual occasions are and causality is a trait of the world and not an exclusive characteristic of the reasoning, intellectual, conscious faculties of the human being. (Klose 1997)

As Bergson, Whitehead does not choose among concepts and philosophical disputed sides, and the life-like dynamic of reality imprints a vitality of philosophical perspective and inspire human intelligence. Both philosophers agree with the centrality of action, experience and creativity for any vibrant and useful philosophical vision in consonance with the American pragmatism. Human inquisitive intelligence responds both to imaginative and practical aspects of the world, to specific needs. Experience of feeling and experience of specific aspects of reality are part of human life and experience means as much a contemplative feeling of the world as it implies action, generating ultimately a theoretical and philosophical or poetic horizon, as actional, industrious and practical involvement in the world. American pragmatism is another resource for the philosophy of organism. Whitehead recognizes William James and John Dewey as main pragmatist sources of influence for his processual and organic philosophy. Being and becoming are in Whitehead both predicated upon experience. But experience is thoughtful as much as it is felt, thus, thought and feeling prove vital for relatedness and concrescence in Whitehead.

In simplest terms, the physical world we encounter, confront and interact with is shaped and reshaped by our activities and interactions, based on our relatedness to the world and on our imaginative creativity, hence, so, it is shaped by our thoughts and ideas, too, as cause and consequence of action and experience. Thoughts and ideas are active and important, taking part in the reality of the world.

The processual understanding of the becoming of actual organic entities constitutes a particular expression of a social self. (Smith 2010) The understanding of the “lived body” begins with Descartes, but overpasses the mind-body problem. The analysis of an act of experience is still fundamental, but Whitehead reformed ontology and theory of perception, so he arrived at the becoming of a single occasion of experience. (Smith 2010) Descartes and the mind-body problem is not the only problematic philosophical landmark to overcome, but three more misconceptions are discarded by Whitehead: a). The substance-quality doctrine of actuality; b). The sensationalist doctrine of perception; and c). The Kantian doctrine of the objective world as a construct from subjective experience. (*PR*, 156)

The Greeks’ ontology overconfidence in the power of ordinary language to reveal the inner workings of nature, made subjects *loci* for ascribed predicates. (Smith 2010) This made possible to conceive the persistence of subjects and substances despite their changes in time, be them qualitative. Smith considers this as a core of modern theoretical perception of the self in regarding the world, a *sensationalist* perception since these were only obtained through the senses.

Whitehead explicitly sets the origin of sensationalist philosophy with Hume and Locke. And he sets out to reform it drastically. Also, in his view, the Kantian model of the self which gave the thrust to the German idealist movement departed from such a subjective sensationalist model, but arrived at the predicative description of an objective world resulting from *experience*.

However, although the importance of senses and experience is undeniable, sensationalist philosophy and the German idealism as such were not a good foundation in the constitution of contemporary modes of thought. Whitehead shows that Hume himself introduces the ominous appeal to “practice” – not in criticism of his premises, but only to complete his conclusions. At the other end of the philosophical spectrum, Francis Herbert Bradley, the exponent of the absolute Idealist School, with a doctrine based on Hegel repudiates Hume. He based his doctrine on a conception of mind as paramount in the universe, predominant in importance when compared to matter, with the consequence of deeming the objective world “inconsistent if taken as real”. Whitehead (*PR*, 156) sets out to reconcile in his original vision the philosophical conceptions of reality with the daily experience and to do it in a non-reductionist manner that leaves enough room for both realism and idealism.

In discussing „Fact and Form”, Whitehead arrives at the particular unity of self-experience that stands in “conjoined” correlation to others’ contributing to the multitude (*PR*, 57):

“The creative action is the universe always becoming one in a particular unity of self-experience, and thereby adding to the multiplicity which is the universe as many. This insistent concrescence into unity is the outcome of the ultimate self-identity of each entity. No entity-be it ‘universal’ or ‘particular’ -can play disjointed roles. Self-identity requires that every entity have one conjoined, self-consistent function, whatever be the complexity of that function.”

This is a more adequate model of self, which is experientially immersed into the universe; this is an immersion that connects or a deep connection with the world because of this immersion, too. In our view, this explains the ontological analysis that leads Whitehead to the *subjectivist principle*, referring to the self’s experience as a function of sense impressions and to a second doctrine, the *sensationist principle*, describing subject’s experience as “experient” subject, with a subjective bias, but at the same time with a pragmatic chance to gain via experience *subjective form*. Whitehead considers with a jocular twist that like Columbus who never visited America, Descartes “missed the full sweep of his own discovery”, as he and his successors, Locke and Hume, continued to represent the importance and consequences of the subjective “enjoyment of experience” after analyses resorting to the substance-quality categories. (*FR*, 159) Pragmatism offers the exit from the moors of a philosophy erected on the substance-quality categories’ analyses.

The critique of the subject-substance doctrine is paramount for Whitehead’s conception in the philosophy of the organism and the reformed subjective principle at which Whitehead arrives is crucial both for his theory of knowledge and for his ontology. Smith rightly talks about Whitehead’s rejection of subject-substance ontology that led to an ontological view of separated entities that do not relate to

one another. Whitehead's *speculative pragmatism* proves it for William James is openly mentioned as a source of inspiration by Whitehead and Charles S. Peirce (Hartshorne 1984), who influenced Whitehead rather as a *mutatis mutandis* unacknowledged influence, probably via John Dewey, were certainly speculative pragmatists, too. We may recall that similarly to William James, Whitehead terms duration "specious present". William James and Henri Bergson are predecessors who have capitalized upon the "subjectivist bias", which was "discovered" by Descartes, but Whitehead took James' and Bergson's work in subjectivity further into a novel theory of subjectivity and knowledge: "The philosophy of the organism (...) accepts a reformed subjectivist principle". (PR, 157)

FROM INTERDEPENDENCY TO SATISFACTION AND VALUE. THE ART OF LIFE

Differently from Hume and Descartes, knowledge belongs with the intermediate phase of process and "to the genus of subjective forms", while allowing the subjective forms to function by "absorbing" objective content into the "subjectivity of satisfaction". (PR, 158) In Whitehead, it is the cumulus of successive "actual occasions" – the purely temporal actual entities of the world, that is, predicative qualities working as universals, distinct from God –, in the historic route that constitute "the life of the object"; some of these actual occasions are deprived of knowledge, while other later on (historically) have knowledge: so, historically, the unknowing man *becomes knowing*. In other words, it is the experience with perceiving the object that constitutes subjective knowledge which includes via experience as perception, in time, objectivity into subjectivity. Subjective perception does not imply anymore "the bare subjective entertainment of the datum" in Whitehead as it was in the modern analysis of perception that approached both knowledge and perception in an entirely sensationalist manner. The objective entity, say, "the stone that's grey" provokes a genuine experience, which culminates in a perception and an awareness of the fact that "the stone is grey" or that "I perceive the stone as grey". In this perspective, intentionality cannot be disconnected from perception and perception itself is objectified. The self is actively perceptive in approaching the objective world that "speaks" to the human being, objectively.

Whitehead conceives objectivity immediately accessible and evocative to the human being who is able to immediately vanish the veil of the unconscious in the *presence* of perceptible experiences. Thus, the human encountering a grey stone has a genuine "awareness of sensation of greyness" (PR, 159). And this is the experience of a connection to the world for the human being, too. Then, this experience of (personal) connection to the world, this Heideggerian *present-at-hand* experience, in Whitehead, is a *perception in the mode of presentational immediacy*, just by looking, touching, smelling, hearing the world. It is, again, another

illustration of the fact that “nothing is to be received into the philosophical scheme which is not discoverable as an element in subjective experience”. (*PR*, 166)

In Whitehead, the philosophy of organism is the inversion of Kant’s philosophy. Other interpreters notice and analyse the inversion, too, via abstracting the sensorial illusion of things, to arrive at the underlying objectivity of the world (Smith 2010; Smith and Griffin, 2003). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the subjective data, as *appearances*, contribute to form *the appearance of an objective world*. On this path, the subject actually rather creates the world, or, for Kant, the world emerges from the subject, while, for Whitehead, in the philosophy of organism, the subject “emerges from the world” – “a *superject*” rather than “a *subject*”. (*PR*, 88)

In effect, in the philosophy of the organism, subjectivity and knowledge are rethought via a different conceptualization of perception, subjectivity and common sense, as much more valuable than in the philosophical doctrines and perspectives before Whitehead. Perception is awareness, because it is sensed involvement of the world, predicated upon this emergence from the world of the subject.

Whitehead involves both awareness and intentionality in perception and perception becomes in Whitehead a type of experience or *the experience* itself. Thus, Whitehead involved an objectivist principle in Descartes: “Descartes’ discovery on the side of subjectivism requires balancing by an ‘objectivist’ principle as to the datum for experience” (*PR*, 160). Recognizing and also emphasizing the objective datum in experience, Whitehead is as well philosophically redeeming “common sense”: in Whitehead common sense “is inflexibly objectivist” (*PR*, 158), a declaration that even pragmatists as Moore, in his essay from 1925, “A defence of the common sense”, for instance, did not dare state so sententiously. Moore considered epistemically correct to trust our everyday beliefs unless confronted with reasons to not do so. As a consequence, in this perspective the common knowledge of things in Moore is much similar to tacit knowledge in Michael Polanyi, recognizing “an objective datum” in this or that experience at a level so deep that becomes part of the functional-knowledgeable being, precisely because it is “objectivity absorbed into subjectivity” at an extremely deep and personal level. (Polanyi 1974)

Knowledge is grounded on perception in Whitehead, and perception is, in turn, specified as awareness about a universal quality describing a particular substance. The grasping of a universal quality is paramount in describing a substance and in knowledge; but it also involves intentionality and duration and historicity. (*PR*, 158)

Considering the importance of perception and duration in Whitehead, Kirkpatrick notices that Alfred North Whitehead’s process metaphysics and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s embodied phenomenology might be brought together by their considerable similarities into a novel theory called “process phenomenology”. (Kirkpatrick, 2023) Although the two philosophers belong with different philosophical

traditions, an attentive analysis emphasizes the characteristics that prove Whitehead's ontological scheme and Merleau-Ponty's ontological scheme to be compatible and comparable since they are both based upon *perception as experience* and, Kirkpatrick emphasizes, upon *the primacy of experience* conceived as perception. Both Whitehead and Merleau-Ponty have in the background of their respective philosophical perspectives the influence of Henri Bergson and his philosophy about duration and perception that function also as a fertile framework to explaining the relational worldview in the philosophy of the organism and Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh, both involving "an autopoietic process of 'understanding' oneself and one's world" (Kirkpatrick, 2023).

Whitehead's comprehensive view of the world cannot stop at the rudimentary type of scientific materialism presenting the universe as a puzzle of extended specimen types of matter (like in Descartes) which have to be inert, lifeless, valueless, and purposeless (*SMW*, 17), immersed in empty space. By this, Whitehead stands against the view of nature as a complex congregation of facts which are overall meaningless from a value, purpose and life-oriented human point of view. "It is the grand doctrine of nature as a self-sufficient, meaningless complex of facts. It is the doctrine of the autonomy of physical science. It is the doctrine which [...] I am denying." (*MT*, 132) How things really are and how things are for us, humans, are both important and in our view here is the "inflexion point" where idealism enters Whitehead's comprehensive conception of the world. From Kant, Hume and Descartes to quantum mechanics, matter became energy. Scientific materialism is in Whitehead's view to be transcended in order to have a purposeful and relatedness vision of the world – a comprehensive one important both in itself and useful to close the gap in the mind-body problem and the subject-object divide. Idealism is the champion of overpassing the subject-object picture of the world (via creativity).

Philosophy of organism is consonant with non-atomistic philosophy in Schelling that becomes comprehensive as well by the creative-imaginative functioning principle, as a "Copula" (that unites). (Braeckman 1986) The mechanistic autonomy and primordality are contradicted in Whitehead, for the organicity arises from the primordial status of subjectivity, provided by creativeness as Principle. As in Wordsworth, Shelling, and Coleridge (Braeckman 1986) nature itself is perceived as a *creative activity* and individuation is the fundamental activity, albeit in a relational "logic" that allows for individuality in totality. It is a natural creative and imaginative activity that explains the wholeness of the Universe and the creative principle of individuation, unconceivable in separation from its products. Whitehead's idealism is in consonance with Wordsworth, Shelling, and Coleridge: philosophy of organism uniting in synthesis the mental and the physical in the fundamental character of the creative activity, makes subjectivity both cause and effect. Schelling's concept of imagination and Whitehead's comes together and it becomes clearer that it supports this trait of idealism in the philosophy of organism.

In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead even quotes Wordsworth's well-known phrase: "We murder to dissect" (*PR*, 212), in *MT* Whitehead mentions Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and in *SMW* he notoriously praises the poetic, Romantic subjective creation of the world as "a protest against the exclusion of value from the essence of matter of fact." (*apud* Braeckman, 1986) In Whitehead, creativity and imagination are at the foundation of reality and of the process of becoming. Here, Whitehead emphasizes the importance of the romantic concept of nature that entails two main characteristics: the organic view on nature (described by concrescence, togetherness, relatedness, becoming, creativity, imagination individuality-within-wholeness) and the value-character of nature. Whitehead's project is a metaphysical construction based on the ultimate principle of creativity as cause and as effect also not very far to the "poeticized" culture advocated by Rorty (Duvernoy, 2017). To be emphasized: we cannot understand the principle of creativity in Whitehead if it is not as well predicated upon the crucial role of language for existence and knowledge (language is "the house of being" as we know from Heidegger, who was a thinker of self-creation and affiliation as Rorty himself, whom Rorty places amongst the ironists and the strong poets) and with a view synthetising in language the experience of the making and of the discovering, too.

Whitehead's romantic move goes against the scientific and mechanic understanding of nature inherited from the 18th century. The refusal to reduce nature to matter and to hollow abstractions disjected from subjectivity constitutes the very core of the idealistic trait in the philosophy of organism. Whitehead even states that poetry (English poetry) proves that nature cannot be perceived, nor conceived in separation from its aesthetic values, that actually belong to the creativity of subjectivity and are not exactly "natural". For Whitehead, the experience of nature is nature and the experience of nature is at the same time an experience of value, which is the corollary of subjectivity, creativity and relatedness character of nature.

The vision of the *continuous relatedness of the world* emerges in Whitehead's philosophy also due to the extension of the Jamesian postulate of interrelated *drops* of experience derived from the formation of the identity (self) in human beings to all actual entities, throughout the entire chain of being, deeper and deeper, all the way "down" to atomic and subatomic entities. The relatedness of the drops of experience cannot emerge suddenly in human if it were not there temporally and constitutionally from the beginnings. How could that be? For instance, if the *actual entities* that comprised rocks (atoms) had experience then the aforementioned philosophical conception is valid, although the rocks, as *occasions of experience*, did not provide indications for having experience. The aggregation of the occasions of experience forms the nexus which seems an expression of togetherness due to the mutual prehensions of one another [of the constituents] (*PR*, 22–4). By not using the term *apprehension*, Whitehead avoided to state that the interrelations of these actual occasions of experience are conscious. For him consciousness was a

higher order of experience in very complex organisms, so *prehension* was more appropriate, a wider and more inclusive term used to cover all the possible experiences of togetherness, possibly, mostly unconscious. The prehensions correspond and give way to conceiving and unveiling the *internal relatedness* of the world.

There is a world of societies in Whitehead's vision of the world, all due to mutual prehension. There are enduring objects, corpuscular societies, structured societies, and living societies. With that we comprehend the philosophy of the organism as *panexperientialism*. The reason why evolution developed along the vector of increased complexity and relatedness occasioned as well increased creativity and progress. Contrary to the doctrine of Darwinian survival of the fittest, we have a doctrine of the survival of the most creative and complex. It is logical since with complexity and novel sensitivity come new challenges to be overcome creatively. The emergence of living beings cannot be ascribed to the superior survival value (*S*, 64–5), but we have here the value of purposefulness, the value of complexity, the value of meaning, the value of value if we allow this redundant expression to make the point. This way the value is not ascribed to fitter-ness as a state of being, but to creativity, to the very *art of life* (*FR*, 4). We also recall in Whitehead that "Value refers to Fact, and Fact refers to Value." (*SP*, 88) The experiential nature of everything (in different degrees, or intensities) is the *Grund* for the appreciative function of value, the efficient and symbolical functionality of value (*S*), hence, the expressiveness of value. Identity (mostly personal identity, indeed) serves the "double role of shaping a fact and realizing a specific value". (*SP*, 93)

The unity of style (*S*, 27) is therefore just one aspect of enduring identity, the other, more important, being the value orientation of identity, which is both sentient and creative. The fitness of a rock is superior to that of a living organism, but the superiority of the latter is given by the value of complexity and complex sentience valuably adapting the environment to themselves. (*S*, 7)

The more complex the entities are, the more they aim to the distant end of the continuum to live - to live well - to live better - to live artfully and valuably, for the enjoyment of value. (*S*, 94). And value has many facets from pragmatic, to the ideal, to the real ones.

In our view, it is a gradual increase in idealistic satisfaction in this increased enjoyment of value (*S*, 8) both relevant and notable. Also, it is very interesting relation of similarity to the purpose of enjoyment of value in the philosophy of the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga conceiving the human being as a creative cultural ontological mutation singular in the universe (Blaga 1994, 167; Blaga 1988, 306), moving away from animality by distancing herself from the immediate (away from mere secure survival) for the enjoyment of value the more and more refined as she (the human being) assaults the realms of metaphysics more (and more and more poetically - Baciu 2008, 384–397). In Blaga we have a type of

neo-Kantian subjective idealism with roots into Berkley. In Whitehead we have an eclectic poetic idealism with roots into Bradley, but both are pointing to a spiritualist idealism, to a victorious spirit present in reality and in the progress of the world, which is recognizable in Whitehead's philosophy, in the gradually shared sentience in the world, in the accent placed on panpsychism, on conscience making and spiritualising experience.

The treatment of imagination and creativity in Whitehead, as well as the poeticized thought are signals of idealism, Kantian and German. This is an interpretative direction addressed early on, during the first part of the 20th century (Wyman, 1956; Braeckman, 1986), but which is also undertaken with novel comprehensive thrust (Caranfa, 2015; Segall, 2023).

In the light of this idealistic philosophical trait, we may interpret that, idealistically and metaphysically, the self is not exactly inhabiting the body, as well as in Blaga the self is not exactly something body-dependent or directly connected to the body or body-entrenched, since it is connected to the entire environment and the historical development of the environment which the human being creates not only inhabits and in this sense it is relatable to the body, but not more, or more fundamentally than it is related to the enjoyment of value (artistically and metaphysically, too), purpose, meaning, stylistic concreteness etc. The bodily life is governed by a metaphysical aspiration which is spiritual in nature; a metaphysical thirst, with creative, cultural and knowledgeable consequences, in Lucian Blaga's philosophy. As well, with significant similarity, body is in Whitehead a "complex *amplifier*" (PR, 119) allowing for emphasis on certain elements of experience, allowing for valuing more some experiences to the detriment of others as ours and, *mutatis mutandis*, for ethically interweaving sympathetic connections of shared values (with the environment and with the others).

IDEALISM IN THE CATEGORY OF THE ULTIMATE: CREATIVITY

Whitehead disagrees with Bradley, the representative of British idealism, but he also recognizes his debt to Bradley's *Essays on Truth and Reality*, especially to his "treatment" of experience although this is an aspect of dispute among exegetes. The metaphysical position included into the rejection of an implicit doctrine of "vacuous actuality" is also idealistic in Whitehead, too. And this is not a mere partial transformation of "some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism onto a realistic basis". It is constructive thought built on a conceptual scheme and developing from a conceptual scheme, including idealism, along with scientific realism and pragmatism. As the world itself, the conceptual scheme presents interrelatedness in the communication among the philosophical doctrines, which in turn allows for creativity. We may recall that the main concepts of Whitehead's philosophical

perspective are “actual entity,” prehension,” nexus,” and the “ontological principle,” (*PR*, 18–20) which emphasize the paramount role of togetherness in his philosophical conception.

A brief summary is useful not to lose sight of the thread investigating aspects of Whitehead’s idealism within the complexity of his philosophical position.

There is “becoming and perishing and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute stubborn fact” in his conceptualization of togetherness. His metaphysics is very far from the logical positivism and a pure scientific philosophy. Whitehead approaches, on the one hand, a central concept of “relatedness” involved in a greater importance granted to feeling, living immediacy and becoming in his philosophy of organic relations. “Relatedness” takes precedence over the Aristotelian “quality”. This idealism is relevant in perceiving the world, but also in identifying a “true method of philosophical construction”, which involves the “framing scheme of ideas”, used to consistently explore “the interpretation of experience in terms of that scheme”. Explanation is a. constructive, b. idealistic and c. scientific; not one or the other, but all three dimensions offer the “complete” picture.

Imagination is another key element in Whitehead’s idealism. Whitehead’s idealism is a constructive thought addressing numerous topics of scientific interest with a methodological dominance of this “framing scheme of ideas”, which admits the involvement of imagination and is guiding the imagination, too. Whitehead’s idealism is in certain aspects close to Spinoza’s scheme of thought, as in the philosophy of organism. However, in Whitehead, the “substance-quality” concept is avoided, the morphological description is rejected and replaced by description of dynamic process, within which the “sheer actualities” are analysed, increasing understanding, but not leading to access to a higher degree of reality.

Nonetheless, “reality” itself is a concept that allows for a certain degree of idealism. Explanation and idealism have to be considered necessary in the processual view of reality. The meaningfulness of the world is an important part of the meaningfulness of the human being as it is actually the very orientation of processual-ness of the world. “Reality” is the reality of process, concrescence, relatedness and organicity: this is the “solidarity of the world” that receives its idealistic but not unscientific “explanation”. When poet praises nature in the rose, for its scent (*AE*, 54), it is this togetherness that participates in the evaluation, the processual orientation towards meaning and the enjoyment of value that speaks in the poetical human being. Is it human being something out of this world by this orientation towards meaning and the enjoyment of value? No, for the entire world is, in a processual manner, oriented towards such aims. All in all, “creativity is the ultimate behind all forms” and we are not wrong to generalize that creativity is the ultimate behind everything and anything else:

„[P]hilosophy is explanatory of abstraction, and not of concreteness. It is by reason of their instinctive grasp of this ultimate truth that, in spite of much association with arbitrary fancifulness and atavistic mysticism, types of Platonic philosophy retain their abiding appeal; they seek the forms in the facts. Each fact is more than its forms, and each form 'participates' throughout the world of facts. The definiteness of fact is due to its forms; but the individual fact is a creature, and *creativity is the ultimate behind all forms* [our emphasis], inexplicable by forms, and conditioned by its creatures.” (PR, 20)

Matthew David Segall interprets Whitehead's philosophy of organism as an idealism which is no longer at odds with realism. He emphasizes that Whitehead does not return to naïve realism or pre-Kantian dogmatism. (Segall, 2023) Whitehead's ontology is participatory: taking part into the materialism, significantly different from Absolute Idealism. Whitehead's philosophy, the philosophy of organism, is founding an idealistic concern for the creative individuality; a philosophy of “experients” that are both able to go beyond themselves and into one another. In Segall, Whitehead's organic realism presents its idealistic dimension in the relational process, thus transforming Bradley's timeless monistic Universe into a self-differentiating creative advance, wherein “each creative act” involves the relatedness of everything with everything else and this relatedness is absolute. In short, Whitehead's doctrine of the actual occasion as if the whole [sentient] universe entertains the process of attainment of “satisfaction” – idealism gives way to realism (Segall, 2023) and, we should observe, pragmatism.

Process philosophy is organic philosophy and also an “atomic theory of actuality” (Rohmer, 2021). The actual entities realize ideas, “eternal objects” so the ontological concrescence manifests as reality, as subjectivity is the basis of reality. (Rohmer, 2021) We have a possible parallel between the philosophies of Whitehead and Hegel, as idealisms, and all the more in the virtue of the view by which the finite is not “truly an existent” The “stubborn fact” of relatedness is both realistic, subjective and idealistic (subjectivism, or, the entities, are the very foundation of reality).

To address another facet of idealism, in our view, we should not minimize the meaning of “particular satisfaction” in Whitehead nor the philosophy of meaning per se which is present in the philosophy of organism. “Particular satisfaction” is, in Whitehead, particularly spiritual, for it is intrinsically related to creativity in Whitehead's conceptualization, which is, in this respect, idealistic.

Peter Sjöstedt-H introduces Whitehead's organic awareness of reality to arrive at an argument of organic realism in Whitehead (Sjöstedt-H, 2016). Although we agree with Sjöstedt-H that the philosophy of organism is a form of process philosophy designed to overcome the problems in the traditional metaphysical options of dualism, materialism, and idealism, we do not agree that the argument for “organic realism” describes the entire complexity of the philosophy of organism. As in the case of Segall's interpretation, we consider that not enough importance is

placed on this spiritual relevance of the concept of creativity in the *philosophy of organism*. While John Horton Conway's cellular automaton is a good illustration of concrescence from actual entities in Whitehead's philosophy, it is not the entire meaning behind the concept of organism, other more complex and important aspects such as the stages or degrees of *sentience* – of awareness, feeling and purpose are not illustrated, although they are somehow metaphorically suggested, metonymically there. As Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), Vienna Circle founding philosopher has shown in his 1927 essay *The Meaning of Life*, “Life means movement and action”, with “purpose and value within themselves (...)”, suggested also in *The Game of Life*, although, there, the player is the outside initiator. Whitehead's philosophical architecture assumes that everything is organic, for “Biology is the study of the larger organisms; whereas physics is the study of the smaller organisms” (*SMW*). The sentience is supposed everywhere, with differences of degree, for sentience and self-organisation are mutually implicit.

Thus, Whitehead overpasses the inorganic-organic gap, not only the Cartesian mind-matter divide. The Whiteheadian sort of *panpsychism* is rather *panexperientialism* and although many interpreters may agree and loosely disregard this conceptual interchangeability (a quasi-synonymity) in his philosophy, we consider it of paramount importance. As in A. Damasio (2010), in Whitehead, experience builds, sentience evolves, slowly and (or) gradually, step by step; this is the lesson of concrescence. The sentience is experience and it builds up, constituting the conscience, the consciousness, the self. Here is one important “inflexion point” among Whitehead's idealism, empiricism, pragmatism and realism that is derived directly, logically, from conceptualising *universal* sentience, with spiritual, empiricist, pragmatist and realist dimensions. Matter is conceivably mindful, as well in Whitehead as, for instance, in the conception of Mihai Drăgănescu (2007) built around the notion of “informatter”. In Drăgănescu, the universe is explained via information. The Information is described by auto-functors, which by their essence give birth to the physical and informational processes, described as non-computable, non-formal and unpredictable to an observer from a universe. The fact that the fundamental and the non-fundamental phenomenological information of a universe is semantic represents the similarity in the two philosophical perspectives. The “phenomenological minds” emerge as organizational subcategories of information manifest due to the influence of “orthoenergy”. However, here is no room for addressing the comparison Whitehead-Drăgănescu properly.

The main idea, nevertheless, stands out: experiencing is to be understood also as sentience and it has a paramount role in the philosophy of organism. The notion of experience as information and sentience is central for any discussion of existence as life and relatedness, with meaning and reference. Is it organic idealism or organic realism? In our view the very distinction is bridged in Whitehead. In the togetherness of things, subjectivity absorbs objectivity within and we have a necessarily Gadamerian fusion of horizons both for life (a multi-levelled processual

will of life marks its presence in Whitehead), for living entities and for knowledge, as a subjective meaning that is with necessity sensed, experienced in time and, therefore, also verified and, thus, objective. And this fusion of horizons fuses idealism, realism, pragmatism in a comprehensive and complex philosophy. We, the human beings, are both in the world, of the world and separated from it, thus, conscious and subjectively-objective: "Thus, as disclosed in the fundamental essence of our experience, the togetherness of things involves some doctrine of mutual immanence... We are in the world and the world is in us." (*MT*)

CONCLUSIONS

Creativity is the cause and purpose of creatures that/which create in togetherness. This ultimate category (creativity) is the best revealing agent of idealism in Whitehead. In the philosophy of the organism, the beings in the world create the world. We thus have underlined the role of idealism and humanism in Whitehead's idealist metaphysics.

As creativity cannot be fully comprehended without discussing the conceptualization of duration, we have briefly assessed the Bergsonian influence on Whitehead, followed by a succinct discussion of the understanding of "body" and corporeality in Whitehead and Merleau-Ponty. Subjectivity itself is a locus of objectivity inclusion and "channel" of objectivity.

Mind is not separated from matter and subjectivity is not disjunct from objectivity. Poetical idealism is emphasized in the comparison of Whitehead and Hegel (Lowe, 1966, 256) or of Whitehead with Wordsworth, Shelling, and Coleridge (Braekman, 1986), as well as Whitehead and Rorty, Whitehead and Blaga, too, proving that we have a doctrine of the complexity of truth that might entertain contradictory aspects with an idealism that capitalizes globally the contribution of idealism to philosophy, especially in relating ontology, life, spirituality and creativity. Lowe finds similarities with William Wordsworth and Shelley. In turn, Wordsworth's poetry capturing some of the essence the poetical reflection is similar to both Whitehead and, as we have noticed, Lucian Blaga, philosopher-poet, going to the roots and consequences of the poetic rendering of a complex idealistic thought that is not entirely (or exactly) idealistic, neither Whitehead's, nor in Blaga's case, nor in Rorty's case, for instance.

Whitehead's philosophy is a philosophy of life with a pragmatic, realistic and scientific component. We identify in Whitehead a realistic philosophy of organism which is also pragmatic and idealistic and argue for investigating these dimensions in synthesis. However, we do notice in Whitehead a paradoxical idealism interweaving into a type of realism of the emergence of the organization of mind in investigating matter, arriving at creativity and imagination, and at the sensitivity of being in the world. In Whitehead, too, the human being poetically dwells the world. By aiming to capture the missing link between matter and life, Whitehead proposes

process philosophy of organism as a type of anti-Darwinian theory that makes “superior” beings actually rather recent than superior per se, in actual biological terms of endurance and life duration. Idealism is immersed into and interconnected to scientific realism and pragmatism. The idealistic dimension in the philosophy of organism offers a subtle philosophy of meaningful life, predicated upon the paramount “categorical ultimate”, namely, creativity (poetics and imagination).

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