

## **A History of Philosophy**

### **62 Whitehead and Process Theology**

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Did everybody get a copy of the instructions for the book reviews by the end of the semester? This is the third time I've been hawking these, which means that you people have missed two times. Let's see, who else was there? Anybody back here? Okay. Okay, we turn our attention back today to Whitehead.

And I want to concentrate particularly on Whitehead's conception of God. But in order to do that, we have to have some understanding of his overall philosophical scheme, particularly his metaphysics. Because it goes without saying, I suppose, that how one conceives of God and God's relationship to nature is really going to be dependent on the metaphysical scheme, the God concept is system-dependent in that sense.

The God concept is system-dependent, yeah, because how you conceive of God in relationship to nature depends on how you conceive of nature, quite obviously so. And last time, we were introducing Whitehead. And I was emphasizing the fact that for Whitehead, the basic constituents of all reality are not substances with an enduring, unchanging identity, but rather events.

Events can be very momentary, like 1/50th of a second in duration. 1/50th of a second is pretty small. He tends to call those tiny events actual occasions.

And reserves the word event and sometimes the word entity, actual entities, for the larger-scale events. But whether you're talking of the micro-events or more macro-events, like this class period, or your college education, or the history of the United States, you see, each of those is an event of a different size, a different duration. No matter what the event you're talking about, all events can be described in terms of three constituent elements, three factors.

And as we indicated last time, these three factors are the objective data, which really amount to the causes, the efficient causes, if you like, objective data, eternal possibilities, and the decision. And I repeat this simply because it's so very important to understand it. So, if you conceive of a process going along, what initiates a new event? What initiates the new event is the intersection of two processes.

So that the objective data of the second process intersect with the existing states of affairs in the first process. So that at that point of intersection, there are objective data that are going to make a difference. You say that's a cause-effect mechanism.

Yeah. And inasmuch as the basic model for all of these post-current things is human consciousness, in human consciousness, we would say that the objective data, we're aware of them through what he calls physical prehension. Prehension, of course, is a Leibniz term.

It's a shortened version of apprehension, or if you like, comprehension. But to prehend something is simply to accept it, to be aware of it, for it to affect you. He points out that there can be positive and negative prehension.

Positive prehension, where you, yes, you accept the influence, and you absorb it. Negative prehension, where you simply reject it, ignore it, or turn away from it. You'll see.

But the new event, by virtue of objective data, that are physically prehend, and that is an affective kind of experience, not a cognitive experience, an affective experience. So he criticizes the representational theories of knowledge in people like Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Kant by saying that they give primacy to the cognitive, primacy to the concept, to the idea. That the first initiating thing in a perceptual experience, in a perceptual event, is not the idea but the causal stimulus.

The affective, not the cognitive. And that perceptual experience is the paradigm for all events of all other sorts. So that even in unconscious beings, there is a low-grade equivalent to physical prehension.

Namely, the cause-effect mechanism. You'll see. So, physical prehension.

Eternal possibilities are simply abstract, logical possibilities, which are, if you like, brought to bear by virtue of the objective data. What's going to be the effect of this objective data, of this new experience? Well, it could go various ways, alternative possibilities. You'll see.

And those eternal possibilities in conscious experience, of course, are ideas, which are apprehended by what he calls conceptual prehension. Which, plainly, is cognitive. So the idea is not the primary thing, as it was for Descartes and Locke and Kant, as if in experience you're just bombarded with ideas.

No, Hume was more on target. It's forceful and vivacious in presence. And the ideas follow.

It's the affective first, rather than the cognitive. So you have eternal possibilities. He recognizes that if they're logical possibilities, they're sort of objective logical possibilities.

That is to say, in the very nature of things, there are these logical possibilities. They're not something we invent. We don't invent possibilities.

We may actualize possibilities, but we don't invent the possibilities. We may recognize the possibilities, but we don't create them. So in that sense, the possibilities are there, whether we know it or not.

They're objective possibilities. And so you find him, in his later writings especially, calling these eternal objects. Meaning they're objects of thought, like ideas are objects for Locke.

They're objects of thought. Objective possibilities that you become aware of. So then, in response to this causal stimulus of the objective data, there arise all sorts of possibilities, which in conscious processes we're aware of, in unconscious processes are still there.

There are still those possibilities, whether there's anybody to know what they are or not. And from those possibilities, what determines the future is what he calls the decision. In human consciousness, it's often a conscious decision.

This is what I'm going to do with the new Givens. Conscious decision. But even in unconscious processes, biological, physical, so forth, there's a cut-off point, a selectivity that's involved.

Where not all of the possibilities can be actualized, some are in the natural course of events. Now, this decision is what provides what he calls a subjective aim. Because in the decision, the possibility that is selective becomes the goal that you aim for.

That's what you're going to go for. You're going to actualize that possibility. You see.

Now, the initial subjective aim is that which is presented by the natural causal process. Let's say, given these data outcome. And in any process that's determined, then the initial subjective aim is simply the subjective aim of this new event.

Subjective in the sense that it becomes some intrinsic end for the new event by virtue of the new data that has been absorbed into it. It's intrinsic. Notice he's got a teleological explanation of everything.

A teleological explanation. It's not a mechanistic universe. It's a teleological one.

Now, in the case of beings with consciousness, that initial subjective aim can become a modified subjective aim. A modified subjective aim. So that you might resist the effect of something upon you and handle the new input in some other way.

And, of course, even your pet dog resists your call, your whistle at times, and goes chasing after the cat next door. The initial subjective aim becomes a modified subjective aim when it smells the cat. I always think dogs smell before they look.

The motto, look before you leap, would apply very well to dogs in that sense. Some human beings, I think, leap before they look. Dogs smell before they look, and so forth.

But the look can provide a modified subjective aim. So the initial and the modified subjective aim. So this is the way it is for all events.

And, as I said last time, there's a gradualism so that in varying degrees this is conscious or unconscious across the whole range of things in heaven and earth. Now, the notion of a subjective aim is teleological. Where does that lead? Well, that leads to the completion of the event.

You see? And when the possibility inherent in this new data is achieved, then okay, that's the completion of the event. It's as if there is a genetic process, and try the biological metaphor. A genetic process.

So that you've got conception, not in the cognitive sense but in the biological sense. You've got conception because of the causal stimulus. You have conception.

You have the developmental process with the possibilities emerging and being selected during embryonic development, if you like. Until the birth of the new event with the decision and the achievement in maturity of the subjective aim. And then, of course, the mature event gradually subsides the data.

You see? So you can see it like birth, maturity, death, which gives rise to birth, maturity, death. Hey, dialectics? Hegel? Yeah. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

You see? The influence of the Hegelian tradition is in this full understanding of the world process. The whole world process is a dialectical kind of thing. It has a dialectical structure.

In the synthesis, the objective data are preserved but transcended by new possibilities that they provide. You see? In the synthesis. Well, the completion of the event, then, leads to what he calls satisfaction.

Satisfaction. And again, notice that that's a term drawn from conscious perceptual experience. It's the paradigm.

You know what I mean by a paradigm? You have certain paradigm verbs in a foreign language. You see, if you want to know how to conjugate a verb, you go back to the paradigm. I know a master mind, a master mind.

In French. So forth. You see? So the conscious perceptual experience is the paradigm.

And in perceptual experience, it's the satisfaction when you rarely see as you have the opportunity to absorb it. It is for the satisfaction that Whitehead finds aesthetic satisfaction. Now, aesthetic initially in the continental Germanic sense of sensory satisfaction.

Isthanami has to do with the senses; Kant's transcendental aesthetic has to do with the senses. But it's also aesthetic in the English language sense of it, of aesthetic, an aesthetic satisfaction. How do you describe this aesthetic satisfaction, which is the culmination of the experience? Well, it's that everything in the event, all these three elements, come together to provide a unity.

So that the event is one feeling, it's one experience. Now notice how we use the term experience along those lines. It could be your first taste of pecan pie; what an experience.

It could be the four years of a college education, the Wheaton experience. Get it? And it could be that at the end of some phase of human history, the historian looks back and says, that whole history was a human experience. Singular, with an identity of its own that provides a unified feeling.

You see? So this satisfaction is an ordered unity, a harmony of opposites. Opposites? Yes, contrasts of actuality and possibility. The intensity of feeling that's associated with the ordered harmony of the opposing ingredients within the overall experience.

Now, you know, that's the way some people explain, describe the experience of beauty in the arts. You see? The contrasts harmonized in that final moment where the symphony brings it all together. Have you ever wondered how everybody knows when to clap? It's when the synthesis is achieved.

The experience is complete. And he uses those aesthetic analogies. And in those sorts of processes, those kinds of events, the good is what contributes to that satisfaction.

The good is instrumental towards beauty. Explicitly, for Whitehead. His ethic is a utilitarian ethic.

Good is a means to aesthetic ends. And evil is the fragmentary, transitory opposition to that harmony. Either by virtue of resisting the emerging aim with its grand synthesis, or by virtue of sheer triviality that gets to be boring.

Yes, a novel that's boring is a bad novel. A boring lecture is a bad lecture. And one in which there are things that really are extraneous and interfere with the developing movement of the thing, are bad.

But much of what we call evil is simply the conflict of opposites that are going to be harmonized in the synthesis. So that when Whitehead talked about his son, who was a flier with the British in World War I, what they called the Royal Flying Corps back there, what became the Royal Air Force, his son was shot down in a dogfight over the trenches in France in World War I. When he talked about that, he talked of his life coming to a beautiful completion as it merged into history. His problem of evil? Notice, if you like, the evolutionary optimism and idealism of the 19th century.

Well, you see then that this characterization of an event like perceptual experience is the characterization of a person's life. It's the characterization of all human history, of all cosmic history. You see? And remember that his category of the ultimate, let's say the ultimate explanatory category, is creativity.

The way in which novelty emerges out of the conflict of opposites. How one event gives birth to another event. In dying, we live.

Well, if this is the nature of the world process, the creative process, as it really is and as he takes it to be, the creative process, the world process, what does it say about a human being? Well, it says that a human being is essentially what David Hume said about personal identity. Remember that Hume said that personal identity as we know it in consciousness is simply a bundle of perceptions. The present memory of past experiences, that bundle of perceptions, is the only personal identity you can describe.

Now, Whitehead, of course, strings out those perceptions over a period of time. But it's the continuity of the experiences which gives identity, so that you look at a photo of yourself ten years ago and say, yeah, that's me. And then you can identify with it because of that continuity.

But the human self, he says, is simply a society of events with a unifying structure. A society of events. But the thing we want to get to today, what about God? Now, you look at these three ingredients of all events.

Keep in mind that God, for Whitehead, is not an exception to these metaphysical generalities. But is the example par excellence. So God is conceived in the image of perceptual experience.

Or to put it another way, God is understood in terms of the experience of being God. Self-consciousness is the lens projected on the ultimate. Now, what does that mean? Well, he says there are three phases in the nature of God.

If you like, the three-fold nature of God with respect to any event. All right, here's the nature of any event. And there are three, there's a three-fold nature of God in relationship to the three-fold nature of an event.

The threefold nature of God is simply another example. Of a three-fold event. You see? In other words, the being we call God is like any other being, an event.

An everlasting event. You see? An event without beginning and without end. An everlasting event.

What he talks about in this three-fold nature is the primordial nature of God. His primordial nature. His consequent nature.

And the superjective nature. Okay? By now, you learn not just to memorize meanings of words but to figure them out when you see them. And that word superjective, Latin *yakio*, is the verb to throw, to cast.

Super, over, on. Yeah. So that it's in the superjective nature of God that God, as it were, gives something to nature.

To the world. But the consequent nature of God, God gets something from the world. You see? So you have to start with the primordial nature of God to know, as it were, what God begins with and how an event affects God, and then what God gives back to the event.

Because that's the way it is. You see, what's everlasting is the primordial nature of God. That never changes.

That never changes. Consequent nature, superjective nature, those are changing. But the primordial nature never changes.

What is the primordial nature? It is the ordered harmony of all eternal objects. Eternal objects are the eternal possibilities. In other words, what he's saying is that you have to think of God as the sum total of all logical possibilities.

Now, get that in mind. And then see how it echoes the past. For St. Augustine, the *rationes eterne*, those eternal forms, eternal ideals, Plato's forms, are what? They're conceptual possibilities in the mind of God, archetypes in the mind of God.

Sure, that's what Augustine got from those Alexandrian church fathers, from that Logos tradition in the early church that was so influenced by the Middle Platonism. And you remember of the three influences on Whitehead's thought that we were talking about last time, the third was these Alexandrian church fathers. So, in effect, what Whitehead is doing is picking up on the Platonic theory of forms as it was translated through the Middle Platonism into the Logos language of the Stoics that the Christian church adopted and applied to the creator God and the incarnate Logos in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yes, all rationes eterne, all forms.

That's the way they explained his omniscience. That's the way it was in the Alexandrian tradition, in Justin Martyr, in Augustine, in Anselm, in Thomas Aquinas, the whole medieval tradition. But it's back to the Alexandrians that Whitehead likes to go.

So then, you have in thinking of God and God's experience, God's own experience, you have to think of his thinking on these thoughts, his eternal wisdom, the possibilities for his creation. Now, as nature itself, the world, and the world history development take place, natural events, God, who is all experiencing, experiences the world. And he can be touched with the feeling of what's going on in the world.

So God feels what's going on. God's perception, don't move him. God feels with us.

That's the language that Whitehead keeps using. I'll read some of it to you shortly. So there is then here the conceptual prehension of possibilities.

Here, there is what he has called the physical prehension of objective data, of what's going on. You see? And God, experiencing in that very affective sense what's going on in the world while knowing all sorts of eternal possibilities for harmonizing conceptually, what does he do? In his superjective nature, he offers possibilities to the world process. Yeah, it's God who provides the initial subjective aim.

God, not some blind mechanistic force, but God. And, of course, in human experience, you begin to see now that human beings have the freedom to resist the will of God. Freedom to modify what God in his goodness offers as an aim, purpose.

So, God's primordial nature corresponds to the second ingredient in a natural event. God's consequent nature corresponds to the first ingredient in a natural event. God's superjective nature corresponds with the third.

That is to say, the third, which then leads on into future events as it does. So that as the next event comes down the pipeline, as it were, hideous metaphor, the primordial nature of God incorporates all possibilities for this new situation. You see?

Yes, because the total possibilities included the possibilities that would arise in any new situation.

So the primordial nature is always there with things in reserve. I said the next event that comes down the pipeline. Of course, it's not a matter of events coming down.

Beep. Watch it, here comes another one. Beep.

No, it's not that way. It's much more like, well, I suppose you have to say, since I used sounds, some extremely complex but magnificent symphony. Or if you want to use strands, it's more like a highly complex Bell Telephone cable that takes them a week to sort out when it gets messed up.

You see, with events weaving into events, weaving into events, and multitudinous lines of connection. But for simplicity's sake, he analyzes it in terms of one event leading to another event. So what sort of God then does this give? Well, it's a God who orders the universe.

God, he says, is the principle of order. Or to use his term, God is the principle of concretion. Now you look at that word concretion, and I suppose you think concrete.

No, don't. Never take his words at face value, his technical terms. Concretion seems to be his synonym for the word concrecence.

And if you have Latin, and if you don't, it's still the case that the word concrecence means growing together. Cresco is the verb, to grow, con, with, growing together. There used to be a cooking fat called Cresco.

In these days of fat consciousness, they all became liquid rather than solid. Cresco was a cooking fat that made the cakes rise. So concrecence.

Now God then is the principle of concretion, concrecence. It's God who keeps the growth going into that harmony of the symphony. Now notice, God does not originate the world process.

God doesn't originate it. The category of the ultimate is creativity. There's always been creativity.

The primary example is God. But Whitehead seems to think that there are natural processes that have been going on, one or another, going all the way back. You see, and there's no reason in Whitehead to think that God was the first such process.

So I guess God and the Big Bang, the title of the lecture tomorrow night, I see, would be very different for a Whiteheadian theologian than for a traditional theist. Nor

does he think of God; he doesn't think of him as an originator, nor does he think of him as God who is the terminator. I guess that's a science fiction term now.

God is wrapping it up. In other words, he doesn't have an eschatology. He doesn't have an eschatology.

The end of the thing. You say a teleology without an eschatology? Yeah. The teleology just goes on and on and on and on and on, and then on.

So the harmony is being created all the time. And it's an everlasting harmony. You see? Yeah.

It's an everlasting harmony. So he doesn't think of history having some terminus towards which it's moving. God is the principle of concretion, the principle of order.

He also calls God the principle of limitation. Because by virtue of his superjective nature, there are only limited possibilities available. Only limited possibilities are available.

So the world process is not going to self-destruct for Whitehead. It couldn't, if that's not in the possibilities. God's subjective nature doesn't have such possibilities.

So you notice then that his emphasis is on the creativity of God, and exercised with loving care in providing an initial subjective aim in every event, no matter how micro or macro, in the entire world process. In that sense, God too is an event, the all-experiencing event. You see? It's not pantheism, it's not traditional theism in any sense in which God is creator.

Some process theologians, we'll find in a moment, see it as a kind of panentheism. Everything goes on within the experience that is God. But the event, the super all-inclusive experience that is God, is much more than all of the world process.

So panentheism. Now you may be tempted to ask, as a friend of mine does whenever I remember him discussing this sort of thing, well, what is the experiencer? What is the experiencer? To which Whitehead's reply is, all right, in your case, as a perceiver, what isn't a perceiver? What is a person? You see, the only thing we can say is that a person is a succession of events with a unity and harmony to the whole. That memory theory of personal identity.

You see? Because this is a process philosophy, not a substance philosophy. Don't look for a substrate, a stuff, an entity, a thing that thinks and feels. No, not a thing that thinks and feels, but thinking and feeling.

That's what's real. So this is the way it comes out. Let me read you some of what Whitehead says so that you can get the sense of it.

This is his major work, *Process and Reality*. And towards the end, there's a section on God and the world. And here it is.

In the great formative period of theistic philosophy, which ended in the rise of Mohammedanism, after a continuous coevolution with civilization, three strains of thought emerged. You know, it's noticeable how often he talks of three. Those dialectical triads.

You see? Three strains of thought emerge, which, amid many variations in detail, respectively fashion, first, God in the image of an imperial ruler. Second, God as a personification of moral energy. Third, God in the image of an ultimate philosophical principle.

Now, what does he have in mind? These three schools of thought can be associated respectively with the divine Caesars. Remember how the Roman Caesars were divinized for the Roman Senate? He has become a God, as it was said of one. The imperial ruler.

God, the imperial ruler. The second personification of moral energy is the Hebrew prophets. The third, the ultimate philosophical principle, Aristotle.

But Aristotle was antedated by Indian and Buddhist thought, and Hebrew prophets can be paralleled in traces of earlier thought. Mohammedanism and the divine Caesars merely represent the most natural, obvious, idolatrous theistic symbolism at all epochs and places. The history of theistic philosophy exhibits various stages of the combination of these three diverse ways of entertaining the problem.

However, there is the Galilean origin of Christianity. Not Galileo, but Galilee. Okay, the Galilean origin of Christianity.

Yet another suggestion there that doesn't fit well with any of the three main strands. It doesn't emphasize a ruling Caesar, a ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love.

And it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom that's not of this world. It doesn't look to the future, but finds its reward in the immediate present. The kingdom of God is among you.

Every sparrow, when it falls, is seen. The hairs of your head are all numbered. For some of you, it's a much bigger task than others.

So then, God in those terms. And he's caught up, you see, by not Christian theology, but caught up by the image of Jesus as it was in a certain liberal theological tradition that emphasized Jesus as the man of love, you see. He was very active in his younger years, due to his background.

Then, let's see, 346. Yeah, we conceive of the patience of God tenderly saving the turmoil of an intermediate world by the completion of his own nature. God's role is not the combat of productive force with productive force, of destructive force with destructive force.

It lies in the patient's operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. What's the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization? The primacy of the primordial nature, which is his conceptual harmonization of all possibilities. Hence, his ability to work all things together for good.

So, let's see, the patience of God, yeah. The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality. And yet the good they did achieve in individual joy and individual sorrow in the introduction of needed contrast is saved by its relation to the completed whole.

The image is that of tender care that nothing be lost. God does not create the world; he saves it, or more accurately, he's the poet of the world with tender patience leading it by its vision of truth, beauty, and goodness. And creation achieves the reconciliation of permanence and flux when it reaches its final term, its everlastingness.

So, there it is. He talks of leading by love, and he has a long disquisition in one place, long disquisition, no, repeated talk in one of his books, about love, which he takes to be Eros. In *Adventures of Ideas*, this is.

Love, which he takes to be Eros, not Agape, but Eros. Because Eros is the Platonic word for love, which is what? A love of the good, you see. So, it's in this overarching love of good that God acts.

A desire for good, you see. And it's that which, in the initial aim that God gives, the initial subjective aim, is being spread abroad. A desire for good.

And you recall how in the medieval teleologies, you see, all of nature has its natural tendency towards its natural good. And even human beings who mistake what is the good still desire the good, even though they have said, evil be thou my good, they still desire that good. You see, so he's trying to recapture that teleology in this way.

Well, any comments, any questions? You said earlier that the world process continues. Does he have no, does the Second Coming fit into this? No, no. No, in fact, the Incarnation doesn't either.

You see, he talks of the historical Jesus, but not of the incarnate Second Person of the Trinity. So that, as in Hegel, so in Whitehead, Christian theological concepts are simply symbols. Not to be taken as conceptually true, you see.

Remember, in Hegel, you get the final triad in the absolute spirit, moving from art to religion to philosophy. Where religion is a symbolic expression, it's philosophy that conceptualizes it. So religious talk is symbolic talk.

Incarnation, then, is symbolic of what? Of the imminent loving activity of God in history, in nature. In fact, some years ago, I taught a seminar on Whitehead and process theology, in which the second half of the term, after having studied Whitehead, each person in the class was responsible for one 20th-century process theologian. And for what that theologian had to say on certain key theological topics.

And I don't think we found a single one who gave any traditional interpretation of the Incarnation. It was always symbolic. And similarly with other cardinal Christian doctrines.

Now, I'm not going to say it couldn't be done. And I didn't read all the stuff that I had them read; I was getting them to do my reading for me. Which is, you know, the best reason for teaching a seminar.

Get other people to do your research. Sometimes I'd like to go back and do it for myself. I was telling somebody that when I retire, the book I have up my sleeve is a Whitehead book.

I've been reading Whitehead, working on Whitehead on and off for 40 years. I'd like to bring it to fruition. But one of the things I'd want to do is to go through all that literature you see.

And see if there's any of them who really do move beyond Whitehead in that regard. They may. But certainly in the literature, it's not at all evident.

In describing this God, I wonder, even in the use of a pronoun. I mean, it doesn't seem. But I suppose, I guess you have to go back to his definition of a person.

Yeah, you're concerned with what? The term God? Being used? He? Yeah, yeah. If, yeah, that's a good question. Does he mean that God is actually a conscious and self-conscious mass? I think so.

But then, on the other hand, you have a shred of doubt. Could he be using it in terms of a degree of influence coming from something? God? You say that he speaks that way because that's the way he speaks of everything. The paradigm is consciousness.

No, I think he means it's consciousness. And he certainly seems to talk that way in some evening conversations with him that were recorded and transcribed after his death. Certainly seems to talk that way.

Yeah. Let me make this point, I think. This may help to clear it up.

That for Whitehead, in contrast to, say, Thomas Aquinas, in Thomas Aquinas, God is the efficient cause of creation, the formal cause of creation, the final cause of creation. Right? There's no material cause because creation is ex nihilo. Now, it seems to me that in Whitehead, God is the formal and the final cause, but not the efficient cause.

God is the formal cause in the sense that his primordial nature conceives of all logical possibilities and logical order. Okay? He is the final cause by virtue of the superjective nature by which he lures events. And that's his term, lure.

Now, I'm no fisherman, but I know what a lure is. It doesn't kick the fish in its tail. What it does is to attract the fish.

A lure is a final cause, not an efficient cause. So it's the winning way of a lure that's significant, and the winning way of an ideal that's significant in a final causation. So God's relationship to the world for Whitehead is that of a formal cause and a final cause, but not an efficient cause.

Which means God does not act. If by act you mean what is meant in biblical history. The mighty acts of God in the history of Israel.

The mighty act of God in the incarnation or in the second coming, as you raise it. No, God does not act. And I think the underlying nature of his metaphysics precludes God from acting.

In fact, I did an article on Whitehead a few years ago that I called Why God Cannot Act. Why God Cannot Act. It's in a book called Process Theology, edited by Ronald Nash.

It's in the library. And it seems to me that the reason God cannot act is that Whitehead's God is essentially a Hegelian God. It's a God of, say, Schleiermacher, who is more a ground of being than a personal agent.

You see. And so, as though these agency categories of acting don't apply, just the ground of being you rely on.

The ultimate ground that influences nature indirectly. And so, just as in the liberal theology of the 19th century, you have no special revelation. It's all imminent from within.

You have no supernatural act. It's all natural process by virtue of the divine creativity within. It's the same in Whitehead.

So if you are familiar with the history of 19th century theology and the Schleiermacherian tradition, the Romanticist tradition. Well, that's Whitehead. And as I said, Whitehead seems to have read Wordsworth as if it were the Bible.

You remember that line from last time? So I think this is a Romanticized version of 19th-century theology that comes out in a 20th-century process metaphysic. Can you just take the principle of creativity, which is the essence of all reality, and give that a little regard? Yeah. Yeah.

And there are some process theologians who try to do that. Some who try to do that. And I think I'm right in saying that Charles Hartshorne is one who is perhaps the best-known process thinker.

He was not himself influenced by Whitehead, but developed in parallel to him. And he taught all at Harvard for a number of years, then at Chicago, then in his retirement at Texas. Hartshorn did.

Very much the panentheist, and he could be a panentheist if creativity is God. Influenced a lot of people. Perhaps today the best known process theologian is John Cobb, who, I think, I'm right in saying, is at Claremont School of Theology in California.

John Cobb. But lots of them are around. We don't have time to talk about them now.

Okay. Next time, what I'd like to do, and this is a pattern we'll follow on these books you're reading. What I'd like to do is some commentary on his book, *Science in the Modern World*.

So I urge you to give it a reading. Maybe not enough of a reading to do the review. But give it a reading, and we'll do some commentary on it, and we can discuss things that you want to talk about then.