

# On the Unique Origin of Revelation, Religious Intuition, and Theology

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Time and again, process theology has been accused of reducing theology to metaphysics, thereby eliminating the genuine source of theology, i.e., the experience of God's revealing reality. In this regard, one recalls Langdon Gilkey who deplored this collapse of all problems to metaphysical problems.<sup>1</sup> According to Gilkey, the problem with "metaphysics" occurs when it loses its flowing, critical structure and begins to solidify into a constructional, systematic theory. Then, process theology seems to mutate into a guardian of a *true*, if not the *only* true, metaphysical theory. Consequently, the traditions of revelation devolve to mere variables of the solidified metaphysical constant. Moreover, the unique events relevant to theology, the genuine intuition of religious experience, and revelation-theological reflection cannot reach into the metaphysical core anymore and at all.<sup>2</sup> David Pailin appropriately summarizes this process-theological confession for the dissolution of revealed theology into general metaphysics in saying:

God is active in all events, however difficult it may be in practice to identify his particular influence on and purpose in them. From this it follows that the distinction between natural and revealed theology is alien to a Whiteheadian understanding, whether the natural theology is empirical derived (cf. Paley and Tennet) ore more metaphysically oriented (cf. Aquinas' five "ways," especially the first four). A "process theology" that is true to Whiteheadian (and Harshornean) insight does not provide a case for affirming certain limited affirmations about the reality of God which are then to be augmented by a distinct kind of "revealed theology." Rather it derives its theological understanding from the character and processes of reality in all its aspects.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to understand the *genuine* sources from which theology legitimizes its irreplaceable intuition, and in order to preserve the *revelation*-theological relevance of process-theological theory, we may contrast the main position of process theology by identifying the counter question: Can there be found any genuine place for a revealed theology within Whitehead's work so that theology does not have to be *subordinated* to general metaphysics but, rather, finds its connection to metaphysics in *mutual* influence?<sup>4</sup> Affirming this question, the thesis will be presented that, *first*, Whitehead knows of, or at least implicitly enables us to understand, a *genuine* claim of revelation which cannot be justified *metaphysically* (without being metaphysically irrelevant); and that, *sec-*

only, metaphysics becomes relativistic in the view of a genuine revealed theology. The somehow negative-theological solution desired in this twofold thesis reads as follows: God's revelation cannot be grasped either *non-historically* by metaphysical categories alone or *non-eschatologically* by historical events already passed.

I will present my thesis in two parts. First, I will reflect on the non-metaphysical nature of revelation, its uniqueness, and some hypotheses affirming the project of a genuine revealed theology in the context of process theology. Secondly, I will try to support the possibility of a process-theological notion of genuine revelation by pleading for a more fluid interpretation of the relation of metaphysics and theology.

### ***Part I: "Universality of the Singular": Three Reflections on the Non-Metaphysical Origin of Revelation***

#### ***1. Religious Intuition: "Special Occasions"***

In Whitehead's "theory of religion," the development of religion leads (at least in its last level that we know of) to a *rationalization* of religious experience (RM 20–36).<sup>5</sup> Although, at first, religious concerns were preoccupied with rituals, partial myths, and emotional stabilization, later religious consciousness evolved increasingly towards the recognition of universal connectivity, leaving behind provincial rituals and social bindings (RM 28). For Whitehead, this process of the "rationalization" of religion occurs within reciprocal movements towards *solitariness* and *solidarity*. Together, these opposite features reveal the meaning of "religious intuition," namely, to be the *universal mediation of uniquely experienced events*.

In Whitehead's words: The contrast of *singularity* and *universality*, *solitariness* and *solidarity*, illuminates "the origin of rational religion" (RM 58). "Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness" (RM 16) and "religion is world-loyalty" (RM 59). In this contrast, the religious experience of uniqueness is both the experience of "solitariness" and that of the "loyalty" to the world (RM 86). It is this two-faced structure that expresses Whitehead's theory of "religious intuition":

Rational religion appeals to the direct intuition of special occasions, and to the elucidatory power of its concepts for all occasions. It arises from that which is special, but it extends to what is general. The doctrines of rational religion aim at being that metaphysics which can be derived from the super-normal experience of mankind in its moments of finest insight. (RM 31)

"Religious intuition," as analyzed, has two aspects, or directions of motion: (1) *Singularity*: religious intuition is a "direct intuition" which cannot be resolved by general terms (rationality, metaphysics), but may only be *experienced*. Hence, religious intuition cannot be conceptualized completely, but is bound to the *uniqueness* of the experienced over against all conceptual generality (cf. RM 65).<sup>6</sup> And in this *unpronounceable* uniqueness, religious intuition

constitutes “the ultimate religious evidence, beyond which there is no appeal” (RM 65); (2) *Rationality*: although “intuitions” occur as events under *unique* conditions, they must, due to their accessibility for others, be subject to a process of communicability by theoretical transformation, i.e., the process of their “*rationalization*” (cf. RM 63).<sup>7</sup> “Intuitions,” as it were, introduce the uniquely “new” into the world. However, at the same time, they must be generalized to be accessible *for* others experience.<sup>8</sup> Or, as Whitehead says, the relevance of its concepts can only be distinctly discerned in moments of insight, and then, for many of us, only after suggestion from without.

It is important to realize that, in Whitehead’s thought, “religious intuition” has *irreplaceable* meaning for any general “theory of the world.” On the one hand, it allows for a unique base of experience, or “one select field of interest” (RM 86).<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, it maintains that concepts of religion, “though derived primarily from special experiences, are yet of universal validity” (RM 31). For a general theory of the world, the *irreplaceable* contribution of *religious* experience consists in the fact that it proceeds from the “super-normal experience of mankind in its moment of finest insight” (RM 31).

## 2. Revelation, Part I: “Feelings Feel Particular Existents”

As Johann Baptist Metz and John Cobb have seen in correspondence, it is the *memoria* of the Christ-event that plays a crucial role in the theological notion of revelation.<sup>10</sup> In this view, a certain historical tradition of narration and reflection recalls the experience of a unique revealing event by memory. Nevertheless, *universality* comes to this historical revelation only if it *remains* itself “in experience” for different generations (although modified and under different conditions). This is the function of *memoria* or *anamnesis*. Hence, theological reflection on the revelation of God is founded historically, by *the universal relevance of unique events*. Or in turn: *only singular events have universal meaning*.<sup>11</sup>

In order to interpret this core-principle of revelation, we must understand its essential presupposition; namely, that events are *present* “in” other events-present not just abstractly (through “eternal objects”), i.e., mediated by the “general,” but *as* singular events that effect their further history by their *unique* concreteness (PR 338).<sup>12</sup> Whitehead recognizes precisely this constellation when he says: “[T]he truism that we can only conceive in terms of universals has been stretched to mean that we can only feel in terms of universals. This is untrue. Our perceptual feelings feel particular existents. . .” (PR 230).

A first step to obtaining an understanding of the presence of unique revelational events in others can be made by applying Whitehead’s theory of hybrid prehension. In short, and already centered on the our problem, we can say: in a “completely living nexus,” mental prehensions, whereby novelty enters into events, have a *particular form*: They can be passed from occasion to occasion in a *certain completeness* (PR 161) because, in each case, the occasions following their predecessors are not objectified regarding their physicality, but regarding their mentality (PR 245–247). Whitehead speaks both of a *direct*,

*non*-mediated immanence of occasions (cf. PR 226) and of direct, *non*-physically *mediated* contact of mental prehensions of occasions lying far apart physically (PR 307–308).<sup>13</sup> The universality of unique revealing events, thus, lives by “an element of immediacy in the relations of the mental side” (AI 248) of occasions that constitute a historical route. We may even think of a kind of “transmutational” character of this mentally connected thread of occasions (according to Cat. Oblg. VI: PR 27) in which we recognize the historical route of revelational occasions as *one* “revelational event.”<sup>14</sup>

Now, we can further investigate the *character* of this “immanence” of the singularities by introducing Gilles Deleuze’s theory of the “universality of the singular.” In his main work, *Difference and Repetition* (1968), he has shown why the conception of *concrete immediacy* in and between occasions must not be considered *naïve* in a post-Hegelian sense, but *post-Hegelian* altogether.<sup>15</sup> In order to achieve this aim, Deleuze replaces the categorization of the world into *the general* and *the individual* in favor of the distinction of *the universal* and *the singular*.<sup>16</sup> On the level of abstraction, “mediation” describes the analysis of that which is subjected to a “law.” The “singular,” on the other hand, is *not* mediated by “laws,” but is *directly* effective in *universality*.<sup>17</sup> Under the paradigm of the “general,” there is no “uniqueness.” The “general,” i.e., a “law,” permits only “something similar” or “the same,” yet the character of the similar is that it is *exchangeable* under a general law. Contrary to the “general,” it is the essence of the “unique” *not* to be “exchangeable.” Paradoxically, the “singular” can only be *repeated*. Therein, however, it is *universally* effective:

The exchange . . . of particulars defines our conduct in relation to generality . . . . By contrast, we can see that repetition is a necessary . . . conduct only in relation to that which cannot be replaced. Repetition as a conduct . . . concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities. . . . Generality, as generality of the particular, thus stands opposed to repetition as universality of the singular.<sup>18</sup>

Deleuze’s idea of the “repetition” *as* “universality of the singular” may interpret Whitehead’s idea of “repetition,” i.e., the apparent paradox that only the *unrepeatable* become present in other occasions by a “conformal transference of subjective form.”<sup>19</sup> Like Deleuze, Whitehead’s “repetition” does not mean the “repetition of the being,” i.e., that what *was*, and it does not indicate any *new* realization of what is “similar.” Such process would create merely an exchangeable similarity under the paradigm of the general. Instead, “repetition” states and confirms the *unrepeatable*. Again, Deleuze:

[Repetitions] do not add a second and a third time to the first, but carry the first time to the “nth” power. With respect to this power, repetition interiorizes and thereby reverses itself: as Péguy says, it is not federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille, which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation days.<sup>20</sup>

What can we gain by this notion of “universality?” Since “universality” does no longer justify itself by “exemplary instantiations” of laws and rules, but proceeds as the *universal effectiveness of the unique*, this structure enables us to understand how *singular events* can become reasons of *universal revealing*.

### 3. Revelation, Part II: “Transcendence is Self-Revelation”

I have tried to prepare the ground for a process-theological speech of “revelation.” *First*, a unique revealing event cannot be conceptually exhausted or completely resolved into any system; it cannot be completely contained by any generality or in its specific singularity removed by any general experience. In its *singularity*, the revealing event is *transcendent*, i.e., irreplaceable with “generality.”<sup>22</sup> And *secondly*, the revealing event, nevertheless, is universal. It repeats itself in its singularity in other events that memorize and re-activate it. In its *universality*, the revealing event is *immanent*, i.e., immediately effective in other events.<sup>23</sup>

“Universalization” of singular revealing events names the “repetition of the unrepeatable.” And this process must be recognized as a “transference” of the internal essence of one occasion to others by which the transferred event sacrifices its internity, uniqueness, and immediacy. The self-transcendence of any event, which makes it immanent for others, does not, however, only signify a process of “objectification,” loss, and what Whitehead called “objective immortality,” but it highlights the “repetition” of the singular *as* singular. Finally, *this* is the process of what Whitehead calls “self-revelation.”

Each actual entity is a cell with atomic unity. But in analyses it can only be understood as a process; it can only be felt as a process, that is to say, as in passage. The actual entity is divisible, but is in fact undivided. The divisibility can thus only refer to its objectification in which it transcends itself. But such transcendence is self-revelation. (PR 227)

In its self-transcendence, each and every occasion is the *self-revelation of its singularity* for and in other events. At least three elementary consequences may follow for an theological understanding of “revelation” (which is process-theologically legitimized):

(a) *God’s nature is God’s self-revelation*: God reveals God’s nature *as* relational, *as* all-relating, *as* essentially “pro-existent.”<sup>24</sup> More precisely: God’s *nature* is God’s *self-transcendence* which is God’s *self-revelation*. Such divine self-revelation covers the infinite abundance of God’s graceful affection for the world, but also God’s self-sacrificing and kenotic emptying.<sup>25</sup>

(b) “Repetition” is the *universal effectiveness of the singular revealing events within their concrete history*. Objections notwithstanding, in terms of its universality, God’s self-revelation is related to a concrete history of unique events. Revealing events, as it were, constitute a history of the *anamnesis* of their singularity.<sup>26</sup> Their uniqueness cannot be extracted theoretically from the history of reveal-

ing events. Instead, it is the coming history in which the revealing event “repeats” itself. It has its own power to “re-enact” itself.<sup>27</sup>

(c) *It is the function of theology to universalize its “own contribution of the immediate experience”* (RM 77). Consequently, the immediacy of the singular revealing event, which becomes universally “repeated” within the feelings of other events, preserves an irreplaceable element that cannot be reduced to metaphysical conceptuality—namely religious intuition’s “super-normal experience of mankind in its moments of finest insight” (RM 31).<sup>28</sup>

## ***Part II: “No Triumphs of Finality”: Three Reflections on Metaphysics and Revelational Theology***

### ***4. Revelation within Metaphysics: “Extension to What is General”***

It is questionable whether Whitehead would have ever introduced “God” to his metaphysics if he had not been convinced of the *religious*, i.e., *non-metaphysical*, meaning of the notion of God.<sup>29</sup> Whitehead consciously developed his cosmology in the context of an “immediate comparison with the deliverances of religious experience” (RM 87). He knew that “whatever suggests a cosmology, suggests a religion” (RM 136). Indeed, as some interpreters have noticed, Whitehead’s cosmological vocabulary is “itself of an elementary theological meaning.”<sup>30</sup> But no earlier than in Whitehead’s *Adventures of Ideas* does the philosophical relevance of revelation-theological content assume reflexive shape.<sup>31</sup>

Especially in his sketch of the general development of European metaphysics within “three steps” (cf. AI 166–167), Whitehead realizes two transitions: first, from the primordial “intellectual discovery” of Plato to the “exemplification” of its contents in Jesus’ life; then, secondly, from the Christ-event to its “metaphysical interpretation” within the generalizations of the Alexandrian theology (AI 166). In Jesus’ life of “non-violence,” Whitehead finds *in actu* what Plato constructed *in mente*: the true “Icon” of the divine nature as the Eros of self-transcendence and as self-revealed power of persuasion (AI 167, cf. RM 19).<sup>32</sup> The Alexandrian theology again rationalized the unique power of the Christ-event, thereby generalizing what has been the novelty of the revealing event over against Plato’s metaphysical suggestions; namely, the modes of “mutual immanence” of singular actualities.

Although one can expect, to a certain extent, such an influence by revealed theology on the developments of metaphysics, especially in the context of Whitehead’s theory of “religious intuition,” Whitehead appreciates the Alexandrian theology not for its specific content and “highly special form” (AI 167), but to the extent that it suggests “the solution of a fundamental metaphysical problem” (AI 167). Hence, Whitehead notes: “I am not making any judgment about the details of their theology, for example, about the Trinitarian doctrine” (AI 169).

When Whitehead protests, however, that Alexandrian theology has “made no effort to conceive God in terms of the metaphysical categories which they applied to the World” (AI 169), his claim does not conform to the implications of his own theory of “religious intuitions.” The Alexandrines developed their Trinitarian theology, universalizing the Christ-event, so that the metaphysical categories arose *in the light* of the uniqueness of a revealing event. Whereas the general analysis of the structure of experience is philosophy’s concern, theology, instead, interprets the general structures of experience *through* the uniqueness of the historical Christ-event. This “universalization” is the genuine contribution of revelational theology to metaphysics’ “generalization.”

### ***5. Metaphysics within Revelational Theology: “The Way in which the Human Spirit Cultivates its Deeper Intuitions”***

Laurence Wilmot has proposed the reasonable thesis that Whitehead’s metaphysical vision and the advancement of his metaphysical categories permit a correction *in the light* of the salvational reality of Christianity:

. . . Whitehead published *Adventures of Ideas*, in which he reports the data upon the basis of which he was able to revise his assessment of the relative values of the Platonic and the Christian conceptions of God and the World and in the light of which his metaphysical scheme may be revised and its inadequacies removed.<sup>33</sup>

Since generality permits only exchangeable relations, metaphysical systems of principles and categories represent a *general* order that cannot grasp the *singularity* of the events theology draws upon. As Deleuze writes, the “universality of the singular” is “by nature . . . always revealing a singularity opposed to the particulars subsumed under laws, a universal opposed to the generalities which gave rise to law.”<sup>34</sup>

In the light of such a *critical* function of theology in relation to the generalizations of metaphysics, metaphysical “principles,” “laws,” and “categories” do not appear as (transcendental) conditions of *any possible* experience, but as that of *real* experience.<sup>35</sup> In a certain sense, Whitehead found a way to initialize a theological project without developing it; and he grounded it in the *imperfection* of all metaphysical systems in relation to actual events that have the power to reconstruct categories in the passage of the events. And, as Deleuze adds, the *actual imperfection* of the “list of empirico-ideal notions that we find in Whitehead . . . makes *Process and Reality* one of the greatest books of modern philosophy.”<sup>36</sup>

From the theological reconstruction of metaphysics, we have gained a new principle concerning the relativity of metaphysical requirements. This principle reads: No a-historical matrix can ever deliver a “form” for *all possible* actualizations of *all possible future events*—hence, for singular events of revelation, too.<sup>37</sup> Since no “form” exists beyond its future actualizations, there is no

“rule” or “law” that can determine future activity in such a way that the “rule” could not be changed by the future process of becoming.<sup>38</sup>

A crucial, but rarely examined paragraph in Whitehead’s *Adventure of Ideas*, formulates the correction of metaphysics and allows its integration within revelational theology:

[P]hilosophic systems . . . are the way in which the human spirit cultivates its deeper intuitions . . . . Even the discordance of comprehensive philosophical systems is a factor essential for progress. . . . It is a step by step process, achieving no triumphs of finality. We cannot produce that final adjustment of well-defined generalities which constitute a complete metaphysics. But we can produce a variety of partial systems of limited generality. . . . Also the discordance of system with system, and success of each system as a partial mode of illumination, warns us of the limitations within which our intuitions are hedged. These undiscovered limitations are the topics for philosophical research. (AI 144–145)

This passage emphasizes the following main points: (1) no philosophical system can construct a perfect “system of eternal truths” for all possible worlds, taken off from the run of the things; (2) the relation of “system,” “intuition,” and “reality” is an *historical* process that does not contain a promise of finality, i.e., of achieving final clarity and security of how things really are; (3) despite Whitehead’s consideration elsewhere, one cannot attain any coherent metaphysics of *all possible worlds*. Even regarding a reasonable “cosmology” as a theory of *this current world*, security is impossible; (4) in actual processes, “rules” have the status of structural facts of already realized actualities rather than that of any transcendental apriority. They do not indicate how a process “functions,” or *must* function, due to some underlying “law,” but how it “will have functioned” when it has already happened.<sup>39</sup>

This relativity of metaphysical systems enables us to keep our thought open for a *non-metaphysical dimension of rationality*. Since the events of self-revelation are *pre-regular*, they are a gift of novelty and of grace, rather than a mere exemplification of faceless rules. The conception of the self-revelation of God as radical novelty over against any world highlights God’s radical *eschatological* breaking-through of all automatic self-containing loops of rules.<sup>40</sup>

### **6. Christian Theology: The “Empirical Basis” of Soteriology**

In summary of the argument so far, we may say that theology reflects the radical novelty and universality of singular events, which no concept can seize, but only the *events of anamnesis* can demonstrate.<sup>41</sup> In his “general principle of empiricism,” Whitehead appropriately realizes this “anamnetic structure” of theology, when he writes: “[T]he general principle of empiricism depends upon the doctrine that there is a principle of concretion which is not discoverable by abstract reason. What further can be known about God must be rest on an empirical basis (SMW 178).

That is to say at least the following: God does *not* enter into metaphysics as a system seeking to interpret the most general structures of experience in the world (PR 3). Prior to the general structures explored by “abstract reason,” *concrete actuality* happens, i.e., a concrete *history* of the self-revelation of God that is not replaceable by any philosophical rationality (MT 89; cf. RM 79).<sup>42</sup>

Since metaphysics investigates general structures *beyond* any specific basis of any special experience, it is understandable that it abandons the religious base of general structures of experience. The philosophical “God” is understood, if not independently of religious intuition, then definitely beyond its singular appearance (RM 88).<sup>43</sup> Over against the philosophical approach, Christianity developed the double strategy which we have analyzed as “religious intuition” contributing finally to the formation of revelational theology:<sup>44</sup> (1) Christianity proceeded not *from* any metaphysics, but it “has always been a religion seeking a metaphysics” (RM 50).<sup>45</sup> Christianity strove for theological *rationalization*,<sup>46</sup> (2) Christianity, however, did not follow any *certain* metaphysics (PR 66–68), but “has been true to its genius for keeping its metaphysics subordinate to the religious fact to which it appeals” (RM 69). Christianity understands itself in its linkage to the unique Christ-event and its *anamnesis* (cf. RM 55).<sup>47</sup> Only in the process of a permanent critical revision of theological terms, the events, upon which theology reflects, can be “re-presented” (come into presence again) and—in *anamnesis*—may be “re-activated.”

The notion of “*Christian* theology,” then, means that a singular revealing event, i.e., the Christ-event, dwells as the focal point of Christian religious intuition. This theology, however, does not deal with its revealing event in order to transform it into a sample of a general patterns of how things are, but theology tries to understand its very singularity. It is the concern of Christian theology, then, to relativize all general terms, categories, and principles, thereby initializing the universalization of this singular event. This “empirical basis” of theology produces an irremovable contrast to the “general set of rules” that a metaphysics of general structures of experience is designing.<sup>48</sup> In light of the “general principle of empiricism,” and in order to remain loyal to the universality of its singular revealing events, Christian theology performs a three-way movement of a *historical*, an *eschatological*, and a *soteriological* type:

(a) *Historical movement*: Any general matrix of experience and, hence, the *character* of the general as such, have an *historical* structure.<sup>49</sup> Certain *historical* events, however, will be re-presented *directly* in the memory of the revelational events.<sup>50</sup>

(b) *Eschatological movement*: God’s transcendence radically breaks with all “repetition.”<sup>51</sup> Since a world, in which God reveals Godself as an eschatological event, is of almost *apocalyptic* nature, no one can claim to know any given rule or any world-law that God has to follow. Instead, God is the eschatological limit of any world-immanent *logos*.<sup>52</sup>

(3) *Soteriological movement*: God, who for Whitehead is the beginning of each event (PR 244) and the original power of novelty (PR 67), is also the *release from the repetition of the past*, i.e., the repetition of evil, guilt, and death.<sup>53</sup> On this basis, theology can follow its soteriological function; namely, “to show how the World is founded on something beyond mere transient fact, and how it issues into something beyond the perishing of occasions” (AI 172). Finally we may say: Seen under the scope of the possibility of process theology, we *can*, indeed, construct a revelational theology which is not the performance of a metaphysical investigation. Rather, such theology generates a “rational” and “anamnetical” interpretation of the universal meaning of unique revealing events in historical, eschatological, and soteriological dimensions.

## Notes

1. Cf. Gilkey (1973) *passim*.
2. This was the criticism brilliantly addressed by Gilkey. On part of process theology, rarely anyone really answered—with exception perhaps B. Loomer, who understood himself as a theologian, to whom metaphysics interprets, but not constitutes “revelation.”
3. Pailin, in Holz/Wolf-Gazo (1984) 285. Further: “A “process theology” that is true to Whiteheadian (and Hartshornean) insights does not provide a case for affirming certain limited affirmations about the reality of God which are then to be augmented by a distinct kind of “revelational theology.” Rather it derives its theological understanding from the character and processes of reality in all its aspects and taken as an inter-locking whole throughout which God is creatively active even though [sic] it may consider that God’s activity is more apparent in some series of events than in others.”
4. In RM 76, Whitehead himself notes this “mutual dependence” of metaphysics and religion.
5. Cf. Lowe (1966) 79–116 and Wilmot (1979) 19–29. Cf. for Whitehead’s theory of the four steps of the development of religion Welker (1985) 287–291.
6. In RM 65, Whitehead compares this experience of the unpronounceable that is, nevertheless, known with the knowledge of the mother, who “can ponder many things in their hearts which their lips cannot express.”
7. Cf. RM 63: “But reason is the safeguard of the objectivity of religion: it secures for it the general coherence denied to hysteria.”
8. This applies in particular to the religious experience, in which “novelty” cannot be expressed by any “formula.” Nevertheless, religious experience becomes (and remains) accessible by its rational generalization (RM 129 ff). Cf. a quite similar description of “intuition” in Lachmann (1994) 84–88.
9. Cf. the formulas of RM 31: “a small selection from the common experience,” or “one among other specialized interests of mankind whose truths are of limited validity.”
10. Cobb (1982) 51–53 takes account of this central moment of Metz’s theology, namely, the *memoria*, while generalizing it at the same time.
11. In Christian theology, Jesus Christ is understood as revealing-event, as *universale concretum*.

12. Generally, process thought holds that that occasions can be present in other occasions only by simultaneous abstraction of their uniqueness. So did Whitehead's. In his early work, he had gone out of analysis of "events" as unique and of "objects" as that which, can ingredate as the repeatable within several events (CN 169).

13. Cf. Griffin (1992) 88–95. PR 226 stresses that, although between event A and D still are events B and C, D does not only mediate by B and C, but appears to be directly connected as a *physical* cause of A. PR 308 speaks of "hybrid physical prehensions." In those mental prehensions are subject to "immediate objectification" in contrast to the "mediate objectification" of physical prehensions. Thus, "universal, but concrete effectiveness" can take place by means of "hybrid prehensions" of passed events regarding their identity-forming novelty ("mentality") in an immediacy of actualization, which cannot sufficiently be attained by any physical causality. Cf. in addition Hamilton (1967) 82–86.

14. Cf. Whitehead's definition of "event" in PR 73, in which he forged "the difference between actual occasions comprised in some determined event." For the objective character of the transmutation in the defining characteristic of the nexus of occasions itself cf. (AI 213.)

15. This is the reproach against Whitehead's thesis of "immediacy" which, in PR 25, CatExpl XXIII, constitutes the "subjectivity" of events, i.e., their privateness that cannot be objectified. Hegel's notion of "concept," which is a process of dialectic mediation, leaves us with the impression of abstractness; cf. Kline (1990) 150–151. As Deleuze (1994) 8 writes, the "objection to Hegel is that he does not go beyond false movement—in other words, the abstract logical movement of 'mediation.'"

16. Deleuze (1994) 70–128.

17. Deleuze (1994) 10: "This is what we are told: this movement, the essence, and the interiority of movement, is *not opposition, not mediation*, but repetition. Hegel is the one who is denounced as the one who proposes an abstract movement of concepts instead of the Physis and the Psyche. Hegel substitutes the abstract relation of the particular to the concept in general for the true relation of the singular and the universal in the Idea. . . . We must see how Hegel betrays and distorts the immediate in order to ground his dialectic in that incomprehension, and to introduce mediation in a movement which is no more than that of his own thought and its generalities."

18. Deleuze (1994) 1.

19. Nobo (1986) 18–19, 61–106, builds his understanding of "causality" on this notion. Cf. Deleuze (1994) 1–2. For elucidation of the difference of the repetition of the singular to the forming of laws, Deleuze points to Kant's paradigm of the "Categorical Imperative," which states a individual standard as general law of the same or similar actions, and opposes it to Nietzsche's anti-legalistic postulate of the "eternal return": It is the repetition of the singular which cannot be understood by any law. In Deleuze's interpretation, Nietzsche's "will to power" represents precisely the will of the singular in its universal potensation; cf. Deleuze's (1994) 5–11.

20. Deleuze (1994) 1. Theologically, this is of crucial importance for the presence of an unique event through its history, for instance for the memory of death of Christi in the Eucharist.

21. In its "subjective form," an event transfers not only that what can be abstracted from it, but also its *singularity*.

22. Here, we apply the “ontological principle” which, in this context, means that history must not only be interpreted either by reason or by communication, but in the light of the “diachron transcendence” of passed and future events.

23. Note that a new event does not decide to “repeat” the revealing event, rather the revealing event repeats itself in certain way with its own power. The new event is always already a reaction to this revelation.

24. Both the “primordially nature” and “consequent nature” are defined as “objectively immortal” (PR 32), i.e., they are *relatively related* to the world; cf. the “relativity principle.” Here, we do not want to hold that God must reveal itself *ad extra*, but that the internal reference of God to everything that is not God is of a *relational* type, i.e., essential for world events and their nexic connections beyond the difference of God’s “nature” and “will.”

25. It is not presupposed, however, that God’s nature already is kenotic “from eternity.” That opinion would be based on a gnostic misinterpretation for which the highest form of the love is the painful renouncing and suffering love; cf. against this misinterpretation: Faber (1995) 405–420. Here, rather, I understand God’s nature as always already receptive and pathic; cf. Ford (1977) 382 *et alia*. In this sense, God’s nature is always already empty. Cf. the Buddhist interpretation of the Whitehead’s notion of God in Inada (1975) *passim*, and Odin (1981) 65 ff. Cf. further Whitehead’s note that the essence of a thing is to be *prehensive*, receptive, and relational (PR 41).

26. It is justified to discern a “final revelation” from a “complete revelation,” as Cobb already knew in his dissertation (1952) 155. The uniqueness of the Christ event justifies its universality *and* an open-endedness at the same time.

27. One can say that Whitehead knows of the distinction between a general and a special history of revelation. Whereas the general history of revelation relates to the “subjective aims” of all events (and God’s presence in it), the special history of revelation is connected with the universality of certain events. Cf. Hosinski (1993) 231.

28. Then, the “singular” would lose its “universality” thereby gaining “generality.” But “generality” would make it “exchangeable.”

29. Hosinski (1993) 178 n2: “Clearly, Whitehead would not have introduced the concept of God into his philosophy if he judged that there was no presence of God which supported his concept.”

30. The original text is written in German: “. . . selbst eine elementare theologische Bedeutung,” Koch (1983) 146. By any means, however, Whitehead’s stream of thought is not “dictating to him a specific view of God,” as Johnson (1958) 82, has seen. One can differentiate between a metaphysical and a religious function of Whitehead’s notion of “God.” Cf. Cobb (1952) 150f, who discerns the “secular function.” God concerning “eternal objects” from God’s “religious function.” Cf. also Lederer (1974) 35 ff, who speaks of a “God of the religion” within Whitehead, apart from a metaphysical notion of “God.” The soteriological dimension is, however, cannot be exhausted by metaphysics. With poetic weight, Whitehead formulates that events—by themselves and without God—are a “flash of occasional enjoyments lightening up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience” (SMW 192); cf. Lowe (1990) 188. The world “process” contains motions of adventure and tragic: “The Adventure of the Universe starts with the dream and reaps tragic Beauty” (AI 296). Hence, world-process and men are “haunted by a vague insistence of another order, where there is no unrest, no travel, no shipwreck: “There shall be no more sea.” (PR 340).

31. It was the “Galilean vision” that Jesus had of a God of love that influenced Whitehead’s cosmology in its basic constellations (PR 343). In defending such a genuine Christian vision of God working in the world by “persuasion,” weakness, and love, he was disappointed by the penetration of the later Christian theology of anthropomorphic ideas of “God” (ruler, moralist, first mover). Cf. Price (1954) 174 “. . . I consider Christian theology to be one of the great disasters of the human race. . . .” Later, Whitehead explains the division of the God understanding into the vision of Jesus of a loving God and God as a ruler, on the other hand, from which Whitehead felt deeply repelled (pp. 175f). Later theology for Whitehead, hence, distorted Jesus’ vision of “gentleness and mercy” by an “old ferocious God. . . , the Oriental depot, the Pharaoh, the Hitler; with everything to enforce obedience, from infant damnation and eternal punishment,” Price (1954) 176.

32. Cf. AI 167: “. . . the life of Christ as a revelation of the nature of God and of his agency in the world“. Cf. further: “The Mother, the Child, and the bare manger: the lowly man, homeless and self-forgetful, with his message of peace, love, and sympathy: the suffering, the agony, the tender words as life ebbed, the final despair: and the whole with the authority of supreme victory.”

33. Cf. Wilmot (1979) 72

34. Deleuze (1994) 5.

35. Bradley (1994) 155 ff undertook an attempt of such an interpretation. Baugh (1996) 34 defines this connection of the conviction to have an access to the possess of *real* experience (and not the bare projection of it) and, at the same time, the specification of the conditions of the possibilities of this experience as “transcendental empiricism.” Deleuze does not look for *necessary* conditions as Kant did, however, he finds *transcendental* conditions of actual experience.

36. Deleuze (1994) 284–285.

37. Cf. Rorty (1995) 3, who underlines that “the fundamental insight of a post-Hegelian philosophy” is “the abandonment of a claim to a transhistorical frame of orientation beyond linguistic differentiation.”

38. Jean-François Lyotard (1994) 202–203 stands for a significant similarity to our reinterpretation of Whitehead’s “ontological principle,” when he notes: “*Ein postmoderner Künstler oder Schriftsteller ist in derselben Situation wie ein Philosoph: Der Text, den er schreibt, das Werk, das er schafft, sind grundsätzlich nicht durch bereits feststehende Regeln geleitet und können nicht nach Maßgabe eines bestimmenden Urteils beurteilt werden, indem auf einen Text oder ein Werk nur bekannte Kategorien angewandt werden. Diese Regeln und Kategorien sind vielmehr das, was der Text oder das Werk suchen. Künstler und Schriftsteller arbeiten also ohne Regeln; sie arbeiten, um die Regeln dessen zu erstellen, was gemacht worden sein wird. Dabei rührt, daß Werk und Text den Charakter eines Ereignisses haben. Dabei rührt auch, daß sie für ihren Autor immer zu spät kommen oder, was auf dasselbe hinausläuft, daß die Arbeit an ihnen immer zu früh beginnt. Postmodern wäre also das Paradoxon der Vorzukunft (post-modo) zu denken.*”

39. In this sense, the “ontological principle” may be interpreted not only as principle of *history*, but as principle of *eschatology*: The past is justified in the present, which creatively follows no rule. The present, therefore, grounds in the future, which will create its own rule for its appearance. “Continuity” implements itself in the self-revealing of God as the promise of reconciliation-*beyond* of the repetition of the past. In an reversal of the time-index

of the “ontological principle,” we do not know what rules the future will set up for becoming.

40. While in metaphysics discontinuity is neutralized by a *general* pattern of the things, theology detects the *surprising salvation* of the old in the new. The Biblical passage, found in Rom 3:21–25, exemplifies beautifully this structure. Discontinuity—the act of salvation in Christi—creates “continuity” because it justifies the old as saved.

41. Here, the importance of the structure of *anamnesis* can function for a process theological interpretation of the presence of Christ in the Christian liturgy.

42. In RM 79, Whitehead underlines the indispensability of the uniqueness of religious experience for the “generalizations” of metaphysics in saying, that the “rational religion must have recourse to metaphysics. . . . At the same time it contributes its own independent evidence, which metaphysics must take account of in framing its description.”

43. Thus it comes that Whitehead can speak of a “secularization” the notion of “God” in making it independent of any special religious intuition: “[T]he concept of religious feeling is not an essential element in the concept of God’s function in the universe” (PR 207). Whitehead does not want to negate religious experience, but, in defining a *philosophic* meaning of “God” within a general “theory of the world,” he excludes it. As Hosinski (1993) 23, proposed, Whitehead interprets “religious intuition” and “God-experience” in reciprocal connection. God is not only subject to religious experience, but also of “secular experiences.” There exists a difference between both, but not in the difference of the object (the religion, the cosmology), rather in the “subjective form” of the experience, i.e., the way in which the “object” is assumed. In “secular experience,” God appears to be one of those general “factors which are either non-actual or non-temporal, disclosed in the analysis of what is both actual and temporal” (RM 87). For the analysis of the items “non actual,” “non temporal,” “actual,” and “temporal,” which represent the Aristotelian side Whitehead’s notion of “God” cf. Dalferth (1986) 163–175.

44. Every religion stands within the uniqueness of religious intuition (whereby intuitions also can contradict or have a only volatile character, without losing thereby the character of intuitions: cf. FR 38, PR 13, MT 50) and general theory about “the nature of things” (RM 49). Not every religion, however, creates a “theology.” For Whitehead, the specific feature of the Christianity exists in its unique relation it maintains to its unique revelational event—the Christ event (RM 55).

45. Cf. RM 50: “Buddhism is the most colossal example in history of applied metaphysics.”

46. *Rationalization*: Theology is the movement of *uniqueness*, which it justifies, into *generalization*. This “uniqueness” does not just mean a unique “*intuitive experience*” of God, but the “*historical event*” by which the intuition appears within the world. Thus, rationalization does not begin with purely subjective experience of immediacy, as for religion in general may apply (RM 16), but with one “*inspired moment of history*,” i.e., “the life of Christ” (RM 55). Cf. RM 16: “Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man.” Although uniqueness is irreplaceable, the “*completely novel intuition*” (RM 130) must be generalized to become understandable. As Wilmot (1979) 22 underlines, Whitehead is convinced of an “*objective truth*” of the experiences of faith—similar to the *Prosligion* of Anselm and, earlier, Augustin.

47. *Anamnesis*: Cf. Lachmann (1994) 85. Cf. auch Reikerstorfer (1992) 108, who speaks of “*anamnetic reason*” which does not fade out the “*aporetic of unreconcilable existence*.” In

the memory of the singular revealing event and in contrast to the movement of “rationalization,” it happens an “actualization” of the *uniqueness* of the original event. In the context of rationalization, the *critical* function of the *anamnesis* of the uniqueness of the original revealing event results from the *correction* of each theoretical “distortions” of concrete experience. The *memoria* of the event establishing revelation happens as actualization of the immediacy of this event. In order to present it as active, *anamnesis* actualizes its original freshness. This has a critical consequence for revealed theology: Theological terms that interprets the singular revelational events exist not just for generalization, but also for their *new actualization*. In order to gain this aim, the theological vocabulary must be robbed of its “substantiality.”

48. In theology, this is represented by the connection of *general* experience of not being reconciled, e.g., in “the moral evil . . . the pain and the suffering” (RM 49) and the *special* experience of salvation by Christ, carrying the evil in by his “*solitary . . . on the Cross*” (RM 19).

49. The connection of “immediacy” and “historicity” is essential for the reconciliation of the classical dissenses between the two doctrines of *De Deo uno* and *De Deo trino*, and, hence, of natural and revealed recognition; cf. Faber (1995) 38–77 & 176–192.

50. Whitehead, indeed, has seen the dialectic of “immediacy” and “history” regarding “religious intuition” in saying that the inspiration of religion lies in its *history*, i.e., the primary expressions of its *intuitions*; cf. RM n144.

51. Any theology, which argues with the help of the intermittent structure of unique events and their connection, seems to be preoccupied with infinite continuity. Process-theological models stand generally under the cosmological assumption of an infinite process of the production of always new events without end and aim—an assumption, to which Whitehead gave the name of the “remorseless working of things in Greek and Buddhist thought” (PR 244). Nevertheless, this presumption is not conclusive by any means.

52. The singularity of the self-revelation of God is not “regular,” but rather “pre-regular.” As Deleuze formulates: “If exchange is the criterion of generality, theft and gift are these of repetition,” Deleuze (1994) 1. Therefore, the self-revealing of God is the gift of novelty, of renewal, of grace, and of reconciliation. Cf. that “which cannot be and nevertheless ‘is’” in PR 350.

53. For Deleuze, there are only these two possibilities—“memory” or “repetition.” Deleuze (1994) 14–15: “When the consciousness of knowledge or the working thought of memory is missing, the knowledge in itself is only the repetition of the object: it is played, that is to say repeated, enacted instead of being known . . . : the less one remembers, the less one is conscious of remembering one’s past, the more one repeats it.” Cf. the similarity to the process-theological interpretation of the original sin in Suchocki (1995) 14–27, thereby following Whitehead’s theory of causality, as a repetition of the (evil) past, as the inheritance from occasion to occasion, from society to society, from person to person, as a curse of the continuity with the old.

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