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**A COMPARISON OF THE CONTENTIONS OF THE VALUE OF EXISTENCE IN
THE PROCESS AESTHETIC THEORY OF THE METAPHYSICS OF ALFRED
NORTH WHITEHEAD AND *THE PLAGUE* OF ALBERT CAMUS**

by

Sarah J. Roebuck

**A Dissertation
Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
through Religious Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at The University Of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1998



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Abstract

This thesis compares the contentions of the value of existence in the process aesthetic theory of the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead and *The Plague* of Albert Camus.

One of the central tenets of the process aesthetic theory is that each experience contains aesthetic value. There are various levels of value achievement, depending on the choices of *actual entities* (the most basic units of reality). Beauty is the ideal value, and is the attainment of the *aesthetic mean*. Likewise, for Albert Camus, existence is valuable unto itself, and simply to live is to concede that existence is valuable. To rebel against that which negates that overarching value, moreover, indicates that this value is worth preserving.

The thesis shows that one of the central tenets of the process aesthetic theory is that the extremes of existence lead to imbalances wherein suffering and evil arise. *The Plague* portrays these extremes, for instance, strict prophylactic measures produce monotony, whereas mass death and anxiety produces chaos. Both the extremes of monotony and chaos lead to suffering.

For this reason, each *actual entity* strives to avoid the extremes to attain the aesthetic mean, or beauty, the ideal value. Camus also contends that the ideal value is beauty, and is expressed in just acts.

Furthermore, both Whitehead and Camus contend that existence is valuable *even under extreme conditions*, and *despite the ubiquity of suffering*. For this reason, both Whitehead and Camus examine the spectrum of experience.

Finally, (conscious) *actual entities* have the obligation to achieve the most appropriate aesthetic value due to the relatedness of all actuality by means of mutual *prehensions* or feelings of other entities in the environment. This has implications for ethics, as other *actual entities* benefit or suffer from the choices of one *actual entity*. Similarly, the rebel is motivated to increase value for others.

In this way, both the process aesthetic theory and Camus' views are consistent, in that both seek to demonstrate the value of existence and insist that a balance is required for appropriate value achievement. This balance, for both Whitehead and Camus, is the attainment of beauty.

Dedication

**To My Brother Brooks
Who Has an Exceptional Sense of the Absurd**

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LIST OF FIGURES

DIAGRAM

Dessoir-Davis Circle

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|--|
| AC | <i>Albert Camus, Amoia</i> |
| ACP | <i>Albert Camus: La Peste, Haggis</i> |
| CCE | <i>Camus: A Critical Examination, Sprintzen</i> |
| ACLR | <i>Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt, Cruikshank</i> |
| AI | <i>Adventures of Ideas, Whitehead</i> |
| ASPE | “An Aesthetic Solution to the Problem of Evil,” Whitney |
| ATCP | <i>Approaches to Teaching Camus’ The Plague, Kellman</i> |
| AWA | <i>A Whiteheadian Aesthetic, Sherburne</i> |
| C | <i>Camus, Bree</i> |
| CAS | <i>Camus: A Study, Masters</i> |
| CEE | “The Process Perspective as Context for Educational Evaluation,” Sherburne |
| CGPT | “Camus, God and Process Thought,” Goss |
| CSPM | <i>Creative Synthesis & Philosophic Method, Hartshorne</i> |
| CSA | “A Critical Study of the Absurd,” Griggs |
| EPG | <i>Evil and the Process God, Whitney</i> |
| HE | “Helen’s Exile,” Camus |
| HET | <i>Human Existence and Theology, Sutton</i> |
| KPR | <i>A Key to Process and Reality, Whitehead, ed., Sherburne</i> |
| ME | <i>The Metaphysics of Experience, Kraus</i> |
| MS | <i>The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus</i> |
| MVT | <i>A Minimalist Vision of Transcendence, Jerome Stone</i> |
| P | <i>The Plague, Camus</i> |
| PPCT | <i>Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, ed., Delwin Brown et al.</i> |
| PR | <i>Process and Reality, Whitehead</i> |
| PT | <i>Process Theology: an Introductory Exposition, Cobb and Griffin</i> |
| R | <i>The Rebel, Camus</i> |
| RG | <i>Reality of God and Other Essays, Ogden</i> |

| | |
|------|---|
| RRD | <i>Resistance, Rebellion and Death, Camus</i> |
| SFCA | <i>Stubborn Fact and Creative Advance, Hosinski</i> |
| SMW | <i>Science and the Modern World, Whitehead</i> |
| TANW | <i>Theodicy of Alfred North Whitehead, Barineau</i> |
| UCAC | <i>The Unique Creation of Albert Camus, Lazere</i> |
| WATS | <i>What are They Saying About God and Evil? Whitney</i> |
| WOA | <i>“Whitehead’s Other Aesthetic,” Dean</i> |
| WM | <i>Whitehead’s Metaphysics, Leclerc</i> |
| WP | <i>Whitehead’s Philosophy, Hartshorne</i> |

Introduction: A Comparison of the Contentions of the Value of Existence in the Process Aesthetic Theory and Albert Camus' Novel *The Plague*

This thesis compares the process aesthetic theory¹ of Alfred North Whitehead's metaphysics with the contentions of value in Albert Camus' novel *The Plague*. The thesis shows that in their respective writings, Whitehead and Camus have given central attention to the value of existence, especially in the face of suffering and evil. The thesis argues that *both Whitehead and Camus find value in experience, despite the ubiquity of suffering.*

The importance of the thesis is evident insofar as no extensive discourses comparing Whitehead and Camus have been published.² There have been, however, applications of Whitehead's cosmology to literature.³ The thesis is also timely, as almost 40 years after Camus' death, his final book, *The First Man*, has been published and translated for the first time (1995). This has incited renewed interest in Camus' life and work. A new biography by Olivier Todd (Gallimard, 1996) and the prompt English translation of the text (1997) are examples.

Whitehead's Metaphysics

The thesis contends that the process aesthetic theory has significant implications for the understanding of the value of existence. The process aesthetic theory proposes that each *actual entity*⁴ has the opportunity to achieve an appropriate level of aesthetic value relevant to its particular experience. This process is also called *becoming* or *concrecence*, i.e., the process of each *actual entity* in its self-creation and the actualization of its "decisions."

The thesis notes that *creativity*⁵ is the fundamental character in all experience presupposed by all *actual entities*. Each *actual entity* exemplifies *creativity* as each attempts to *ingress* an *eternal object* or an indeterminate possibility⁶ which is the goal of its *concrecence*. By means of *ingression*, *actual entities* strive to attain a balance, called the aesthetic mean, between the extremes of intensity and triviality, or chaos and monotony. The aesthetic mean ideally promotes an experience which guarantees appropriate aesthetic value for each unique situation.⁷

The thesis notes that there is no guarantee, however, that the *actual entity* achieves the most appropriate value. As such, the loss of that potential value leads to suffering, i.e., experiences in which there is too much intensity, too much triviality, too much disorder, or too much order. Nevertheless, despite the likelihood of the emergence of aesthetic imbalances in experience, the process aesthetic theory contends that there is value in each experience.

The thesis also indicates that whatever value is actualized is not limited simply to the particular *actual entity*. The “decisions” made by one *actual entity* affect others in their environments. Each strives to achieve value for its own benefit and also for the benefit of the world [see SFCA 148]. Hartshorne writes: “Altruism and self-interest are perfectly coincidental” [EPG 154].

Camus

The thesis shows, likewise, that Camus’ novel *The Plague* demonstrates the value of existence [see HET 7]. Camus’ characters are often considered as bleak and somber.⁸ Yet the thesis argues that Camus insists upon the value of human existence in the midst and in spite of suffering, death and gratuitous evil.

Like Whitehead, Camus addresses the spectrum of experience, both positive and negative, novel and monotonous. For Camus, the value of existence is embodied in the struggle against injustices, suffering and evil by means of revolt, also called rebellion by Camus. Revolt, for Camus, maintains the value of existence and saves it from despair, inertia and meaninglessness [see HET 8]. This revolt is not simply for the self-interest of the rebel, but for the benefit of humankind, whose quality of existence ideally improves in value [see R 13-22] as a result of the rebel’s actions. The thesis interprets this as the highest aesthetic achievement for Camus.

Central Thesis and Methodology

The methodological approach of the thesis is an application of the process aesthetic theory to the philosophical implications of relevant examples from Camus’ novel *The Plague*. The thesis contends that the process aesthetic theory functions as a valid framework in which to approach and interpret this novel.

Whitehead's Metaphysics and the Process Aesthetic Theory

In the first chapter, the thesis discusses some of the fundamental concepts of Whiteheadian metaphysics relevant to the understanding of aesthetic value, beginning with the formative elements of *creativity*, *eternal objects* (or potentialities), and the roles and natures of the Whiteheadian conception of God. The formative elements are the prerequisites for actuality to arise out of potentiality, and for *actual entities* to achieve the aesthetic value that arises from their choices.

Next, the thesis examines Whitehead's notion of *actual entities*. *Actual entities* are the most "basic units" of reality [see SFCA 22]. They are comparable to the Cartesian understanding of *res vera* and Leibniz's monads [see PR xiii] in that these constitute the most fundamental aspect of reality. However, *actual entities* differ significantly in that they are not substances, but events. This is emphasized in the primacy of *becoming* rather than "being" in Whitehead's metaphysics.

Actual entities become actual by means of *concrescence*, which is the "growing together" or the unification of many feelings into one whole moment of experience [see KPR 7-19; see also SFCA, Chps. 3-5]. It is the means by which each *actual entity* actualizes aesthetic value derived from its choices.

The second chapter introduces the process aesthetic theory, in which Whitehead contends that *actual entities* strive to attain a balance between order and disorder, and between monotony and chaos. Each *actual entity* exercises its innate *creativity* in its *concrescence* when "choosing" a possibility to be actualized.⁹ If the *actual entity* achieves an aesthetic mean, appropriate aesthetic experiences result from its choices. In this way, the *actual entity* avoids the extremes on the spectrum of aesthetic value from which evil (specifically defined as the "loss" of aesthetic value) arises [see EPG 142-153]. This is one of the major aspects of the Whiteheadian resolution to the problem of evil [see Barry Whitney, IJPR pp. 21-37, 1994].

Camus' Philosophy

The third chapter introduces those aspects of Camus' philosophy relevant to Whitehead's metaphysics and the process aesthetic theory, drawing material mainly from *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*. The thesis introduces this material in order to

develop Camus' view of the value of existence as demonstrated in *The Plague*, expounded at length in Chapter Five.

It is well known that Camus diagnoses the world as absurd, due to its inherent meaninglessness and its indifference to human aspirations. While refusing to deny this fundamental reality, Camus advocates revolt against these absurd conditions.

More importantly, in his commitment to upholding life's worth, Camus asserts that there is value in existence, value which is obtained through the rebel's striving for justice. Justice addresses the extremes of existence by protecting what Camus recognizes as "the common value of humanity" [R 297].

It must be acknowledged that Camus' view of the value of existence is often overlooked or misunderstood, perhaps because of the image Camus utilizes to portray the absurd, i.e., that of Sisyphus, who ceaselessly pushes his rock up the hill. While Sisyphus is without hope, more importantly for Camus, he is also without illusions, and embraces the possibilities within the limitations of his existence.

Camus has been identified, perhaps, with his characters who disaffirm value. Such interpretations of Camus may be due to the embodiment of the opposites of value in Camus' characters, characters such as Meursault of *The Outsider* and Clamence of *The Fall*. The thesis, nevertheless, shows that Camus' affirmation of value is compatible with Whitehead's similar affirmation.

Philosophical Similarities

In the fourth chapter, the thesis compares Whitehead's metaphysics and particularly the process aesthetic theory with Camus' philosophy. The focus is on their conceptions of value and the contribution of that value. freedom and limitations, beauty and balance. This component of the thesis is not a comprehensive comparison of process and Camus' philosophies, but acknowledges that greater detail and more extensive analysis could be in order.

There are, of course, dissimilarities in Whitehead's and Camus' approaches to the conception of the value of existence. Whitehead approaches the subject as a metaphysician, and makes use of the conceptual language of systematic philosophy to affirm value. Camus, however, approaches the conception of value as an artist, and relies on the metaphoric language of creative literature, language which is open and elusive.

The Process Aesthetic Theory and *The Plague*

In Chapter Five, the thesis engages in a detailed application of the process aesthetic theory to relevant examples from Camus' novel *The Plague*. This novel demonstrates that value and meaningful possibilities are found within even some of the strictest limitations of temporal existence. The thesis argues that this coincides with Whitehead's notion of achieving aesthetic value within the confines of the actual environment of the temporal world. For instance, the panic and anxiety, the loss of loved ones, and the mass suffering and death wrought by the plague produce an excess of chaos. Moreover, the town of Oran is exiled from the rest of the world, as the town gates are closed while a state of plague is proclaimed and severe prophylactic measures are enforced. This results in the excess of monotony, as possibilities are restricted to triviality. Suffering, then, arises from the excesses of both chaos and monotony due to the aesthetic imbalances in the data of experience.

Nevertheless, some of Camus' characters are able to achieve significant value, such as Doctor Rieux and Jean Tarrou, who are dedicated to the revolt against the injustice wrought by the plague. This is consistent with the contention of the process aesthetic theory that generosity is one of the greatest aesthetic values to be achieved [see WP 108]. Similarly, this value is upheld by Camus in his portrait of the rebel [see R 304]. Tarrou and Rieux actualize value, moreover, in the solidarity of their struggle, which is also one of the greatest aesthetic values, that of companionship [see WP 108]. More specifically, the thesis shows that Camus, like Whitehead, upholds the value of finite existence even amidst the extremes of aesthetic imbalances. The thesis also demonstrates that a reading of this novel from a Whiteheadian perspective offers a viable interpretation of Camus' views.

ENDNOTES

1 The “process aesthetic theory” is also referred to in this study as the “aesthetic theory of process philosophy” and the “Whiteheadian-Hartshornean aesthetic theory.” While the philosophical contentions of Whitehead and Camus are central to the thesis, other Whiteheadian and process philosophers are cited to strengthen the comparison. The most significant proponent to elaborate Whitehead’s aesthetic theory is Charles Hartshorne, yet others, such as Donald Sherburne, Barry Whitney, Thomas Hosinski and Elizabeth Kraus contribute useful clarifications and developments. For the thesis, the “process aesthetic theory” is the preferred term so as to acknowledge these other contributors.

Regarding other Whiteheadian terms, they have been italicized throughout. This emphasis is to remind the readers of their specific meaning in the context of process philosophy, in contrast to more common quotidian and philosophical usage. Where these terms are italicized in quotations by other authors, the emphasis has been added.

2 To date, there has appeared only one article on Whitehead and Camus: James Goss. “Camus. God and Process Thought.” *Process Studies*, 4/2 (1974), 114-127.

3 One example of the compatibility of Whiteheadian thought to the philosophical visions expressed in literature is Strachan Donnelley’s article. “The Philosopher’s Poet: Boris Pasternak, *Dr. Zhivago*, and Whitehead’s Cosmological Vision” [see *Process Studies*, 13/1 (1983), 46-58]. In his article, Donnelley focuses on aspects of Whitehead’s philosophy that are beyond the scope of the present thesis. Consequently, some of Donnelley’s conclusions diverge from the comparison of Whitehead and Camus. Yet this is due to some disparities between Pasternak’s and Camus’ views and Donnelley’s emphases on particular aspects of Whitehead’s thought. Nevertheless, the validity of both comparisons attests to the broad applicability and relevance of Whitehead’s philosophy.

4 The Whiteheadian term *actual entity*, also called *actual occasion*, draws a distinction between the philosophical notions of “being” and *becoming*, the latter of which is more fundamental for Whitehead. *Actual entities* are microcosmic entities, the most basic units of reality: they are “the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going

behind *actual entities* to find anything more real” [PR 180]. *Actual entities* or *actual occasions* constitute their own agency, expressed in their experience, which is their process [see AWA 9].

Actual entity will be the favoured term throughout the thesis, as it is the most commonly used term in process philosophy, and is clearer and more immediately grasped than the term *actual occasion*. More importantly, *actual occasion* denotes a “conditioned *actual entity* of the temporal world, unless God is expressly included in the discussion. The term ‘*actual occasion*’ always excludes God from its scope” [PR 88]. The thesis utilizes the term *actual entity* to emphasize God’s status as an *actual entity* as well as God’s involvement with the actual world.

5 *Creativity* is a principle, not an actuality. “It is an ultimate which exists only in its individual instances” [AWA 15]. But it is the ultimate principle in Whiteheadian metaphysics in that “it constitutes the generic metaphysical character of all actualities” [WM 86]. *Creativity* is presupposed by each moment of experience, for it is the principle of novelty. Novelty is grasped by the *actual entity* in each *concrecence* for the purpose of self-creation [See AWA 10-24].

6 An understanding of the term *eternal object* is required to understand *ingression*. *Eternal objects* are possibilities for *actual entities*. They are not actual, yet they are necessary for actuality to exist and for process, or experience itself, to occur at all. *Eternal objects* are the pure potentials of the universe; and the *actual entities* differ from each other in their realization of potentials” [KPR 21]. *Ingression* is the vehicle through which pure potentiality becomes actualized; it is the function of the *eternal object* and the act of the *actual entity*. *Ingression* occurs when the *actual entity* “chooses” an *eternal object* for its self-creation in *concrecence*.

7 Process philosopher Barry Whitney claims that there need only be minimal value, while Hartshorne claims that there is a “surplus” of value in each experience [see EPG 150-153; CSPM, 303-323]. See also Barry Whitney, “An Aesthetic Solution to the Problem of Evil,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 1994.

8 Perhaps this generalization is due to the popularity of his first novel, *L'Etranger*, a portrait of a loner who remorselessly murders an Arab and is sentenced to death.

9 This “choice” need not be conscious, because the vast majority of *actual entities* have no mental functioning analogous to human intellect or awareness. Moreover, even conscious entities make many “decisions” without conscious deliberation [see SFCA 110-17].

Chapter One

The Metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead

Introduction

This chapter examines the fundamental concepts of the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead relevant to the process aesthetic theory. For the thesis, the process aesthetic theory is the link of commonality in their respective writings

The chapter begins with an examination of the formative elements. The formative elements provide actuality with the potentiality required to advance into further novelty and the achievement of aesthetic value. The first is *creativity*, the generic character and activity in the universe, due to the fact that all *actual entities* partake in *creativity* in each *concrecence*. The second formative element, *eternal objects*, are potentialities that are *ingressed* in *concrecence* for their inherent value. Thirdly, the *primordial nature of God* orders the *eternal objects* for relevance in the actual world. The *primordial nature of God* also provides the *subjective aim* that lures the *actual entity* to actualize the most appropriate aesthetic value of an *eternal object*.

Next, the chapter clarifies the concept of *actual entities*, also called *actual occasions* or the basic units of *becoming*, and their process, referred to as *concrecence*. Whitehead delineates four main phases of *concrecence*, involving feelings and appropriation of the past and the *ingression* of *eternal objects* in the present. Once the process of *concrecence* is complete, the *actual entity* becomes *objectively immortal*, that is, it becomes a value for future entities. It is by means of *concrecence* that *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value.

There are three categories in Whitehead's metaphysics that are ultimate (all of which are mentioned above) and to which all other categories are subordinate. They are *creativity*, *eternal objects* and *actual entities* (including God, as will be discussed) [see SFCA 208-215]. These ultimate categories are interdependent, and require as well as presupposed each other. Without one of these categories, process would be impossible. This chapter discusses these at length, since they are indispensable for an understanding of Whitehead's metaphysics.

I Potentiality

I i The Formative Elements

As noted above, in Whitehead's metaphysics, the formative elements are the prerequisites for actuality to arise out of potentiality. The *primordial nature of God* orders *eternal objects*, lending them relevance as well as investing them with value. The *primordial nature of God* also provides the *initial subjective aim* that "urges" the *actual entity* to actualize the inherent value of a possibility appropriate for its *concrecence*. By means of its inherent *creativity*, the *actual entity* "grasps" the relevant *eternal objects* and then is free to complete its *concrecence*. Once the *actual entity* actualizes the value of an *eternal object*, it attains *satisfaction* and achieves its goal: enjoying and contributing the aesthetic value derived from its *concrecence*.

The significance of this discussion of the formative elements is to emphasize that *creativity*, *eternal objects* and God provide *actual entities* with the potentiality required to achieve novelty and aesthetic value in experience. Process philosophy's contention that there is aesthetic value in each *concrecence* is the basis of the process aesthetic theory.

I.1 Creativity

I.1 i The Generic Character and Activity of the Universe

According to Whitehead, *creativity* is the reason for the dynamic quality of the universe and its progression into novelty. Thomas Hosinski indicates that *creativity* is constitutive of each *actual entity* and not an independent, external "force" from without [see SFCA 24]. Each *actual entity* utilizes *creativity* as it "chooses" to actualize the value of a novel possibility. In Whitehead's metaphysics, the universe is made up solely of *actual entities* and each utilizes *creativity*. In this way, *creativity* is the "generic metaphysical character" of the universe [WM 86].

Creativity is also inherent in each *concrecence* [see WM 87]. According to Whitehead, the universe is made up most fundamentally of "creative activity" [see WM 86]. Each act or experience is a "decision" to actualize a value inherent in potentiality,

and each act is an exercise of *creativity*. As such, the choice of potentialities is a *creative act*. Therefore, *creativity* is the generic and universal *activity* of the universe.

I.Iii Creativity as the Principle of Novelty

Creativity, moreover, functions as the principle of novelty. Novelty produces diversity for the actual world to *progress into further novelty*. Whitehead calls this the *creative advance* from the irreversible “deadness” or “settled-ness” of the past, the latter referred to as *stubborn fact* [see PR xiv]. Each *actual entity* resists *stubborn fact*, the unchangeable past that is the “inheritance” of *actual entities* [see SFCA 23]. *Creativity*, then, fosters the advance of *actual entities* into further creative experience, and is the principle of novelty.

I.Iiii Creativity as Non-Actual

While *creativity* is an ultimate principle embodied in all actuality, nevertheless, in Whitehead’s system, *creativity* is not actual, i.e., not some independent, distinct “thing.” For Whitehead, *creativity* is “devoid of actuality” [PR 7] as it has no actuality or character in and of itself.

Thomas Hosinski explains: “We can abstract the idea of ‘*creativity*’ from the actual self-creative things, but in actuality, there is no such thing as ‘*creativity*’ in itself; there are only self-creative ‘*actual entities*’” [SFCA 210]. Donald Sherburne adds that *creativity* “is an ultimate which exists only in its individual instances” [AWA 15]. All *actual entities* exhibit *creativity*. *Creativity*, then, is not actual, but dependent upon *actual entities* which exercise their inherent *creativity* in the temporal world.

In each *concrecence*, an *actual entity* qualifies *creativity* [see PR 88] in that particular actualization. As qualified, *creativity* becomes temporal and specific. Whitehead contends that actuality conditions or individualizes *creativity* [see PR 237]. Beyond these conditions, *creativity* is non-actual, but is made concrete by *actual entities*.

Creativity, however, is not sufficient reason that there is process, experience, value, or an actual world. Apart from *creativity*, the values inherent in *eternal objects*, the *actual entities* that actualize them and, more importantly, the roles played by God make up and make possible the process of *becoming* of *actual entities* and the universe as a

whole. As will be seen, *creativity*, *eternal objects*, *actual entities* and God are interrelated and interdependent in the process of *becoming* and the advancement into novelty.

The point of this discussion is that the role played by *creativity* in Whitehead's metaphysics is integral to the process aesthetic theory. It is by means of the inherent *creativity of actual entities* that they actualize novelty and achieve aesthetic value. The objects of novelty are *eternal objects* or potentialities, which the *actual entity* chooses to actualize in *concrecence*.

1.2 Eternal Objects

Eternal objects or potentialities constitute the second formative element in Whitehead's metaphysics and the second ultimate category. Whitehead defines *eternal objects* as "Pure Potentials for the Specific Determination of Fact, or Forms of Definiteness" [PR 22]. The term "form of definiteness" is synonymous with *eternal object* and emphasizes Whitehead's view that potentiality lacks determinateness. Hosinski states that *eternal objects* constitute "total abstract possibility" [SFCA 106]. Moreover, a particular *eternal object* may be chosen several times, and be manifest in diverse contexts. Yet, for Whitehead, "'actual entities' differ from each other in their realization of potentials" [PR 149].

1.2 i *The Ingression and Relatedness of All Eternal Objects*

The role of *eternal objects* is *ingression* into actuality [see KPR 21]. When *actual entities* "choose" an *eternal object* to be actualized for its value, that *eternal object* is *ingressed* into the actual world. Whitehead defines *ingression* as "the particular mode in which the potentiality of an *eternal object* is realized in a particular *actual entity*" [PR 23]. Elizabeth Kraus interprets Whitehead to mean that *ingression* makes an *eternal object* an "ingredient" that "incarnates" that potentiality in *concrecence* [see ME 31]. As actualized, the *eternal object* determines what the *actual entity* "becomes" in that *concrecence*.

Whitehead states that there is a selection of relevant *eternal objects* available to each particular *concrecence* [see PR 41]. For instance, Kraus explains that those *eternal objects* that are irrelevant to a particular *concrecence* cannot be *ingressed* by that particular *actual entity* [see ME 33]. Nevertheless, each *eternal object* is involved in each *concrecence* due to the relatedness of all *eternal objects*.

Sherburne notes that *eternal objects*, as unactualized, are “disconnected” from each other and exist “in abrupt isolation from one another” [AWA 30]. Yet when one is *ingressed*, all “are bound together into the concrete actuality which is the constitution of that entity” [AWA 30]. Whitehead states that each *ingression* “retains its message of alternatives which ‘*actual entities*’ have avoided” [KPR 22]. Kraus adds that, for Whitehead, a single, *ingressed eternal object* “brings with it the totality of these relations” [ME 34]. In other words, when one *eternal object* is *ingressed*, it “carries” with it its relationships to all *uningressed eternal objects*. Hence, all *eternal objects* are relevant in each *ingression*, even if they are irrelevant to a particular *ingression*.

1.2 ii *Ordering Eternal Objects: The Standard of Value*

Kraus points out moreover that, for Whitehead, each *eternal object* cannot be included in each *ingression* due to the finitude of *actual entities* and the inevitable contradictions among *eternal objects* [see ME 47]. Hence, an ordering of *eternal objects* is necessary for the relevant possibilities to be available to each *actual entity*. Kraus writes: “Without an order among *eternal objects* ... novel advance would be impossible” [ME 90]. More precisely, the finite *actual entity* cannot select from an infinite spectrum of possibilities.

As previously stated, the *actual entity* *ingresses* an *eternal object* on the basis of its value [see SFCA 75]. This value is created by the relevance of the *eternal object* to the *becoming* of the particular *actual entity*. Relevance is necessarily a restrictive element, since it limits the possibilities to only those that are valuable to the particular *actual entity*. Because value necessarily requires limitations, relevance provides a standard of value that creates “contrasts, gradations and oppositions” [see SFCA 160]. The experience of value requires a standard for *eternal objects* to be felt as valuable.

Hosinski confirms this as he writes: “If there is no standard of beauty or goodness, nothing can be experienced and evaluated as ‘beautiful’ or ‘good’” [SFCA

160]. The point is that the standard of value creates value and meaningfulness for each *actual entity* due to the restrictions of the temporal world.

The significance of *eternal objects* in Whitehead's metaphysics is that they introduce novelty into actuality. *Eternal objects* qualify each *concrecence* and make possible the *creative advance* into further novelty. With respect to my thesis, the place occupied by *eternal objects* in Whitehead's metaphysics is relevant to the process aesthetic theory, because it is by means of the *ingression* of *eternal objects* that *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value.

In Whitehead's metaphysics, the ordering of *eternal objects* must be effected by an *actual entity*. Moreover, *eternal objects* must "reside" in an actual "place" before *ingression*. For Whitehead, the *primordial nature of God* is this *actual entity* and this "place" [see SFCA Chapter 7].

1.3 God

1.3 i God as an Actual Entity

As will be shown, Whitehead includes God among the formative elements to ensure the coherence of his metaphysics. Whitehead emphasizes that "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification" [KPR 179]. In other words, God is subject to the same principles as temporal *actual entities*.

Furthermore, Whitehead claims that God is an *actual entity*, though the only "non-temporal *actual entity*" [PR 46]. As will be shown, God also *concreces* and experiences the actual world. Hence, God is a member of the same metaphysical category as temporal *actual entities*, and is not "wholly other" or separate from actuality in the traditional Christian sense.

I wish to note that Whitehead designates God an *actual entity* rather than an *actual occasion*. While the terms *actual entity* and *actual occasion* are generally synonymous in Whitehead's metaphysics [see PR 18, 22, 73, 77, 141, 211] an *actual occasion* is specifically a "conditioned *actual entity* of the temporal world," and so the term "'actual occasion' will always exclude God from its scope" [PR 88]. The point is

that God is an *actual entity along with* all others in Whitehead's metaphysics, and that God is significantly involved in the *concrecence* of temporal *actual entities*.

I.3 ii God and Potentiality: The Primordial Nature

In Whitehead's metaphysics, God's natures correspond to God's roles in each phase of temporal *concrecence*. The first is the *primordial nature*, which prepares actuality for the initiation of *concrecence*. Whitehead defines the *primordial nature of God* as "the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of *eternal objects*" [KPR 179]. The *primordial nature of God* grasps the entire spectrum of *eternal objects* by means of *conceptual prehensions*. *Conceptual prehensions* will be discussed later in this chapter, but for now, they are understood as "feelings" of *eternal objects*. Since God's *conceptual prehensions* are infinite, God "grasps" all *eternal objects*. Hence, for Whitehead, the *primordial nature of God* is the actual "place" where all *eternal objects* "reside" before *ingression* into actuality [see SFCA 166]. It is also from the *primordial nature of God* that *eternal objects* are issued into actuality.

The *primordial nature of God* mediates between actuality and potentiality by providing *actual entities* with the requirements to initiate *concrecence*. The first phase of God's *concrecence* constitute *conceptual prehensions* of *eternal objects*. *Eternal objects* must be ordered to have "effective relevance" for the actual world [see PR 40]. Ordering also invests *eternal objects* with their inherent value due to their relevance once *ingressed*. For Whitehead, this role is performed in the *primordial nature of God*. He writes: "The many *eternal objects* conceived in their bare isolated multiplicity lack any existent character. They require the transition to the conception of them as efficaciously existent by reason of God's *conceptual prehensions* of them" [PR 349].

Since the *primordial nature of God* is the "place" where *eternal objects* reside, and since God *prehends* and orders the entire spectrum of *eternal objects*, the *primordial nature of God* is the actual ground of potentiality. God is also the actual ground of novelty, for the *primordial nature* prepares *eternal objects*, the vehicles of novelty, to be issued into actuality. Finally, as God invests *eternal objects* with value by ensuring their relevance to *actual entities*, the *primordial nature of God* is the actual ground of value [see SFCA 171].

The *primordial nature of God*, moreover, provides each *actual entity* with what Whitehead calls the *subjective aim*. The *subjective aim* initiates *concrecence* and serves as a “lure for feeling” [see PR 85] for the *actual entity* to actualize the value of the most appropriate *eternal object*.

The *subjective aim* also carries with it God’s *valuation of eternal objects*. Hosinski explains *valuation* as the subjective reaction to the value of *eternal objects* [see SFCA 168]. God’s *valuation* consists of God’s “feeling” of which possibility could lead to the greatest achievement of aesthetic value for the temporal *actual entity*. Ideally, this achievement of aesthetic value leads to the attainment of beauty, referred to as the aesthetic mean, which constitutes the goal of the *concrecence* of the *actual entity*.

Once the *initial subjective aim* is given, the *actual entity ingresses an eternal object* according to its own “feelings” of the value of that potentiality [see SFCA 211]. While the other roles and natures of God are discussed later this chapter, it is enough at this point to examine God’s contribution to potentiality.

The *primordial nature of God* in Whitehead’s metaphysics is important for the process aesthetic theory as God’s roles serve to prepare *eternal objects* to be issued into actuality. According to the process aesthetic theory, it is the value inherent in the possibilities chosen by *actual entities* that make each experience valuable.

II **Actuality**

The above discussion of the formative elements in Whitehead’s metaphysics illustrates the uniformity of the underlying structure of experience: the participation of *actual entities* in potentiality. Conversely, an examination of *actual entities* proves the uniqueness of their responses to the *givenness* of the world, responses from which arise *actual entities* that are novel and distinct from all others.

This section discusses the primacy of actuality in Whitehead’s metaphysics. Actuality is central to what Whitehead refers to as the ontological principle, the principle which states that that which exists and is most real is actual, that is, the *actual entity*.

This section also defines *actual entities*, examines their agency and their process of *becoming*, their experience or *concrecence*. *Concrecence* integrates the *prehensions*

or feelings of *actual entities*, and it is by means of this unification that the *actual entity* achieves aesthetic value, an achievement central to the process aesthetic theory. Following this is a discussion of the phases of *concrecence* and the roles of the *consequent nature of God*.

II i The Ontological Principle

The ontological principle answers metaphysical questions, such as What exists? What is real? According to the ontological principle, only actuality exists and is real. Hosinski explains that every item of Whitehead's metaphysics is concrete or empirical, i.e., that which can be experienced, rather than that which is abstracted from reality [see SFCA 20]. For Whitehead, that which exists is actual, and actuality is comprised of only those entities that "exist in the fullest sense of existence" [WM 21].

The ontological principle states that all that exists finds its reason for existence in actuality. Ivor Leclerc writes that, for Whitehead, "Actual things are the truly and fully existent things ... whatever else exists does so in a sense dependent upon and derivative from, that of actual things" [WM 21]. More precisely, something actual cannot be derived from something that is not actual. Whitehead states that the ontological principle "is the principle that everything is positively somewhere in actuality" [PR 40].

The manifestation of actuality is the *actual entity*, the multitude of which constitutes all that truly exists in the actual world. For Whitehead, the ontological principle is "the first step in the description of the universe as a solidarity of many '*actual entities*'" [PR 40]. *Actual entities* are the basic existents of the universe, in which the world finds its reason for existence. Whitehead summarizes the ontological principle: "no *actual entity*, no reason" [PR 19]. This means that only actuality is the agent of all process in reality.

If the ontological principle is founded in empirical observation, this includes also the content of subjective experience of temporal *actual entities*. Subjective experience constitutes the "raw data" of Whitehead's metaphysics, due to his conception of the *actual entity* as the subject of experience and the agent of creative process.

II ii Actual Entities

As previously noted, *actual entity* and *actual occasion* are generally synonymous [PR 18, 22, 73, 77, 141, 211]. The thesis utilizes the term *actual entity* for two reasons: it is the most commonly used term in Whitehead's metaphysics and also to emphasize Whitehead's insistence that God is inextricably involved in the process of *concrecence* of temporal entities.

Hosinski explains that, according to Whitehead, *actual entities* are the most "basic units" of reality [see SFCA 22]. Whitehead writes that *actual entities* are "the final real things of which the world is made up ... The final facts are, all alike, *actual entities*; and these '*actual entities*' are drops of experience, complex and interdependent" [PR 18]. More precisely, all that is actual is made up of *actual entities*.

The process of *actual entities* is *concrecence* or *becoming*. Leclerc writes that, for Whitehead, "Each individual actuality is an 'act of *becoming*' and each act becomes an individual *actual entity* ... there is no activity as such apart from the activity of individual actualities" [WM 21]. Put another way, *actual entities* are the "events" of process, beyond which there is nothing actual.

Hosinski offers a useful explanation of *actual entities*: "If we take a ... slice through this life, we ... encounter a single *actual entity*, a single moment of experience. This single moment is complex, because it bears within it relationships to all the moments that occurred before it and to all the moments that occurred after it ... It does not exist in isolation, but in relation to other moments" [SFCA 21].

As Hosinski's explanation demonstrates, the process of *actual entities* is on the microcosmic level. An *actual entity* is "actual" in that it exists in the actual world. It is also an "*occasion*" in that it is an "event," a fragment of existence. It is a temporal, finite event derived from the settled past, yet in the present, it exhibits novelty and is valuable due to its choices of the values inherent in the possibilities.

II iii The Formative Elements and Actual Entities

All *actual entities* arise from participation in the formative elements, yet Whitehead does not claim that all *actual entities* are alike in their roles or importance. He

states: “[T]hey differ among themselves ... But, though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level” [PR 18]. Just as all *eternal objects* are “on the same level” despite their diversity, so all *actual entities* are “on the same level” as they participate in the formative elements.

II iv The Agency and Freedom of Actual Entities

The manner in which *actual entities* differ from each other is how they participate in the formative elements. Sherburne explains that each *actual entity* is its own “locus of power” [see AWA 13] for its self-creation or *concrecence*. Leclerc contends: “Their ‘existing’ is their ‘acting’ and the nature of their existence is that of acting” [WM 93]. Agency is the power to self-create, and process is the result of the agency of *actual entities*. Agency makes *actual entities* novel and actual. This has direct implications for the ontological principle: the reason for all that occurs in the process of the temporal world is due to the agency of *actual entities* [see PR 24]. It is by means of the agency of *actual entities* that they are empowered to choose the inherent values of *eternal objects* for advance into further novelty and ideally, attain the aesthetic mean.

The freedom of *actual entities* also makes them valuable. Whitehead insists that each *actual entity* is “internally determined and is externally free” [PR 27]. This means that they are determined by the settled past, yet are free to actualize value and novelty in the present within the limitations of their actual situation. Agency and freedom lend *actual entities* a “significance” which is, for Whitehead, “combin[ing] self-identity with self-diversity ... [I]n its process of self-creation, [the *actual entity*] transforms its diversity of roles into one coherent role” [PR 25]. This is the goal of the *actual entity*: the coherence of *concretizing* the values of its experience into one unity amidst the diversity of the data. Whitehead refers to this as *concrecence*.

II v The Reformed Subjectivist Principle

An *actual entity* is the agent of process, determining the outcome of *concrecence* by freely responding, within its own actual limitations, to *stubborn fact* and the value of the relevant possibilities. This response is subjective in that it brings the relationships of

past subjective decisions of value into the present. The *actual entity* is also the subject of process because it experiences *stubborn fact*, then chooses how to shape it for itself while introducing novel value in the present. Hosinski states that the *actual entity* experiences, chooses and acts, and hence, is the subject of experience [see SFCA 26].

If *actual entities* are the basic units of reality and are the subjects of process, then all that is actual arises from the experience of temporal subjects. For Whitehead, the basis for the analysis of reality is temporal subjective experience. In accordance with the ontological principle, temporal subjective experience is “the only source of data and evidence for philosophical reflection” [SFCA 27]. Whitehead states: “[T]he whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experience of subjects” [PR 166]. More emphatically: “apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness” [PR 167].

It is important to note that experience is not equated with consciousness. The term “subject” includes every actuality, conscious or non-conscious. A small population of *actual entities* is conscious — human beings, for example. (In fact, human beings are comprised of complex “societies” and “nexus” of *actual entities*, but this concept is beyond the scope of the thesis). For Whitehead, however, “to experience” is “to participate” in reality [see SFCA 19] as do human beings, animals, vegetation and minerals. In Whitehead’s metaphysics, all these participate in reality and are subjects of experience.

II vi Subjective Immediacy

As a subject, the *actual entity* is “living” and is “alive” in its process. This includes non-conscious *actual entities* because, according to Whitehead, the definition of “life” is the “appetite for novelty” [PR 102]. All *actual entities* have subjective immediacy, which constitutes the *actual entity*. The *actual entity* is “subjective” in that it is the “subject” of *concrecence*; it is “immediate” in that it experiences the world in a “rush of feelings,” [PR 155] immediately, and in the midst of process.

Moreover, the subjective experience of an *actual entity* takes the minutest amount of time, and happens “all at once” [see PR 61]. An *actual entity* is complete in itself; it does not change, but becomes [see KPR 8]. *Actual entities* are important for the process

aesthetic theory because they are the subjects of *concrecence*, which is the means by which *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value.

The process of *actual entities* is constituted by “feeling” the manifold, “public” data of the objective world, choosing a value amidst *eternal objects*, and forming these into a unified, subjective, “private” experience. “Unity of feeling” represents the immediate past that contains potential for the future, and is a “coming together” of all these elements of experience. This is what Whitehead refers to as *concrecence*.

III i Concrecence

Concrecence is central to Whitehead’s metaphysics, and is the means by which *actual entities* actualize aesthetic value. For Whitehead, the *subjective aim* initiates the *concrecence*, and involves the “lure for feeling” [PR 85] for the *actual entity* to actualize the most appropriate possibility. *Concrecence* also involves feelings, called *prehensions*, which is how the *actual entity* feels the data of the past and the possibilities of the present. In Whitehead’s metaphysics, it is by means of *prehensions* that actuality is interrelated, and that *actual entities* are able to “feel” the choices of others. Once the *actual entity ingresses* a possibility, it attains *satisfaction* and the *concrecence* is terminated. The *actual entity* then “perishes,” and becomes *objectively immortal*, and “lives on” as a value for future entities.

Concrecence is Whitehead’s conception of the process of *becoming*, and its purpose is for the *actual entity* to actualize aesthetic value [see SFCA 75]. *Concrecence* occurs by means of the process of *actual entities* — experience in the temporal — and their participation in the “formative elements” — experience in the eternal [see AWA 41]. Leclerc explains that, for Whitehead, “This process of *becoming* is the active process of receiving objects and integrating them into one definite unity” [WM 133]. Whitehead defines *concrecence* as the achievement of “unity from the ‘many’ feelings of experience to the novel ‘one’” [KPR 7]. More precisely, *concrecence* is the subject’s integration of its many feelings of the given past with the value of the novelty of the *ingressed eternal objects* for one novel experience of one complete feeling to emerge.

Concrescence is the process undertaken by each *actual entity* [see KPR 212]. The *actual entity* constitutes the totality of its feelings and experiences. Hosinski clarifies that *concrecence* is a “growing together,” “especially of parts that were originally separate,” and a “hardening” of something,” making it “concrete” [see SFCA 46]. The *actual entity* feels many feelings, though not all of these intensely, and many are often incongruous. Yet through *concrecence*, these feelings develop into more complex feelings [see KPR 36] and are integrated in “one unity of feeling” called *satisfaction* [see KPR 212]. *Satisfaction* is fully determinate, and it is only in the final phase that the *becoming* of the *actual entity* has reached being. Kraus writes: “The indeterminations in the data — how the many are to be felt as one, how they are to be objectified and subjectively felt — are solved in the *concrecence*” [ME 71]. As only the relevant data are considered, *concrecence* is the way in which the *actual entity* experiences the world coherently and meaningfully. Meaningfulness arises from the *satisfaction* of the *concrecence*.

What is of particular importance for the thesis is that *concrecence* is central to the process aesthetic theory, as it is by means of *concretizing* experience in the midst of process that the *actual entity* experiences the value of meaningfulness, which creates appropriate intensity of feeling, leading to “aesthetic enjoyment.”

III ii The Subjective Aim

As mentioned above, *concrecence* begins with the *subjective aim* derived from God’s *primordial nature*. The *subjective aim* serves as a “lure for feeling” [PR 85] for the *actual entity* to actualize the most appropriate possibility. The *subjective aim* carries with it God’s *valuations* of the value of *eternal objects*, and includes the subjective standpoint of the *actual entity*, its manner of experiencing the objective data of the past, and the values of the *eternal objects*. Whitehead calls this “*subjective forms* of feeling” [PR 16] which include purposes, *valuations*, aversions and adversions [see KPR 12].

When an *actual entity* “feels” another entity, the feeling is a re-enaction of the datum. However, the feeling is qualified by the subjective standpoint of the *actual entity*, which is its *subjective form* of feeling. Because this re-enaction is not objective, but interpreted by the subject, it is “novel in reference to its data” [KPR 13]. The *subjective forms* of feeling are then in a sense “personalized” to the experience of the *actual entity*.

Moreover, *subjective forms* of feeling are influenced by memory as well as imagination [see AWA xiii]. Hence, these feelings that guide the experience are aesthetic because they are impressionistic, associative and imaginative. The means by which the *actual entity* feels the data is called *prehensions*.

III iii Prehensions

For Whitehead, an *actual entity* is the sum of its *prehensions*, since *prehensions* reflect the experiences of the *actual entity* along with the *subjective forms of feeling*. Whitehead writes: “The first analysis of an *actual entity* into its most concrete elements discloses it to be a *concrecence of prehensions*” [KPR 9]. That is to say that the *actual entity* is constituted by all its *prehensions*, which are perceptions of its environment, which in turn is constituted by other *entities*.

Physical prehensions are how the *actual entity* is subjectively “aware of” actuality. Whitehead defines *prehensions* as “feelings;” they are “‘vectors’: for they feel what is there and transform it into what is here” [KPR 235]. Prehensions carry the data of the external, objective public world and direct it to the internal, subjective private experience of the *actual entity*. More precisely, “feeling is the term used for the basic generic operation of passing from the objectivity of the data to the subjectivity of the *actual entity* in question” [KPR 8].

IIIiv Types of Prehensions

There are different types of *prehensions*, *prehensions* which correspond to the data *prehended*. *Physical prehensions* initiate the *concrecence* and have as their data past *actual entities* [see SFCA 174] that constitute the immediate past, the most immediate data. *Conceptual prehensions* have as their data *eternal objects* [see KPR 235] and introduce the selection of possibilities and their inherent values. Both types of *prehensions* arise in earlier phases of *concrecence*.

Another type is *hybrid physical prehensions* that integrate *physical* and *conceptual prehensions* in a subsequent phase of *concrecence*. A *hybrid physical prehesion* is defined as “the *prehension* by one subject of a *conceptual prehesion*... belonging to ... another subject” [KPR 235]. *Hybrid physical prehensions* allow the

conceptual prehensions of one entity to be felt *physically* by another. A *hybrid physical prehension* generally is an *actual entity's prehension* of God's *conceptual prehensions* in the *primordial nature*, which supplies the lure for feeling towards an ideal and God's *valuations of eternal objects*.

Whitehead states that each *concrecence* begins with *physical prehensions*, and so the *actual entity's hybrid physical prehensions* of God initiate each *concrecence*. In this way, Whitehead maintains the uniformity and consistency of his theory, and *hybrid physical prehensions* ensure that no principle is violated in the metaphysical scheme.

There are also *positive* and *negative prehensions*. *Positive prehensions* include the data in the *concrecence*, while *negative prehensions* exclude the data [see KPR 235]. *Positive prehensions* are feelings of the incorporated data while *negative prehensions* are feelings of data that do not contribute to the *concrecence*. Whitehead claims that all *actual entities* and *eternal objects* “are necessarily ‘felt’ by that subject, though in general vaguely” [KPR 9]. In this way, an *actual entity* has definite relationships with all *actual entities* and all *eternal objects* by means of its *positive* and *negative prehensions*.

III v *Prehensions and the Relatedness of Actuality*

It must be noted that there is a greater, overriding unity amid actuality, that is affected through *prehensions*. Whitehead refers to this as the principle of relativity. Whitehead states that “every item in [the *actual entity's*] universe is involved in each *concrecence*. In other words, it belongs to the nature of a ‘being’ that it is a potential for every ‘becoming.’ This is the ‘principle of relativity’” [PR 22].

All entities are related to and *prehend* “a world of antecedent actualities” [WP 12]. *Actual entities* do not *prehend* contemporaries, but rather objectifications of the immediate past [see ME 32]. By means of *physical prehensions*, entities are interrelated with and are “present in” all other entities [see SFCA 25]. Hartshorne states this succinctly: “Real relatedness is given only as *prehensions*” [WP 11].

The manner in which all entities are interrelated is by means of *physical prehensions*. A subject is related to past entities by its *physical prehensions* of them; conversely, it is related to future *entities* by *becoming* actual now, the outcome of which shall be *physically prehend*ed by future subjects [see SFCA 189]. Hence, the way in

which *actual entities* are related in actuality is their interdependence in which they serve as data for each other, and it is mutual *prehensions* that effect this interrelatedness.

Whitehead's metaphysics shows that it is by means of *concrecence* that *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value. *Concrecence* is the inclusion and exclusion of values inherent in experience, which Whitehead names "aesthetic synthesis" [see PR 212]. He writes: "Thus the production of 'novel togetherness' is the ultimate notion embodied in the term '*concrecence*'" [PR 21].

III vi Satisfaction and the Termination of Concrecence

Satisfaction is "one complex, fully determinate feeling" [PR 26] as all the *actual entity's prehensions* are synthesized into one unity [see ME 46]. The *actual entity* is what it has become, and is novel and distinct due to its unique standpoint and the uniqueness of the combination of *prehensions* in the synthesis [see AWA 70]. This novelty, distinctiveness and uniqueness make the *actual entity* valuable.

Sherburne states that "The *satisfaction* can be viewed as the solution to the basic problem which the *concrecence* must solve, i.e., how to unify the many components of the objective content in one felt content with its complex *subjective forms*" [AWA 70]. The *satisfaction* ensures some degree of intensity and depth of feeling [see PR 84] appropriate to that particular *actual entity*. Appropriate intensity and depth of feeling are aesthetic components of experience that make the *actual entity* valuable [see PPCT 325]. The *satisfaction*, moreover, is how the *actual entity* feels the aesthetic value of its choice. In other words, the *satisfaction* can be viewed as a "catharsis" wherein the *actual entity* *satisfies* its creative urge [PR 219].

It must be noted that in Whitehead's metaphysics there are varying degrees of intensity in *satisfaction* that depend on the appropriateness of the value chosen in *concrecence*. When the *subjective aim* is successful — that is, when the entity "follows" the lure of the *primordial nature of God* towards *ideal aims* [see SFCA 170-176] — the *actual entity* experiences "the greatest intensity of value" [AWA 44]. When the *satisfaction* is sufficiently and appropriately intense and an appropriate aesthetic experience emerges, the entity achieves what Whitehead refers to as the aesthetic mean, that is, an aesthetic balance among the data of experience in one unity of feeling.

III vii The Actual Entity as *Superject*

In achieving *satisfaction*, the *actual entity* becomes what Whitehead terms a *superject* [see KPR 13]. Kraus explains that *satisfaction* is the elimination of “all indeterminate-ness as to what that existence might be and thus to have become an ‘object’ — a *superject*” [ME 10]. The *actual entity* becomes a *superject* in that the “*satisfaction* embodies what the ‘*actual entity*’ is beyond itself” [PR 219]. The *satisfaction* “closes up, completes, concludes the ‘*actual entity*’” [see KPR 14] and the *superject* is the *actual entity* as a being rather than a subject in the process of *becoming*.

In Whitehead’s metaphysics, however, it lies in the character of *actual entities* to perish. Process implies transition [see WM 77] and the *becoming* of an *actual entity* also entails its perishing, as the present becomes past.

III viii Perishing and Objective Immortality

The unity constitutive of *concrecence* indicates that means that *actual entities* do not change but perish [AWA 12]. As actuality is always in flux, it is always *concrecing*. As there is flux amid stasis and stasis amid flux, so there is process amid concreteness and concreteness amid process.

According to Whitehead, an *actual entity* loses its “subject-hood” and its subjective immediacy as it passes into *objectively immortality* when it becomes “definite, determinate, settled fact” [KPR 233] in the completion of *concrecence*. Whitehead defines *objective immortality* as “the attainment of a particular definiteness ... and its attainment halts [the *actual entity*’s] process” [KPR 233]. As an object, the entity is no longer actual, nor does it *concrece*. Whitehead indicates: “what is settled in actuality is ... ‘given’ for immediacy” [PR 137]. This means that future entities “inherit” the past as well as discover potentiality in the past.

As objectified, the *actual entity* passes into *stubborn fact*. *Objectively immortal* entities are “settled,” yet they serve as new data for future *actual entities*. In this way, *stubborn fact* “at once limits and provides opportunity” [PR 129]. The relationship between *givenness* and potentiality [PR 45] arises from *stubborn fact*, since givenness

provides the stability necessary for novelty to arise. In this way, each presupposes and requires the other.

In Whitehead's metaphysics, there is more to experience than achieving aesthetic value and simply attaining an *objective immortal* status. The *consequent nature of God* preserves all actualized value, and the *satisfaction* of God is passed back into the world for its benefit.

IV The Consequent Nature of God

This section discusses the *consequent nature of God* as the fulfillment of God's *primordial nature*. The *consequent nature of God* is actual, due to God's relationship, interaction and involvement with actuality. God *concretizes* along with actuality and feels and experiences all actualized value. The *consequent nature of God*, moreover, integrates and synthesizes all actualized value, which ensures the permanence of value in God's experience of the world. For Whitehead, the *consequent nature of God* resolves the paradoxes and incongruities of existence by means of this synthesis.

IV i The Fulfillment of the *Primordial nature*

In Whitehead's metaphysics, the *consequent nature of God* is the fulfillment of the *primordial nature*. The *primordial nature of God* demonstrates "the primary action of God on the world" [KPR 180] by providing the temporal world with potentiality, while the *consequent nature of God* is "the reaction of the world on God" [KPR 181]. The *primordial nature* constitutes *conceptual prehensions* of potentiality, whereas the *consequent nature* involves God's *physical prehensions* of the temporal actualizations of aesthetic value. God's nature, then, "is consequent upon the *creative advance* of the world" [KPR 181].

IV ii God as an Actual Entity

God is defined as an *actual entity* in Whitehead's metaphysics. Yet the *primordial nature of God* is "deficiently actual" [see KPR 179] since it is merely conceptual.

However, the *consequent nature of God* is actual due to God's participation in actuality.

In this way, God is what Whitehead calls dipolar in that God is both potential and actual, abstract and concrete, indeterminate and determinate. Dipolarity is also characteristic of temporal entities, which are constituted by both *conceptual* and *physical prehensions*. As will be discussed later, God's *concrecence* differs from temporal entities.

Conceptual prehensions from the *primordial nature of God* grasp *eternal objects*, while the *physical prehensions* from God's *consequent nature* grasp objectifications of *actual entities*. God's *physical prehensions* are "derived from the temporal *actual entities* of the world" [SFCA 189]. In other words, all temporal actualizations of aesthetic value are received into the *consequent nature* via God's *physical prehensions* of them. The *consequent nature*, then, is God's experience of actualized value in the world. In this way, God is also an *actual entity*, as God's *concrecence* is analogous to that of temporal entities.

IV iii The Relationship of God and the Temporal World

According to Whitehead's principle of relativity, all *actual entities* *prehend* objectifications of all others by means of *physical prehensions*. This implies a relationship, then, also with God. Hosinski writes: "To be actual, in Whitehead's philosophy, is to be involved in this double relation of world-to-self and self-to-world ... As the primordial actuality, God is related to all *actual entities* by means of *hybrid physical prehensions* of God's *primordial nature*, which is how each temporal entity begins its process of *becoming*. This is the self-to-world relation. But this is not enough. God must also be related to all *actual entities* by *physically prehending* what they become. This is the world-to-self relation" [SFCA 189]. The roles of the *consequent nature*, then, demonstrate these relationships.

IV iv Integration: Actualized Value in God's Experience

For Whitehead, the *consequent nature* refers also to the integration of God's *physical prehensions* of actualized value in the world with God's *conceptual prehensions* of *eternal objects*. For Whitehead, this integration is "the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts" [PR 345]. More specifically, all God's *prehensions* of actuality and potentiality are integrated into one unified whole. This is the third phase of God's *concrecence*.

The importance of the *consequent nature* for the process aesthetic theory is that the world contributes to God its actualized aesthetic value. In the *primordial nature*, God feels the values of *eternal objects* as merely possible; yet in the *consequent nature*, God feels the actualized value of the world. Hosinski explains: "The actual fact is now felt by God in relation to God's eternal standard of value and harmonization of all values. God's integration of the actual world with God's eternal vision of value thus results in a *concrecing* unity and harmony of actualized value in God" [SFCA 191]. Hence, the integration of God's *prehensions* creates an aesthetically valuable harmony among potentialities and actualities.

Hosinski writes of God's vision for temporal actualization: "God's eternal *valuation* of all possibility is a vision of beauty and goodness; and as God integrates the '*actual entities*' of the world with this eternal vision, God experiences and knows the evil that has been actualized in the freedom of temporal creatures" [SFCA 197]. Thus, God desires temporal entities to actualize ideal values.

IV v God's Concrecence: The Permanence of Value

God is involved in each *concrecence* by providing possibilities to each *actual entity*, and then *prehending* what the *actual entity* has actualized, and including it in God's own *concrecence*. It must be noted that God's *concrecence* is not identical to that of a temporal entity. God's *concrecence* begins with *conceptual prehensions* of *eternal objects*, while that of a temporal entity begins with *physical prehensions* of the given past. Next, God *physically prehends* the actual world, while a temporal entity

grasps *eternal objects* via *conceptual prehensions* [see SFCA 189]. And the third phase of integration of *prehensions* is shared by God and *actual entities*.

God “shares” the world with all *actual entities* and *concretes along with* each temporal entity. Hence, actuality is “objectified in God as a novel element” [KPR 181]. According to Whitehead, God preserves actualized temporal value with “a tender care that nothing be lost” [KPR 182]. Whitehead contends that God “saves the world” by ensuring the permanence of actualized value [see KPR 183]. God’s experience of the contrast of the possible and the actual is “the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved” [KPR 182]. Moreover, it is “the judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage” [KPR 182]. That is, the *consequent nature* is God’s “judgment” of the world in that it is God’s “subjective reaction” to what has been actualized. God, then, *retains all value so that what has been actualized is not obliterated by the creative advance*.

IV vi Resolutions of Existence in the *Consequent nature* of God

Whitehead finds in the *consequent nature of God* answers to eternal questions concerning the ultimate purpose and meaning of existence. For Whitehead, these questions “arise from a yearning for a harmony and a unity” [SFCA 181] of experience so important for the worthwhileness of existence. In the *consequent nature of God*, there is a “definite outcome from a situation otherwise riddled with ambiguity” [PR 345].

According to Whitehead, the central problem of the ambiguity of existence is the incompatibility of much of the data of experience. All incongruity must be unified for experience to be coherent and meaningful. Whitehead writes: “The opposites of our experience ... are all summarized in the opposition between permanence and fluency” [SFCA 199]. For Whitehead, permanence and fluency constitute all data of experience: yet how may they be reconciled?

Whitehead contends that the problem can be resolved by bringing together all opposites in an aesthetic tension wherein the opposites require each other [see SFCA 199]. In the *consequent nature of God*, each opposite completes its antithesis in a contrast of unity and harmony of feeling. Hosinski explains: “in each antithesis there is a shift of meaning or focus that converts the apparent contradiction into a contrasted union of

opposites” [SFCA 199]. For instance, the flux of the world and the permanence of God oppose and contradict each other, yet the world and God require each other; the world requires the ordered, meaningful possibilities provided by God’s *primordial nature*, while his *consequent nature* requires the temporal, actualized value. Temporal entities, furthermore, require the permanence of this value, and in turn the *consequent nature* preserves it. As the next section shows, God requires the continuation of the *creative advance*, and provides the givenness of the past by passing back God’s *satisfaction* as data for *concreasing* entities.

For Whitehead, the final opposites of permanence and flux require and complete each other and are reconciled in a harmony and unity in God’s *consequent nature*. Whitehead writes: “God is completed by the individual, fluent *satisfactions* of finite fact, and the temporal entities are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves” [PR 347]. Hosinski adds: “A world that is torn between good and evil, joy and sorrow, happiness and suffering, love and hatred, peace and violence, and where every achievement perishes into the past, yet is unified, transformed, healed and saved forever in the everlasting God; it cannot be, yet is. It is the concept of God, *primordial* and *consequent*, that enables us to understand this incredible fact” [SFCA 201].

The *superject nature of God* is the completion of God’s *conscience*. Just as all *actual entities* are “subject-*superject*,” so also is God, referring to the termination of God’s *conscience* and the divine contribution to the completion of temporal *conscience*.

V The Superject Nature of God

In Whitehead’s writings, there is another aspect of the divine nature which is not yet defined as explicitly as the others: the *superject nature of God*. The *superject nature of God* parallels Whitehead’s conception of the temporal entity as *superject*.

As explained above, *satisfaction* is the “elimina[tion] of all indeterminateness as to what that existence might be and thus to have become an ‘object’ — a *superject* — added to the manifold and given for the future” [PR 219]. The *superject nature of God* is his *satisfaction* with temporal actualized value; God’s experience is objectified, and

becomes a *superject*. His *satisfaction*, then, is felt by temporal entities with God's "subjective reaction" or "judgment" of the world's actualized value [KPR 182].

The *superject nature of God* passes back God's *satisfaction* into the world. Temporal entities then receive the actualized value of the immediate, past world, *prehended* in the subsequent *concrecence*. Hence, God provides the givenness of the past for subsequent entities with which the actualized value of the new temporal *concrecence* is contrasted. Whitehead states: "the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world, and qualifies this world so that each temporal actuality includes it as an immediate fact of relevant experience" [SFCA 202]. This is how *actual entities* experience God's *concrecence*.

The *superject nature of God* demonstrates the mutual dependence of God and the world. God requires temporal *actual entities* to complete their *concrecence* by actualizing value and *actual entities* require the permanence of actualized value that is harmonized and passed back into the world. Hosinski writes that *actual entities* "gain final meaning, harmony, peace and everlastingness from their inclusion and transformation in God" [SFCA 203]. This is how *actual entities* experience meaning and value, which attests to the worthwhileness of existence. This is the basis for the process aesthetic theory; all experience contains value and meaning due to the interdependence and interaction of God and the actual world. This completes the *concrecence* of temporal entities and God in a perfect relationship of value, permanence and fluency.

VI The Interrelatedness of the Ultimate Categories

Now that all the ultimates in Whitehead's metaphysics have been introduced and discussed at length, I wish now to explain their interrelatedness. The ultimate categories are the principle of *creativity*, the inherent dynamism of the universe; *eternal objects* or novel possibilities; and *actual entities*, or the most real units of *becoming*, including God.

For Whitehead, the ultimates are interdependent and presuppose each other. Hosinski explains that, for the ultimates, "in isolation they are meaningless" and they cannot "be conceived in complete abstraction from each other" [SFCA 212]. In other words, they are on "equal footing with each other as fundamental notions" [SFCA 213].

For instance, *creativity* requires God and *actual entities* in order for its mere abstract character to become actual. Thomas Hosinski writes: “*Creativity* cannot be understood in abstraction from ‘*actual entities*’ (God and temporal entities) since it is only in virtue of *actual entities* that *creativity* can be said to be actual and only in reference to them that the notion has meaning.” [SFCA 214]. In this way, *creativity*, as non-actual, requires the actuality of God and temporal entities in order for it to be manifest in the world. *Creativity* also requires *eternal objects* to be realized in the world, as *creativity* itself is “the advance into novelty” facilitated by the realization of *eternal objects* [see SFCA 214] and for it to be qualified and conditioned in the actual world.

Eternal objects, similarly, require God’s *valuation* of the possibilities in order for *eternal objects* to have relevance to temporal entities, and for *eternal objects* to be issued into the actual world. Moreover, *eternal objects* require the *creativity* inherent in the *concrecence* of God and *actual entities* for them to be actualized in the world as effective and relevant possibilities [see SFCA 215]. Moreover, if it were not for the *actual entities* to realize *eternal objects*, they would be “reduc[ed]... to mere undifferentiated non-entities” [SFCA 213]. Yet this is not the case, for *eternal objects* cannot be abstracted from the actual world due to God’s *valuation* of them, and their inherent values are made meaningful by the achievements of value of *actual entities*, entities which, by their very process, introduce novel possibilities by means of their self-creation.

Actual entities, furthermore, require *creativity*, as it is their very nature to self-create in their process of *becoming*. *Actual entities* require *eternal objects*, furthermore, for them to advance from the *stubborn fact* of the past to novel experience and the achievement of value in the present. Most importantly, *actual entities* require God to provide *eternal objects* for novel experience and the achievement of value, as well as for the unification and integration of actualized value in God’s *consequent nature* [SFCA 214].

Finally, unlike some traditional claims of God’s “wholly otherness,” for Whitehead, God requires all the other ultimates. Whitehead writes that the *primordial nature of God* is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this aspect, he is not before creation, but with all creation” [PR 179]. Moreover, the *primordial nature of God* is “the complete conceptual *valuation* of the

eternal objects,” which is a “free creative act” [PR 344]. That is to say that the very definition of the *primordial nature of God* requires potentiality or *eternal objects*, and this *valuation* is creative.

God requires temporal entities, moreover, as God’s *consequent nature* receives, integrates, reintegrates, preserves, and passes back the actualized value of the temporal world [see SFCA 214]. In this sense, God’s *consequent nature* “results from his *physical prehensions* of the derivative ‘*actual entities,*’” [PR 31] *prehensions* which presuppose the actualizations of *actual entities* in the temporal world. Simply put, God experiences the temporal world, and is “consequent upon the *creative advance* of the world” [PR 345]. In these respects, God is dependent upon and requires *creativity, eternal objects* and temporal *actual entities*.

In sum, the ultimates of *creativity, eternal objects, actual entities* and God cannot be understood apart from each other in Whitehead’s metaphysics. Whitehead writes: “There is no meaning to ‘*creativity*’ apart from its ‘creatures,’ and no meaning to ‘God’ apart from the ‘*creativity*’ and the ‘temporal creatures,’ and no meaning to the ‘temporal creatures’ apart from ‘*creativity*’ and ‘God’” [PR 225]. That is to say, that each ultimate is meaningful only in relation to the other ultimates, and together they constitute that which is indispensable for process to occur at all in Whitehead’s metaphysics.

VII The Ultimacy of God

It must be noted that it is essential not to misconstrue the principle of *creativity* as “more ultimate” than God, [see SFCA 209] a common mistake due to *creativity*’s ubiquity in temporal experience and its unique non-actual status. God is the ultimate of the ultimates in Whitehead’s metaphysics [1] due to the complex relationships between God and the actual world, relationships which make temporal experience and process possible, as well as the very occurrence of *actual entities*. Hosinski writes: “[T]he relation between God and the world is not static; it is a cosmic process of interaction, a continual dynamic interplay between the eternal vision and everlasting *becoming* of God and the efforts of temporal ‘*actual entities*’” [SFCA 208-209].

For Whitehead, God's roles indicate God's ultimacy for the temporal world. Hosinski writes: "Without the *primordial nature of God*, the 'aboriginal condition' qualifying *creativity*, there could be no temporal actual world" [SFCA 211]. This is so as God provides the ordered, meaningful values inherent in novel possibilities to the actual world by means of this "free creative act" [PR 344]. By means of this act that is inherently creative, God provides the possibilities necessary for the advance into further novelty and the achievement of aesthetic value of the temporal world.

God is more ultimate than *creativity* in Whitehead's metaphysics, moreover, as God's *consequent nature* "can be understood as a supreme instance of *creativity*, ever saving the world as it perishes, ever healing it with divine love, and ever luring it toward the actualization of God's eternal vision of beauty and goodness" [SFCA 211]. In other words, that God retains all actualized value, and lures *actual entities* towards beauty and goodness — that is, toward the greatest aesthetic achievement of value — makes God ultimate in Whitehead's metaphysics, as God mediates between flux and permanence

God is ultimate, finally, in that God's *superject* nature passes back the actualized value of the temporal world along with God's *satisfaction*. *Creativity*, however, is qualified and conditioned, even limited in the actualization of that value, whereas God is not limited, conditioned or qualified by any actualization of the temporal world, even as God interacts with the limited experiences of temporal entities. God, then, mediates between the potential and the actual, saving that which has been actualized as well as initiating the next *concrecence* for greater achievements of aesthetic value in the temporal world.

VIII The Phases of Concrecence

This section summarizes the phases of *concrecence*. *Concrecence* is the *becoming* of all *actual entities* and provides the basis for Whitehead's metaphysics and the process aesthetic theory. *Concrecence* is divided into phases:

The first phase is the receptive phase, consisting of *physical prehensions* of the immediate past, the *objectively immortal* entities of *stubborn fact*. The data are given by

the *superject nature of God* and derive from God's *physical prehensions* of preceding temporal *concrescences*.

The second is the responsive phase of *conceptual prehensions* that grasp relevant *eternal objects* ordered by *conceptual prehensions* in the *primordial nature of God*. *Eternal objects* are invested with value due to God's primordial ordering. Next, God provides the *actual entity* with its *subjective aim*, a lure to achieve the most appropriate possibility according to the value of the *eternal objects*.

The third is the integrative phase, wherein God's and the *actual entity's physical* and *conceptual prehensions* are integrated. God and the *actual entity* both feel what has been and what may be now [see SFCA 188]. I wish to note that only high grade *actual entities* have the capacity to reach this level of complexity of experience, for instance, conscious creatures. Lower grade *actual entities*, such as vegetation, do not have a great variety of relevant data, hence, the availability of values they may achieve is minimal. This means that the more complex the *actual entity*, the more data it may integrate, hence, the more intense and *satisfying* the *concrecence*.

Once the *conceptual* and *physical prehensions* are integrated, the *actual entity* *ingresses* an *eternal object* it feels the most appropriate to actualize according to its felt value. Once an *eternal object* is actualized, the *actual entity* is *satisfied*. The *concrecence* terminated, the entity loses its "subject-hood" and passes into *objective immortality*. God *prehends* these objectifications of the entity's actualized values. As God achieves *satisfaction*, his experience of the actualized value is objectified. God's *superject* nature then passes back God's *satisfaction* into the world, now objectified, and provides the givenness of the *objectively immortal* past for future entities.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the formative elements of *creativity*, *eternal objects* and the *primordial nature of God*, focusing on their role of introducing novelty into the actual world. *Creativity* is the inherent dynamism of the universe, and is expressed in the self-creation of "*actual entities*." *Eternal objects* are the possibilities that are *ingressed* in each *concrecence*. The *primordial nature of God* orders the *eternal objects* to ensure

effective relevance. The *primordial nature of God* also provides the *initial subjective aim* that initiates the *concrecence*.

‘Actual entities,’ the data for Whitehead’s metaphysics, are the basic units of existence, and the subjects of *concrecence*. *Actual entities* partake of potentiality in order to achieve aesthetic value by means of *concrecence*. Concrecence is Whitehead’s conception of the process of *becoming*. Prehensions, or feelings, enable the *actual entities* to feel the data of the past and, by means of the *subjective aim*, to feel the values of the possibilities to be actualized in the present. Once a value has been actualized, the *consequent nature of God* integrates, synthesizes and preserves that value. The *superject nature of God* then passes back God’s feelings of the actualized value into the world. This serves as the relevant data for future entities.

The significance of these aspects of Whitehead’s metaphysics for the thesis is that they provide the foundation for the process aesthetic theory with which I find parallels in Camus’ writing concerning the value of existence. In the next chapter, the thesis discusses *concrecence* as the means by which *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value and strive to attain the aesthetic mean, a balance in the aesthetic elements of experience.

ENDNOTES

1 While this chapter has discussed the contribution of God in the process of *concrecence* of temporal entities, Whiteheadian humanists argue for a Whiteheadian metaphysics without God.

The “Whitehead Without God” position holds that Whitehead’s metaphysics would be more coherent if God were eliminated. To demonstrate this, Whiteheadian humanist Donald Sherburne examines many aspects and principles of Whitehead’s metaphysics. One relevant issue focuses on God’s role of providing entities with the givenness of the past.

Sherburne asks: how can God “perceive *occasions* in the first place so that they can be taken up as *objectively immortal* into his *consequent nature*?” [PPCT 308]. As previously indicated, *actual entities* *prehend* objectified entities, not contemporary

entities. Hence, God could provide the past only if God *prehends* contemporaries. Yet this would violate Whitehead's metaphysical principles.

As also stated above, Whitehead's God *concretes along with* temporal entities; hence, God is a contemporary of each *actual entity*. However, Sherburne indicates that if God *concretes along with X* and "witnesses" the perishing of X, God cannot *prehend X* until X is *objectively immortal*. Hence, God cannot provide A (a *concreting* entity) with X (the past) until X is *objectively immortal*, as God is the contemporary of both X and A. Therefore, Sherburne argues that God cannot *prehend X* before A *prehends X*, and God cannot provide A with X, the givenness of the past [PPCT 309]. Accordingly, the only way that God provides the givenness of the past to *concreting* entities is to claim that God does *prehend actual entities* as they *concrete*. Again, this, would make God an exception to the metaphysical rules.

Sherburne asks: what need, then, do we have of God preserving the past? Sherburne "denies that the value of life depends upon a God who either provides men with a general confidence about the final worth of life ... or with a sense of the worthwhileness of the present moment whatever its final outcome" [CGPT 114]. For Sherburne, in other words, that God provides and preserves the past does not render existence worthwhile; he states: "take God away and you don't take away all value — there will still be the value, the significance, of experience as immediately felt by temporal *occasions*. The worthwhileness of *occasions* is in the richness of the experience of *occasions*" [PPCT 325]. In other words, experience is felt as valuable in its immediacy and transience, in the *satisfaction* of the entity and its actualized value.

Chapter Two

The Process Aesthetic Theory

Introduction

This chapter examines the process aesthetic theory, which has significant implications for Whitehead's contention of the value of existence. The process aesthetic theory contends that each experience contains aesthetic value somewhere on the spectrum of aesthetic achievement. *Actual entities* are lured towards the actualization of the most appropriate aesthetic value by means of the *ideal aims* provided by the *primordial nature of God*, aims which initiate each *concrecence*. *Actual entities* have the freedom to respond to the lure, as well as the opportunity — and the obligation at the conscious level — to achieve appropriate aesthetic value relevant to its particular experience. Ideally, the *actual entity* achieves the aesthetic mean.

However, the aesthetic factors in the environment condition the experience and either foster or hinder the attainment of the aesthetic mean. For instance, order, or “settled-ness,” limits possibilities, and may introduce monotony in the data, yet it also provides stability from which novelty is contrasted. Disorder, moreover, may precipitate chaos, yet it also provides novelty and diversity. Nevertheless, both order and disorder, when extreme, introduce “inhibitions” or “attenuations” in the experience of *actual entities* [see PR 90].

Furthermore, while *creativity*, freedom and agency ensure some value in each *concrecence*, there is always the possibility that evil or suffering arise (also called “less than appropriate aesthetic experiences”) either deliberately or accidentally, from the free choices of *actual entities*. Hence, for Whitehead, the freedom and agency of *actual entities* are the source of evil in the world. Also, the more radical the risk to overcome *stubborn fact* involves an even greater chance for evil to emerge.

There are various forms of evil, some of which are mentioned above as “extremes.” Another form of evil, called the “loss of value,” occurs when the past fades, and the subjective immediacy of that value is “weakened” over time. Another form of the loss of value occurs when less appropriate values are actualized, to the exclusion of equal or greater values.

Nevertheless, evil is “overcome” in the process aesthetic theory in several ways. First, evil is overcome by means of *objective immortality*, which ensures the preservation of value and the contribution of value to future entities. Secondly, the loss of values is “saved” by means of the integration and synthesis of all past values in the *consequent nature of God*. Most significantly, God also contributes to “overcoming” evil by providing *actual entities* with *ideal aims*.

According to Whitehead, *actual entities* seek and require experiences of aesthetic value and meaningfulness [see ASPE 24] and strive to actualize an aesthetic balance between the extremes of order and disorder, and between monotony and chaos. In the process aesthetic theory, this balance is referred to as the aesthetic mean, which ideally promotes experiences that guarantee appropriate aesthetic value for every unique situation. In achieving the aesthetic mean, the *actual entity* avoids the extremes on the spectrum of aesthetic value from which evil arises [see EPG 143]. The aesthetic mean is the “attainment of beauty,” which arises from the balance of the aesthetic factors in the *actual entity’s* felt experience derived from *concrecence*. Beauty, as an “ideal aesthetic value” [CSPM 304] is the goal of the experience of each *actual entity*, and entails harmony within the integrated data as it avoids any “attenuations” or “inhibitions.”

The tenet of the process aesthetic theory that this study emphasizes is that all experience contains aesthetic value, and my contention is that this aspect of the process aesthetic theory is compatible with Camus’ views of the value of existence.

I i Aesthetic Experience

F.S.C. Northrop explains that, in Whitehead’s view, experience involves “aesthetically impressionistic images” [see AWA xiii]. Experience contains intricate, subtle, intuitive and imaginative feelings and interpretations by means of prehensions of the objective data. These feelings are derived from experience which influences how the *actual entity* “feels” or “interprets” the objective data at present [see KPR 245]. Interpretation entails subjective forms of feeling, feelings which constitute the *actual entity’s* felt response to the data. For Whitehead, subjective forms of feeling are not added to the experience; subjectivity and feelings constitute the experience. Because the

subjective perspective of the *actual entity* informs its interpretation of the data, experience is “inescapably aesthetic” [see AWA xviii]. In fact, Whitehead defines experience as “enjoyment” [see WP 10] and contends that “the basic principles of immediate awareness are aesthetic” [WP 11]. William Dean adds that, for Whitehead, the “major aesthetic task is to discern ... the aesthetic worth of the external world” [WOA 110]. That is, the *private subjective experience of the public objective data is primarily aesthetic*.

I ii The Lure Towards the Achievement of Aesthetic Value

The lure of the *subjective aim*, which Whitehead also calls the “appetite,” implies an “urge” towards the realization of “what is not and may be” [PR 32]. This is affected at the unconscious level by conscious *actual entities*, and is negligible in lower-grade entities. As discussed in Chapter One, the *subjective aim* lures the *actual entity* towards the most appropriate eternal object to *ingress* in order to achieve the most appropriate aesthetic value. Also, as previously indicated, the *valuation of eternal objects* is derived from the *subjective aim*. Valuation is the determination of the “intensive importance” [see PR 241] of the relevant *eternal objects*, and guides the *actual entity* in its ingression. When the lure is successful, the *actual entity* achieves the most appropriate aesthetic value attainable in that *concrescence*, and an aesthetic balance is reached [see AWA 44]. However, as free, the *actual entity* may choose a possibility that is less appropriate. In this case, the outcome is an aesthetically imbalanced experience, or suffering.

II i Aesthetic Value

The by-product of the lure of the *subjective aim* and ingression of *eternal objects* is the realization of aesthetic value. For Whitehead, aesthetic value is identified with the character or uniqueness of the *actual entity* due to its own “pattern” of realizations [see ME 28]. Whitehead states: “Value is the intrinsic reality of an event” [SMW 93]. This succinctly points to the fundamental tenet of the process aesthetic theory that *all experience contains aesthetic value*.

Hartshorne states, furthermore, that experience is most aesthetically valuable when it is diversified and harmonious [see CSPM 303]. All feelings contribute to the

emergence of the aesthetic value of a particular experience and are “values contributory to the *satisfaction*” [PR 84].

II ii The Achievement of Aesthetic Value and the Principle of Relativity

According to Whitehead, the *actual entity* achieves aesthetic value and is *satisfied* for its own sake in its own actual *becoming*. The final synthesis makes the *actual entity* unique, novel and valuable. Kraus explains: “Value refers to the in-it-selfness and for-it-selfness of the process of self-realization” [ME 28]. *Experience itself*, in other words, is *valuable for the actual entity* itself, and its decisions are motivated by its own benefit. Nevertheless, this motivation is not incompatible with empathy for others; in fact, it is aligned with empathy, because the *actual entity donates* the aesthetic value of its experience to the world [WP 11]. Hartshorne writes: “Self-interest ... is seen as a case of sympathetic projection” [WP 16].

Whitehead’s principle of relativity demonstrates that it is by means of mutual prehensions that all *actual entities*prehend and benefit from the aesthetic value achieved by each *actual entity*. As *objectively immortal*, the achieved value of an individual *concrecence* becomes a datum for the *concrecence* of future *actual entities* [ME 28]. It is by means of mutual prehensions, then, that the *actual entity* is able to donate its achieved value for the benefit of all other *actual entities*.

III The Implications of the Theory

III i Factors that Promote and Hinder the Achievement of Appropriate Aesthetic Value

In his metaphysics, Whitehead strives for comprehensiveness, coherence and adequacy in the task of including, describing and interpreting all experience. As a result, Whitehead’s claim that each experience contains aesthetic value has implications for those aspects of experience that are undeniably negative and destructive.

Whitehead’s metaphysics and the process aesthetic theory address the problem of evil by accounting for that which fosters and hinders aesthetic value. For example, the

standard of value of *eternal objects*, the settled past and the opportunity for novel experience, contrasts in the data, intensity and depth or the lack of depth of feeling, order and disorder, as well as the implications of risk-taking both foster and hinder value achievement. The next section shows that it is the agency and freedom of *actual entities* that create the possibility for evil and suffering to arise from the data of experience. However, when the data of the aesthetic synthesis are harmonious or mutually compatible, appropriate aesthetic experiences result, i.e., that which produces the best possible actuality for each moment in experience.

III ii The Standard of Value

While aesthetic value arises from the unity produced by *concrecence*, there are varying degrees of aesthetic value in experience. The agency of *actual entities* grants them *freedom* of choice, and the *opportunity* to ingress the best available option. However, agency and freedom *do not guarantee* that the most *appropriate* decision is made.

As indicated in Chapter One, the ordering of *eternal objects* lends them the relevance required for their availability to be ingressed and issued from mere potentiality into actuality. Relevance gives *eternal objects* meaningfulness for each *actual entity*, and meaningfulness in turn gives *eternal objects* aesthetic value for each *actual entity*. This relevance, then, requires a standard of value with which to judge the meaningfulness of *eternal objects* [see SFCA 75]. Degrees of relevance, and hence, meaningfulness, designate the aesthetic value achieved as it is “displayed against a background of relevant alternatives” [ME 39]. Choosing among alternatives requires a standard of value that creates “contraries, grades, and oppositions” [SMW 178] that enable the *actual entity* to compare the relative value of the possibilities. Gradation creates contrasts in the data, gradations which make the selection aesthetic. Kraus writes that a contrast is a unity among multiplicity that “joins those items in a higher unity” [ME 117].

The environment, however, consisting of past *actual entities*, must provide certain aesthetic factors to foster appropriate aesthetic experiences, such as “order” and “disorder.” Order and disorder are general terms that include many other aesthetic factors

of experience; for example, superficiality and intensity, and monotony and chaos. These terms are discussed in the next section.

III iii Order

According to Whitehead, the environment provides the order necessary for the emergence of aesthetic value. For Whitehead, order is the givenness of the data, [see PR 83] the “settled-ness” of the past or *stubborn fact*. Order is also conceived as the “continuing physical structures” [SFCA 88] and the stability upon which the emergence of novelty relies [see SFCA 148]. As such, order serves as the unalterable, secure foundation of the antecedent world that creates the necessary contrasts with novelty.

Due to the unchangeability of order, order limits the possibilities for the *concreting* entity. The limitations, then, created by the standard of value and expressed in order, are able to promote sufficient *satisfaction*, because the limitations of order restrict potentiality to *only those possibilities that would foster some value* [see ME 61].

It follows, then, that by restricting possibility and serving as a stabilizing factor in experience, order both “limits and supplies” [see PR 110] *actual entities* with the aesthetic resources for sufficient and appropriate intensity of experience. Whitehead writes: “Intensity arises from order such that the multiplicity ... can enter explicit feeling as contrasts” [PR 83]. In the process aesthetic theory, order and novelty are the principle contrasts in experience: order is stability and givenness, while novelty is uniqueness and appropriate intensity of feeling.

It is important to note that Whitehead insists that there does not exist one absolute order applicable to each *actual entity* [see PR 91]. As each *actual entity* partakes of only those *eternal objects* that are relevant to its *concrecence*, order is relative, in that there are only those orders that correspond to the requirements of the experiences of particular *actual entities* [see ME 62].

III iv Disorder

Disorder, on the other hand, is the failure to harmonize the data in an aesthetic synthesis [see KPR 83] and is created by “mutually inhibiting or incompatible elements” that are either prehended negatively or “synthesized as contrasts if an aesthetic unity is to

be achieved” [ME 61]. Whitehead also calls disorder “dissonance,” which overwhelms the viability of achieving the aesthetic mean [see KPR 162]. Another term utilized in the process aesthetic theory is “discord,” which refers to “inhibitions and attenuations” in the data [see PR 90].

Moreover, disorder includes that which is logically excluded from order, such as that which Whitehead refers to as “vagueness,” “chaos” and “triviality.” “Vagueness” is similar to disorder, occurring when there is “irrelevance of difference” in the data [PR 111]. In other words, vagueness arises when the contrasts are “faint,” lack “strength” or variance [see PR 111]. “Chaos,” on the other hand, “thwarts” or “enfeebles” the *satisfaction* due to the “lack of compatible contrasts” [see PR 92-3].

Next, “triviality,” also called “superficiality,” arises when the aesthetic factors of the synthesized data are uncoordinated. Whitehead states that triviality occurs when “Incompatibility has predominated over contrast” [PR 111]. Whitehead also conceives of triviality as the “loss” of aesthetic value [see ME 161]. This occurs when the past is merely repeated, and greater potential values are not realized. Stated simply, triviality is a product of mere order, and is also called “monotony,” as for instance, boredom [EPG 145].

III v Aesthetic Proportions in Experience

According to the process aesthetic theory, mere order reduces life to repetition [see KPR 175]. On the other hand, too much order breeds simplicity, regularity [see EPG 144] or even “numbing predictability” [ASPE 24]. The feeling, for instance, that the *actual entity* has for mere order is “revolt” [KPR 175]. Barry Whitney writes that too little complexity or “unnecessary triviality is as much an evil to be avoided as too little order. Discord is not the sole evil” [EPG 148].

It follows, then, that disorder in the data brings minimal aesthetic value in experience, while an excess of disorder results in chaos. Insufficient intensity as well as chaos equally produce aesthetically imbalanced experiences. Moreover, too much intensity breeds confusion and over-stimulation, while too much superficiality brings triviality or monotony. According to Whitehead, the *actual entity*, therefore, requires an aesthetic mean between order and disorder, or superficiality and intensity, for an

appropriate aesthetic experience to emerge [see ME 61]. The order-disorder ratio conditions the experience out of which arises aesthetic value [see ME 61]. Kraus writes: “The aesthetic value of a *satisfaction* finds its inspiration or lack of inspiration in the order-disorder given for it in the environment” [ME 62].

It is important to understand Whitehead’s emphasis to dissociate order from goodness and disorder from evil [see PR 112] as both are required to achieve appropriate aesthetic experiences. With disorder comes *diversity*, *variety* and hence, *novelty*. Hartshorne explains that the diversity inherent in disorder limits predictability as it is “unforeseen novelty” [see CSPM 306]. Whitehead contends also that “Progress is founded upon the experience of discordant feelings” [AI 156]. That is to say, that disorder may contribute to the achievement of appropriate aesthetic value, in that it provides the impetus to break from the *stubborn fact* of the discord to achieve a greater, more *satisfying* experience.

Disorder, furthermore, provides necessary contrasts from order to foster the emergence of novelty [see ME 64]. The importance of contrast is that it ensures that novelty is set apart from order to prevent the “uncreative reiteration” of the past [see ME 62]. Whitehead emphasizes that “the lure for contrast [is] a condition for intensity of experience” [KPR 53]. When there are appropriate contrasts in the data, a harmonious experience emerges, leading ideally to an aesthetic balance. Whitehead refers to this as “achieving beauty” in experience. Therefore, the process aesthetic theory contends that the proper proportions of the data of experience is the chief requirement for the *actual entity* to advance creatively with sufficient novelty and contrasts as well as opportunities to achieve the aesthetic mean.

Finally, Whitehead recognizes that the aesthetic components of experience initially deemed merely discordant may contribute to an adjustment or modification of the aim or direction of experience, even if the present experience is felt as balanced. Whitehead writes: “Perfections of diverse types are among themselves discordant. Thus the contribution to Beauty which can be supplied by Discord ... is the positive feeling of a quick shift of aim from the tameness of outworn perfection to some other ideal with its freshness still upon it” [AI 256]. This points to the importance of diversity and variety, as opposed to striving to maintain an experience that is considered “perfect” or “beautiful.” This, however, inevitably becomes merely ordered, and hence, monotonous and

imbalanced. Whitehead states succinctly: “[E]ven perfection will not bear the tedium of indefinite repetition... Adventure is essential, namely, the search for new perfections” [AI 258].

III vi “Creative Risk-Taking”

The *actual entity* is capable of attaining the proper proportion of order and disorder by means of its agency and the appropriateness of its choices. In the process aesthetic theory, this involves “creative risk-taking” [EPG 149]. Each *actual entity* must take risks in order to intensify its aesthetic experience and create contrasts of aesthetic value from *stubborn fact*. Satisfying and appropriately intense experiences necessarily entail risk because, evidently, for conscious *actual entities*, there are more reasons and incentives to actualize novelty than to simply reiterate the past. In other words, there are more benefits in actualizing novelty, as the resulting experience is more *satisfying*. A conscious *actual entity* does not seek *only ordered* experiences, as mere repetition would be less *satisfying* than the realization of the aesthetic value of a novel experience. Moreover, David Ray Griffin states that since there is value in each experience, there is “some assurance that the risks are worth the taking” [EPG 149].

The agency and inherent *creativity* of the *actual entity* implies the responsibility of each to achieve aesthetic value and to donate that value to the world. While achieving the most appropriate possibility is always difficult, Sherburne calls this “the struggle after value” [CEE 84]. He states also that “The worthwhileness of occasions is in the richness of the experience of occasions. As agents we can make experience either richer or poorer; there lies the ground of our obligation” [PPCT 325]. This obligation reflects the indebtedness of each *actual entity* to the world, to contribute the aesthetic value it has ingressed.

IV i Freedom and Agency: The Emergence of Evil

Whitney states that the inherent *creativity* of *actual entities* “guarantees a minimum value to every actuality” [EPG 142]. In fact, according to Whitney, “There is no divine guarantee that any creature will experience anything other than what the

creature itself chooses, although the divine lure is powerful, and the actions of other creatures and natural forces also affect us very significantly” [ASPE 28]. In this way, there is *no guarantee* that the most appropriate value is actualized, as the freedom and agency of *actual entities* entail the prospect of introducing suffering and evil — or less appropriate aesthetic experiences — into the world. Hartshorne explains: “Risk of evil and opportunity for good are just two aspects of one thing: multiple freedom ... This is the sole, but sufficient, reason for evil as such and in general” [WATS 51]. While *creativity*, freedom and agency ensure *some value in each ingression of eternal objects*, Whitehead asserts that “selection is at once the measure of evil, and the process of its evasion” [PR 340]. This selection, expressive of freedom, *creativity* and agency, presupposes the possibility of issuing evil and suffering into the world due to poor choices.

Actual entities have the opportunity to seek meaningful, valuable experience, despite the surrounding circumstances that may be less than favourable [see ASPE 24]. According to Hartshorne, “the evils are in spite of this meaning, not because of it” [CSPM 317]. Hence, because there is value, but also freedom in each experience, evil, deliberate or unintentional, figures into the equation of the selection from possibility.

IV ii Evil and the Level of Complexity of Actual Entities

The chance of evil arising becomes even greater, moreover, depending on the complexity of the *actual entity*. More sophisticated *actual entities* are able to synthesize a greater amount of data than simple *actual entities*. This amounts to a greater chance for discord to arise from the integration of the data. Whitney writes: “Human beings ... can appropriate an immense range of possibilities either harmoniously or destructively. We are able to accept or reject the divine lure which seeks to persuade us to actualize those possibilities which will produce for us the maximum harmony” [EPG 146]. A human being, as a complex “society” of *actual entities*, may act contrary to the divine lure (felt unconsciously) and *deliberately* choose evil over good. Moreover, suffering may result unintentionally from poor choices *despite* the *ideal aims* provided in the initial phase of *concrecence*. An insect, on the other hand, would not generate very much suffering in the world due to a moment of faulty decision-making.

IV iii The Risk of Evil

Furthermore, the more complex *actual entity* requires greater values corresponding to the capacity for greater intensities in experience [see EPG 144]. Yet, accordingly, the risk of evil becomes greater, and the chance that evil and suffering arise from the experience becomes more likely.

Moreover, the more radical the risk to overcome *stubborn fact* involves a greater chance for discord to emerge [see EPG 145]. Human beings are able to take greater risks due to the capacity to synthesize more data in experience. It is clear, then, that it is more likely that human beings generate far greater evil and suffering from their choices than any other type of *actual entity*. It also follows that the evil that arises from poor human choices is most likely one of the greatest sources of evil and suffering in the world. For this reason, in process philosophy, “God is exonerated from permitting suffering, since God continually provides significant opportunities for meaningful experiences appropriate to every creature” [ASPE 27]. More significantly, experience shows that the rewards and punishments for good or poor choices are immediate. Whitney writes: “Every choice we make limits or expands our future choices. As such it is in our best interest to choose wisely, or else future possibilities are limited more severely than otherwise would be the case” [ASPE 24].

V Evil as the “Loss of Value”

V i The Loss of Value in Potentiality

In the process aesthetic theory, however, there is another type of evil that does not arise from poor choices, but rather from *the very act of choosing*. Whitehead writes: “Selection is elimination” [PR 340]. This means that to choose one possibility is to exclude another of *equal* or *greater* value that remains unrealized. Whitehead calls this “the evil of loss” [EPG 147].

Furthermore, Hartshorne’s “principle of positive incompatibility” states that the loss of value often occurs in decisions involving the “clash” of goods [EPG 147]. He writes succinctly: “always some goods must be renounced” [CSPM 311]. Hartshorne also contends that positive incompatibility accounts for the majority of evil and suffering:

“The principle of incompatible goods, together with that of *creativity*, or the self-determination of each moment of existence in and by the reality of that moment, furnishes the ultimate reason for suffering in the world” [CSPM 311] and that the above “are enough to make a purely harmonious world impossible” [CSPM 312].

Whitehead emphasizes the above as he writes that all the aesthetic aspects of experience, taken together, are “mutually obstructive” [PR 340]. Stated differently, it may even be the case that, in a complex experience of equally valuable and internally harmonious feelings, the loss of value is effected due to the opposite lures of the goods in question. Whitehead writes that the “two systems of prehensions may each be internally harmonious; but the two systems in the unity of one experience may be discordant, when the two intensities of their subjective forms are comparable in magnitude.” [AI 260]. That is, the loss of value occurs when discord arises from the incompatibility of two goods, yet, in this case, neither are actualized due to the “magnitude” of the prehensions and of both values.

V ii The Loss of Value in Actuality

As shown above, aesthetic value is lost in potentiality as it is *excluded* from actuality. Yet another type of loss of value is incurred by the very *inclusion* of that value in actuality. Whitehead states: “The ultimate evil ... lies in the fact that the past fades, that time is a ‘perpetual perishing’” [PR 340]. Over time, actualized aesthetic value fades from relevance and immediacy. Whitehead contends that, inevitably, “process entails loss” [PR 340]. Past achievements are still felt by the *actual entity*, yet they are not felt with the subjective immediacy the *actual entity* once had. For Whitehead, the loss of value is part of the inevitability of evil in experience. Whitehead states: “Decay, Transition, Loss, Displacement belong to the essence of *Creative Advance*” [AI 286].

VI The “Overcoming” of Evil

VI i Objective Immortality

In Whitehead’s metaphysics, the loss of achieved value is “overcome” by means of *objective immortality*. As indicated in Chapter One, *actual entities* lose their subjectivity once *concrecence* is terminated. As an object, however, the achieved value of the objectified entity becomes a value for future entities [see ME 160]. The contribution of value by means of the *actual entity’s objective immortality* aids partially to overcome the loss of achieved aesthetic value [see EPG 157]. This is what Kraus calls the “pragmatic afterlife” [ME 46] of *actual entities*. In this respect, aesthetic value is preserved by means of *objective immortality* and contributes to future value as part of the data relevant in future *concrecences*.

VI ii The Preservation of Value in the Consequent Nature of God

The role played by the *consequent nature of God* more significantly overcomes the loss of value. As previously shown, God experiences the objectifications of actuality and preserves all achieved value. But it must be noted that God preserves *both the actualized good and the actualized evil*. Whitney writes: “God’s experience of evil is supplemented by his perfect retention of all past values” [EPG 151].

That God retains all past values has implications for the problem of evil. Several questions arise, such as How does God experience the evil that is actualized? And How does God respond to that evil? According to the process aesthetic theory, God overcomes evil in God’s experience of the world. Whitehead contends that God’s feelings of all temporal actualization is “woven by rightness of feeling” [KPR 182] into one unified harmony. This means that the opposites and incongruities in the actual data, such as good and evil, are brought together in God’s consequent nature. In other words, all the actual data, including the evil, are “harmonized into a greater synthesis” [EPG 152]. Whitehead clarifies this: “The revolts of destructive evil ... are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve ... is yet saved by its relation to the completed whole” [KPR 182]. That is, all actualized evil is synthesized in God’s experience as part of the actual data received into God’s consequent nature, and the actualized evil has its own place in God’s “ideal complement of vision” [EPG 151].

VI iii The Synthesis of Values in the Consequent Nature of God

Hartshorne contends that evil is overcome by God's synthesis of temporal actualizations as God "realizes the most good which can be achieved through synthesis ... which include the evil to be sure, but much more besides" [EPG 151]. Hartshorne states that God "adds to all such evils a context which produces in relation to them, whatever good can be made to result" [EPG 151]. This context is God's synthesis of the temporal good and evil. The value of experience overcomes evil also as "all past goods are fully experienced together with all the good which lies potentially within the evil" [EPG 152]. Hartshorne explains: "partly evil occurrences are changed from isolated entities by being taken into a new whole of ideal sympathy and vision beholding also what the future can best do with the good and the evil in them" [EPG 152].

VI iv God's Satisfaction and the Provision of the Ideal Aim

God's most significant contribution to overcoming evil lies in his provision of *ideal aims* that initiate *concrecence*. As stated in Chapter One, both God and temporal entities attain *satisfaction* once *concrecence* is completed. God then "donates" God's *satisfaction* to the world so that it is part of the relevant data for entities of the immediate future. David Griffin writes: "The evils experienced and overcome by God do not merely remain part of the divine experience, but, in fact, are passed back into the world for the benefit of its creatures!" [EPG 155]. This "passing back" of God's *satisfaction* benefits *actual entities* in that they feel the harmony of God's *satisfaction*.

As also previously indicated, the *primordial nature of God* provides each *actual entity* with *ideal aims* that equip the *actual entity* with feelings of God's vision of beauty and goodness for the immediate future. Hence, the *actual entity* has the opportunity to overcome the evils contained in the immediate past. Griffin writes: "In responding to the evil facts in the world ... [God] provides *ideal aims* for the next state of the world designed to overcome the evil" [EPG 155]. The *ideal aims* serve as a lure for feeling towards those possibilities that would overcome the evil of the settled past and "actualize beauty" in the immediate future.

VI v Evil and the Value of Experience

Finally, God is able to overcome evil due to the value inherent in each experience. As all temporal experience contains value, so God's experience of actuality is valuable. According to the process aesthetic theory, as there is *always value* in each experience, there is never an "overbalance" of disvalue [see EPG 152] in the divine, nor temporal experience.

There is some disagreement, however, on this point. Hartshorne argues that there is a "net increment of value" or a "surplus of good over evil" [EPG 152] in each experience, while Whitney contends that it is enough that each experience contains some value, even minimal value [EPG 153]. Whitney writes that because there is minimal value in each experience, we "continue to seek value despite the suffering and misery to which we are all condemned" [ASPE 31]. That there is value in each experience, retained perfectly by God, is reassuring, and gives us "sufficient stimulus (in most cases) to continue our striving in the creative advance for aesthetic achievement" [EPG 153]. Whitney writes that "to expect more than minimal value would be asking to be other or more than what we are: we are finite creatures, free (within limits)" [ASPE 25]. In other words, to demand more than limited value would be to demand a world wholly unlike our own. Despite this disagreement, it can be said that in the process aesthetic theory, "no actuality could not have value" [EPG 143]. In other words, "Absolute aesthetic failure simply means no experience at all" [CSPM 304].

These claims of the process aesthetic theory have significant implications for the problem of evil. The traditional aesthetic theory holds that evil is merely illusory, and that "God wills certain evils for aesthetic ends ... or for the overall good" [EPG 151]. In the process aesthetic theory, however, evil is neither negated nor denied, but recognized as a reality. Whitney explains: "Evil is not obliterated in God's experience of the world's evil or seen as something other than it is, but rather becomes part of his everlasting experience" [EPG 151]. Consequently, all the good and evil realized in the achieved values of the temporal world are equally felt and preserved in the *consequent nature of God*.

VI vi Divine Power and the Lure to Actualize Good

It is important to note that Whitehead revises the traditional notion of God's omnipotence. For process theists, God is a *persuasive*, not a coercive God. God provides the lure towards the greatest possible value, and provides temporal creatures with the opportunity to freely choose according to their limited situation. Whitney writes that Whitehead's God provides the "persuasive lure which enables us to appropriate the aesthetic value which gives our lives meaning" [ASPE 27].

As *ideal aims* are feelings of the actualized good and evil in the immediate past as well as feelings of the potential good in the immediate future, they entail the responsibility to overcome past evil. This is at least the case with *actual entities* endowed with consciousness, for instance, human beings. While evil may arise unintentionally in conscious and non-conscious entities, consciousness provides the awareness of what has been and what could be, and the responsibility to choose appropriately from the alternatives.

VII i The "Significance" of Experience

Flux and transience are an inevitability in temporal experience, yet, for process philosophy, the achievement of aesthetic value is worthwhile *despite* the transience of value [PPCT 324] because of the preservation of value in the consequent nature. For Sherburne, "Experience is valuable because of, not despite, its transience. What is valuable is depth of feeling and *satisfaction* derived from experience. Value arises in, is present in, the passing flux of immediate things" [PPCT 325]. Consider the absence of this flux: if the past were forever present, all achieved value would be meaningless, because it would inevitably fade into the backdrop of mere order, stability, and unalterable monotony.

The flux of temporal experience also points to its "significance." William Dean explains that, for Whitehead, "the sense of being one actuality in a world of actualities — is the gift of aesthetic significance" [WOA 108]. In other words, the interrelatedness of all *actual entities* in flux contributes to the experience of meaningfulness and "worthwhileness" as the entity feels its relations with all others.

Flux is related to its opposite, the permanence of value in God. Process philosopher John Cobb contends that “the vision of God nevertheless guarantees the worthwhileness of present life whatever may be its temporal outcome” [PPCT 324]. For Whitehead, there is “permanence ‘beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things’” [SMW 275] that “inspires the sense of the worthwhileness of these things themselves” [PPCT 324]. Hence, the permanence of value in God lends significance and meaningfulness to experience; it is a final confidence in the worthwhileness of experience, experience which inevitably entails risk, loss and evil, but also the possibility of good.

VII ii God and Temporal Evil

Here, several traditional questions arise: If God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? Must the achievement of aesthetic value be so costly? [EPG 148].

According to the process aesthetic theory, evil is an inevitable part of the temporal world. As previously indicated, God is not coercive, but persuasive, and lures the temporal world towards greater beauty and the achievement of greater aesthetic values. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, the freedom of *actual entities* does not guarantee that the most appropriate value is ingressed. Process itself, moreover, generates evil by means of the loss of value. Finally, Hartshorne’s principle of incompatible goods testifies to the inevitability of evil and suffering.

For Whitehead, “God’s purpose in the creative advance is the evocation of [aesthetic] intensities” [PR 105]. For the process aesthetic theory, God’s vision for the temporal world is to provide temporal entities with the opportunity to experience aesthetic values and, ideally, to attain an aesthetic balance. Whitehead states of God: “His aim ... is depth of *satisfaction* as an intermediate step towards the fulfillment of his own being. His tenderness is directed towards each *actual occasion* as it arises” [PR 105]. If God’s purpose is to give temporal entities the opportunity freely to experience aesthetic values, that opportunity implies the viability for evil and suffering to arise. Conversely, if temporal entities were not free, the experience of aesthetic value would not be possible, as possibility itself implies some degree of freedom. Whitney writes: “In luring the

primordial chaos into ever greater levels of complexity and order, accordingly, God surely is seeking to bring into existence (for his value and for his creatures' value) experiences which are intense and which escape unnecessary triviality" [EPG 148].

VIII i Beauty

This discussion of "beauty" utilizes material from Whitehead's and Hartshorne's writings for a clearer understanding of the process aesthetic theory. The discussion begins with their respective conceptions of beauty to introduce the central aspect of the process aesthetic theory — the aesthetic mean.

Whitehead defines beauty as "the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience" [AI 252] and "the absence of mutual inhibitions among various prehensions" [AI 252]; that is to say, the component feelings in an experience are harmonious and unrestrained by any discord due to clashing feelings. In this way, beauty is the absence of "mutual destructiveness" [AI 256] among the entity's feelings, "the absence of painful clash [or] the absence of vulgarity" [AI 252] as the feelings conform to each other. Whitehead states that the *actual entity* experiences beauty "by reason of the Beauty that would be realized in that occasion by a fortunate exercise of its spontaneity" [AI 255]. For Whitehead, here, "spontaneity" refers to the entity's positive prehensions of that which is felt as "beautiful" among the complex elements of experience. The experience of beauty, then, is due to "a fortunate association with other data combined with a fortunate exercise of spontaneity by the occasion prehending it" [AI 255]. In other words, the association of the combination of the harmony of the entity's subjective and private feelings with the harmony of the public and objective datum results in the experience of beauty.

For Hartshorne, beauty is the "unity in variety" [CSPM 303] that stems from the resulting depth of *satisfaction* of an aesthetically valuable experience. Unity and variety, however, require a balance for beauty to be achieved. Hartshorne explains further: "To the obvious objection that every experience has both unity and variety — unity as one experience, and variety as involving objects diverse both from the experience and from each other — the answer is that this only ensures that there will be at least minimal aesthetic value. And of course there will be" [CSPM 303]. The combination of unity and

variety emphasizes the need of balance as well as contrasts in order to achieve beauty in experience. The depth and appropriateness of the *satisfaction*, moreover, depend on contrasts [CSPM 303]. When the integration of the data is successful, beauty arises from the harmony among the contrasting data. The intrinsic value of beauty, then, is the ultimate goal of experience, and, for the process aesthetic theory, beauty is “the ideal aesthetic value” [see CSPM 303-304] and the optimum achievement of value for the *actual entity*.

VIII ii Beauty and Ethical Goodness

The contention of the process aesthetic theory is that the value of experience is *primarily aesthetic, not ethical*. This is reasonable considering the minimal ethical dimensions of most *actual entities*. According to Whitehead’s “reformed subjectivist principle” discussed earlier, all *actual entities* experience subjectively [see SFCA 26]. “Experience is not necessarily conscious” [SFCA 18] in Whitehead’s metaphysics, as only a small fraction of *actual entities* are conscious. Among those that are conscious, it is only human experience that involves ethical choices. All *actual entities* experience aesthetic values such as harmony and discord, intensity and monotony, sameness and newness. Nevertheless, only human beings (and some of the higher animals) have the capacity for ethical decision-making. Hartshorne writes: “All animals are subject to aesthetic good and evil, but not to ethical good and evil” [CSPM 309].

According to the process aesthetic theory, goodness is an aim at beauty [EPG 217]. That is to say, beauty is “‘the basic value’ and in it both goodness and truth are supposed ... goodness ‘presupposes aesthetics,’ since goodness ‘is not the value of experiences themselves, but rather the instrumental value of acting so as to increase the intrinsic value of future experiences, particularly those of others than oneself’” [EPG 217]. Therefore, beauty is the greatest value (and the achievement of the aesthetic mean, as will be discussed shortly) and includes ethical goodness in the process aesthetic theory. Hartshorne explains: “If we know what experience is, at its best or most beautiful, then and only then can we know how it is right to act: for the value of action is in what it contributes to experience” [CSPM 303].

IX i The Aesthetic Mean

For the process aesthetic theory, an aesthetic balance is only achieved with great difficulty and effort. This is why “our purpose is to seek experiences that avoid the extremes” [EPG 144] of order and disorder, harmony and discord, complexity and simplicity. To avoid these extremes is to achieve an aesthetic balance.

According to Whitehead, balance is “the absence of attenuations due to the elimination of contrasts which some elements in the pattern would introduce and other elements inhibit” [KPR 53]. To achieve an aesthetic balance is to eradicate the data that lead to the rise of discord. But it is more than that: Whitehead also writes that balance is the “preservation” of appropriate contrasts among the possibilities [see KPR 53]. That is, balance is the maintenance of appropriate contrasts among the various elements in experience.

Whitehead also states that balance is “the adjustment of ... diversities for the introduction of contrast with the avoidance of inhibitions by incompatibilities” [KPR 54]. A balance, then, entails the achievement of harmony among the contrasting aesthetic data of experience. Hartshorne adds that for each particular *actual entity*, “there is a balance of unity and diversity which is ideally *satisfying*” [CSPM 304]. *Actual entities* not only require a balance among contrasts in order for experience to be intense and *satisfying*, even coherent, but there is a balance for each particular experiential context or metaphysical standpoint.

According to the process aesthetic theory, the aesthetic mean is the ideal balance which all *actual entities* strive to attain. As mentioned above, extremes in experience create imbalances, leading to suffering and evil. Because there are particular orders for particular *actual entities*, the goal is to achieve the most appropriate experience. This emphasizes that, in many cases, the best decision may yield worse results [see PR 244] for instance, a misinterpretation of a gesture intended to be kind. This illustrates the importance of achieving the most appropriate value rather than the best value.

The ideal vision of the entity itself contained in the *subjective aim* lures the *actual entity* away from past imbalanced experiences and toward *ideal aims* of an aesthetic balance [see EPG 155]. As discussed earlier, it is the order of the settled past and the

novel choices of *actual entities* that foster the viability of aesthetic experiences that “constructively add to the value actualized in the world” [SFCA 148].

IX ii The Dessoir-Davis Circle

For the process aesthetic theory, each experience contains aesthetic value, yet there are various “levels” of beauty attainable within a “spectrum” of value achievement, depending on the variables within the context of the particular experience, such as the acceptance or rejection of the lure of the *ideal aims* and the restrictions inherent in the environment. Yet there is at least some unity and some variety in each experience. This is exemplified in the “Dessoir-Davis Circle”¹ [CSPM 305]. (see attached diagram)

The Dessoir-Davis Circle demonstrates that while “the ideal of success is single, the possibilities of failure are dual, and opposite to one another” [CSPM 304]. In other words, the ideal experience is the centre of the circle, that is, the beautiful, while the dual failures in aesthetic value are at both extremes. For instance, the “magnificent” experience may be unified, yet it may lack sufficient diversity. Conversely, the “commonplace” is too simple, and may lack complexity and exhibit too much order.

Next, the “sublime” as well as the “pretty” may be superficial, yet without sufficient intensity. The “tragic,” moreover, may generate too much profundity, while the “ridiculous” may be trivial in content or may result in discord. Hartshorne writes that, on both sides of the spectrum, “one form of aesthetic failure is as bad as the other” [CSPM 304].

With the exception of the “beautiful,” all of the above are distortions of the ideal. In each case, the experience is either not sufficiently diversified or unified, or may lack appropriate contrasts. Hence, the experiences, on either side of the spectrum, result in a *satisfaction* of insufficient appropriateness. Nevertheless, all experiences contain some level of aesthetic value. Hartshorne states: “deviations from the mean still contain aesthetic value if they are not hopelessly far from the mean” [CSPM 304]. Yet, for the process aesthetic theory, “no actuality could not have value” [EPG 143]. In other words, each experience contains at least some value: that is, value is experience.

The relevance of the data and the capacity of the subject to assimilate it also determine the aesthetic outcome. Hartshorne writes: “The diameter of the circle as well as

its location of course also may vary greatly” [CSPM 306]. Hartshorne uses the example of a bird song and a symphony. To a human being, a bird song seems pretty, but trivial: yet for the bird, it is beautiful and profound [CSPM 305]. Similarly, “For a bird, a symphony is hopelessly profound: for a human being, some bird songs are almost hopelessly superficial” [CSPM 305]. This illustrates that, in Whitehead’s metaphysics, only relevant *eternal objects* are available to each *actual entity*, as they are the only meaningful possibilities for that entity. For instance, the bird song is meaningfully relevant to the bird, yet a symphony is meaningless to the bird.

X The Greatest Aesthetic Achievements

Hartshorne writes that one way to interpret what Whitehead means by beauty or aesthetic value is “happiness” [see WP 107]. While happiness is a human value, it is congruous with Whitehead’s theory of experience: “to enjoy is to exist as a unity self-created out of the manifold” [ME 10]. If beauty is the “mutual adaptation of elements in experience” [AI 252] then “to say that the aim of the universe is beauty is to say happiness” [WP 107] which includes many different experiences and values.

Nevertheless, the greatest aesthetic achievements are achieved by human beings, for human experience is the most sophisticated and complex type of subjective experience. Hartshorne writes that the values of “companionship and generosity” [WP 108] are also among the highest values that one may attain as they are the most *satisfying* and meaningful experiences. Hartshorne writes: “Harmony with other persons is aesthetically on a higher level ... There are many kinds of such relations, all subject to aesthetic criteria” [CSPM 312]. Hartshorne adds that the variance and contrasts involved in different types of relationships “tend more to unite than to divide, to harmonize more than produce discord ... [and is] the supreme form of harmony between equals” [CSPM 315].

But what could be greater than the loyalty to promoting the greatest good for humanity, the fidelity to human well-being? Hartshorne claims that “There is no definitive rational aim short of the good of humanity (at the very least) so far as we have the power to promote that good” [CSPM 320]. Hartshorne writes of the “larger needs of

mankind”: “The ultimate loyalty is ... not even to the totality of mankind ... but rather to that cosmic something or someone relation to which, or relation to whom, must ultimately embrace all our values, and which or who is above our narrow prejudices, and stands for the truly common or universal good of all creatures. Without an aim beyond self, and even beyond any merely human good, life on this temporary planet seems as absurd as Sartre says it is” [CSPM 316].

This fidelity to a “cosmic something,” an “aim beyond self” is best expressed as the fidelity to the whole of humanity, seeking justice and upholding the common value of humanity. It is hardly an extrapolation to say that just acts entail the most aesthetically and ethically sound decisions and acts, creating the most beauty and value.

As previously discussed, all achieved aesthetic value is prehended by all *actual entities*. It follows, then, that to act justly in accordance with a higher loyalty to the common value of humanity is to achieve value that can literally benefit all *actual entities*. To be loyal to this common value is to multiply the significance and meaningfulness of that value and its benefit for the world. Finally, if all value achieved is aesthetic, then to say that the greatest value is to act justly is to say justice is an achievement of the greatest beauty.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined some of the main aspects of the process aesthetic theory which contends that each experience contains at least some aesthetic value as *actual entities* strive to attain the aesthetic mean, or a balance between the extremes of experience, such as order and disorder, and monotony and chaos. The aesthetic mean, as seen above, is the ideal for each particular metaphysical standpoint, in which the *actual entity* “achieves beauty.”

For Whitehead, *actual entities* are free to respond to the lure of the ideal aim to achieve appropriate aesthetic value. However, there are limitations within which the *actual entity* may achieve this goal. For instance, the order of the environment may restrict experience, yet it also provides the stability from which novelty emerges. It was seen also that disorder, or discord — not to be mistaken for evil — provide the variety

and diversity necessary to effect a contrast from order. Nevertheless, when extreme, both order and disorder introduce “inhibitions” or “attenuations” in the data of experience and hinder the achievement of the aesthetic mean.

Furthermore, while freedom and agency ensure some value in each *concrecence*, there is always the possibility that evil or suffering arise. Hence, for Whitehead, the freedom and agency of *actual entities* are the source of evil in the world. Also, the more radical the risk to overcome *stubborn fact* involves an even greater chance for evil to emerge.

The chapter has also examined the various forms of evil. The “loss of value” is effected by the passing of time and the immediacy of subjective experience is lost. The loss of value occurs also when less appropriate values are actualized, and equal or greater values are excluded from actuality.

For the process aesthetic theory, nonetheless, evil is “overcome” by means of the permanence of value effected by *objective immortality*. As seen, the value actualized by *objectively immortal* entities becomes a value for the benefit of future entities. Secondly, the *consequent nature of God* preserves achieved value by integrating and synthesizing all past values in God’s own experience of the actual world. Lastly, God contributes to “overcoming” evil by providing *actual entities* with *ideal aims*, aims which lend *actual entities* the opportunity to achieve appropriate aesthetic value and, ideally, the aesthetic mean which ideally promotes experiences that guarantee appropriate aesthetic value for every unique situation. In achieving the aesthetic mean, the *actual entity* avoids the extremes on the spectrum of aesthetic value from which evil arises [see EPG 143]. The aesthetic mean is the “attainment of beauty,” which arises from the balance of the aesthetic factors in the *actual entity’s* felt experience derived from *concrecence*. Beauty, as an “ideal aesthetic value” [CSPM 304] is the goal of the experience of each *actual entity*, and entails harmony within the integrated data as it avoids any “attenuations” or “Inhibitions.”

The tenet of the process aesthetic theory that the thesis emphasizes is that all experience contains aesthetic value, and my contention is that this aspect of the process aesthetic theory is compatible with Camus’ views of the value of existence.

Even in the midst of suffering, the value of an experience is often not immediately recognized or felt by the subject. Many of the implications of that event must unfold over

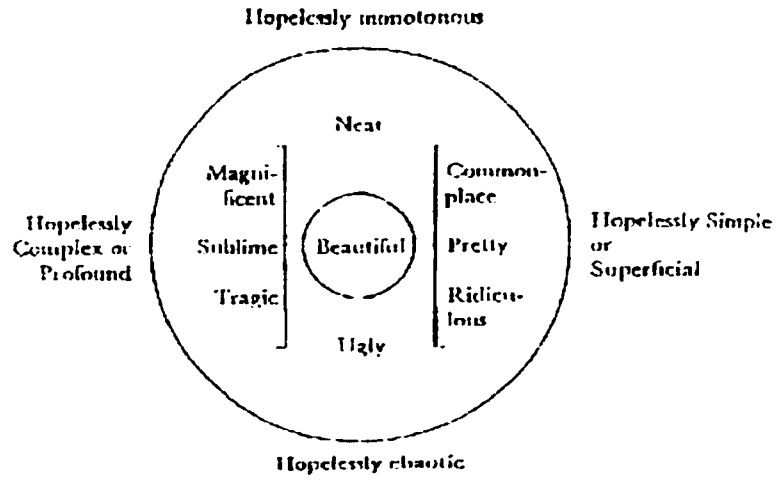
time for the subject to fully appreciate the realized value. Yet there is always some value, some “good from some perspective, even if it is not experienced” [ASPE 29] in each entity.

Moreover, a major accomplishment of the process aesthetic theory is the demonstration that there is no need to defer to an eternal afterlife, where a divine being metes out rewards and punishments according to ethical acts on earth. The process aesthetic theory considers only those aspects of existence that are actual and temporal, and the inherent value in the course of temporal experience is primary as it is actual. Whitney points out that the process aesthetic theory “avoid[s] a supernatural resolution to a rational problem” [ASPE 32]. And Sherburne adds that aesthetic value is found simply in “the passing flux of immediate things” [PPCT 325].

In a telling passage, Hartshorne reaffirms the value of experience despite the predominance of one philosophy over another in passing eras of ideas: “It is ideas of the cosmos that are on trial, not our essential value-sense ... Particular cosmologies are dispensable, not the affirmation of worth that is life itself. The idea that the universe is absurd or meaningless is itself absurd or meaningless. It expresses a living creature trying to deny its aliveness” [CSPM 317].

DIAGRAM

Dessior-Davis Circle



Chapter Three

Albert Camus: The Absurd and Revolt: Temporal Value

Introduction

This chapter examines those essays of Albert Camus that are relevant to the comparison of the Whiteheadian-Hartshornean aesthetic theory and Camus' views. Two central ideas in Camus' writings are "the absurd" and "revolt," also called rebellion, and within these two conceptions lies his argument for the value of existence, notably in *The Rebel* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

Broadly speaking, Camus contends that the absurd characterizes the human condition, and his conception of rebellion protects the common value of human existence. Camus' rejects that which negates life's value, such as suffering, death and injustice. "Absolute values" have the same effect, as they sacrifice the present moment — wherein lies temporal value — for an ideal or an hypothesis that will never be realized. For Camus, this denies temporal value, value that should be realized now. Absolute values, moreover, dismiss the value and meaning of the individual and the unique as they summarize and compartmentalize temporal existence into constructs. This, for Camus, is an evasion of the temporal moment, wherein lies the value of existence.

In his inquiry into the value of existence, Camus interest spans both its positive and the negative aspects. There are, of course, adverse aspects that are undeniable and inescapable, such as the brevity of existence and the inevitability of death. Camus' conception of the "absurd man" recognizes this in an "absurd awakening" that heightens his awareness of the meaninglessness of the universe, and the "divorce" between himself and the world. However, this instills in him the incentive to create his own value and meaning within the confines of his limited freedom, effected by life's brevity.

This position leads to Camus' conception of revolt or rebellion, which perceives injustice as the embodiment of suffering and death. The importance of *lucidity*, that is, the recognition of the primacy of the present moment, motivates the rebel to confront injustice for the sake of the common value of humanity. Camus indicates that this confrontation, however, entails the observance of the limits of freedom, expressed in the

moderation of actions. That is to say, the rebel's actions are confined to the values which the rebel upholds and protects.

According to Camus, moreover, the goal of rebellion is beauty, as it is the measure to evaluate ethical actions within the perimeter of the moderation of revolt [see CGPT 120]. Both art and rebellion for Camus challenge that which opposes the value of existence and lend it the beauty to increase that value. Camus compares art and rebellion: "To create beauty, he must simultaneously reject reality and exalt certain of its aspects. Art disputes reality, but does not hide from it ... Art thus leads us back to the origins of rebellion" [R 258].

One of the most common interpretations of Camus' work is that he espouses a pessimistic philosophy, as evidenced in his subject matter — alienation, meaninglessness, suicide and murder. The present thesis challenges this bleak interpretation of Camus' work, claiming that it affirms the value of existence in spite of evil and suffering. Camus' interpretation of the myth of Sisyphus exemplifies how the absurd and rebellion are related and may be embodied in one figure. Sisyphus may be seen as a bleak representative of a pointless, meaningless existence. Yet he still maintains a passion for life, for which he was dealt his punishment, and still enjoys the freedom to find value within the confines of his limited condition.

I i Camus and the Twentieth Century Experience

This section discusses the historical context in which Camus lived and wrote, more specifically, his disillusionment with constructs and systems of thought and the undeniably widespread suffering and evil in the twentieth century.

Camus' life spanned many significant events of the twentieth century. He was involved in the French Resistance during the Second World War and felt the anxieties of the subsequent Cold War. He also spoke out against guerilla warfare in his native Algeria. Throughout his life, Camus continually dealt with the implications of the suffering and death he witnessed and the meaninglessness he experienced.

According to Camus, death and meaninglessness negate the value of this life. He came to believe that the question of the legitimacy of murder defines all action and

thought; as a member of a society that permits murder, oneself permits it. He writes: “If murder has rational foundations, then our period and we ourselves are rationally consequent. If it has no rational foundations, then we are insane, and there is no alternative but to find some justification or to avert our faces” [R 4]. In other words, any calculated or systematic murder, for instance, state-ordered death, is less defensible for Camus than, for instance, a crime of passion.

I ii Camus’ Rejection of Constructs: Absolute Values

Camus also recognized the dangers of constructs, or systems of thought and their inherent absolute, or prescribed, given values. Camus perceived that individuals and groups appeal to these constructs for deliverance from suffering, meaninglessness and death. For instance, Christian values teach that we shall be delivered from suffering in an afterlife. On the other hand, revolutionary doctrines justify capital punishment for the good of protecting society or as a deterrence: hence, they may claim that a reactionary must be eliminated now. In this respect, constructs *redefine absolute values only for the purposes of the particular group* [see ACLR ix]. Camus understood that “[t]he same values have apparently been invoked on behalf of so many conflicting causes that these values have lost all meaning” [ACLR viii]. These examples emphasize a hypothetical future of greater happiness, and rationalize and reduce temporal existence according to principles of the particular system. Yet Camus indicated that this *evades* the realities of temporal existence and *sacrifices the present in a perpetual suspension of individual fulfillment* [see ACLR xviii].

Throughout his writings, Camus strives to “affirm the value of life in spite of personal and historical tragedy” [CGPT 117]. He defends *temporal* value by exposing the fallacies of *absolute* values and asserts the primacy of temporal value by denouncing that which negates this overarching value. David Sprintzen explains: “He is seeking to diagnose a malady ... from which many of his contemporaries suffer in order to point the way to a cure” [CCE 46]. More broadly, Camus’ writings seek to explain, describe and define the.

I iii “Historical Dislocation”

Camus describes his writings as the effort to understand the age in which he was born [see ACLR viii]. Robert Chester Sutton contends that the twentieth century is characterized by “historical dislocation,” which occurs when there is a drastic shift of beliefs caused by unalterable social upheavals [see HET 61]. This type of historical occasion challenges one to question political, social and religious authority and their responses to the most fundamental questions about human existence. The disassociation from traditional beliefs and unfamiliarity with or the lack of resources to find satisfying alternative responses to existence give rise to fear, anxiety and a “sense of dread” [HET 38]. Sprintzen writes that we “struggle to sustain a transcendent faith by which we can no longer live, but have not yet learned how to live without” [CCE 51].

This confusion becomes burdensome and may lead to inertia and despair: in a word, “alienation” [see HET 61]. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus writes: “A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger” [MS 13]. According to Nathan Scott, the modern dilemma of being caught between the old and the new [see CGPT 115] instills a feeling of “separat[ion] from the source of being” [117 CGPT]. Camus calls this the absurd.

II The Absurd

This section examines Camus’ conception of “the absurd,” the alienation of the individual and the uselessness of absolute values and constructs to lend existence its own meaning and value. For Camus, the individual must confront the meaninglessness of the universe in order to create one’s own value and meaning. While the absurd is conceived in somewhat negative terms, Camus insists that the absurd must be retained in his inquiry into life’s value, as it is the “sole evidence” of temporal existence.

II i The Absurd: The Individual and the Universe

The absurd is alienation from the self, others and the world. The absurd arises partly from the awareness of the disproportion between human aspirations and the indifference of nature. This disproportion lies in the incongruous yet inseparable realities of human existence and the meaninglessness of the universe. Camus writes that this results in a “divorce between man and his life, the actor from his setting” [MS 13]. The absurd “bursts from the comparison between a bare fact and a certain reality” [MS 33]. The absurd is the human quest for value and meaning — the “certain reality” — confronted with a world yielding no answers — the “bare fact.” Thus the absurd arises from the comparison of sensitive humanity and “the primitive hostility” of the world [MS 20]. Camus writes: “The absurd lies in neither of the elements compared; it is born of their confrontation” [MS 33]. That is to say, it is “not in man ... nor in the world, but in their presence together” [MS 34].

II ii The Absurd: The Awakening and The Confrontation

The disproportion of the absurd is also found between “man’s true predicament and all the forms of his social and political life ... all schemes for the ‘improvement’ of his condition by social and political means” [ACP 20]. For Camus, this means that constructs in general, and social and political systems in particular, cannot *unconditionally* provide values and meaning.

Moreover, the absurd is the “awareness of the monotonous, mechanical” aspects of existence [ACP 20]. In other words, the “dailiness” of our routines intensify the sense of meaninglessness and alienation. The absurd arises when there is a momentary detachment from social interaction, when one “stand[s] outside the ... automatic responses of everyday existence, and sees them in a new light” [ACP 20]. This new way of “seeing” is the absurd “awakening.”

In the absurd awakening “the ‘why’ arises” [MS 19]. The question “why” confronts the meaninglessness of existence: Why am I performing this act day after day, and what does it mean? Moreover, The “why” invokes doubt as to God’s existence and the afterlife, as these concepts lack immediacy and concreteness; for, as Camus indicates, in the last analysis we have only a lack of evidence of God and an eternal life.

II iii The Absurd: The Recognition of the Evasions and Illusions of Absolute Values

Another implication of the awareness of the absurd is the realization of the brevity of life [see UCAC 53] and that all things *pass away as though without meaning*. This question by-passes absolute religious meaning and value, because it confronts the realities of human mortality and death's inevitability [see ACP 20]. In the absurd experience, these are unalterable realities that absolute values cannot mitigate. In fact, Camus perceives absolute values as transparent attempts to *compensate* for human mortality, a fact that remains unfronted. Camus states that there is a "hiatus between what we fancy we know and what we really know ... which allows us to live with ideas which, if we truly put them to the test, ought to upset our whole life" [MS 23]. In other words, absolute values or constructs perpetuate the fear of death by providing *given meanings* that *evade* and *escape* from the *present temporal existential situation*. In a word, "The struggle is eluded" [MS 38]. This exemplifies Camus' desire to deny nothing, to refuse to lie and to *maintain complete lucidity*. He writes: "Seeking what is true is not seeking what is desirable" [MS 43].

The absurd, of course, objects to the illusions perpetuated by absolute values, such as the unity, coherence and purpose of existence [see UCAC 9] expressive of the chief illusion, that is, immortality. The absurd confrontation with the lack of unity, coherence and purpose dispels these illusions. Most importantly, the question "why" compels one to confront temporal existence as it is, without appeal to absolutes. In other words, Camus rejects all appeals to another type of existence. Camus writes: "those categories that explain everything are enough to make a decent man laugh. They have nothing to do with the mind" [MS 26]. And: "the doctrines that explain everything to me also debilitate me at the same time. They relieve me of the weight of my own life and yet I must carry it alone" [MS 54].

II iv The Necessity of the Absurd

Camus claims, however, that *the tension between absurd awareness and absurd reality must be maintained* and their coexistence preserved. He writes: “A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it” [MS 35]. The absurd man “does everything to keep before him the absurd ... Negating one of the terms of the opposition on which he lives amounts to escaping it” [MS 53]. This means that once existence is recognized as absurd, the absurd must be retained. If the absurd is denied, the illusions of unity, coherence and purpose are reconstituted. Yet these illusions, sustained by constructs and their inherent absolute values, are exactly that which the absurd rejects.

Yet it is impossible to betray one’s awareness of illusions unless one is willing to betray one’s own consciousness. Camus explains: “If I judge that a thing is true, I must preserve it. If I attempt to solve a problem, at least I must not by that very solution conjure away one of the terms of the problem. For me the sole datum is the absurd. The first and after all, the only condition of my inquiry is to preserve the very thing that crushes me, consequently to respect what I consider to be essential in it” [MS 34]. That is to say, *the absurd must be preserved because the absurd is the only truth, and that which is true must be upheld, not betrayed.*

II v The Absurd: Temporality

It may seem that it is somewhat contrary to “preserve the very thing that crushes me” or to be faithful to that which heightens the sense of alienation and mortality. Yet Camus’ point is that *the absurd is contradictory*: this is the absurd nature of existence itself. For instance, one requires the world, yet the world is alien; one yearns for unity and coherence, but these ideals are elusive. Still, the absurd man lives in a “nostalgia for unity” [MS 50]. Camus writes: “These two certainties — my appetite for ... unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle — I also know that I cannot reconcile them” [MS 51]. In sum, the absurd is “something irreducible that escapes us” [MS 17].

For Camus, that which one knows to be true is that which one experiences in *this* existence. Temporal existence — as contrasted with absolute values or absolute existence, such as eternal life — is the only unequivocal truth, and this temporal

existence is absurd. Therefore, since temporal existence is inevitable — unless one chooses suicide, a response Camus emphatically rejects — then the absurd is also inevitable. So to preserve the temporal existence itself, is to defy death by choosing to live and to reject absolute values by asserting the primacy of temporal existence.

III i The Primacy of Temporal Existence

This section discusses Camus' view of the primacy of temporal existence, especially in the context of his rejection of absolute values. For Camus, the present moment is the only concrete, immediate and relevant data for his inquiry into the value of existence. Despite and because of the inherent limitations of temporal existence, existence is valuable due to that relevance and immediacy in that particular unique context.

If the absurd is the only truth, Camus proposes to remain within the bounds of that truth. Camus stresses that it is important “to bring in nothing that is not certain” and “to live solely with what he knows” [MS 53]. If the only truth consists of the absurd, then the absurd is the only certainty and the sole evidence is the absurd [see CCE 56]. In this respect, Camus accounts for only that which is concrete, immediate and relevant. In this way, he “risk[s] nothing that is hypothetical” [MS 59] since hypotheses are tentative, abstract, and not immediately relevant to the present moment.

III ii Camus' Commitment to Indeterminism

Camus observes that when absolute values are applied to temporality, exceptions are inevitably dismissed as either *illegitimate* or *anomalous*. Consequently, the conclusiveness of absolute values is unable to respond to temporal uniqueness and diversity. Existence resists summaries, and compartmentalizations because of its uniqueness, its diversity, its incoherence and lack of unity.

Donald Lazere states that Camus' indeterminism “is the determination to say ‘no’ to any claim that existence can be made intellectually coherent or part of a system of absolute truths” [UCAC 69]. Camus resists systems of thought as the systematization of

existence *reduces* it to absolute principles that are *not* temporal. This reductionism is unacceptable to Camus, as it *obscures the unique and individual*.

Another important aspect of Camus' indeterminism is his conviction that one never reaches a complete, final knowledge of existence, due to its lack of coherence. He gives the example of scientific theories that claim to explain the totality of existence:

Between the certainty of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled ... all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws ... But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain this world to me with an image. I realize that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know ... So that science that was to teach me everything ends up in a hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor ... What need have I of so many efforts? The soft lines of these hills and the hand of evening on this troubled heart teach me much more" [MS 24-25].

Camus returns to the primacy of temporal existence, to certainty, the concrete and the immediate. As existence is stripped of absolutes in the absurd consciousness, what remains is the lucidity of mind valued in the absurd. This leads ideally to the perception of the value of the present moment, with its inherent possibilities, which is the only reality for Camus.

III iii The Paradox of The Absurd

These are important ideas for understanding Camus' views, yet they are difficult. The absurd man recognizes the lack of unity, coherence and purpose of temporal existence that render existence absurd. He or she also realizes that *these ideals shall never be fully attained. Nevertheless, she or he constantly seeks unity, coherence and*

purpose despite the fact that temporal existence is never fully unified, coherent or completely purposeful. If a total unity, coherence or purpose were attainable, it would be singular, absolute, and imposed on temporality, a singularity and imposition which Camus wishes to resist. Camus values indeterminism because it is able to circumvent the consequences of imposition, singularity and absolutism wrought by absolute values and constructs. However, indeterminism excludes the very unity, coherence and purpose provided by absolute values, yet these are precisely what the absurd man seeks. Hence, that which the absurd man seeks is also that which he resists.

In his commitment to indeterminism, Camus is able to maintain lucidity by recognizing both aspects of the paradoxes of existence, such as the rational and irrational, unity and diversity. This illustrates the indeterminism productive of the fundamental ambiguity of existence: "Life can be magnificent and overwhelming ... that is its whole tragedy" [CCE 44].

III iv Hope: The Future and the Present

Another expression of lucidity in Camus' writings is the refusal to hope. This does not imply despair, nor renunciation [see MS 34] but the refusal to hope for some future unity and coherence in temporal existence. Camus recognizes that the consequence of discarding the absolute value of a spiritual afterlife is that the future becomes a transcendent value. The future, albeit a temporal future, *becomes, then, the absolute value to which the present is sacrificed for an end that is merely hypothetical.* The concept of the future implies a "better" existence, for instance, "progress" in political terms. Yet progress, like the future, is a mere *hypothesis* as it is never attained. It implies, moreover, the hope of the attainment of coherence in existence which, again, is never fulfilled. Hope is the desire for the *replacement of this* immediacy with *that* hypothesis, which amounts to claiming that this life is insufficient. It is not this "better life" in which Camus disbelieves, but the inherent evasion of, and disregard for, the present moment wherein value is discovered. To reject the transcendent value of the future means that all that remains is the present moment. Camus writes succinctly: "a man devoid of hope ... has ceased to belong to the future" [MS 35].

In Camus' thought, "a greater life cannot mean for him another life" [MS 64] as hope presupposes a turning away from the limited, relevant, present possibilities of which the value of temporal existence is constituted [see CCE 45]. Yet this reconstitutes the illusions of constructs and absolute values, progress and the future to which the present must succumb. For this reason, Camus challenges the concept of the temporal future, that is progress, and an eternal spiritual life. Rather, Camus is prepared to remain in the present, which contains the most immediate and concrete evidence for temporal value. Of the primacy of the present, Camus writes: "At that last crossroad where thought hesitates, many men have arrived ... They then abdicated what was most precious to them, their life ... The real effort is to stay there, rather, in so far as that is possible, and to examine closely the odd vegetation of those distant regions" [MS 161]. Sutton explains: "to transgress the limit of the value of the present ... involves a denial of existence in favour of an ideology or rational system" [HET 7].

For Camus, the present moment is the most significant moment for the absurd man, yet, in a sense, it is never-ending: "The present and the succession of presents before a conscious soul is the ideal of the absurd man" [MS 62]. This results in the fullness of the temporal moment recognized and brought to light by the absurd consciousness [see MS 61].

IV i Absurd Freedom: Lucidity and the Value of Existence

For Camus, the limitedness of temporal freedom intensifies the value of existence. However, it is crucial to maintain lucidity to perceive those values in the present moment and to exercise that freedom, however limited, in order to remain "available" to those relevant possibilities.

The primacy of the present moment in Camus' writings, moreover, has ramifications for temporal freedom. The "absence" of God and concentration on the temporal increase the *significance of freedom*. Camus writes: "Now if the absurd cancels out all my chances at eternal freedom, it restores and magnifies on the other hand my freedom of action. That privation of hope and future means an increase in man's availability" [MS 56]. Availability, another expression of lucidity, also emphasizes the

primacy of the present moment. If one maintains complete lucidity and is completely available to the present moment, the value and significance of that moment, as ephemeral, is intensified. One's freedom, however limited within the short-lived moment, is also intensified within the context of lucidity in and availability to the present moment. Camus states: "What bound him was another world ... Not the divine fable that muses and blinds, but the terrestrial face, gesture and drama in which are summed up a difficult wisdom and an ephemeral passion" [MS 106]. In other words, we must recognize that freedom now. In the present moment, new possibilities open up and we may seek to "exhaust the field of the possible" [CCE 62].

IV ii The Quantity of Experience

Absurd freedom is "freedom with limits." Yet that freedom is more valuable because of its finitude. The brevity of life points to the "irreplaceable value" of existence [see CCE 63]. He writes: "If I admit that my freedom has no meaning except in relation to its limited fate, then I must say that what counts is not the best living but the most living" [MS 59]. This is Camus' idea of "quantity."

Lucidity is related to the quantity of experience, as experiences are enumerated by the absurd man. Camus states: "For the absurd man, it is not a matter of explaining and solving but of experiencing and describing" [CCE 45]. To maintain lucidity and availability requires responsibility, and therein lies the significance of freedom. Everything depends on oneself, one's experiences and the value of those experiences. Camus writes: "the mistake is thinking that quantity of experiences depends on the circumstances of our life when it depends solely on us" [MS 61].

IV iii *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Camus utilizes the myth of Sisyphus to illustrate that even under conditions of minimal freedom and novelty, existence is valuable and that the absurd life is worth living [see CCE 56]. Despite Sisyphus' calculated lack of freedom, in Camus' view, he is still free to be happy within the absurd conditions of his punishment.

Sisyphus' fate is to ceaselessly roll the rock up the hill and retrieve it each time it rolls back down. He is punished for his refusal to leave the earth once he received permission to return to it from the underworld. But Camus interprets Sisyphus as a figure who suffers willingly for the value of earthly life: "his scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted towards accomplishing nothing. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth" [MS 108].

The myth of Sisyphus evidently illustrates Camus' concept of quantity. His task is pointless, fruitless and endless. But Sisyphus does not hope; he has no future, and has no need to sacrifice his existence to abstract ideals. For Camus, Sisyphus is completely available to his rock: "His rock is his thing" [MS 110]. Camus writes: "The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy" [MS 112]. This does not mean, however, that Sisyphus' existence is coherent: "the absurd man multiplies here again what he cannot unify" [MS 68].

IV iv Absurd Happiness

Because "the absurd is ready to pay up" [MS 65] Sisyphus is prepared to push and descend. He acknowledges his limits and never transgresses them; in this respect, Sisyphus "enjoys the wonderful ease of masters" [MS 67] because he accepts the consequences of his absurd existence. Camus states: "The important thing ... is not to be cured but to live with one's ailments" [MS 41]. This is the first step to living out life's value: to recognize its limitations of a particular existence and to live within and according to them.

Camus does not deny that Sisyphus can be overcome by a sense of defeat, outrage or sadness. If he is overcome, "this is the rock's victory, this is the rock itself" [MS 109]. But according to Camus' interpretation, Sisyphus' lucidity saves him from despair: "living an experience, a particular fate, is accepting it fully" [MS 53]. For Sisyphus, "The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory ... he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock ... he knows himself to be the master of his days" [MS 109-110]. Camus admits that the myth of Sisyphus "sums itself up ... as a lucid invitation to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert" [MS 7].

This calculated avoidance of hope is not equated with resignation, but happiness. John Cruikshank contends that for Camus, happiness is “the simple harmony relating the individual to his existence” [ACLR 38]. This refers to the relation of the self to one’s own existence, the measurement of “self against self.” For Sisyphus, happiness is an inner harmony, even a “stoic serenity which may come from a recognition of the impossibility of happiness” [ACLR 39]. This is the value of absurd freedom and the absurd consciousness: even as Sisyphus pushes his rock, he still enjoys the freedom to be happy. In fact, *to choose the value of happiness is to revolt against the meaninglessness of the absurd*. For Camus, this is the value of absurd existence.

V Value and Meaning

V i Value

From the example of Sisyphus, it follows that the human condition is absurd yet the possibility of value and meaning is still present even under conditions of minimal value and meaning. Camus states succinctly that, despite the limitedness of existence, “[t]he point is to live” [MS 63]. Camus writes: “what does life mean in such a universe? Nothing else for the moment but indifference to the future and a desire to use up everything that is given” [MS 59]. This statement links the notions of quantity of experience and the richness of experience that makes life valuable.

Camus examines the value of existence in light of the antagonism between the inevitability of death and the desire to live. His rejection of suicide also indicates his belief in temporal value. He contends that to die is to “lose the purest of joys which is feeling, and feeling on this earth” [MS 62]. Sprintzen adds: “By killing himself he will reveal that there are no limits other than mortality to what humans can be” [CCE 51].

For Camus, availability is best expressed in a singular passion to live. Sprintzen states that it is “the fact of death and the impassioned refusal to allow that fact to rob life of its significance” [CCE 62] which lends existence its value. In fact, the passion for life is intensified by that which makes existence absurd: the inevitability of death and the brevity of life effected by death [see ACLR 34]. In this respect, that which makes life valuable is what intensifies its absurdity as well as the passion to live out this temporal

existence. Passion informs us that we cannot “fritter away [our] newly found precious and irreplaceable existence” [CCE 62].

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus offers Don Juan as the prototype of a passionate figure. Don Juan is an example of one who has a great quantity of brief, yet intense experiences; what is valuable for him is the passion that arises from experiences that are “short-lived and exceptional” [MS 70].

For Camus, the sufficient reason for values is that they are experienced by the individual. In this way, values refer to the individual in his or her own meaningful way. Cruikshank writes: “Values can only be created in a very limited way. They will be subject to a particular historical situation, they will have a predominantly personal validity” [ACLR 7]. The limits of experience and temporal values, then, lend existence its significance. Camus emphasizes that “Man is his own end. And he is his only end. If he aims to be something, it is in this life” [MS 82]. In this respect, it is the limited and individual nature of temporal existence that give life its irreplaceable value.

V ii Meaning

Throughout his writings, Camus makes several positive statements concerning meaning, such as that “the universe and existence is meaningless,” and “existence is meaningful.” However, one of his main contentions is that ultimate, absolute meaning is not necessary for life to be worth living under absurd conditions. He writes: “people have believe[d] that refusing to grant a meaning to life necessarily leads to declaring that it is not worth living. In truth, there is no necessary common measure between these two judgments. One merely has to refuse to be misled by the confusions, divorces, and inconsistencies” [MS 15]. In other words, it is individual meaning, not given, absolute meanings, that gives life its value. Lazere states Camus’ point that “life is more valuable with only limited meaning” [UCAC 54].

These statements are important, since “meaning” is singular; Camus does not contend that temporal existence has no meaning: rather, it has no singular, ultimate meaning. In other words, *there is no total lack of meaning, but a lack of total meaning* [MVT 180]. Camus writes: “The world itself, whose single meaning I do not understand, is but a vast irrational” [MS 31]. This singular meaning would obliterate the value and

legitimacy of individual meaning. Camus states: “What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms” [MS 51]. That is to say, absolute meaning overarches existence, yet is not *internal to* the human condition. Existence is meaningless, but *this does not rule out its value*. The limited possibilities open up to the individual and the absurd conditions pave the way to a meaningful life [see CCE 44]. After all, “men cannot always make history have a meaning, they can always act so that their own lives have one” [CCE v].

V iii The Human Meaning

The absurd recognizes the meaninglessness of the world and the futility of prescribed meanings. Yet, for Camus, the experience of meaninglessness leads the individual to the realization of the responsibility to create one’s own limited meaning. Between forsaking given meanings provided by others and the world’s meaninglessness lies the individual freedom to create temporal, limited meaning.

Camus identifies temporal meaning with human intelligence. He writes: “I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature insisting on having one. This world at least has the truth of man, and our task is to provide its justification against fate itself. And it has no justification but man” [RRD 28]. That is to say, limited meaning is its own justification, and human existence is perpetuated by the search for temporal, individual, limited meaning. Camus writes of human meaning: “There is but one luxury for them — that of human relations. How can one fail to realize that in this vulnerable universe, everything that is human and solely human assumes a more vivid meaning? ... such strong and chaste friendship among men — these are the true riches because they are transitory” [MS 83]. This is the point at which revolt, or rebellion, is relevant to Camus’ conception of value.

VI Revolt

This section discusses Camus' conception of revolt as a response to the absurd. Revolt is the confrontation with the meaninglessness of the universe as well as the suffering and evil inherent in existence. The rebel is motivated to action due to the belief in the value and meaning of humanity, and in his "insane generosity" strives to eliminate suffering.

VI i Revolt as a Response to the Absurd

For Camus, the absurd is a conception of solitude, and revolt of solidarity. The absurd characterizes the human condition, and revolt, as conceived in Camus' terms, is the response to that condition. Camus often conceives of revolt as metaphysical, in that the rebel revolts against the absurd condition that is existence: "Revolt ... is a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity... It challenges the world anew each second ... It is the certainty of a crushing fate without the resignation that ought to accompany it" [CCE 63].

Revolt is the succinct expression of Camus' humanism and his contention of the value of existence. He admits that the absurd is a provisional position: a departure, not a conclusion. Comparing the absurd and revolt, it is clear that the absurd fails to promote action or protest. Camus writes: "it is inconceivable to translate absurdism into action due to its inherent contradictions" [R 9]. The absurd remains ambivalent in the face of evil, suffering and death, a position Camus does not want to defend.

For this reason, Camus proposes the transition from the absurd to rebellion. Lazere states that Camus "introduces the theme of revolt in calling for the man of absurd awareness to rise above his overwhelming, lonely fate by bearing it defiantly rather than killing himself, to stave off death through prolonging and savouring every moment of life" [UCAC 9]. Herbert Read explains Camus' conception of the absurd and rebellion: "If we decide to live, it must be because we have decided that our personal existence has some positive value. If we decide to rebel, it must be because we have decided that a human society has some positive value" [R vii]. The absurd man chooses to live, yet he is indifferent. while the rebel's actions are motivated by the belief in human value. The chief problem for rebellion is "how to reconstitute from the absurdist point of departure a

humane scale of values while stopping short of any value that justifies killing” [UCAC 62].

Nevertheless, the absurd and revolt have in common the quest for unity. Revolt demands “order amidst chaos and unity at the very heart of the ephemeral” [R 10]. Again: “The insurrection against evil is, above all, a demand for unity” [R 101]. The confrontational aspect of the absurd is adapted in rebellion and is its central motivation. The rebel acts because he recognizes the absurd incoherence of the universe, and that existence is “not an established order, but an order to be established” [ACLR 10].

VI ii Revolt and Absolute Values

Another reason why Camus rejects absolute values is that they avoid innovation, and thus perpetuate oppression, the antithesis to the values upheld by the rebel. James Goss interprets Camus as follows: “To deify any absolute value appears to enslave man to a superior power” [CGPT 118]. In this respect, Camus opposes the “deification of history” supported, for instance, by revolutionary regimes. Camus also “resist[s] anything in nature or history that oppresses men” [CGPT 117]. For example, traditional Christian theodicy claims that there is value in human suffering as it benefits the general whole for a greater good. However, these claims dismiss suffering, hence, perpetuating it.

Another example is the story of the crucifixion, which Camus believes to be dangerous. By *exemplifying suffering*, it *legitimizes suffering*, especially the torture of the innocent [R 34]. Christianity also teaches that the suffering of ordinary people could neither surpass nor equal Christ’s passion. According to Camus, this exalts death and generates further suffering by failing to alleviate it. This is also the antithesis of revolt, as it negates the value of this life.

While the value and meaning of existence need no justification, they must be sustained before that which negates it: evil, suffering and death. Rebellion protects and preserves value and meaning when they are debased. Camus writes: “to fight against death amounts to claiming that life has a meaning” [R 101].

VI iii Revolt: The Value and Meaning of Humanity

The rebel is motivated by a sense of loyalty to an aspect of himself which he identifies in all others [see R 14]. This is the “common value of humanity” [R 297] that lends human existence its overarching value. Camus writes: “From the moment that life is recognized as good, it becomes good for all men” [R 6]. We all suffer from the same absurd conditions, and hence, no exceptions are made, no privileges are recognized in rebellion, and human solidarity must be upheld. Camus states also: “If men cannot refer to a common value ... man is incomprehensible to man” [R 23]. In other words, if the common value of humanity were not recognized, there would be nothing of universal worth underlying human existence.

In direct opposition to Jean-Paul Sartre, Camus writes that “contrary to the postulates of contemporary thought, a human nature *does* exist ... Why rebel if there is nothing permanent in oneself worth preserving?” [R 16]. In this sense, revolt implies a common human nature, while exposing “the limits which are the very principle of this nature” [R 294]. The limitations of human nature — the absurd brevity of life — ensure the common human value, and intensify the rebel’s motivation to preserve temporal existence in its fragility and ephemerality.

VI iv The Risk and the “Insane Generosity” of Revolt

The recognition of this common human value instills in the rebel a radical empathy that is the motivation to take risks to protect that value. For the rebel, “the rights of all are more important than himself” [R 14]. The common value of humanity is “so far from being gratuitous that he is prepared to support it no matter what the risks” [R 14]. According to Camus, the rebel’s risk reflects a generosity that insists that all benefit from the fruits of rebellion. Camus writes: “This insane generosity is the generosity of rebellion, which unhesitatingly gives the strength of its love and without a moment’s delay refuses injustice” [R 304]. Insane generosity also entails responsibility: the greater the impulse toward generosity, the greater the risk, and the greater the benefit for the greater number. Hence, the rebel freely contributes the value of his risk for the benefit of

others. Camus writes that the rebel “distribut[es] everything [he] possesses to life and to living men” [R 304].

It should be noted that Camus identifies the role of the writer or artist with that of the rebel. Art must be “an instrument of liberation” [RRD 254] yet the writer must risk speaking out against injustices. Camus states: “We can never escape the common misery and that [writers’] only justification, if indeed there is a justification, is to speak up, insofar as we can, for those who cannot do so” [RRD 267].

VII Revolt: Limits and Possibilities

This section discusses the limited freedom of the rebel and the value of his actions within the restrictions of moderation. It cannot be emphasized enough that, for Camus, the values defended by the rebel are temporal and are understood in human terms [R 21]. Within the limits of temporal freedom, the rebel strives for justice, yet his actions are restricted to just those values that are upheld in rebellion. For this reason, Camus values moderation as it eliminates the imbalances that cause suffering evil and injustice.

VII i Revolt and the Limits of Temporal Values

For Camus, values such as justice and freedom are valuable as they are experienced, not because they are good in principle. For example, as previously emphasized, political systems have upheld certain values for their own ends. Camus’ point is that temporal values are acquired in existence itself, and not by means of constructs [R 16]. Sprintzen explains: “Values are lived pre-reflectively until their denial is felt to be unbearable. Only then, thorough the act of rebellion, does the value get existentially recognized ... Revolt thus struggles to gain articulation in the face of a threat to the heretofore inarticulate value that sustains it. But the specific context of its emergence cannot but mark the manner and content of the claim” [CCE 130]. In other words, the limits of temporal conditions make values possible, as limits make each value relevant to that individual situation and limits provide existence with meaning. Camus states: “to the extent to which I arrange my life and prove thereby that I accept it having a meaning, I create for myself barriers between which I confine my life” [MS 57].

Above all, rebellion recognizes its own limits. For Camus, rebellion is defined over against revolution, which acknowledges no boundaries, and hence, no ethic. Since the rebel breaks from the commonplace acceptance of suffering, it must “generate a new morality” [CCE 62]. Yet this new ethic requires limits that would delineate “the range of the ethically permissible” [CCE 130]. In this sense, Camus’ conception of limits is closely related to ethics.

VII ii Revolt: Temporal Freedom and Justice

As indicated above, meaningful freedom is possible within the limits of temporal existence. For Camus, absolute freedom is meaningless because it is limitless, and imposes no restrictions on action or thought. He writes: “the most extreme form of freedom, the freedom to kill, is not compatible with ... rebellion. ... Rebellion puts total freedom up for trial” [R 284]. Total freedom has no boundaries, leading to the claim that “everything is permitted” [R 57]. But Camus opposes this nihilism, as it negates the value of limited freedom.

Like the absurd, Camus’ conception of revolt is guided by “freedom with limits.’ The rebel is not above the law, and recognizes the limits of freedom. Yet freedom is necessary for justice: without freedom, justice is inconceivable [see R 105]. If one is profaned, the other is also [see RRD 93]. Camus declares that to separate freedom from justice “is the epitome of the social sin ... If someone takes away your bread, he suppresses your freedom at the same time” [RRD 94]. In other words, without justice, freedom becomes meaningless and loses all value. This is one of the chief preoccupations of the rebel.

VII iii Moderation

In Camus’ view, limits restrict actions, yet they also guide ethics. Associated with limits is moderation, the middle ground that Camus seeks throughout his writings. Limits and its balance — moderation — restrict the scope of the rebel’s actions insofar that *actions are confined to the values which the rebel protects*. This avoids the excesses that create imbalances in existence, imbalances which lead to evil, suffering and death — in a word, injustice. For Camus, rebellion cannot encompass suffering, evil or murder, *for*

these are the very excesses that rebellion strives to diminish. For this reason, suffering, evil and murder contradict revolt [R 281].

For Camus, moderation fosters a balance that avoids excesses and retains proportions in existence. Camus equates excess with “madness,” as excess destroys itself: “The real madness of excess dies or creates its own moderation ... In its most extreme manifestations, it finds its limit on which ... it sacrifices itself” [R 301].

Camus applies the principle of moderation to the rebel: “Moderation is not the opposite of revolt. Revolt in itself is moderation, and it demands, defends, and re-creates it throughout history” [R 301]. In other words, revolt requires moderation; if revolt were to extend itself beyond moderation, *it would breed the very destruction and oppression it seeks to extinguish*. Hence, since the extremes of experience foster imbalances, the rebel’s moderation ensures that his actions are guided by the values that he protects.

The moderation of revolt “guarantees us that [revolt and its goals] can only be partially destroyed” [R 301]. Because existence entails limits, and because the extremes of existence create imbalances, moderation informs the rebel’s actions. Revolt, then, is the striving for justice, and moderation is the middle ground between the chaos of suffering and the absolute order of absolute values.

VIII i Beauty and the Rebel

This section examines Camus’ comparison between the rebel and the artist. According to Camus, both seek to attain beauty, that is, the unity of existence, free of suffering and evil. Beauty is interpreted as the standard to measure the value of actions, as beauty provides a balance for existence.

The rebel, like the artist, is motivated to create beauty, as Camus points out that “beauty has never enslaved anyone” [RRD 27]. As quoted above, Camus compares art and rebellion: “To create beauty, he must simultaneously reject reality and exalt certain of its aspects. Art disputes reality, but does not hide from it ... Art thus leads us back to the origins of rebellion” [R 258]. That is, the artist and the rebel challenge that which negates existence, such as injustice, and affirm meaning and value. Camus states that the

rebel claims “an integral part of the reality whose name is beauty ... The procedure of beauty, which is to contest reality while endowing it with unity, is also the procedure of rebellion” [R 276]. It is clear from this passage that unity and beauty are ideals that art and rebellion strive to attain. The rebel, then, seeks unity while striving for beauty.

For Camus, beauty is also the standard to evaluate human actions [see CGPT 120]. Goss interprets Camus: “to ignore ... beauty is to turn history into a desert, void of all that ... which makes possible a judgment upon human violence” [CGPT 120]. In other words, if beauty is dismissed, it is impossible to judge what is humanly valuable and meaningful. Beauty is the middle ground on the scale of values that is the measure of what is good. Beauty is required, then, for justice. Camus adds: “Is it possible eternally to reject injustice without ceasing to acclaim the nature of man and the beauty of the world? Our answer is yes” [R 276]. Again: “Man cannot do without beauty and this is what our era pretends to want to disregard” [HE 170]. In other words, without beauty, there is no justice, and suffering and evil arise in the absence of beauty. “[O]ur era is deserting the world ... the dreadful walls of the modern city will fall to deliver up ... Helen’s beauty” [MS 171-2]. In this respect, *aesthetics and ethics are intimately related and indispensable for rebellion and justice*.

Furthermore, if beauty is a measurement of the value of actions, beauty can also provide a balance for existence. For Camus, a balance is needed to counter the extremes of suffering, strife and death. The contemplation of beauty has the power “to rediscover a balance” and “oppose the immoderateness of history” [CGPT 119]. If beauty can balance existence, and rebellion seeks this balance, then beauty is the purpose of the rebel. And if beauty can measure the value of actions and provide a balance for the extremes of existence, then beauty is the foundation, the goal and the product of justice.

Conclusion

Camus’ sensitivity toward the value of existence arises during an historical period of suffering and injustice, vulnerability and “moral and intellectual confusion,” a situation which he approached with “questioning urgency” [see ACLR xi]. His own experience of meaninglessness and despair led him to embrace the absurd, although he perceived the absurd as a departure and not a conclusion [see CSA 270].

In his writings, Camus remains within the realm of temporality, denying neither evil nor beauty in order to understand temporal existence and its implications for justice. His rejection of absolute values springs from his disillusionment with political, social and religious collectives and his recognition of the inherent injustices within each of them. For Camus, absolute values deny temporal value, as they disregard the value and meaning of the individual and compartmentalize temporal existence into constructs. Temporal individual values are more important to Camus, as they are the most relevant, concrete and immediate.

Camus characterizes temporal existence as absurd, which entails the awareness of the disproportion between human aspirations and the indifference of the world, the confrontation with meaninglessness and the “divorce” between the individual and his life effected by alienation. However, the “absurd awakening” involves the recognition of the transparency of the given meanings of absolute values, and instills in the “absurd man” the motivation to create his own meaning in his own limited, finite situation.

Camus’ conception of the absurd is completed by that of revolt, the proper response to the absurd. The rebel, like the absurd man, denounces absolute values in favour of temporal values. In his belief in the common value of humanity, the rebel strives to end suffering and evil in his quest for justice. The meaning and value of temporal existence is not only upheld in revolt, but preserved and protected against that which negates it. Within the limits of freedom and guided by the value of moderation, the rebel’s actions are confined to the values which the rebel upholds. In this context, the rebel strives for beauty, which is, for Camus, the standard for evaluating ethical actions.

For Camus, temporal value triumphs over despair, meaninglessness and alienation that is the spirit of his age. He writes: “Far from always wanting to forget [the world] [we] suffer, on the contrary, from not being able to possess it completely enough, estranged citizens of the world, exiled from their own country ... to understand life at last, as destiny — these are their true aspirations” [R 260]. That is to say, for Camus, the value of existence is expressed in the struggle of living itself.

Chapter Four: A Comparison of the Process Aesthetic Theory with the Philosophy of Albert Camus

A man does not show his greatness by being at one extremity, but by touching both at once.

— Pascal

Introduction

This chapter compares the philosophical writings of Alfred North Whitehead and Albert Camus concerning their common views of the value of existence. The chapter utilizes material discussed in the three previous chapters and as such, serves to discuss in more depth some of the similarities already examined. As other process philosophers are also cited, such as Hartshorne, Sherburne and Whitney, the terms “process philosophy,” “process thought” and “process theology” will be used, rather than referring exclusively to Whitehead.

In their respective writings, Whitehead and Camus uphold the primacy of temporal existence and reject the impositions of absolute values upon existence. As discussed in Chapter One, Whitehead restricts his metaphysics to the subjective experience of *actual entities*, that is, entities of the actual, temporal world. This is accomplished by means of the ontological principle, the principle which confines his philosophical inquiry to only that which exists in the tangible, actual world in the subjective experience of *actual entities*. As noted in Chapter Three, Camus expresses his primacy of temporal existence more in terms of his emphatic rejection of absolute values in favour of temporal existence rather than constructs, hypotheses or systems of thought.

Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus agree that it is the limits inherent in temporality which lend existence its value, for it is only the possibilities *relevant* to a particular limited existence that are meaningful. In Whitehead’s metaphysics, the ordering of *eternal objects* by the *primordial nature of God* and the standard of value, moreover, lend *eternal objects* effective relevance. Camus, on the other hand, values the individual’s availability to the possibilities in the present moment, which requires the lucidity of mind to perceive those values unique to that particular situation. In Camus’

essays, this is the primacy of the value of the present moment, particularly expounded in *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

Moreover, Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus value temporal freedom and insist that its limits are necessary for freedom to be valuable and meaningful. The three deny the value of absolute freedom and deem it meaningless. For Camus, as indicated in Chapter Three, oppression is the deprivation of freedom. The “ephemerality” of existence’ for process thought, or, as Camus expresses it, “the brevity of existence,” intensifies the meaningfulness of limited freedom.

Furthermore, Whitehead and Camus emphasize that others benefit from the value achieved by and for the individual. In Whitehead’s metaphysics *actual entities* contribute their achieved value to other *actual entities* by means of mutual prehensions of each other (referred to as the “principle of relativity.”) Moreover, other *actual entities* benefit from value actualized in the present and partake in it as a future value as the present *actual entity* becomes *objectively immortal*. A similar concept for Camus is the “insane generosity” of the rebel as emphasized in Chapter Three. By means of revolt, the rebel contributes his value for the benefit, a benefit that far outweighs his concern for his own value. This is illustrated as an application of Whitehead’s contention that there is no contradiction between the good of the individual and the general good of the whole, the whole which benefits from the value of the individual.

Furthermore, both Whitehead and Camus contend that beauty is the greatest value. As seen in Chapter Two, beauty is the ideal aesthetic value and is the goal of each *actual entity*. For Camus, beauty is the goal of the rebel in his quest for justice, as beauty does not enslave, but elevates the value of existence. Moreover, for Whitehead and Camus, beauty serves as a measurement to evaluate actions for, without beauty, there can be no judgment of what is good. For both, beauty is presupposed in goodness and is the measurement for ethical actions. Whitehead and Camus also agree that beauty serves as a balance to “oppose immoderateness” and lend existence an equilibrium between extremes that cause suffering and evil. This is the achievement of the aesthetic mean for Whitehead, and justice for Camus. One of the greatest achievements of beauty, according to Hartshorne, is generosity, which is exemplified by the rebel in his quest for justice.

Finally, in a radical attempt to reconcile process philosophy and Camus’ metaphysical views, the thesis demonstrates that Camus’ theological conceptions are

compatible with Whitehead's notion of God. It is significant to note that Whitehead challenges the traditional God and assigns God unorthodox attributes, for instance, the lack of omnipotence as examined in Chapters One and Two. It is shown below that, for Camus, if God exists, God should have just those attributes that Whitehead designates to God. For instance, the traditional God is unacceptable to Camus, as God, traditionally conceived as omnipotent, must be responsible for evil. Yet for Whitehead, the freedom and agency of *actual entities* introduce evil into the temporal world. Moreover, Camus holds that God should be "involved" in temporal existence, and not removed from history, as conceived in traditional theology. For Whitehead, however, God and the world are interdependent, and God is an integral part of the process of *becoming* of each *actual entity*. Finally, Camus perceives no advantage in a heavenly eternal afterlife. Similarly, for many process philosophers, there is no "subjective immortality," whereby each individual lives on with one's character, relationships and memories intact. Instead, *objective immortality*, as seen in Chapters One and Two, reflects the value achieved in this life, and furthermore benefits future temporal entities, hence, eliminating the need for a heavenly afterlife. This chapter examines these points of compatibility between Whitehead and Camus.

I Temporality

This section examines the contention of the primacy of temporal existence common to both Whitehead and Camus. For Whitehead, the ontological principle restricts his philosophical speculation within the confines of the actual world, that is, his philosophical inquiry is restricted to the process of the basic units of experience, or *actual entities*. Hosinski explains that this prevents his philosophy "from *becoming* pure ungrounded speculation" [SFCA 20]. He considers only temporal existence, and not abstractions or hypotheses.

For Camus, as seen throughout Chapter Three, [see Parts I ii, II iii, II v, III i, Part V and VI ii] upholds temporal in his contention of the primacy of the present moment. abstractions, constructs, absolute values. As previously indicated, Camus defends temporal value by rejecting that which negates this overarching value, such as constructs

that evade the realities of temporal existence and sacrifice the present in a perpetual suspension of individual fulfillment [see ACLR xviii; see also Chapter Three, Part I ii].

I i Whitehead

In his metaphysics, Whitehead indicates that the most basic of unit of existence, in fact, all that exists, comprises *actual entities*. This is particularly evident in his ontological principle as seen in Chapter One. The ontological principle states that all that exists consists of *actual entities*. As seen in Chapter One, Part IV i, Whitehead states that the ontological principle is “the first step in the description of the universe as a solidarity of *actual entities*” [PR 40; see also Chapter One, Part IV i]. That is to say that actuality is comprised only of entities that “exist in the fullest sense of existence” [WM 21; see also Chapter One, Part IV i]. Whitehead’s ontological principle, then, restricts his philosophical inquiry to actuality. Hence, that which comprises actuality constitutes the only data for philosophical speculation. In this respect, Whitehead includes only that which is actual, and excludes data that are extrapolated or abstracted from subjective experience. In this way, Whitehead’s metaphysics encompasses only actuality, and excludes abstractions in favour of the immediacy of temporality.

I ii Camus

Similarly, Camus As seen in Chapter Three, Part III iv, Camus contends that “to transgress the limit of the value of the present ... involves a denial of existence in favour of an ideology or rational system” [HET 7]. In other words, Camus wants to “risk nothing that is hypothetical” [MS 59; see also Chapter Three, Part III i] such as constructs and abstractions. Camus, then, deems temporal existence primary, so as to “bring in nothing that is not certain” [MS 53; see also Chapter Three, Part III i]. What is certain for Camus is temporal existence as it is, in the present moment, stripped of abstractions, constructs or any impositions upon temporal existence.

In sum, both Whitehead and Camus view temporal existence as primary for philosophical inquiry. Whitehead does not “deny existence in favour of an ideology or rational system.” Rather, his metaphysics is based on only that which is actual, that is,

that which exists in temporality. Also, Whitehead's concern for the immediacy of experience is compatible with Camus' view of the primacy of the present moment. Hence, Whitehead and Camus are in agreement insofar as they propose that temporal existence is the only material for philosophical inquiry.

II Value and the Limits of Temporality

This section shows that for both Whitehead and Camus, the limits inherent in temporality invest the relevant possibilities with value that is meaningful in that particular context. In this way, possibilities are valuable because of, not despite, the limitations inherent in temporality. The following utilizes material from Whitehead as well as from process humanist Donald Sherburne in the examination of their contentions that value exists even within the limitations of temporal experience.

II i Whitehead and Sherburne

As previously indicated, Whitehead asserts that "Value is the intrinsic reality of an event" [SMW 93; see also Chapter Two, Part II i]. This means that there is aesthetic value in each experience. The ordering of *eternal objects* by the *primordial nature of God* as well as the standard of value, moreover, invests *eternal objects* with relevance by limiting the selection available to *actual entities* [see ME 90]. This selection is comprised of only those *eternal objects* that are meaningful and valuable for the particular *actual entity*. Therefore, it is the restrictive element of relevance that invests the possibilities with aesthetic value because of, not despite, the limitedness of available possibilities.

Moreover, as indicated in Chapter Two, Sherburne claims that there is "worthwhileness" in the "passing flux of immediate things" [PPCT 325; see also Chapter Two, Part VII i]. That is, experience is valuable because of, not despite, temporal limits. Transience enables experience to be felt as valuable, as the *creative advance* ensures that the aesthetic elements of experience create a flux of contrasts in the data. The limitations of experience, then, generate further novelty and the viability of greater aesthetic realizations.

II ii Camus

Similarly, as seen in Chapter Three (especially Parts V i and VII i) Camus holds that we must find our own limited values within the confines of temporality. More precisely, Camus appeals to the possibilities in the present moment, that is, the limited possibilities and their values within the confines of temporality. He writes: “Unless we choose to ignore reality, we must find our values in it” [R 21]. That is, values are in — not beyond — temporal experience, for instance, in an otherworldly realm of heavenly existence, abstractions or ideas. Sutton explains: “Camus appears intent on finding a way of expressing the possibilities, meanings, and values [in] the immediate context of the everyday world” [HET 8]. Also, As seen in Chapter Three, Camus contends that “if [man] aims at something, it is in this life” [MS 82; see also Chapter Three, Part V i]. More precisely, Camus appeals to the possibilities in the present moment.

For Camus, temporal value lies in one’s availability to the possibilities in the present moment, which refers to the lucidity of mind to perceive those values, as demonstrated in the myth of Sisyphus. As stated in Chapter Three, Part III iv, Camus writes: “At that last crossroad where thought hesitates, many men have arrived ... They then abdicated what was most precious to them, their life ... The real effort is to stay there, rather, in so far as that is possible” [MS 17]. The “abdication of life” for Camus is the deification of absolute values, or to commit “philosophical suicide,” whereas the temporal values of that moment, if one is fully available to it, contain unique possibilities.

Camus insists that temporal values are meaningful because they are temporal. As indicated in Chapter Three, Part V iii, he writes, for instance, of friendships: “these are the true riches because they are transitory” [MS 83]. In other words, it is from the limits of temporal conditions that value may emerge, and limitedness lends experience its valuable.

In sum, Whitehead, Sherburne and Camus concur that temporality contains the possibilities wherein lies the value of temporal existence. For this study, Whitehead’s idea of “the intrinsic reality of an event” is understood as the “present moment” for Camus. Moreover, Sherburne’s interpretation of Whitehead regarding flux and transience parallels Camus’ contention of the value of existence effected by temporal limits, for instance, in his claim that human friendship is valuable because it is ephemeral. In this

respect. Whitehead and Camus are in agreement that existence is valuable, not despite, but because of its inherent limitations.

III The Case for Minimal Value

This section examines the common claim that existence is valuable even within very restricted circumstances. In order to demonstrate that there is value in each experience, it must be demonstrated that even under very limited conditions, some value still exists. This was shown in Chapter Two IX ii as demonstrated by the Dessoir-Davis Circle which shows the spectrum of aesthetic value achievement. In Chapter Three, Camus utilizes the myth of Sisyphus to illustrate his point that there is value even within very restricted conditions.

III i Whitehead and Hartshorne

As seen throughout Chapter Two, Whitehead and Hartshorne insists that there is value in every experience. The Dessoir-Davis Circle, particularly, demonstrated that there is some value in each experience, either commonplace or magnificent, neat or ugly [see Chapter Two, IX ii]. Hartshorne argues: “We wring some kind of satisfaction, however poor or strained, out of pain and frustration; though we may feel very keenly how much better life might be” [EPG 152].

As seen in the process aesthetic theory, “*Creativity* guarantees a minimum of value to every actuality” [CSPM 306]. This implies that there is at least some value in each experience. Hartshorne writes: “It is an aesthetic law of experiencing that without the unforeseen there can be no experience” [CSPM 306]. That is, one does not merely repeat the past (in the case of “high grade” *actual entities*). Hence, there is novel value in each experience, even if mere order or mere triviality dominate in the aesthetic data. No two experiences are perfectly identical, and one particular experience cannot be exempt from the process of *becoming*; the *creative advance* is perpetuated in the temporal world.

As noted in Chapter Two, Hartshorne indicates that without minimal value, “there would be no stimulus for further living: when life offers less than nothing, we do not live” [EPG 152]. But in most cases, we do go on living: “if life were not more satisfying

than otherwise, could it go on?" [EPG 152]. In other words, no value, no experience [see Chapter Two, Part VI].

III ii Camus

Camus also upholds the "worthwhileness" of existence despite the prevailing circumstances that are less than ideal. As previously seen, Camus writes: "Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy" [MS 11]. That is to say, all issues and debates are superfluous to this one question, which is challenged by the absurd conditions of meaningless existence.

Camus utilizes the myth of Sisyphus to illustrate that even under conditions of the excess of monotony, life is worth living and even minimal value exists [see Chapter Three, Part IV iii]. Camus writes of his interpretation of Sisyphus: "his lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory ... This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile ... The struggle towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. We must imagine Sisyphus happy" [MS 109, 111; see also Chapter Three, IV iii]. For Camus, Sisyphus is happy as he maintains lucidity. There is still minimal value in Sisyphus' experience, even under completely monotonous conditions of trivial value. Hence, the value of existence triumphs over suicide and defeat in the bleakest of places. Camus writes: "In a man's attachment to life there is something stronger than all the ills in the world" [MS 15].

In conclusion, this section has sought to demonstrate that Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus argue that even within the most stringent restrictions, value may still emerge in experience. Sisyphus does "wring some kind of satisfaction, however poor or strained" out of his task. And to Hartshorne's question: "if life were not more satisfying than otherwise, could it go on?" Camus would reply that "to breathe is a choice" [R 4]. In other words, one chooses to go on living, and this proves that life has at least a relative value. Lazere explains: "Refusing the world all meaning amounts to abolishing all value judgments. But living ... [is] in [it]self a value judgment" [UCAC 57].

IV Freedom

In their respective writings, Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus emphasize the significance of freedom in achieving temporal value. Each holds that freedom, however limited by temporal conditions or circumstance, is necessary for the achievement of value. In Whitehead's metaphysics, limited freedom is meaningful due to the standard of value that lends possibilities their relevance. For Hartshorne, only limited freedom is meaningful, as absolute freedom cannot be maintained. For Camus, moreover, absolute freedom leads to oppression, as it is a negation of temporal freedom. According to Camus, furthermore, the brevity of existence intensifies the meaningfulness of limited freedom. The following discusses their respective views concerning limited freedom in temporal existence.

IV i Whitehead and Hartshorne

As seen in Chapter One, Whitehead contends that each *actual entity* is "internally determined and externally free" [PR 27; see also Chapter One, Part I.2 ii]. *Actual entities* are restricted by *stubborn fact* yet, in their limited actual context, they are free to complete their *concrescence*. Limited freedom is meaningful because of the standard of value that lends possibilities their relevance [see Chapter One, II iii]. In this way, limits are linked to the experience of freedom. Whitehead writes: "There is no such fact as absolute freedom ... Freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other" [PR 133]. In other words, absolute freedom refers to no meaningful experience, as limits are inherent in temporal existence. Moreover, 'givenness' lends freedom its meaningfulness due to the relationship between the *actual entity's* actual universe (its particular environment) which constitutes the givenness that lends experience its limits — and the *actual entity* — its novel response to givenness [see Chapter Two, Part III v].

Hartshorne further addresses the problem of absolute freedom when he writes: "freedom can never be either absolute or wholly absent ... if freedom is to have promise of producing harmony, limits must always be set to the scope of freedom. Yet ultimately it is freedom itself which sets these limits" [CSPM 55]. Stated more simply, only limited

freedom is meaningful for temporal experience, and absolute freedom is impossible to maintain in temporality.

Moreover, the past decisions of free *actual entities* that constitute the “givenness” of aesthetic data in the present limit the present possibilities. These limitations lend value to the possibilities because they are restricted to this particular *actual entity* in this particular *concrecence* [see Chapter One, Part I.2 ii, I.3 ii and III v; see also Chapter Two, Part IV i].

IV ii Camus

As previously seen in Chapter Three, Camus also argues that “freedom with limits” lends existence its value. Absolute freedom, for Camus, negates temporal freedom: for instance, he who has all the freedom — that is, all the power — cannot revoke part and retain the whole of that freedom. Moreover, Camus states: “Absolute freedom is the right of the strongest to dominate” [R 287]. In short, this amounts to oppression. In *The Rebel*, Camus argues that absolute freedom places no restrictions on actions or thought, which leads to the contention that “everything is permitted” [R 57] or “everything is possible and nothing has any importance” [R 5: see also Chapter Three, Part VII ii]. In other words, absolute freedom has no value because nothing has any importance. In other words, there is no gradation of value, nor limits, hence nothing has any meaning, nor significance.

For Camus, it is limits that lend freedom its value. Limited freedom relates the finite individual to its restricted environment and its unique possibilities. Furthermore, as emphasized in Chapter Three, temporal existence, stripped of a divine will and devoid of a telos, increases temporal freedom and leads to an “increase in man’s availability” [MS 56: see also Chapter Three, IV i]. As seen in Chapter Three, Part IV i, Camus writes: “Now if the absurd cancels out all my chances of eternal freedom, it restores and magnifies on the other hand my freedom of action” [MS 56]. In other words, if God is no longer a presupposition, the individual is “demystified” of all false hopes of a future unity and is focussed, then, on the present moment. For Camus, this demystification intensifies the value of limited freedom [see CCE 44]. Restricted to the present moment, what is left

is limited freedom, contingent upon the limited possibilities. In the present moment, it is these possibilities and this immediacy that contains potentialities for this individual.

Finally, that which points to the absurdity of existence — the brevity of life and the inevitability of death — also intensifies the value of temporal freedom. That existence is ephemeral is another expression of limits which increase the limitedness and the meaningfulness of freedom. One is free, but time is short; hence, one must savour each moment and maximize its value now. [see Chapter Three, Part IV i]

More importantly, Camus perceives a relationship between freedom and justice, as discussed in Chapter Three. He writes of the imperative of preserving the right of freedom: “It can be done only by reviving at once in our selves and in others the value of freedom — and by never again agreeing to its being sacrificed, even temporarily, or separated from our demand for justice” [RRD 93]. Camus argues also, as indicated in Chapter Three, Part VII ii, that to deprive one of bread is to deprive one of freedom, which, again, amounts to oppression [RRD 94]. He writes: “Liberty ultimately seems to me, for societies and for individuals, for labour and for culture, the supreme good” [RRD 248]. That is to say, that there is no advance toward justice without freedom, and nothing can be accomplished without it.

In sum, this section has sought to show the compatibility of the conception of freedom with limits for Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus. They all contend that only limited freedom is valuable, as it magnifies the meaningfulness of that freedom in the particular context of the individual. In Whitehead’s metaphysics, the standard of value that restricts the possibilities and the limited context of the *actual entity* lend freedom its value, whereas for Camus, the ephemerality of existence lends freedom an intensified significance.

This discussion of freedom leads to an examination of Whitehead’s and Camus’ common contentions regarding the contribution of the value of actions, actions which are more valuable due to the limitedness of freedom.

V The Contribution of Value

For Whitehead, the aesthetic value achieved by one *actual entity* is contributed to other *actual entities*. A similar concept for Camus is the “insane generosity” of the rebel. The following utilizes the writings of Whitehead as well as Kraus and Whitney, and demonstrates the compatibility with Camus’ writings on the rebel concerning the significance of the contribution of value to others.

Whitehead’s metaphysics describes existence in terms of the actualization of value of individual entities, and Camus illustrates his point of the contribution value by means of a figure, such as the rebel. This is conducive to the application of metaphysics to a figure who demonstrates the contribution of value. This section applies Whitehead’s concept of the *actual entity*’s contribution of value to Camus’ conception of the rebel. A review of both approaches precedes the application.

V i Whitehead, Kraus and Whitney

As previously indicated in Chapter One, Whitehead’s “principle of relativity” indicates that each *actual entity* is involved in each *concrecence* by means of mutual prehensions. Whitehead writes: “*Actual entities* are really together ... by reason of the *objective immortality* of their real mutual prehensions of each other” [PR 230: see also Chapter One, Part III v]. That is to say that *objectively immortal* entities are felt as a datum by all other *actual entities*.

As previously indicated in Chapter Two, Part II ii, Kraus explains that “Value refers to the in-it-self-ness and for-it-selfness of the process of self-realization” [ME 28]. Nevertheless, the achieved value is donated to the world for all other entities to feel, enjoy and benefit from the actualized value. In this respect, the private achievement of value for the individual becomes a public value from which other entities benefit. That the achieved value of one *concrecence* is contributed to all other *actual entities* magnifies the responsibility inherent in risk; the more appropriate the *ingression*, the greater the value of the action.

This value, moreover, is greater for the entity itself and for other entities that feel that actualized value by means of mutual prehensions. Hence, due to the fact of value contribution to others, there is great responsibility in choosing one’s course of action.

Whitney illuminates this: “it is in our best interests to treat others morally and fairly ... possibilities for good are enhanced by good acts, good choices by our selves and by others and by natural processes, all of which affect us. This ... is justification enough to act for good ends” [ASPE 33]. In other words, if the *actual entity* chooses its value achievements responsibly as the value of its actions is donated to others, then good acts are justified unto themselves because the possibilities for good are enhanced.

V ii Camus

Whitehead’s concept of the contribution of value can be illustrated in terms of the generosity of the rebel. As stated before in Chapter Three, the rebel does not seek personal gain, but is motivated to contribute the value of his actions to others, and the greatest value the rebel donates is justice. Camus contends that “insane generosity is the generosity of rebellion which unhesitatingly gives the strength of its love, and without a moment’s delay refuses injustice” [R 304; see also Chapter Three, Part VI iv].

V iii *The Application of Whitehead’s Conception of Value Achievement to the Rebel*

While Camus emphasizes the public aspect of the contribution of value, Whitehead considers also the private aspect, and claims that they have an interrelation. A passage from *Process and Reality* illuminates Camus’ views of the rebel’s actions: “The antithesis between the general good and the individual interest can be abolished only when the individual is such that its interest is the general good, thus exemplifying the loss of the minor intensities in order to find them again with finer composition in a wider sweep of interest” [PR 15]. In short, Whitehead states that there is no true tension or antithesis between the achieved value for the purpose of private *satisfaction* and the value that it contributes to the public good. In other words, as the rebel’s interest is the general good, his achievement of value for his own *satisfaction* also coincides with the best value for others. Hartshorne explains succinctly: “Self interest ... is seen as a case of sympathetic projection” [WP 15; see also Chapter Two, Part II ii]. That is, all achievements of value benefit all *actual entities*.

The “loss of the minor intensities” is the rebel’s postponement of enjoyment of the private, achieved value-for-self, as the value is donated to all others. That is to say that his private value becomes a public achievement; his own *satisfaction* is temporarily

sacrificed as the value benefits others. The “wider sweep of interest” is the context of the immediate need for justice and the benefit of others from the rebel’s actions. Finally, “The finer composition” is the “fine-tuned” aesthetic value of justice that the rebel also enjoys in his private experience.

In sum, this section has sought to show that the contribution of value is significant in process philosophy and Camus’ philosophy. The contribution of value, moreover, has important implications for ethics. The next section confirms that there is an important connection between ethics and aesthetics for Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus.

VI Beauty and the Implications for Ethics

As indicated in previous chapters, beauty is the greatest value for Whitehead and Camus [see Chapter Two, Part VIII i, and Chapter Three, Part VIII i] According to the process aesthetic theory, beauty is the “the ideal aesthetic value” [see CSPM 303-304] and the greatest aesthetic achievement [see Chapter Two, Part X]. In Chapter Three, Part VIII i. it was shown that, for Camus, beauty is the goal of revolt, and serves as a measurement to evaluate actions, because, without beauty, there can be no judgment of what is good.

A measurement, moreover, may indicate where an action is located on the spectrum between the extremes of existence, such as between monotony and chaos, or between complexity and simplicity. The process aesthetic theory contends, moreover, that there is a spectrum of achieved aesthetic value, as seen in the Dessoir-Davis Circle. The following compares these concepts found in the aesthetic theory and Camus’ philosophy.

VI i Whitehead and Hartshorne

As indicated in Chapter Two, part VIII i, Whitehead defines beauty as “the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience,” “the absence of mutual inhibitions among various prehensions” and “the absence of painful clash, the absence of vulgarity” [AI 252]. These definitions underline the importance of achieving harmony among the integrated data of *concrecence*. Hartshorne defines beauty as “a

balance of unity and variety” [CSPM 303; For the above, see Chapter Two, Part VIII i]. This emphasizes the diversity of the data and similarly indicates the necessity of achieving harmony and the mutual “togetherness” in the data of experience. Actualizing aesthetic value introduces some degree of beauty into the world, which presupposes the attainment of harmony.

However, there are varying degrees of achieved aesthetic value. Actualized aesthetic value is evaluated by the results of the choices of *actual entities*. As discussed in Chapter Two, Part IV i, an appropriate aesthetic experience results if the *actual entity ingresses* appropriate *eternal objects* for that particular *concrecence*. If the choice of possibilities is poor or inadequate, suffering and evil arise from the discordant data of that *concrecence*.

According to Hartshorne, truth and goodness are supposed in beauty, as beauty is “the basic value” [EPG 217]. Beauty, then, is the goal of ethical actions. He writes: “If we know what experience is, at its best or most beautiful, then and only then can we know how it is right to act; for the value of action is in what it contributes to experience” [CSPM 303]. As the purpose of experience is to achieve the greatest aesthetic value, beauty is the measurement of achieved aesthetic value [see Chapter Two, VIII].

VI ii Camus

Camus approaches beauty from the perspective of an artist, and so has a different conception of beauty. Camus does not define beauty, but rather states that beauty is the ideal of rebellion and, clearly, the artist [see Chapter Three, Part VIII i]. In several passages, Camus compares the rebel to the artist: “To create beauty, he must simultaneously reject reality and exalt certain of its aspects. Art disputes reality, but does not hide from it ... Art thus leads us back to the origins of rebellion, to the extent that it tries to give its form to an elusive value which the future perpetually promises” [R 258; see also Chapter Three, Part VIII i]. In other words, revolt and art confront existence and reflect and express its beauty as well as its suffering, its greatness and its injustice; in short, as existence is and how it should be; this is the “elusive value” of which Camus speaks: the acknowledgement of evil and the correction of injustices.

Camus states that both art and revolt have a transforming power with beauty as their aim in the confrontation with suffering and injustice. Camus writes: “The procedure of beauty, which is to contest reality while endowing it with unity, is also the procedure of rebellion” [R 278]. In this passage, Camus states his contention that beauty unifies existence, and may lend the coherence it lacks. The unity which the rebel strives to attain is also understood in terms of the unity and harmony of *concrecence* in which aesthetic value is achieved. It is the unifying power of beauty within the variety of temporal conflicts that the rebel and the artist must overcome to attain beauty. Beauty, then, is the aim of the rebel in his quest for justice.

In sum, Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus agree that beauty is an indispensable standard for evaluating actions. Camus contends that the contemplation of beauty is the source of sane behaviour and serves as a measurement for a “judgment upon human violence” [CGPT 120]. In other words, beauty serves as a standard for evaluating actions. For Whitehead, beauty is the measurement of the achieved aesthetic value, while for Camus, it determines what is just and good.

In these passages, there are significant similarities between Whitehead’s, Hartshorne’s and Camus’ insistence that beauty is a measurement of ethical actions as well as a guide for actions. Whitehead and Hartshorne and Camus converge in their contentions that *the attainment of beauty is also the goal of experience* and, for Camus, the goal of revolt.

VII Beauty as Balance

In order to achieve beauty, a balance must be attained, according to Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus. The next discussion compares Camus’ definition of moderation and Whitehead’s conception of the aesthetic mean. For each, beauty provides a balance for existence.

VII i Whitehead and Hartshorne

Whitehead defines a balance as “the adjustment of identities and diversities for the introduction of contrast with the avoidance of inhibitions by incompatibilities” [PR 278; see also Chapter Two, Part IX i]. In other words, a balance features compatibility and harmony in the data insofar as no potential intensities are attenuated [see PR 278]. In this case, appropriate aesthetic experiences may arise from the data. Less appropriate aesthetic experiences or discord may arise from attenuations and inconsistencies in the data which create imbalances [see EPG 146].

Hartshorne’s conception of beauty is “a balance of unity and variety” [CSPM 303; see also Chapter Two, Part VIII i and IX i] which identifies beauty with balance itself. For the process aesthetic theory, the ideal balance of beauty is the aesthetic mean. The aesthetic mean is a balance between the extreme aesthetic factors in experience, such as too much triviality or too much intensity. An aesthetically balanced experience achieves an aesthetic mean that lends some degree of coherence to existence. Therefore, beauty is balance in experience in that the aesthetic mean is the most appropriate and ideal experience for that particular *actual entity*.

VII ii Camus

Similarly, as seen in Chapter Three, Part VII iii and all of Part VIII, Camus’ associates beauty with the achievement of a balance which he calls moderation. It is related to the fidelity to limits [see MS 171] that informs the actions of revolt. As previously quoted, “moderation is not the opposite of rebellion. Rebellion in itself is moderation, and it demands, defends and recreates it through history” [R 301]. More importantly, moderation ensures that the rebel’s actions are confined to the values which the rebel protects so that the rebel does not indulge in the excesses against which he revolts.

Throughout his writings, Camus expresses a “desire to find a middle course between total negation, on the one hand, and an affirmation that would explain away the enigma of existence, on the other” [CGPT 121]. This is his quest for a balance for existence. Moderation is the expression of fidelity to limits, and more significantly, the search for balance: “The real madness of excess dies or creates its own moderation ... in

its most extreme manifestations, it finds its limit on which ... it sacrifices itself' [R 301; see also Chapter Three, Part VII iii].

In "Helen's Exile," Camus refers to the Greeks: "[they] never said that the limit could not be overstepped. They said it existed and that whoever dared to exceed it was mercilessly struck down. Nothing in history can contradict them" [MS 170]. This refers to the need for balancing the excesses of existence in order to find moderation, and the middle ground for Camus is beauty. Camus compares the Greeks' elevation of beauty and modern Europe's preference for the ugly: "We have exiled beauty: the Greeks took up arms for her" [MS 167].

Camus believes that beauty has the power "to rediscover a balance to oppose the immoderateness of history" [CGPT 119; see Also Chapter Three VIII i]. This "immoderateness" is the imbalances of history that are mended by beauty. For Camus, beauty defies injustice and provides existence with a balance between extremes of history, such as the absolute order of the German occupation of France, and the chaos of suffering and death of the Second World War. Like the Whitehead and Hartshorne, Camus acknowledges the need for balance for existence, and finds this possibility in beauty.

In sum, this section has sought to demonstrate that Camus' concept of moderation is congruous with the concept of the aesthetic mean in Whitehead's metaphysics. Moderation and the aesthetic mean both hold beauty as the ideal that provides a balance that avoids the extremes of existence out of which suffering and evil arise. The rebel's moderation can be understood as the striving to attain the aesthetic mean. Therefore, Camus' conception of moderation and the process conception of the aesthetic mean are consistent.

VIII The Greatest Achievements

Finally, Whitehead (particularly Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead) and Camus agree on what is conceived as the greatest value achievements, those of generosity and companionship. The value of generosity recognized in the process aesthetic theory is consistent with Camus' conception of the "insane generosity" of revolt and the striving

for justice. Camus moreover, values companionship, especially in terms of that which is accomplished by means of solidarity.

VIII i Hartshorne

As indicated in Chapter Two, Hartshorne writes that “a supreme form of beauty [is] ... generosity” [WP 108]. For Hartshorne, generosity is one of the “supreme forms of beauty” [WP 108]. The other great achievement of aesthetic value is companionship [WP 108; see also Chapter Two, Part X]. Clearly, both these values are contributions beyond oneself and for the benefit of others. In Hartshornean terms, generosity and companionship are expressive of justice. It follows, then, that just acts entail the most aesthetically and ethically sound decisions and acts, creating the most beauty and value for others. Moreover, if all value achieved is aesthetic, then to say that *the greatest value is to act justly is to say justice is an achievement of the greatest beauty*.

VIII ii Camus

Hartshorne’s contention that generosity is the greatest form of beauty is applicable to Camus’ conception of the “insane generosity” of the rebel. If the insane generosity of the rebel is a striving for the attainment of justice, then justice is the greatest value for Camus. Justice, as previously seen, is understood in the thesis as the *attainment of beauty*, and is the *middle ground between excesses, such as the chaos of human suffering and the imposed order of absolute values* [see Chapter Three, Part VIII i and iii].

Concerning Hartshorne’s value of companionship, Camus has a similar conception: “Only in association do we receive a human value” [R 138]. He writes also: “such strong and chaste friendships among men — these are the true riches” [MS 83; see also Chapter Three, Part V iii]. This is clear particularly among certain characters in *The Plague* who unite for the common value of eliminating the injustice inherent in the epidemic that causes such widespread suffering. This is examined in the next chapter.

In conclusion, Hartshorne’s contention that generosity and companionship are the greatest values expressive of beauty is consistent with Camus’ value of justice and

solidarity, which serves to introduce greater beauty in the world. Generosity, and companionship or solidarity, moreover, are expressive of beauty and the striving for justice.

IX i Camus and Whitehead's God

Finally, this study finds significant similarities between Whitehead's conception of God with Camus' views. This is perhaps the most contentious aspect of the thesis, yet it must be noted that *both Whitehead and Camus challenge the traditional concepts of God*. As seen in Chapter One and Two, Whitehead delineated particular roles for God and God's relationships with the actual world. For Camus, if God exists, God should have just those attributes — however conceived untraditionally — that Whitehead assigns to God.

It is significant to note that throughout his writings, Camus does not ultimately rule out the existence of God; rather, he emphasizes that reason cannot ascertain God's existence. As seen in Chapter Three, this is one of the symptoms of the absurd condition. For Camus, God's existence is less a metaphysical issue than an epistemological one [see UCAC 52]. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he writes that "the absurd does not lead to God" and footnotes it with the statement: "I did not say 'excludes God,' which would still amount to asserting" [MS 42]. And in another footnote, he states: "Let me assert again: it is not the affirmation of God that is questioned here, but rather the logic leading to the affirmation" [MS 43]. It is from this starting point that the thesis argues that Camus' views are reconcilable with Whitehead's God. This section utilizes material from James Goss' article "Camus, God and Process Thought," Camus' *The Rebel* and discussions of God's roles and characteristics in Chapters One and Two of the thesis.

IX ii Camus' Theological Views

Camus' reasons for rejecting the Christian God are related to the importance he places on "temporal justice." Camus asks if God is responsible for the evil and suffering in the world because of the contradiction between God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence and his apparent refusal to remove evil. Goss writes that, for Camus,

“the amount of evil in the world testifies to God’s inability to establish justice” [CGPT 115]. For Camus, then, if God exists, he should be *active, responsive and involved in the temporal world*. These statements refer to the traditional Western definitions of God, whereas Whitehead’s definitions diverge from traditional theological conceptions.

Moreover, if God is as merely another absolute imposed on the world, Camus denies God’s existence. The Christian God is eternal and static, and these characteristics, according to Camus, diminish the value of temporal existence. That which is static has no meaningful reference to temporal change. For this reason, “In the name of self-creation, and temporal value, Camus curses God” [CGPT 115]. Consequently, Camus does not have faith in a God who is *extrinsic* to temporal existence and who cannot or will not remove the evil and suffering intrinsic to the world.

It must also be noted that Camus never expresses interest in eternal salvation [see CGPT 116]. The primacy of temporal existence and the retention of the absurd frees him from preoccupation with salvation or damnation [see UCAC 29]. Yet Camus does not completely abandon the possibility of transcendence. Goss writes: “He cannot accept history barren of all transcendence, yet he will not give credence to a God removed from the adventure of history” [CGPT 121]. In fact, in a significant passage in *The Rebel*, Camus writes: “perhaps there is a living transcendence, of which beauty carries the promise, which can make this mortal and limited world preferable to and more appealing than any other” [R 258]. Goss writes: “Rather than seeing any form of transcendence as a threat to the value of temporal existence, Camus advocates a transcendence so as to guarantee the value of this life!” [CGPT 121]. Camus, though, never defines this living transcendent value. The thesis finds this a propitious opportunity for the introduction of Whitehead’s God that qualifies as that which satisfies Camus’ quest for a transcendent value.

In sum, the sheer amount of evil in the world, for Camus, indicates that God, as all-powerful, is unable to eradicate all or even part of that evil. Moreover, God’s all-lovingness and the fact of temporal evil are contradictory, and point to the likelihood of God’s remoteness, that is, the removed god of the deists. Furthermore, Camus finds no consolation in an eternal afterlife. Camus, then, questions the relevance of an absolute, eternal God imposed upon temporal existence. In the next section, *Whitehead’s*

conception of God answers each of these concerns in Camus' terms, and demonstrates their compatibility.

IX iii Whitehead's God

Evil: Freedom and Creativity

It is clear that Camus understands God from the perspective of the traditional conception of God as omnipotent. However, Whitehead rejects this tenet. As previously seen, for Whitehead, God is not indictable for evil because God is not omnipotent. Rather, it is the free choices of *actual entities* that foster the introduction of evil into the world [see Chapter One, Part II iv; and Chapter Two, Part IV i]. The given data of the experience, or the immediate past, is established as the very result of the free choices of *actual entities*, and it is from within the limitations of its past decisions that the *actual entity* chooses which value to actualize in the present. However, freedom of choice does not guarantee that the best value is actualized. Hartshorne writes: "Risk of evil and opportunity for good are just two aspects of one thing: multiple freedom" [WATS 51; see also Chapter Two, IV i].

The agency of *actual entities*, moreover, makes each its own "locus of power" [AWA 13]. That is to say that they are agents in their particular *becoming* [see Chapter One, Part II iv]. God persuades them by means of the *subjective aim* to actualize value. Goss writes: "Since reality, for Whitehead, is composed of countless actualities each with its own power, there can be no single entity that is omnipotent. God, as an actuality ... would be limited by the power in all occasions" [CGPT 125]. In this respect, Whitehead avoids the traditional problem of the incompatibility of divine omnipotence, free choice and evil. Evil is caused by the free, but poor choices of *actual entities*; the resulting evil is neither divinely willed nor caused.

In these respects, it is not God that is indictable for evil for Whitehead. In fact, God overcomes evil by means of the preservation of value, and all that is actualized in the temporal world is "harmonized into a greater synthesis" [EPG 152] as examined in Chapter Two, Part VI ii. Whitehead's God, then, qualifies as Camus' "value that transcends history but which does not diminish human freedom and *creativity*" [CGPT 124]. In fact, God grants that freedom.

IX iv An “Involved” God

Camus believes that if God did exist, he would be active, responsive and involved. However, for Whitehead, this is precisely what God is. God is not remote, but an *actual entity*, albeit a non-temporal entity, along with all others. Whitehead insists that “God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification” [PR 179; see also Chapter One, part i.3 i]. As an *actual entity* that *concretes* along with the temporal world, Whitehead’s God is a living transcendence; he is neither static, nor fixed.

Whitehead’s God, moreover, is not “wholly other” as traditionally conceived, including Camus’ view, but the *consequent nature of God* is “the reaction of the world on God” [PR 181; see also Chapter Two, Part VI ii] insofar as God provides the givenness of the past, and *actual entities* react to that givenness. The *consequent nature of God* depends upon temporal actualizations. In this way, Whitehead’s God is not an absolute imposed on temporal existence, nor does God diminishes temporal value; rather, God is “consequent upon the *creative advance* of the world” [PR 181]. In this respect, Whitehead’s God is not above, but with the temporal world. Camus’ rejection of God, then, is rooted in his understanding of traditional theological tenets, and for Camus, if there is a God, God would be precisely as Whitehead conceives of God.

IX v Eternal Salvation vs. Objective Immortality

Finally, Camus admits no concern for eternal salvation, yet reserves a place for transcendence. Again, Whitehead responds appropriately.

For Whitehead, Hartshorne and many other process philosophers, “there is not personal immortality in the traditional sense, no heavenly realm of blissful joy and eternal peace” [EPG 157] in the traditional Christian sense, where individuals retain their characters, memories and appearances. That is, it is less important that one accumulates experiences in heaven than that our temporal existence has value and meaning [see EPG 158]. *Actual entities* enjoy a pragmatic afterlife called *objective immortality* [see Chapter One, Part III vii]. As previously indicated, an *actual entity* is *objectively immortal* when its *concrecence* is completed, and it serves as new datum for future entities. Whitney writes that “we live forever in the mind of God, not consciously, as we now live, but

rather as data in the eternal divine experience” [EPG 157]. That Whitehead’s God ensures the permanence of temporal value means that all experiences “are immortalized in God as data or objects of his eternal and perfect awareness” [EPG 159]. For many process philosophers, this is enough reason to actualize value in the temporal realm, and the actualization of value and the permanence of that value in God are the rewards which make this life worth living.

In this way, process theology retains the transcendence of God without the necessity of an eternal afterlife that is problematic for Camus. Hence, Whitehead’s God is the “living transcendence” that provides the permanence of value and meaning without reference to an afterlife. Moreover, for Whitehead, the God’s purpose for temporal existence is the “evocation of intensities,” that is, the provider of opportunities for the achievement of aesthetic value [see Chapter Two, Part VII ii]. In this sense, Whitehead’s God is “the living transcendence of which beauty carries the promise.”

Conclusion

This chapter has presented some significant similarities between process philosophy and Camus views. Both contend that temporal existence contains meaningful possibilities wherein lies value. Temporal value, for Whitehead and Camus, is of prime importance for philosophical discussion, as opposed to abstractions, extrapolations or constructs. This is expressed in Whitehead’s ontological principle and in Camus’ rejection of absolute values.

There is agreement, moreover, in the claim that it is the limits inherent in temporality that increase the value of experience. This is evident even under conditions of minimal value, as shown in the Dessoir-Davis Circle and in Camus’ interpretation of the myth of Sisyphus.

Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus also value freedom with limits. For process philosophy, the standard of value limits freedom, yet only to those possibilities that are meaningful. Similarly, for Camus, freedom with limits is valuable because it relates the individual to his restricted environment and its unique possibilities.

Freedom with limits is also relevant to freedom of action, as it intensifies responsibility as the value of those actions is contributed to the world. For Whitehead, value is contributed by means of the principle of relativity, whereas for Camus, it is the rebel that best exemplifies the contribution of the value of actions. This was demonstrated by an application of Whitehead's views to Camus' concrete figure of the rebel.

The process aesthetic theory and Camus' philosophy agree further that beauty is the greatest value, and that beauty guides ethical actions. For Whitehead and Hartshorne, beauty is presupposed in goodness. For Camus, beauty is the goal of revolt, who strives to eliminate injustice and elevate the value of this life.

Moreover, both Whitehead and Camus hold that beauty may serve as a balance to "oppose immoderateness" and lend existence an equilibrium between extremes that cause suffering and evil. This is the achievement of the aesthetic mean for Whitehead, and justice for Camus. One of the greatest achievements of beauty, according to Hartshorne, is generosity, which is exemplified by the rebel in his quest for justice.

Finally, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that for Camus, if God exists, God should have the attributes of Whitehead's God. Camus contends that if God is defined as all-powerful, it appears that God is responsible for evil. Yet for Whitehead, God's power is limited, and it is the freedom and agency of *actual entities* that generate evil. Camus holds also that God should be "involved" in temporal existence, while for Whitehead, God and the world are interdependent. Finally, Camus expresses no interest in an eternal afterlife. Similarly, for some process philosophers, an afterlife of continuing experience is not necessary for temporal existence to be valuable and meaningful. In conclusion, there are several common contentions between the claims of value, limits, beauty and balance in the writings of Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus.

Chapter Five: An Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Albert Camus’ Novel *The Plague*

Introduction

This chapter is an application of the process aesthetic theory to Albert Camus’ novel *The Plague*. The events, circumstances and characters of *The Plague* serve as an apt, fitting and pertinent example of the validity of the main thesis, that is, the common contention of the value of existence in the process aesthetic theory and in Camus’ philosophy as illustrated in *The Plague*. The present chapter is an elaborate demonstration of the main thesis, and cites relevant passages from the novel to illustrate that for both the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ novel, value still exists in the limitations of temporal existence despite the ubiquity of suffering and evil.

The application is significant since both Whitehead and Camus address the extremes of existence. The process aesthetic theory contends that each experience is located on the spectrum of aesthetic value, i.e., between the extremes of too much intensity or too much triviality, and between the extremes of too much monotony or too much chaos. This was seen in Chapter Two as illustrated by the Dessoir-Davis Circle [CSPM 305; see also Chapter Two, Part IX ii]. Similarly, *The Plague* exemplifies extremes of existence, such as the monotony of the exiled city and the chaos of the decimation of Oran. Both the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ metaphysical views concur that some value nevertheless exists within the limitations of finite existence. For Camus, this is evident in the actualizations of value of the characters within the confines of the monotony of Oran and the intensity of the suffering wrought by the plague.

The absurd, moreover, underlies the plague [see ACP 14] and represents “l’existence en general” [ACP 20]. For Camus, the plague is a symbol of the world in which we live under conditions not of our own design. In this respect, the plague “is a metaphysical illness which springs from the very nature of things” [CSA 277]. Whitehead’s thought is congruous here. For example, as cited in Chapter Two, Whitehead contends that “The characters of things are mutually obstructive” [PR 340 see also Chapter Two, Part V i].

In addition, it is well known that Camus wrote *The Plague* as an allegory of the German occupation of France during World War Two. Despite the bleakness of war and plague, Camus intends to show that some value may still arise under restricted, limited conditions [see CCE 56; see also Chapter Three, Part IV iii]. This is consistent with Whitehead's conception of the aesthetic values that are achieved within the limitations of temporal existence [see CSPM 304; see also Chapter One, Part I.2 ii and Chapter Two, III v]. For Camus, the greatest value achievement in *The Plague* is *the relief of suffering and the prevention of its spread for the sake of the plague victims*, that is, for the *common value of human existence* [see R 297; see also Chapter Three, Part VI iii]. This is the aesthetic achievement of the value of generosity, one of the greatest values to be achieved, according to Hartshorne [see WP 108; see also Chapter Two, Part X].

Another great value achievement for Camus is the *solidarity* of those who are *united* for this value. Camus writes of the liberation of France, which may also apply to the plague: "United in the same suffering ... we have won our solidarity. And we are suddenly astonished to see during this dazzling night that ... we have never been alone. We have lived the years of fraternity" [RRD 39]. In *The Plague*, estrangement and fear bring people together in a "solidarity which emerges from victimhood" [CSA 278]. In other words, the novel portrays a collective revolt that fosters "an order born of disorder" [C 146]. For Hartshorne, this solidarity is the other great aesthetic value achievable — that of companionship [see WP 108; see also Chapter Two, Part X].

Chapter Outline

This chapter applies the process aesthetic theory to the conceptions of temporal value and the value achievements of selected characters in Camus' novel *The Plague*. The comparison begins with an introduction to the aesthetic elements of existence in a state of plague, and their effects on the inhabitants of Oran. These are the extremes of the chaos of anxiety and death, and the monotony of the exiled city.

Next, and more significantly, the thesis examines the characters' responses to the plague and the value achievements of Cottard, Father Paneloux, Rambert, Tarrou and Doctor Rieux. Each response indicates the inherent values of the possibilities that each character seeks to actualize. The widespread suffering and death wrought by the plague

produce the excess of chaos in Oran, and the *standpoint and free actions of each character, accordingly, either contribute to or contrast from the chaos of suffering*. Relatedly, Whitehead writes: “Each individual makes a fundamental judgment about the character of specific sufferings ... whether he must endure the suffering he encounters or should annihilate it; whether suffering can be eliminated or whether it is an inevitable part of the human condition” [TANW 4-5]. In other words, each character must confront the injustice of suffering. Consequently, his actions, informed by that confrontation, *either perpetuate or diminish suffering*. This chapter argues that for Whitehead, Hartshorne and Camus, this confrontation with human suffering — that is, the struggle against the plague to preserve the value of humanity — is the greatest achievement of aesthetic value for this particular context. Conversely, the perpetuation of suffering due to inaction and acquiescence is equivalent to the loss of aesthetic value [see Chapter 2, Part III ii, see also ASPE 24 and EPG 147].

According to the process aesthetic theory, the course of action of each character exemplifies the actualization of various levels of aesthetic value and, for some, the effort to achieve the aesthetic mean. As previously indicated, each *actual entity* has the opportunity to seek meaningful, valuable experiences, despite the surrounding circumstances that may be less than favourable [see ASPE 24]. As the state of plague is an example of a harrowing challenge to achieve value, the risks for value achievement are the more meaningful [see EPG 145; see also Chapter Two, Part III iv and IV ii].

There are many possible responses to the pestilence. One response, embodied by Cottard, is a fatalism. Cottard *yields to the sheer impossibility of checking the spread of suffering and perpetuating death of the plague*. His self-indulgence and despair inhibit his creative *becoming*, and he refuses to achieve appropriate aesthetic value. In this way, Cottard fails to acknowledge or take responsibility for his donation of value to the *creative advance*.

A second response is quietism, held by Father Paneloux. This is a position of inaction and acquiescence before suffering. The priest defers to an all-powerful God to interpret the plague, and consequently, to justify the quietist stance. He preaches that the pestilence is a divine punishment and a divine test. Hence, he believes that the *evil of the plague and the suffering it creates must be accepted because divine justice must not be obstructed*. For the process aesthetic theory, Father Paneloux’s quietism *discourages any*

significant achievement of aesthetic value, as he advocates inaction and a denial of suffering. This indifference is anathema to both Camus and Whitehead, as both insist that the achievement of temporal value must not be forgone, nor postponed due to the belief in a compensation for suffering in an afterlife [see Chapter Four, Part IX v]. Paneloux's perspective, moreover, represents the traditional aesthetic theory, which the thesis compares with the process aesthetic theory.

A third response is that of Rambert, a visiting journalist, who *embodies both evasion and revolt.* He plans an illegal escape, yet he finally decides to remain in Oran to help control the spread of the plague. In this sense, Rambert's actions are located on both sides of the spectrum of aesthetic value achievement. At first, he prefers to achieve the individual value of companionship, which is the motive for his escape to reunite with his wife [see WP 108]. While this position fails to recognize the more immediate value of reducing the suffering of the plague victims, both Whitehead and Camus agree that this stance contains *at least some value.* Later, however, Rambert decides to stay in Oran, and joins the sanitary squads. For Whitehead, this is the achievement of value for the benefit of the collective existence, with the aim to improve the quality of temporal existence in the midst of plague [see Chapter Four, Part V].

The best response is revolt against the pestilence and devotion to service and support. This defines Tarrou, who organizes sanitation squads. Tarrou contends that *revolt is the only meaningful option in a time of plague,* and that to succumb to its evil is equivalent to perpetuating suffering. Tarrou maintains that to simply interact with others brings suffering. Hence, *he proposes to do the least damage,* and to ensure, even in ordinary interaction, that he brings the least suffering to others [see P 205-206].

Protagonist Doctor Rieux who also embodies revolt, is the most accurate representation of Camus' views. Rieux challenges Paneloux's reliance upon absolute values, a challenge that is taken up by both Whitehead and Camus. Rieux perseveres in his medical duties, *despite the fact that it costs his own happiness.* This illustrates the point made in Chapter Four, Part V, where Whitehead's conception of the contribution of value was explained utilizing the figure of Camus' conception of the rebel. Both Tarrou and Rieux discern the significance of the *contribution of the value of their revolt against the injustice of the plague that threatens the basic value of existence.*

Moreover, Tarrou, Rieux, and others who engage in revolt against the plague achieve a greater value amongst themselves, that of solidarity. This may be interpreted in Whiteheadian terms: “A species whose members are always in pain may develop a finer and more subtle relationship among its ... parts” [TANW 106]. In other words, even amidst the extremes of chaos and monotony precipitated by the plague, the value of the cultivation of meaningful relationships is still possible. Furthermore, the solidarity represented in these relationships is the value of companionship which, as seen previously, is one of the greatest values to be achieved [see WP 108].

I i The Declaration of Plague

The Plague opens with an introduction to the city of Oran and, more significantly, the developments that lead to the declaration of plague. Rieux spots the first dead rat in the hallway, but at that point is not alarmed. The number of tiny corpses, however, rises to the thousands in only a few days. They soon disappear and die [see P 19] and the newspapers dismiss the phenomenon as a “disgusting nuisance” [P 15]. The rats’ fleas, though, infest some of the inhabitants of Oran, and soon the number of victims increases rapidly. Only then is the connection evident between the death of the rats and bubonic symptoms. Finally it is Rieux who prompts the Prefect to send the definitive telegram: “Proclaim a state of plague Stop close the town” [P 56].

I ii Oran: Chaos and Monotony

Life during a time of plague in a town whose gates are closed to the rest of the world is a succinct example of the extremes of chaos and monotony. Chaos of mass anxiety arises from the threat of suffering and death and the loss of loved ones, the height of lost value. Monotony, on the other hand, is the outcome of the restricted freedom and severely limited possibilities in exile, as all daily mechanisms halt for the emergency.

As seen in Chapter Two, Part III v, the process aesthetic theory holds that the excesses of the above aesthetic factors result in imbalances on both sides of the spectrum of experience, and hinder the viability of the attainment of the aesthetic mean.

Nevertheless, there are some who are able to achieve a significant level of aesthetic value, even amidst the chaos of suffering and the monotony of restricted freedom.

I iii Chaos

The atmosphere of fear and anxiety in Oran is overbearing once the gravity of the plague is realized. Camus writes: “Discontent was on the increase ... goaded to frenzy by the epidemic” [P 94] and “Perplexity ... gave way to panic” [P 22] as twenty illnesses end fatally [see P 28]. Many are “thrown off their balance by bereavement and anxiety” [P 139]. The chaos is further compounded by the extremes of the weather. “Combined with the influences of heat and terror, everything was exaggerated” [P 94]. The heat also hastens the spread of the epidemic and intensifies the suffering of the victims.

For the process aesthetic theory, the chaos of the epidemic and the intensity of fear of impending death and the loss of loved ones produce an imbalance in the aesthetic data of experience. As examined in Chapter Two, Part III v, this imbalance enfeebles and thwarts the potential for the achievement of significant levels of aesthetic value.

I iv Monotony

There are many passages that recreate the sheer tedium of Oran’s exile, and magnify the monotony due to the stringent prophylactic measures. Movement and freedom are harshly restricted, and many retire in apathy and lethargy [see P 150]. Camus writes poetically: “[T]he streets [are] thick in dust, grey as their present lives” [P 95].

Initially, when groans of pain are heard, people crowd around the victims’ houses out of “curiosity or compassion” [P 94]. But eventually, cries of pain become “the normal speech of men” [P 94]. That is, “they had adapted themselves to the very condition of the plague, all the more potent for its mediocrity. None of us was capable any longer of an exalted emotion; all had trite, monotonous feelings” [P 149]. In fact, Camus writes that “the very word ‘novelty’ had lost all meaning” [P 180].

For the process aesthetic theory, “whatever ceases to ascend, fails to preserve itself and enters upon its inevitable decay” [TANW 101]. That is to say, that the “background of relevant alternatives” [ME 39] is limited to triviality because of the lack of relevant possibilities. In this way, many inhabitants of Oran are despondent because

there are no other options, and triviality is the dominant aesthetic fact in their lives during a time of plague.

I v Value

There are instances, nevertheless, when some inhabitants of Oran are able to achieve significant levels of value, as some remarkable changes ensue. For instance, “Husbands who had had complete faith in their wives became jealous ... Men who had pictured themselves as Don Juans became models of fidelity” [P 60]. During the plague, there is a heightened perception of the value of companionship and their lives together, coupled with a keener recognition of the relevant possibilities. The value of their relationships is appreciated, and the value of their present togetherness is intensified despite their exile and the surrounding suffering. The state of plague, then, *is the occasion in which these values arise because of, not despite, the excesses in existence*. In other words, had the plague not occurred and the town not exiled, *perhaps these values would not have been achieved*, as perhaps they would not have been invoked into consciousness as relevant, meaningful possibilities.

For the process aesthetic theory, exile and suffering are translated as monotony and chaos. However, it is evident from the above that the achievement of aesthetic value is still possible despite the environment of monotony and chaos. As the plague presupposes extremes in existence, value achievements are even more meaningful and significant. Whitehead writes: “‘discord enhances the whole’ by substantiating ‘the individuality of the parts’ and by bringing ‘into emphatic feeling their claim to existence in their own right’” [TANW 105]. In other words, the discord wrought by the plague itself brings to the fore the viability of significant value achievement among the individual members, and creates the occasion for the finer perception of the value of collective existence despite the aesthetic excesses during the plague. In this way, the achievement of the aesthetic value of companionship during a time of plague demonstrates the thesis that, even amidst the extremes of chaos and monotony, significant values may still exist.

II The Characters

This section examines the responses of five characters: Cottard, Paneloux, Rambert, Tarrou and Rieux. Camus is not interested in them as *characters* [see ACP 59] but with “approaches towards truth exemplified in their actions and in the dialogue” [CAS 62]. For this reason, dialogue has heightened significance, as it expounds their responses to the plague, that is, “l’existence en general.”

As one’s stance informs one’s actions, each response indicates the degree of aesthetic value each character achieves, and to what extent they strive to attain the aesthetic mean. This section demonstrates the main thesis that both the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ novel *The Plague* address the extremes of existence from which suffering and evil arise. This section shows that, nevertheless, Whitehead and Camus concur that temporal value still arises in the context of such extremes, and that the achievement of value is more significant because of the extreme conditions.

II.ii The Fatalistic Stance: Cottard

The first character is Cottard, who represents a fatalistic stance due to his self-indulgent submission to despair. Cottard is introduced as one of Rieux’s emergency cases, when his suicide note is discovered just in time [see P 17]. Throughout the novel, Cottard evades revolt in favour of his own self-interest and refuses to acknowledge his contribution of value to others.

When the inspector interrogates Cottard after his suicide attempt, Cottard insists that “his one wish was to be left in peace” [P 31]. Cottard’s suicide attempt detracts the police from more pressing cases, so the officer retorts: “Allow me to point out, my man ... that just now it’s you who’re troubling the peace of others” [P 31]. The contrast between Cottard’s and the officer’s statements reveals that Cottard believes his existence is self-contained, and that his actions affect no one.

Throughout the plague, authorities are preoccupied with the enforcement of emergency laws, and are diverted from arresting Cottard [see P 132] for crimes that are not disclosed to the reader. The closing of the town gates also gives Cottard the opportunity to delve into the black market, from which he reaps lucrative returns.

Involvement in the black market is easy, as the returns are great as well as immediate. Yet this is an evasion of confronting his own “secret grief” [P 30] and struggling against the plague.

Throughout the novel, two contrasting possibilities open up to Cottard. His rejection of both proposals exemplifies his evasion of his responsibility to contribute the value of his actions to others. The first is an underground organization that invites him to escape Oran, but he answers: “I’ve no wish to leave ... I’ve been feeling much more at ease here since the plague settled in” [P 118].

The second is Tarrou’s offer to join the squads to fight the epidemic, and Cottard’s retort best exemplifies his fatalism: “It won’t get you anywhere. The plague has the whiphand of you and there’s nothing to be done about it” [P 131].

In the first case, Cottard would rather endure the plague for what he views as the greater value, that of capitalizing from the black market. In the second, he expounds his belief in the fundamental powerlessness before the absurd forces that govern existence. In this way, he justifies his inertia: to revolt is pointless. What Cottard determines as being of “intensive importance” [PR 241] is the flight from justice and personal gain *despite and amidst* the chaos of the plague.

Higgs suggests that Cottard’s decisions and actions “spring not so much from a deliberate evil intention to take advantage of others, as from a moral abdication that is the consequence of his inner despair” [ACP 37]. In this way, Cottard is not a transparent character of evil intent, but a man of wretched desperation and melancholy.

Cottard is the antithesis of Camus’ vision of the rebel: he does not revolt against injustice, nor does he attempt to rise above his despair, weakness and self-interest. Rather, Cottard welcomes the plague for his own purposes. For Camus, furthermore, suicide is an unacceptable response to existence, as it is submission to despair and an escape from the concrete realities of absurd existence [see MS 11-17, 62]. Through Cottard, Camus depicts an abdication, that is, an evasion, from one’s responsibility to others, which is more acute in a state of plague, such as alleviating the suffering that is so widespread.

II.1 ii *The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Cottard*

Similarly, for the process aesthetic theory, Cottard fails to discern his contribution to the *creative advance*, nor his contribution of value to the *becoming* of others. In one scene previously mentioned, Tarrou *concretizes* the ideal aim by approaching Cottard to join him to combat the plague. Yet Cottard rejects the lure in favour of actualizing a value in relation only to his own *becoming*.

Moreover, his fear and despair prevent him from advancing to greater levels of aesthetic value [see CAS 78]. Whitehead refers to this inertia and willful repetition of the past as “decadence” [TANW 101]. In Cottard’s case, this is the refusal to advance beyond the *stubborn fact* of his melancholy.

It was previously indicated that Hartshorne insists that “Self-interest is seen as a case for sympathetic projection” [WP 15; see also Chapter Two, Part II ii]. However, Cottard’s self-interest overwhelms the possibility of empathy, and his actions demonstrate little, if any, sympathy for others. For this reason, Cottard contributes little meaningful value. Instead, he abdicates the responsibility to contribute the value of his choices, favouring actions that are motivated by his self-interest.

In sum, of all the characters in *The Plague*, Cottard best represents the fatalistic response, as he yields to the sheer impossibility of the situation. This fatalism is unacceptable to Camus, as it does not address suffering, nor does it contribute to fighting against injustice. He has an “affinity with the plague” [P 118] because there is no significant contrast between his actions and the chaos of the epidemic, as his self-indulgence prolongs that disvalue by means of his inertia and lack of empathy. Camus, Whitehead and Hartshorne are in accordance as they reject the conscious self-exemption from contributing value embodied in Cottard. Moreover, Cottard rejects the lure to attain an aesthetic balance. Instead, the intensity of his despair and the chaos of the plague are extended, and he fails to break from the *stubborn fact* of his melancholic existence.

II.2 i **Quietism and the Acceptance of Suffering: Paneloux**

The second character to be examined in the thesis is Paneloux, the local priest who takes a quietist stance toward the plague by means of his inaction, informed by his acceptance of suffering. He defers to religious constructs, namely the traditional aesthetic

theory, to find meaning in the plague, and consequently, to justify his posture of inaction, advocating an eschatological justice that compensates for suffering and evil. He preaches that the plague is divine punishment in his first sermon, albeit this harsh position is mitigated in his second. This section compares the tenets of the traditional aesthetic theory expounded by Paneloux with the process aesthetic theory, as his sermon is a succinct presentation of the traditional position.

Paneloux's sermon opens with a strong, judgmental statement "vibrant with accusation" [P 82]. "Calamity has come on you, my brethren, and, my brethren, you deserved it" [P 80]. Paneloux interprets the plague as "an act of deserved retribution" [CSA 278] or divine punishment. For instance, he refers to the plagues in Egypt, which are traditionally interpreted as "wielded to strike down the enemies of God" [P 80]. For Paneloux, Oran has incited the plague by their "criminal indifference" [P 82] toward their relationship with God, and for this reason, God has willed the plague and has intervened to bring suffering to Oran because of their sins.

The priest proclaims also that "The divine compassion ... has ordained good and evil in everything ... This same pestilence which is slaying you works for your good and points your path" [P 83]. That is to say, the plague is ordained by God for the purpose of introducing evil into the world to produce some good. Yet, beyond this point, it is impossible to understand God's ways, as God's perspective is infinite, while the human perspective is finite and hence imperfect.

Paneloux states that there is "a small still flame in the dark core of human suffering. And this light, too illuminates the shadowed paths that lead towards deliverance. It reveals the will of God in action, unfailingly transforming evil into good" [P 83]. This implies that Oran's present suffering contributes to a good end, even though that end may not be apparent or comprehensible at the human level. Suffering, then, is a necessary part of a good whole that is ordained by God.

Finally, and most significantly, Paneloux insists: "No man should seek to force God's hand or to hurry the appointed hour, and from a practice that aims at speeding up the order of events, which God has ordained unalterably from all time, it is but a step to heresy" [P 83]. In other words, if God willed the plague, then *to fight against its ravages*

is to fight against divine justice. Paneloux's logic follows, then, that it is best to embrace God's will than to work toward eliminating that which God has caused.

After witnessing the abominable injustice of the death of a child, Paneloux begins to understand the pestilence not as a punishment, but as a divine test [see P 183]. In his second sermon, he continues to hold to theological abstractions, yet he nevertheless discovers some value of struggling against injustice, *especially in the face of innocent suffering*. He declares: "each one of us must be the one who stays!" [P 185]. Paneloux joins the squads, but dies soon afterwards without a significant opportunity to compensate for the "loss to the social environment" [TANW 103] effected by his reluctance, as he waits upon divine atonement in the next life.

Paneloux is Camus' representation of that which Camus discounts, that is, reliance upon absolute values. In this case, these absolute values derive from the traditional aesthetic theory which both accepts suffering as well as denies the reality of evil. Camus' concern is temporal justice and the confrontation of suffering, which Paneloux evades.

Paneloux also serves as an antithesis to Camus' point that the brevity of life and the certainty of death are reasons enough to protect temporal value and to rebel against that which humiliates it [see ACLR 34; see also Chapter Three, Part IV ii, Part V i and VI iii]. Through the priest, Camus illustrates that "to maintain rational thought in the face of evil is to live in denial of certain basic aspects of existence" [HET 4]. The priest's quietism, moreover, "makes innocent suffering a part of the divine harmony and thus becomes a betrayal of the innocent" [CSA 279]. As seen throughout Chapter Three, to defer to abstractions rather than temporal existence itself is anathema to Camus.

II.2 ii The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Paneloux

Barineau interprets Whitehead as saying that "there is no reason to embrace or support the evils and sufficient reason to avoid, nullify or diminish the evils" [TANW 115]. In other words, Paneloux's quietism encourages little value achievement and denies the *stubborn fact* of human suffering. In fact, Barineau uses Paneloux as an example of quietism in literature: "The plague and its deaths are, according to Paneloux, what ought to be; and, if whatever is ought to be, then what ever is should not be challenged" [TANW 39-40]. However, according to Whitehead and Camus, this acquiescence

neglects the value of temporal existence and fails to resist evil. This results in the loss of value due to the priest's acquiescence and inaction [see EPG, 147; see also Chapter Two, Part V i].

The priest's belief that evil is part of a good whole points to the traditional tenet that evil is an illusion. Whitney writes: "to say that all evils serve a good end is in effect to deny the reality of evil as evil; it becomes an illusion" [EPG 36]. In other words, according to the traditional aesthetic theory, because the human perspective is imperfect, we merely experience evil as real, when it is, from the divine perspective, the means to a good end. However, to claim that evil is an illusion is to *deny its reality* and to fail to nullify that evil. For the process aesthetic theory, this is objectionable because, as previously seen, evil is an actuality and an inevitable part of the actual world [see EPG 151; see also Chapter Two, Part VI v .

The process aesthetic theory, moreover, rejects the traditional tenet that God ordains evils as punishment for sins, or that God "wills certain evils for aesthetic ends" [EPG 151]. Instead, for Whitehead, God's purpose for the temporal world is the "evocation of intensities" [PR 105] which implies the viability of evil. For the process aesthetic theory, evil arises from the poor, unintentional or deliberate decisions of *actual entities* that enjoy temporal freedom and agency. Hartshorne writes: "Risk of evil and opportunity for good are just two aspects of one thing: multiple freedom ... This is the sole, but sufficient, reason for evil as such and in general" [WATS 51; see also Chapter Two, Part IV i]. The risk to achieve aesthetic value necessarily involves the possibility of evil, as "the cost of achievement is suffering" [EPG 147].

For the process aesthetic theory God does not, furthermore, ordain or permit evil, nor does God intervene to cause evil. Whitney states the process position: "The distribution of evil ... is so apparently unjust that any belief that it is deliberately caused by God ... seems religiously, morally, and intellectually offensive. Many creatures suffer greatly, overly greatly, for the good ends which may result from their suffering; and some evils seem to contribute virtually nothing to the overall good, or, for that matter, to any individual's good" [EPG 139]. In *The Plague*, the suffering and death *are too great for the end of producing a good*, for instance, the cultivation of a relationship with God.

Finally, the notion that evil and suffering must be embraced without rectification contradicts the process aesthetic theory. As seen in Chapter Two, the purpose of ideal

aims given by God to initiate each *concrecence* is to overcome the evil of the past [see EPG 155; see also Chapter Two, Part VI iv]. Relatedly, evil is seen as evil; a reality, that is, an actuality, not an illusion. Because evil is actual, Whitehead's God provides the temporal world with the lure to actualize good for the individual *concrecence* as well as for the contribution of value to others. Whitney challenges the viability of the religious quietist stance: "If evil is part of a good whole or a means to a good end, does this not render misguided and simply mistaken any efforts to eradicate it? And must we not, then, cease to work toward the creation of a more just society, and society with less of the evil and suffering caused by injustice ... and a number of other apparently amendable causes?" [EPG 37]. In other words, to dismiss evil and suffering as illusions is to perpetuate evil and suffering, and to fail to rectify their inherent injustices.

In conclusion, Paneloux's use of the absolute values of divine intervention and eschatological justice to explain the plague leads him to an acquiescent stance before the widespread suffering in Oran. He resorts to religious constructs to give meaning to the plague, such as the belief that the evil of the epidemic is divinely ordained. However, this position denies the reality of suffering, and fails to confront it, hence, perpetuating the evil of suffering. This reliance on absolute values is anathema to Camus, as examined in Chapters Three and Four.

This section has also compared the traditional aesthetic theory and the process aesthetic theory to show that its tenants are consistent with Camus views that evil is not an illusion, but a reality. Neither contend that God *intervenes* to will certain evils for aesthetic ends. Despite these different approaches, both the process aesthetic theory and Camus' philosophy do not accept the tenets of the traditional aesthetic theory, as it is a denial of fundamental realities of temporal existence and is inconsistent with the imperative of temporal justice in the context of widespread suffering and death.

II.3 i Individual and Collective Value: Rambert

The third character, Rambert, is a journalist who is stranded in Oran once the town gates are closed. He is in Oran only a short time before the plague breaks out, and

has no binding friendships there. For this reason, he wishes to leave and reunite with his wife.

Rambert readily invokes sympathy from the reader because he openly expresses the frustration of his exile [see CAS 73]. He is a complex character, moreover, as he embodies both evasion, in his planned escape, and revolt, when he decides to join the sanitary squads. In this way, Rambert actualizes various levels of aesthetic value throughout the novel.

When Rieux declines the proposal to write Rambert a certificate stating he is free of plague and may leave Oran, Rambert conceptualizes his illegal escape. From his perspective, the greater value is that of love and companionship, achieved for his individual existence, rather than remaining within the environment of tedium in Oran. At first, Rambert perceives no value in joining the squads. Rather, he understands that the only relevant values are either escape for love, or doing nothing in exile, awaiting the opportunity to escape.

Concerning his priority of individual love, Rambert declares: "it's quite likely I was brought into the world to live with a woman" [P 72]. He states also: "I know now that man is capable of great deeds. But if he isn't capable of great emotion, well, he leaves me cold" [P 135]. For Rambert, the intensity of love is what lends existence its value. For Rambert, Oran's exile during the plague is "the same thing over and over again" [P 135]. Understandably, this tedium is unbearable, compared with the value of being with a woman.

While escape exemplifies Camus' conception of the evasion of the absurd, Rambert's efforts to rise above the pain of exile also contains some value. He strives to "recover ... lost happiness and to balk the plague of that part of [himself] which [he was] ready to defend to the last ditch ... Rambert fought to prevent the plague from besting him" [P 117]. This demonstrates the value of resistance and revolt.

In one particular scene, Rambert's discussion with Rieux and Tarrou illustrates Camus' preference for concrete realities rather than abstractions. Rambert explains that he chooses not to join Tarrou's squads because he maintains that they are motivated by abstractions. Rambert claims that they would sooner die for an idea — that is, humanity reduced to an idea [see P 135]. He conceives of Tarrou and Rieux as motivated by

heroism rather than any meaningful love for humanity [see P 136]. Yet Rieux responds: “Man isn’t an idea, Rambert ... There’s no question of heroism in all this” [P 136]. It is likely that Rambert’s lack of involvement with the squads and his unfamiliarity with the plague victims prevent him from appreciating the immediate possibilities as actualized by Rieux and Tarrou and represented in their actions.

Rambert makes a transition, however, from evasion to revolt. (It must be noted, however, that, ironically, Rambert’s planned escape is far more detailed in the novel than his participation with the squads, whereas it is clear from the thesis that Camus and Whitehead condone the latter stance for the achievement of greater value). This is a transition from striving to actualize the individual value of love to actualizing the collective value of resistance to injustice. He decides to join Tarrou and Rieux [see P 137] and admits: “now that I’ve seen what I have seen, I know that I belong here whether I want it or not. This business is everyone’s business” [P 170]. At that moment, he realizes that the values of individual love and collective revolt are at cross purposes. Both cannot be simultaneously attained, hence he must choose one or the other.

II.3 ii The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Rambert

From the perspective of the process aesthetic theory, Rambert actualizes aesthetic value on both sides of the spectrum of value achievement — inaction, like Cottard and Paneloux, albeit each for different reasons — and revolt, the contribution of value to the collective existence. Whitehead’s and Camus’ positions coincide in that even as Rambert resists joining the squads to revolt, he does achieve some value; as he waits for the opportunity to escape, he resists the monotony of the exiled city effected by the stringent prophylactic measures. However, when he revolts, he achieves the greater value of resisting the chaos of the plague. This value is greater as it benefits a greater number of people.

Concerning Rambert’s priority of love, Hartshorne argues that mutual harmony between individuals is the value of companionship, is one of the highest aesthetic values to be achieved [see WP 108]. In this respect, *there is positive value in Rambert’s decision to escape*. He cares for “living in the generosity of human emotion, in union with another creature” [CAS 74] which is aesthetically valuable in and for itself. Nevertheless,

Rambert disregards the more immediate, collective value of combating the plague, and he responds to the lure of the individual value of love.

As previously indicated, when Rambert joins the squads, he realizes that individual love and collective revolt are at cross purposes. For Hartshorne, this means that “some goods must be renounced” [CSPM 311] and demonstrates Hartshorne’s “principle of positive incompatibility” which states that there is a loss of value in decisions involving the “clash of goods” [EPG 147; for both these citations, see also Chapter Two, Part V i]. Nevertheless, the inherent value of collective rebellion overcomes the loss of the value of reunion with his beloved. Rambert, then, is lured toward the ideal aim to “constructively add to the value actualized in the world” [SFCA 148]. This idea was discussed in Chapter Two, Part VI i regarding the contribution of value of the individual to all other *actual entities*. In *The Plague*, this means that Rambert is lured away from the past imbalance of the cross purposes of values and is able to achieve some aesthetic value despite the loss of value in relation to his own *becoming*.

In conclusion, Rambert embodies both evasion and revolt and actualizes various levels of aesthetic value by effecting the transition from value achievement for his individual *becoming* to value achievement for collective existence. It is demonstrated also that Rambert’s determination to achieve the individual value of love has some value in Camus views and well as for Whitehead and Hartshorne. For Camus, this involves an individual revolt against the plague to keep it from besting him. For Hartshorne, similarly, this is the determination to achieve one of the greatest values: companionship. However, the individual and collective values are at cross purposes and, for Hartshorne, it is evident that “some goods must be renounced.” Because of this, Rambert must decide between one or the other, and chooses the more immediate and relevant value of revolt against the plague and its inherent injustice.

II.4 i Revolt: Tarrou

The next character, Tarrou, is remarkably motivated and represents dedication to revolt against injustice. Like the rebel, as seen in Chapter Three, Tarrou’s conviction of the common value of humanity compels him to organize voluntary sanitary squads [see P

105; R 297; and Chapter Three, Part VI iii]. The sanitary squads symbolize solidarity and collective revolt against the absurd conditions that diminish the overarching value of temporal existence. Tarrou is useful for the thesis as evidenced in this character's relevance to the process aesthetic theory.

Throughout the novel, Tarrou is confronted by challenges to his rebellious stance. On the one hand, "Many fledgling moralists ... were going about our town proclaiming ... we should bow to the inevitable" [P 111]. Tarrou, however, retorts "that a fight must be put up ... The essential thing was to save the greatest possible number of persons from dying and being doomed to unending separation. And to do this there was only one resource: to fight the plague. There was nothing admirable about this attitude; it was merely logical" [P 111]. Tarrou, then, is not impeded by fear in his decision to take the fatal risks to achieve the value of preserving the life of the ill and protecting those of sound health. According to this fatalism, the plague is conceived as *unconquerable*, and this posture allows *suffering to be prolonged unnecessarily*. For Tarrou, this is an injustice in itself. Yet Tarrou, like Camus' rebel, holds that the risks are worth taking because of his contention that there are more reasons for, and greater benefits for others, to actualize these temporal values, rather than to "bow down" or precipitate suffering by failing to alleviate it. This was addressed in Chapter Three in passages dealing with Camus' conception of revolt, especially in Part VI iv. For instance, as previously cited, Camus holds that, for the rebel, "the rights of all are more important than himself" [R 14]. This defines Tarrou's stance in *The Plague*.

On the other hand, Tarrou is confronted with the opposite position: that his actions and those of the sanitary squads under him, are heroic. However, Tarrou insists that "Those who enrolled in the sanitary squads ... had, indeed, no such great merit in doing as they did, since they knew it was the only thing to do and the unthinkable thing would then have been not to have brought themselves to do it" [P 110]. In other words, had Tarrou not recruited the squads, and had the members not joined, *they would be perpetuating suffering when there are the means available to allay it*. Tarrou and the squads, then, demonstrate revolt against injustice, which is the greatest value for Camus [see Chapter Three, Part VIII i]. More specifically, Tarrou, like the rebel, perceives the common value of humanity as a value "so far from being gratuitous that he is prepared to

support it no matter what the risk” [R 14]. In this respect, Tarrou and the squads take the risk of contagion and death in their pursuit of achieving the value of justice for the suffering victims.

In a conversation between Tarrou and Rieux, Camus expresses his passionate opposition to capital punishment and, in Tarrou’s voice, compares it with the plague. Tarrou claims: “I learned that I had an indirect hand in the deaths of thousands of people, that I’d even brought about their deaths by approving of acts and principles which could only end that way” [P 205]. Here, Tarrou speaks of his acknowledgment of his previous passive approval of state-ordered death.

Tarrou’s awareness of his contribution to the disvalue of suffering wrought by capital punishment and the plague demonstrates the lucidity which Camus upholds. That is, to maintain lucidity contains great value, as then there are greater possibilities that injustices are confronted and eliminated. To live in ignorance or denial, and to adapt to, rather than oppose, injustice is what Tarrou calls the state of the “plague-stricken” [P 205]. The plague represents evil and suffering — in short, the injustice of death and the plague-stricken, for Tarrou, bring about death [see P 205].

Tarrou also observes sadly: “We can’t stir a finger in this world without the risk of bringing death to somebody” [P 206]. That is to say that all contact with other living beings brings the possibility of inflicting *at least some degree of suffering* [see ACP 26]. Tarrou contends that “to escape this contagion completely in an imperfect world is impossible” [ACP 38]. In this respect, he recognizes the consequences of acting in the world, and holds that a significant contribution to diminishing the disvalue of suffering is the *attempt to not contaminate others with the “plague.”*

Tarrou, then, endeavours to *not add* to suffering, in this case, to not perpetuate the chaos of the plague. “We must always keep watch so we don’t infect anyone else” [P 207]. All must maintain a “vigilance that must never falter” [P 207]. Tarrou is compelled to “save them, or at least do them the least harm possible” [P 207]. That is, Tarrou acknowledges the consequences of action and inaction, and believes that the least one can do is try not to contaminate others with the “plague.”

Tarrou's radical risks, however, bring his death, as he contracts the plague at the end of the novel. In this way, he devotes his entire being to the value of "doing the least harm possible" in his "quest of peace by service in the cause of others" [P 237].

II.4 ii The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Tarrou

Tarrou's character reveals an extensive relevance to the process aesthetic theory concerning risk-taking for the achievement of the greatest value, the avoidance of the loss of value effected by the triviality of inaction and his success in attaining a balance between others' responses to his choice of action.

First, the "moral fledglings" claim that he should "bow to the inevitable" but he responds simply that "a fight must be put up." For Camus, as seen before, this reflects the value of the rebel, that the best option is to struggle against injustice. Similarly, for Whitehead, risks for the achievement of value are worth taking since there are more reasons and benefits to actualize temporal value than to "bow down" to injustice or to accept the *stubborn facts* of suffering [see EPG 149; see also Chapter Two, Part III vi].

The other challenge, that Tarrou's actions and those of the squads under him are unheroic, receives another response consistent with process thought. Tarrou holds that "the unthinkable thing would then have been not to have brought themselves to do it" [P 110]. For the process aesthetic theory, this means that, if Tarrou had not organized the squads and, consequently, had the members not joined, they would have rejected the lure toward the more appropriate value of alleviating the suffering of the plague victims. Tarrou and the squads would have failed, then, to achieve more appropriate levels of aesthetic value. Consequently, they would have introduced unnecessary triviality to the aesthetic data, resulting in the contribution of little value. As seen in Chapter Two, triviality is also an evil to be avoided because it effects a loss of value [EPG 148; see also Chapter Two Part III v and V i]. In this case, the loss of value is the unnecessary deaths of plague victims that would have gone without treatment from the squads.

Tarrou, then, *strikes a balance between the fatalism of the "moral fledglings" and heroism by means of his revolt, which he conceives as the only relevant and meaningful possible course of action.* Tarrou achieves and contributes one of the highest aesthetic values, that of generosity. This generosity is consistent with Camus' conception of the rebel, whose actions are motivated by the conviction of the value of human existence [see

R 304: see also Chapter Three, Part VI iv; and the application of Whitehead's principle of relativity to Camus' figure the rebel, Chapter Four, Part V i].

Tarrou's views concerning capital punishment and the plague also are relevant to the process aesthetic theory. As stated above, to live in ignorance or denial, and to adapt to, rather than oppose, injustice is what Tarrou calls the state of the "plague-stricken" [P 205]. For Whitehead and Hartshorne, this is the loss of aesthetic value by means of acquiescence [see Chapter Two, Part V i]. Relatedly, Tarrou claims also that the awareness of one's contribution to the disvalue of suffering inspires one to change one's course of action. This awareness demonstrates Camus' value of lucidity, as a lucid mind denies no aspect of existence, including injustice [MS 43, 34; see also Chapter Three, Part IV i]. This is comparable to the value of consciousness in "high-grade" *actual entities* in Whitehead's metaphysics. Conscious *actual entities* are able to integrate a greater amount of aesthetic value, value which, for human beings, includes the benefit of knowledge. According to Hartshorne, knowledge is a value unto itself, since it increases the prospect for the achievement of greater aesthetic value [see CSPM 308, EPG 217]. Hence, *to acknowledge injustices increases the chances of a remedy*. In this way, there is consistency in Camus' value of lucidity expressed in Tarrou and the value of knowledge in the process aesthetic theory.

As stated above, Tarrou states also: "We can't stir a finger in this world without the risk of bringing death to somebody" [P 206]. Here, "death" is interpreted as suffering in general. Tarrou contends adds that "to escape this contagion completely in an imperfect world is impossible" [ACP 38]. Again, the process aesthetic theory agrees with Tarrou's claims, as it proposes that some aesthetic items in the universe inevitably clash when they are at cross purposes of their processes of *becoming*. Hence, suffering and evil are the inevitable products of the *creative advance*. This is Hartshorne's "principle of positive incompatibility" as discussed in Chapter Two, Part V i. Hartshorne writes: "the principle of incompatible goods, together with that of *creativity*, or the self-determination of each moment of existence in and by the reality of that moment, furnishes the ultimate reason for suffering in the world" [CSPM 311]. For Hartshorne, these aesthetic realities "are enough to make a purely harmonious world impossible" [CSPM 312]. In this way, Tarrou's contention that interaction in the world inevitably involves suffering is congruous with Hartshorne's "principle of positive incompatibility."

The aesthetic mean for Tarrou, then, is found in *the striving to interact responsibly and to perpetrate the least damage possible, an aim that is, nevertheless, almost impossible to achieve due to the incompatibilities of the aesthetic data in the temporal world*. For the process aesthetic theory, one cannot not interact with others because of, for instance, the value that arises from meaningful relationships, as well as the loss of value that occurs from the refusal to affiliate with others. For Tarrou, *the attempt to not compound the suffering already in the world is the aesthetic mean between the evil of the plague and the unique values that arise from meaningful human relationships*.

Finally, Whitehead's definition of aesthetic balance, as previously indicated, illuminates Tarrou's stance. An aesthetic balance is "the adjustment of ... diversities" and the "avoidance of inhibitions" [KPR 54]. This describes Tarrou's point: one must adjust one's choice of actions or value achievements with the aim of circumventing the incitement of suffering that already overwhelms the temporal world.

In sum, Tarrou's character is a good example of the compatibility of Camus' views and the process aesthetic theory. Tarrou's conception of the worthwhileness of risk and his unwillingness to succumb to the plague are example of his refusal to contribute unnecessary triviality from inaction. By means of his revolt, Tarrou also attains a balance between quietism and heroism. Moreover, his value of the knowledge of injustice as the first step to rectification is consistent with the process value of knowledge. Finally, Tarrou's contention of the impossibility to escape "contagion" is comparable with Hartshorne's "principle of positive incompatibility."

II.5 i The Challenge to Absolute Values and the Sacrifice of Personal Happiness: Rieux

The final character of *The Plague* examined in the thesis is the protagonist, medical doctor Rieux. Rieux is the "man of good will" [ACP 36] who constitutes the "picture par excellence of revolt" [CSA 277]. Through his actions, Rieux expresses "the sense of human solidarity that follows upon an awareness of man's absurd predicament"

[ACP 37]. He is “outraged by the whole scheme of things ... fighting against creation as he found it” [P 107]. That is, his stance is that of revolt against the injustice of suffering.

Rieux is also the absurd hero of *The Plague*; like Sisyphus, he repeats the same actions over and over. In Rieux’s case, he deals with one plague victim at a time, one after the other. He also recognizes that his “victories will never be lasting ... But it’s no reason to give up the struggle” [P 108]. This epitomizes Rieux’s position of revolt and struggle against the pestilence.

Rieux’s principle of revolt is in direct opposition to Paneloux’s quietism, and this dichotomy is a source of ideological and social tension throughout the novel. Rieux criticizes the priest’s resignation before the plague: “When you see the misery it brings, you’d need to be a madman, or a coward, or stone blind to give in tamely to the plague ... Every country priest who ... has heard a man gasping for breath on his deathbed, thinks as I do. He’d try to relieve human suffering before trying to point out its excellence” [P 106]. For Rieux, his constant contacts with the ill and the dying attest to the fact that suffering is a concrete, actual injustice, and not an illusion enjoyed by God, which is the position held by Paneloux.

Concerning Paneloux’s belief that suffering contributes to the good of the whole, Rieux retorts: “who would dare to assert that eternal happiness can compensate for a single moment’s human suffering?” [P 183]. The doctor’s revolt contrasts sharply with the priest’s adherence to absolute values. To the question of who contributes the greater value, the answer is simple; Rieux’s dedication to fighting against suffering and death represents his devotion to the amelioration of temporal existence, especially amidst the plague, while Paneloux’s quietism generates little value.

Rieux is often portrayed as exhausted, and at times “seemed unable to shake off his fatigue” [P 170] which indicates the intensity of his struggle. In order to contribute the value of his work he foregoes his own happiness and fulfillment, sacrificing that which he most loves. His wife is very ill in a sanatorium outside of the city, and although he is separated from her and she dies while she is away [see P 237] he perseveres in the immediate tasks of the present moment. The postponement of Rieux’s own happiness and fulfillment is expressed in his emotional distance. This appears to be indifference, though it helps him to manage his “almost unendurable burden ... Thus he was enabled to follow

... the dreary struggle in progress between each man's happiness and ... the plague" [P 76-77].

Like Rambert, Rieux is separated from his wife and he expresses this loss due to his sacrifice: "for nothing in the world is it worth turning one's back on what one loves. Yet that is what I'm doing — though why I do not know ... That's how it is ... and there's nothing to be done about it" [P 170]. It must be noted also that Rieux and Rambert make similar concessions in that both suffer from an active deprivation of love in their rebellion against the pestilence. However, Rieux invests significant energies into the value of his work as a doctor. He is the narrator and the protagonist of the novel, the unwavering rebel whose actions enjoy much more detail than Rambert's. Rieux is driven by "a quiet but fierce love for his fellows and a deeply-felt anger with the suffering they are made to endure" [CAS 65]. It must be noted that Rambert's hesitancy is chronicled more than his actual work with the squads in the novel, whereas Rieux's work is inextricably linked to the development of his character. In this respect, Camus emphasizes Rieux's devotion to his duty more than Rambert's decision to revolt, as Rieux's contribution of value enjoys more detail throughout the novel.

II.5 ii The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Rieux

Like Tarrou, Rieux is a useful illustration of this study's central thesis. His dialogues and actions represent Camus' position, and magnify the significance of the compatibility of Camus' views with the process aesthetic theory. Again, this section utilizes material previously introduced to demonstrate that the process aesthetic theory is a valid framework which illuminate Rieux's character, especially his views of the primacy of temporal value and the urgency to relieve suffering, a value he contributes to others.

In one scene, Rieux responds to the priest's sermon and states the opinion that, if Paneloux had witnessed the disease and death Rieux had, "He'd try to relieve human suffering before trying to point out its excellence" [P 106]. While Paneloux holds that evil is an illusion that only God perceives and understands, Rieux expresses his contention that, like the process aesthetic theory, suffering is immediate, concrete and actual. In fact, the *acknowledgement of the reality and actuality of suffering is*

justification for relieving suffering. This position, moreover, generates greater aesthetic value as it incites the attempt to introduce beauty and goodness in the aesthetic data.

Rieux further responds to Paneloux's belief that suffering contributes to the good of the whole. Rieux asks: "who would dare to assert that eternal happiness can compensate for a single moment's human suffering?" [P 183]. Process philosopher Whitney concurs: "Even a post mortem heavenly realm could not explain, undo, compensate or justify evils suffered by countless innocent souls" [EPG 37]. This means that both Rieux, who the thesis interprets as speaking for Camus, and Whitney, representing process philosophy, claim that *compensation for suffering in another life does not justify suffering in the temporal world*. Simply put, the belief in an afterlife reward leads to the failure to relieve suffering here and now, as such a posture is a denial of suffering.

The postponement of Rieux's happiness and *satisfaction* in his own *becoming* can also be understood in the framework of the process aesthetic theory. In his perseverance in his medical duties, Rieux's choice to postpone his own happiness is consistent with Whitehead's conception of the delay of *satisfaction*. Rieux subordinates the depth and intensity of his own *becoming*, his private experience and *satisfaction* in order to *contribute the value of his actions of restoring health and protecting others from the threat of the plague*.

Another example of the postponement of Rieux's private *satisfaction* is that he, like Rambert, suffers from a loss of value because of his separation from his wife, compounded with his medical tasks. Because of the pressing immediacy of his duties, and because the prophylactic measures restricts him to Oran, he cannot see his wife, nor benefit from the *satisfaction* of the aesthetic value of meaningful companionship. Hence, Rieux perseveres in the present moment with the task at hand — to cure and treat the plague victims.

The process aesthetic theory recognizes that selection of possibilities for actualization involves necessarily an elimination [see PR 340]. This illuminates Rieux's unhappiness. He suffers the evil of "the clash of vivid feelings, denying to each other their proper expansion" [TANW 103]. In other words, he is satisfied with neither his work, as it is never complete due to the severity of the spread of the disease, nor can he enjoy the pleasures of love. Moreover, according to Hartshorne's view, Rieux suffers the

evil of the “clash of goods” [EPG 147] insofar as both the value of love and the value of curing the ill cannot be simultaneously achieved. This is the source and reason for the impossibility of his happiness and fulfillment in his own *becoming*.

Moreover as discussed in Chapter Two, Part VIII i, Hartshorne’s definition of beauty elucidates Rieux’s private experience. For Hartshorne, the attainment of beauty is the achievement of “unity in variety” [CSPM 303]. Experience, moreover, is most aesthetically valuable when it is diversified and harmonious [see CSPM 303]. Due to the sheer repetition of Rieux’s actions and their calculated lack of diversity, Rieux’s experiences are not sufficiently diversified for him to achieve the aesthetic mean for his own *becoming*. He is deprived furthermore, of the availability of those aesthetic elements that would viably contribute to greater *satisfaction* and value.

Nevertheless, because the intensity of his devotion to his medical duties, Rieux strives to achieve the aesthetic mean for others. By means of his consistent dedication, Rieux immerses himself in the struggle after value. As seen in Chapter Two, “The struggle after value” [CEE 84; see also Chapter Two, Part III vi] is how Sherburne denotes temporal existence itself. Similarly, the struggle against the plague, which symbolizes “l’existence en general” is what Camus calls revolt. Because of his resolution to revolt, Rieux achieves and contributes one of the most significant and meaningful levels of aesthetic value, that of generosity, as he responds appropriately to the lure of the ideal aim to overcome the evil of the *stubborn facts* of the pestilence.

Because Rieux is driven by “a quiet but fierce love for his fellows and a deeply-felt anger with the suffering they are made to endure” [CAS 65] he attains a significant level of unity and harmony, especially as he increases the value experienced by others. The intensity of his devotion to his work indicates the striving to reach the aesthetic mean, and his sacrifice also intensifies the value of his actions for others. He succeeds in nullifying the extreme of the chaos of suffering and the triviality of the decisions of others, such as Cottard’s refusal to engage in revolt, Rambert’s hesitancy and Paneloux’s quietism.

In conclusion, Rieux’s opposition to absolute values evidently reflects Camus’ position, as expounded in Chapter Three. Rieux’s responses to Paneloux concerning the place of suffering in a divine scheme, moreover, are consistent with the process aesthetic

theory. Finally, an analysis of the delay of Rieux's *satisfaction* and the sacrifices he makes for the immediate demands of his duty, and his contribution of value prove relevant to the compatibility of Camus' philosophy with the process aesthetic theory.

III i The Aesthetic Achievements of Rieux and Tarrou

By means of their solidarity, Tarrou and Rieux are the characters who achieve the most significant levels of aesthetic value in the *Plague*. Representing Camus' position, both characters rebel against injustice to ameliorate existence. According to the process aesthetic theory, both Tarrou and Rieux aim for "a higher perfection" [TANW 105] to contend against the *stubborn fact* of the discord of suffering. Whitehead's statement interprets these characters' motives: "The categories governing the determination of things are the reasons why there should be evil; and are also the reasons why, in the advance of the world, particular evil facts are finally transcended" [PR 223]. That is to say, the temporal world, according to process thought, inevitably includes evil, yet these *stubborn facts* are reason enough to endeavour to eliminate evil.

Throughout *The Plague*, Rieux and Tarrou strive for beauty, which is goodness, according to the process aesthetic theory. As stated previously, Hartshorne writes: "goodness 'is not the value of experiences themselves, but rather the instrumental value of acting so as to increase the intrinsic value of future experiences, particularly those of others than oneself'" [EPG 217: see also Chapter Two, Part VIII ii]. As evidenced in examples from *The Plague*, this defines Tarrou's and Rieux's striving to achieve value for others in a time of plague.

Moreover, Whitehead contends that something is beautiful if it *creates more beauty than it inhibits* [TANW 102]. *This is demonstrated particularly in Tarrou's value of the prevention of suffering and in Rieux's dedication as a doctor.* In this way, Tarrou and Rieux resolve to achieve the aesthetic mean. However, due to the aesthetic imbalances of chaos and triviality in the environment, neither are able to attain aesthetic "perfection."

The values that Tarrou and Rieux succeed in achieving, nevertheless, are worthwhile despite the excesses of chaos and monotony, as well as the lack of unity and the loss of value. Sherburne writes that, for the process aesthetic theory, the opportunity

to achieve aesthetic value “guarantees the worthwhileness of present life whatever may be its temporal outcome” [PPCT 324]. Similarly, Camus states: “the struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart” [MS 111]. In other words, the process aesthetic theory and Camus views concur that temporal existence has value during and because of the struggle towards value. And that struggle or revolt for value achievement are worthwhile in and of themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ novel *The Plague* demonstrate that significant values may still be achieved even amidst the extremes in existence which foster suffering and evil. Both *The Plague* and the process aesthetic theory address the extremes of existence, such as exile, and suffering and death. For the aesthetic theory, these extreme aesthetic elements are translated as monotony and chaos.

More significantly, the characters of *The Plague* portray various responses to the pestilence, which symbolizes for Camus “l’existence en general.” For the process aesthetic theory, these responses exemplify perceptions of the value of existence vis-a-vis human suffering, and the achievement of various levels of aesthetic value informed by these perceptions.

Each character examined in the chapter actualizes various levels of aesthetic value. Cottard evades revolt because of his despair and self-absorption, Rambert also shirks revolt because, at first, he prefers to actualize what he perceives to be the greater value of companionship with his beloved. Rambert’s reasons for staying in Oran, however, are opposite to Cottard’s. Cottard’s decision to stay is for self-gain, whereas Rambert stays to assist the squads, despite the loss of the value of love.

Paneloux, moreover, refuses to engage in revolt because of his belief that a divine will has ordained the plague, and that there should be no attempt to alter punishments meted out by God. The priest’s acquiescence is informed by his conviction that an eschatological justice compensates for temporal suffering. Paneloux does not evade the

plague like Cottard, but rather is convinced of the absolute value of an otherworldly justice that cannot be altered.

Rambert and Rieux, furthermore, make a similar sacrifice — to forego the individual value in favour of the more urgent value of helping the plague victims. Yet Rieux is unlike Rambert who plans to escape. Instead, throughout the novel, Rieux perseveres within the limits of the immediate values of the present conditions.

Finally, Rieux and Tarrou demonstrate the humanitarianism for which Camus' is known. They share the devotion to the preservation of the common value of humanity and the value of protecting it against that which diminishes that value. The reasons for their choice, as previously seen, are: "it was merely logical": "it was the only thing to do"; "That is what I'm doing, and there's nothing to be done about it" and "I know that I belong here whether I want it or not. This business is everyone's business." Another quote sheds light on these stances: "Since plague became in this way some men's duty, it revealed itself as what it really was; that is, the concern of all." In other words, the wager for rebellion against the plague and for the value of humanity, rather than values relevant only to individual *becoming*, is self-evident as it generates greater value for others.

Similarly, Whitehead contends that any act "which in any wide sense is beautiful is to that extent justified in its existence" [TANW 102]. That is to say, that which creates beauty or ethical goodness is warranted in itself. As seen in the discussions of the characters Cottard, Paneloux and Rambert, *to choose to forgo the struggle against the plague requires some justification*. It also entails the refusal to achieve and contribute the most appropriate value: that of the collective struggle against the plague.

Camus' novel *The Plague* demonstrates the values that emerge in temporal existence in stringently limited contexts. For the process aesthetic theory, there is not an overbalance of disvalue amidst the plague, but a heightened significance of the contribution of the aesthetic values of the generosity of revolt and the companionship expressive of the solidarity, which are the most significant achievements of aesthetic value. Rieux attests to the value of his experience: "to state quite simply what we learn in a time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise" [P 251]. That is to say, meaningful values emerge in experience, even during a time of plague. Whitehead explains: "experience is more harmonious than discordant, more orderly than

chaotic” [TANW 156]. For Camus, this absurd universe is not entirely hostile to human aspirations; rather, it is “ambiguous because it provides intense and deeply satisfying human pleasures, yet also condemns man to suffering and death” [ACP 14]. Hartshorne concurs: “It is the critic’s fantasy that somehow great good can exist without evil” [EPG 217]. In conclusion, despite the excesses of the aesthetic elements of monotony and chaos that cause suffering, and despite the conflicting purposes of *actual entities* that obstruct *becoming* and thwart the attainment of an aesthetic mean, significant values may still exist, even in a state of plague.

CONCLUSION

Central Thesis

This thesis has compared the contentions of the value of existence in the process aesthetic theory and Albert Camus' novel *The Plague*. The thesis has argued that both Whitehead and Camus find value in experience, despite the ubiquity of suffering.

One of the central tenets of the process aesthetic theory is that each experience contains aesthetic value. A succinct expression of Whitehead's contention that value *is* experience is his statement that "Value is the intrinsic reality of an event" [SMW 93]. In other words, "no actuality could not have value" [EPG 143].

Likewise, for Camus, revolt, as he conceives of it, is motivated by the underlying belief in the value of existence. According to Camus, "If we decide to live, it must be because we have decided that our personal existence has some positive value. If we decide to rebel, it must be because we have decided that a human society has some positive value" [R vii]. That is to say, that on one hand, simply to live is to concede that existence is valuable. To rebel, on the other hand, indicates that this value is worth protecting and preserving.

Moreover, the thesis has shown that both the process aesthetic theory and Camus' writings contend that existence is valuable even under extreme conditions, such as an excess of triviality or an excess of chaos. For this reason, both the process aesthetic theory and Camus' writings take into account the spectrum of experience, positive and negative, novel and monotonous. In the process aesthetic theory, the Dessoir-Davis Circle demonstrated that there are various levels of aesthetic value achievement, for instance, either "magnificent" or "commonplace," "pretty" or "ridiculous." At the centre of the circle, "beauty" is the ideal aesthetic value, and is equated with the attainment of the aesthetic mean. All other values are located around beauty accordingly. The point is that "deviations from the mean still contain aesthetic value" [CSPM 304]. In other words, experience still contains value even under conditions that hinder the attainment of the aesthetic mean, or beauty. It was explained also that each *actual entity* strives to attain the aesthetic mean between the extremes of experience to achieve an appropriate aesthetic value for each particular context. However, the aesthetic mean is attained only with great effort on the part of the *actual entity*.

Finally, *actual entities* have the obligation on the conscious level to achieve the most appropriate aesthetic value due to the relatedness of all actuality by means of mutual *prehensions* of each other. This has implications for ethics, as other *actual entities* benefit or suffer from the choices of one *actual entity*.

Similarly, Camus' novel *The Plague* portrays the achievement of value amidst the extreme conditions of monotony and chaos. For instance, on the one hand, when a state of plague is declared and strict prophylactic measures are enforced, Oran's exile demonstrates the extreme of monotony. On the other hand, anxiety of impending death, mass suffering and the loss of loved ones exemplify the extreme of chaos. Nevertheless, there is a heightened perception and keener recognition of the value of their relationships. The state of plague, then, is the occasion in which these values arise. This is a valid illustration of the thesis that, even amidst the extremes of chaos and monotony, values may still exist.

Furthermore, characters such as Rieux and Tarrou are able to achieve significant value by means of their revolt against the plague. For Camus, revolt fosters a balance between the chaos of suffering and evil and the triviality that can arise from the absurd. Similar to the process aesthetic theory, Camus equates the rebel's striving to overcome the extremes of injustice with the striving to attain beauty. For Camus, both art and rebellion challenge that which opposes the value of existence and lend it beauty to increase that value. As quoted several times throughout the thesis, Camus compares art and rebellion: "To create beauty, he must simultaneously reject reality and exalt certain of its aspects. Art disputes reality, but does not hide from it ... Art thus leads us back to the origins of rebellion" [R 258]. Camus also recognizes that the attainment of beauty, or justice, is accomplished only with great effort and striving on the part of the rebel [R 258].

In this way, both the process aesthetic theory and Camus' views are consistent, in that, as both seek to demonstrate the value of existence, both hold that a balance is required for appropriate value achievement. This balance is the attainment of beauty, the ideal value, accomplished only with great effort. This effort and striving are valuable unto themselves, as the value achieved from that effort also benefits others.

Overview

Whitehead's Metaphysics

The thesis devoted the first chapter to Whitehead's metaphysics to provide relevant background for the discussion of the process aesthetic theory.

Whitehead's metaphysical system has two main components, potentiality and actuality. The formative elements comprise potentiality, and are *creativity*, the generic character and activity in the universe; *eternal objects*, or potentialities that are *ingressed in concrescence* for their value; and the *primordial nature of God*, which orders the *eternal objects* for relevance in the actual world. The *primordial nature of God* also provides the *subjective aim* that lures the *actual entity* to actualize the most appropriate aesthetic value of an *eternal object*. In short, the formative elements provide actuality with the potentiality required to advance into further novelty and the achievement of aesthetic value.

The concept of the *actual entity* is central to Whitehead's metaphysics. They are the most "basic units" of reality [see SFCA 22]. *Actual entities* are "the final real things of which the world is made up" [PR 18]. That is to say that all that is actual is made up of *actual entities*.

Actual entities are the subjects of *concrescence* and the agents of process, and are inherently creative and free. Their process is referred to as *concrescence*, which is the means by which *actual entities* actualize aesthetic value. The *subjective aim* initiates the *concrescence*, and is a "lure for feeling" [PR 85] to actualize the most appropriate possibility.

Concrescence is pivotal in Whitehead's metaphysics, as it is by means of *concretizing* that *actual entities* achieve aesthetic value. *Concrescence* involves feelings, called *prehensions*, which is how the *actual entity* feels the data of the past and the possibilities in the present. It is by means of *prehensions* that actuality is interrelated, and that *actual entities* are able to "feel" the choices of others. This is referred to as the "principle of relativity." Once the *actual entity* *ingresses* a possibility, it attains *satisfaction* and the *concrescence* is terminated. The *actual entity* then "perishes," and becomes *objectively immortal*. This means, in short, that the *actual entity* "lives on" as a value for future entities that "feel" that value by way of mutual *prehensions*.

For the thesis, the significance of this discussion of Whitehead's metaphysics in Chapter One is to examine the experience and process of *actual entities*, which is *concrecence*. As shown, *concrecence* is how the *actual entity* achieves aesthetic value.

The Process Aesthetic Theory

The second chapter expounds the central aspects of the process aesthetic theory, for which Whitehead's metaphysics is the foundation. The process aesthetic theory contends that each experience contains aesthetic value, derived from the choices of *actual entities*. *Actual entities* are equipped with *ideal aims*, and hence have the opportunity to achieve appropriate aesthetic value. Conscious *actual entities* have the obligation to respond to the *ideal aims* and achieve the most appropriate aesthetic value. This obligation is made more significant due to the mutual *prehensions* of all entities. Ideally, the *actual entity* achieves the aesthetic mean.

However, aesthetic factors in the immediate environment of the *actual entity* may either foster or hinder the attainment of the aesthetic mean. For instance, order limits possibilities, and may lead to monotony. Yet order also provides stability to contrast from novelty. Disorder, moreover, may bring on a chaotic state, yet it may also provide novelty and diversity. Nevertheless, both order and disorder, when extreme, introduce suffering and evil in experience [see PR 90]. Suffering and evil arises, either deliberately or accidentally, from the free choices of *actual entities*. For Whitehead, then, the freedom and agency of *actual entities* are the source of evil in the world. Evil, is also the "loss of value." This occurs when the past fades, and the *subjective immediacy* of the actualized value is "lost" over time. A more significant form of the loss of value occurs when the *actual entity* chooses less appropriate values, and equal or greater values remain unactualized [EPG 147].

Nevertheless, in the process aesthetic theory, evil is "overcome" in several ways. *Objective immortality* ensures the preservation of value and the contribution of value to future entities. The loss of values, moreover, is "saved" by means of the integration and synthesis of all past values in the *consequent nature of God*. Most significantly, God also contributes to "overcoming" evil by providing *actual entities* with *ideal aims* to lure them towards more appropriate values in the immediate future.

According to Whitehead, *actual entities* seek and require experiences of appropriate aesthetic value [see ASPE 24]. This is why each strives to actualize the aesthetic mean between the extremes of order and disorder, and between monotony and chaos. By achieving the aesthetic mean, the *actual entity* avoids the extremes on the spectrum of aesthetic value from which evil arises [see EPG 143]. The aesthetic mean is also deemed the “attainment of beauty,” which occurs when there is a balance of the aesthetic factors in the *actual entity’s* felt experience derived from *concrecence*. Beauty, as an “ideal aesthetic value” [CSPM 304] is the goal of the experience of each *actual entity*, and entails the avoidance of “attenuations” or “inhibitions,” [see PR 90] that is, harmony within the integrated data of experience.

The discussion of the process aesthetic theory in Chapter Two served to introduce relevant concepts utilized in the comparison of the claim of the value of existence in the process aesthetic theory to Camus’ similar claim expressed and illustrated in his novel *The Plague*.

Camus’ Philosophy

The third chapter of the thesis elaborated Camus’ philosophical writings concerning the value of existence. This discussion elucidated Camus’ views as portrayed in the events and embodied in the characters of *The Plague*.

Camus’ defense of life’s value is expressed in his denunciation of that which negates that value, such as suffering, death and injustice. Absolute values, moreover, sacrifice the present moment — wherein lies value — for an ideal or an hypothesis that will never be realized. Absolute values also dismiss the value of the individual and the unique as they summarize and compartmentalize temporal existence into constructs and systems of thought. This is an evasion of the temporal moment, where value exists. The two central ideas in Camus’ writings, “the absurd” and “revolt,” constitute Camus’ argument for life’s value, and both positions deny the validity of absolute values in favour of the more immediate realities of temporal existence. In Camus’ writings, both the absurd and revolt are embodied in two concrete figures, the “absurd man” and “the rebel.” Camus contends that the absurd characterizes the human condition, and revolt protects the common value of humanity.

In his inquiry into value, Camus' interest spans both its positive and the negative aspects. There are, of course, negative aspects that are undeniable and inescapable, such as the brevity of existence and the inevitability of death. In an "absurd awakening," the absurd man experiences a heightened awareness of the meaninglessness of the universe, and the "divorce" between himself and the world [MS 13]. However, this instills the incentive to create his own value within the confines of his limited existence, effected by life's brevity.

This is illustrated, for Camus, by the myth of Sisyphus. Sisyphus' fate is tolerable because of the value he discovers within the strictures of his task. He acknowledges his limits and never transgresses them. In this respect, Sisyphus "enjoys the wonderful ease of masters" [MS 67]. According to Camus' interpretation of this myth, Sisyphus' happiness is a "stoic serenity which may come from a recognition of the impossibility of happiness" [ACLR 39]. As Sisyphus pushes his rock, he enjoys the freedom to be happy. To choose the value of happiness is to revolt against the insipid quality of his fate. For Camus, this is the value of absurd existence.

The perspective of the absurd leads to Camus' conception of revolt. Due to the brevity of life, the value of existence is intensified and must be protected from that which negates it, particularly injustice. The rebel is motivated by a sense of loyalty to an aspect of himself that he identifies in all others [see R 14]. Camus calls this the common value of humanity [R 297]. Camus conceives of the rebel as "insanely generous" as revolt "unhesitatingly gives the strength of its love and without a moment's delay refuses injustice" [R 304].

Camus indicates further that revolt entails the observance of the limits of freedom, expressed in the moderation of actions. For Camus, moderation fosters a balance that avoids excesses from which arises suffering and injustice. Revolt, then, retains proportions in existence. Camus insists that the rebel's actions are confined to the values that the rebel upholds. For Camus, rebellion cannot encompass the perpetuation of suffering, evil or murder, for these are the very excesses that revolt strives to diminish. For this reason, suffering, evil and murder contradict revolt [R 281].

According to Camus, furthermore, the goal of rebellion is beauty, as it is the measure to evaluate ethical actions within the moderation of revolt [see CGPT 120]. Both art and revolt, as Camus conceives of it, challenge that which opposes the value of

existence and lend it beauty to increase that value. Again, as quoted several times in the thesis, Camus compares art and rebellion: “To create beauty, he must simultaneously reject reality and exalt certain of its aspects. Art disputes reality, but does not hide from it ... Art thus leads us back to the origins of rebellion” [R 258].

Beauty is also the standard to evaluate human actions [see CGPT 120] and is the middle ground on the scale of values that is the measure of what is good. Beauty is required, then, for justice [R 276]. For Camus, without beauty, there is no justice, and suffering and evil arise in the absence of beauty. In this respect, aesthetics and ethics are intimately related and indispensable for revolt in its endeavour to eliminate injustice.

The examination of Camus’ writings clarifies his position that, not only is temporal existence valuable, but that value requires protection and preservation by means of revolt against that which negates it. These ideas are elaborated in *The Plague*, examined in Chapter Five.

The Comparison of the Process Aesthetic Theory with Camus’ Philosophy

There is much detail in the first three chapters of the thesis, elaborating Whitehead’s metaphysics, the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ philosophy. The compatibility of their contentions leads to a comparison of these philosophies in Chapter Four.

In their respective writings, Whitehead and Camus uphold the primacy of temporal existence and reject the impositions of absolute values upon existence. By means of the application of the ontological principle to his metaphysics, Whitehead restricts his philosophical inquiry to the subjective experience of *actual entities*. Whitehead includes only that which is actual, and excludes data that are extrapolated or abstracted from subjective experience. In this way, Whitehead’s metaphysics encompasses only actuality, and excludes abstractions in favour of the immediacy of temporality.

Similarly, Camus expresses the primacy of temporal existence in terms of his emphatic rejection of absolute values, or constructs, hypotheses or systems of thought. Temporal existence — as contrasted with absolute values or absolute existence, such as

eternal life — is the only unequivocal truth. The present moment, then, is the only concrete, immediate and relevant data for his inquiry into the value of existence.

The process aesthetic theory and Camus' philosophical standpoint, moreover, are in agreement that it is the limits inherent in temporality that lend existence its value. For Whitehead, the ordering of *eternal objects* by the *primordial nature of God* and the standard of value invest *eternal objects* with effective relevance, as the selection of possibilities is limited to only those that are meaningful to each *actual entity*.

Camus, on the other hand, emphasizes the limited possibilities inherent in the present moment. This requires availability to the present moment, and lucidity to perceive those limited values unique to that situation.

The process aesthetic theory and Camus' philosophy, furthermore, emphasize the significance of freedom, however limited, in achieving temporal value. Whitehead contends that each *actual entity* is "internally determined and externally free" [PR 27]. *Actual entities* are restricted by *stubborn fact*, yet they are free to complete their *concrecence*. Limited freedom is meaningful, moreover, because of the standard of value that lends possibilities their relevance. In this way, limits are linked to the experience of freedom. Whitehead holds also that absolute freedom is meaningless. He writes: "There is no such fact as absolute freedom ... Freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other" [PR 133].

Similarly, Camus argues that "freedom with limits" intensifies the value of existence, as the brevity of life points to the "irreplaceable value" of existence [see CCE 63]. He writes: "[M]y freedom has no meaning except in relation to its limited fate" [MS 59]. Between forsaking given meanings provided by others and the world's meaninglessness lies the individual freedom and imperative to create temporal, limited value in that particular situation. Also, for Camus, absolute freedom negates temporal freedom. For instance, as stated in Chapter Three, the individual who has all the freedom — that is, and all the power — cannot revoke part and retain the whole of that freedom. Absolute freedom leads to oppression, as it is a negation of temporal freedom.

In addition, Whitehead's and Camus' views are consistent in that both emphasize that others benefit from the value achieved by and for the individual. In Whitehead's metaphysics *actual entities* contribute their achieved value to other *actual entities* by means of mutual *prehensions* of each other. This is referred to as Whitehead's "principle

of relativity.” Moreover, other *actual entities* benefit from value actualized in the present and partake in it as a future value, as the present *actual entity* becomes *objectively immortal*. While the *actual entity* is motivated to satisfy its creative urge for its own sake, this motivation is not incompatible with empathy for others; in fact, it is aligned with empathy, because the *actual entity* donates the aesthetic value of its experience to the world [WP 11]. Hartshorne writes: “Self-interest ... is seen as a case of sympathetic projection” [WP 16].

A similar concept for Camus is the “insane generosity” of the rebel. By striving for justice, the rebel contributes the value of his actions to others that benefit from his efforts. According to Camus, the rebel’s risk reflects a generosity that insists that all benefit from the fruits of rebellion [see R 304]. The greater the rebel’s risk, the greater the benefit for the greater number. Hence, the rebel freely contributes the value of his risk for the benefit of others.

What is more, Whitehead and Camus contend that beauty is the greatest value to be achieved. Beauty serves as the standard for which to evaluate actions, a statement that has implications for ethics. For the process aesthetic theory, beauty is the ideal aesthetic value and the goal of each *actual entity*. This was demonstrated in the Dessoir-Davis Circle, wherein beauty is the centre, representing the aesthetic mean. For the process aesthetic theory, goodness is interpreted as an aim at beauty [EPG 217]. Beauty is “the basic value and in it both goodness and truth are supposed ... goodness presupposes aesthetics.” [EPG 217]. Beauty, then, encompasses ethical goodness and is the standard for Beauty serves as the standard for which to evaluate the course of ethical actions. Hartshorne explains: “If we know what experience is, at its best or most beautiful, then and only then can we know how it is right to act; for the value of action is in what it contributes to experience” [CSPM 303].

For Camus, likewise, beauty is the goal of the rebel in his quest for justice, as beauty elevates the value of existence. The rebel seeks to attain beauty, or the eradication of suffering, evil and injustice. Camus writes of the rebel and the artist: “The procedure of beauty, which is to contest reality while endowing it with unity, is also the procedure of rebellion” [R 276]. In other words, beauty is the ideal pursued by the artist and the rebel. The rebel, then, seeks unity while striving for beauty. Like the process aesthetic theory, Camus maintains that beauty is the standard to measure the value of actions. Goss

interprets Camus: “to ignore ... beauty is to turn history into a desert, void of all that ... which makes possible a judgment upon human violence” [CGPT 120]. Beauty, then, is required, for justice. Camus also holds that beauty provides a balance for existence [see CGPT 119]. If beauty has the power to provide a balance for existence, and revolt seeks this balance, then beauty is the purpose and goal of the rebel to oppose the immoderateness of existence.

Finally, the fourth chapter demonstrated that Camus’ theological conceptions are compatible with Whitehead’s notion of God. As Camus is known as an atheist, drawing any parallels between a theology and Camus’ views seems radical at first sight. Yet it is significant to note that Whitehead also challenges the traditional God.

Firstly, for Camus, if God exists, God should have just those attributes that Whitehead designates to God. For instance, the traditional God is unacceptable to Camus because if God is omnipotent, as traditionally conceived, God must be responsible for evil. Yet for Whitehead, it is the freedom and agency of *actual entities* introduce evil into the temporal world.

Moreover, Camus holds that God should be “involved” in temporal existence, not removed from history as conceived in traditional theology. For Whitehead, however, God and the world are interdependent, and God is an integral part of the process of *becoming* of each *actual entity*.

Finally, Camus perceives no advantage in a heavenly eternal afterlife. Similarly, for many process philosophers, there is no “subjective immortality,” whereby each individual lives on with one’s character, relationships and memories intact. Instead, *objective immortality* preserves the value achieved in this life, and benefits future temporal entities. This eliminates the need for a heavenly afterlife. In these ways, Camus’ theological views are fulfilled by the Whiteheadian conception of God. More specifically, the thesis argues that Camus’ conception of how God should be is how Whitehead conceives of God.

The fourth chapter has sought to demonstrate the above similarities in the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ writings. While this is not the central thesis, this chapter indicated the compatibility of aspects of their respective claims examined in previous chapters.

The Application of the Process Aesthetic Theory to Camus' Novel *The Plague*

The thesis attests that the application of the process aesthetic theory to Camus' novel *The Plague* is the best evidence of the favorable comparison of the claims of the value of existence of the process aesthetic theory and in Camus' philosophy. As emphasized throughout the thesis, the process aesthetic theory contends that there is value in each experience, even amidst the extremes of existence, such as too much triviality or too much chaos. *The Plague* is an excellent portrayal of the extremes of triviality, such as the monotony of the exiled city, and chaos, as exemplified in the horror of the fear of death and the loss of loved ones.

More significantly, the five characters examined in *The Plague* demonstrate that there are various levels of value achievement, derived from good and poor choices. The achievement of this value, moreover, is more significant as it is donated to and felt by others. The thesis examines the characters' responses to the plague and the value achievements of Cottard, Father Paneloux, Rambert, Tarrou and Doctor Rieux. Each response indicates the values that each character seeks to actualize in the context of a state of plague. The widespread suffering and death wrought by the plague produce the excess of chaos in Oran, and the standpoint and free actions of each character, accordingly, either contribute to or contrast from the chaos of suffering. A quote from process writer Maurice Barineau is instrumental to the application of the process aesthetic theory to Camus' novel. He writes: "Each individual makes a fundamental judgment about the character of specific sufferings ... whether he must endure the suffering he encounters or should annihilate it; whether suffering can be eliminated or whether it is an inevitable part of the human condition" [TANW 4-5]. That is, each character must confront the injustice of suffering, and consequently, each chosen course of action either perpetuates or diminishes suffering.

This chapter argues that for Whitehead and Camus, this confrontation with human suffering is the greatest achievement of aesthetic value. Barineau explains this point from the perspective of the process aesthetic theory. He writes: "there is no reason to embrace or support the evils and sufficient reason to avoid, nullify or diminish the evils" [TANW 115]. Conversely, the perpetuation of suffering due to inaction, acceptance or acquiescence is interpreted as the loss of value.

Cottard is the first character examined in Chapter Five. His fatalistic stance demonstrates the failure to acknowledge, or take responsibility for, the donation of value of each *actual entity* to the *creative advance*. As previously stated, Cottard yields to the sheer impossibility of checking the spread of suffering and death perpetuated by the plague. His self-indulgence and despair inhibit his creative *becoming*, and consequently, he refuses to achieve appropriate aesthetic value for himself, nor for others. In this way, Cottard he does not contribute to the prevention of suffering, nor does he endeavour to achieve the aesthetic mean for himself. His suicide attempt and his subsequent decision to join the black market contradict the responsibility to donate achieved value to other entities. Cottard's fatalistic stance, then, contributes little value, and represents the loss of value, as greater values remain unactualized by means of his inaction and acquiescence.

The second character examined in Chapter Five is Father Paneloux, who espouses quietism. Like fatalism, this is a position of inaction as he consents to the perpetuation of suffering. Yet, unlike Cottard, the priest holds that an otherworldly justice is at work in the plague, and this justice cannot be altered, a position that justifies the indiscriminate evil of the plague. Paneloux defers to an all-powerful God to interpret the plague, and preaches that it is a divine punishment and test. Hence, he teaches Oran that this evil and the suffering it causes must be accepted because divine justice must not be obstructed. Father Paneloux's quietist stance, then, does not lead to significant value achievement, as he advocates the denial of suffering. This indifference to injustice contradicts Camus' and Whitehead' positions, as both insist that the achievement of value must not be deferred, as there is no afterworldly compensation for suffering, suffering which can be alleviated now.

Paneloux's perspective, moreover, represents the traditional aesthetic theory, which the thesis compares with the process aesthetic theory. It is also clear that the Paneloux's position is anathema to Camus' priority of temporal justice. The priest's belief that evil is part of a good whole points to the traditional tenet that evil is an illusion. For the process aesthetic theory, this is unacceptable, as evil is considered an actuality and an inevitable part of the actual world [see EPG 151].

Moreover, the process aesthetic theory, rejects the traditional tenet that God ordains evils as punishment for sins, or that God "wills certain evils for aesthetic ends" [EPG 151]. Instead, God's purpose for the temporal world is the "evocation of

intensities” [PR 105] which implies the viability of evil. Unlike the traditional aesthetic theory, the process aesthetic theory holds that God does not, furthermore, ordain or permit evil, nor does God intervene to cause evil. Rather, evil arises from the poor decisions of *actual entities*.

Finally, the notion that evil and suffering must be embraced is countered by the process aesthetic theory. The purpose of ideal aims given by God to initiate each *concrecence* is to overcome the evil of the past [see EPG 155]. Evil is seen as evil; an actuality, not an illusion. Both the process aesthetic theory and Camus’ philosophy reject the tenets of the traditional aesthetic theory, because it is a denial of fundamental realities of temporal existence and is inconsistent with the imperative of temporal justice, particularly in the context of widespread suffering and death.

Rambert is the third character of *The Plague* that the thesis examines. Rambert embodies both evasion and revolt. He plans an illegal escape, yet later decides to stay to help control the spread of the plague. In this sense, his actions are located on both sides of the spectrum of aesthetic value achievement. At first, he prefers to achieve the individual value of companionship, which is the motive for his escape to reunite with his wife.

While this position fails to achieve the more immediate value of reducing the suffering of the plague victims, both Whitehead and Camus agree that this stance contains at least some value, that of companionship. Later, however, Rambert decides to stay in Oran, and joins the sanitary squads. For Whitehead, this is the achievement of value for the benefit of the collective existence, and the acceptance of the lure of the *ideal aim* to ameliorate temporal existence.

Tarrou represents the best response toward the plague, which is revolt against its inherent injustice. He organizes the voluntary sanitation squads serving the plague victims. Tarrou maintains that to simply interact with others brings suffering. Hence, he proposes to do the least damage, and to ensure, even in ordinary interaction, that he brings the least suffering to others [see P 205-206]. Tarrou strikes a balance between fatalism and heroism in his belief that revolt is the only meaningful option in a time of plague, and that to accept its indiscriminate ravages is to perpetuate suffering. According to the process aesthetic theory, Tarrou achieves and contributes one of the highest aesthetic values, that of generosity.

The final character discussed is Doctor Rieux, who is the most accurate representation of Camus' views. He challenges Paneloux's reliance on absolute values, a challenge that is taken up by both Whitehead and Camus. Rieux perseveres in his revolt against the plague despite that it costs his own happiness. This illustrates Whitehead's conception of the contribution of value for the benefit of others. Both Tarrou and Rieux discern the significance of the contribution of the value of their revolt against the injustice of the plague that threatens the basic value of existence.

Moreover, Tarrou and Rieux achieve the value of solidarity and friendship. This demonstrates that even amidst the extremes of chaos and monotony precipitated by the plague, the value of the cultivation of meaningful relationships is still possible. Again, this is one of the greatest values to be achieved according to the process aesthetic theory [see WP 108].

In sum, the process aesthetic theory and Camus' philosophy agree that there are various levels of value achievement represented by the responses to the *stubborn fact* of suffering. Yet the value of revolt against that which opposes the value of existence is the greatest value to be achieved, and this value is best embodied by the decisions and actions of Tarrou and Rieux.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the thesis has demonstrated the compatibility of the process aesthetic theory and Albert Camus' novel *The Plague* concerning the contention of the value of existence even under extreme conditions, such as an excess of triviality or an excess of chaos. Tarrou and Rieux of *The Plague* represent revolt against the stubborn fact of injustice and suffering wrought by the plague, a position that best expresses the value of existence, as it protects and preserves that value. Moreover, the struggle against the plague represents the striving to attain the aesthetic mean for the process aesthetic theory. Consequently, this struggle leads to the contribution of the value of their actions to others, the alleviation of suffering and the amelioration of temporal existence.

Moreover, the process aesthetic theory and Camus' writings examine the positive and negative aspects of existence in order to conclude that there is worthwhileness in existence. There is worthwhileness in existence despite the inevitability of risk, loss and

evil, because there is also the possibility of good. Hartshorne reaffirms the value of experience: “Particular cosmologies are dispensable, not the affirmation of worth that is life itself” [CSPM 317]. For Camus, who strives to “affirm the value of life in spite of personal and historical tragedy” [CGPT 117] the meaninglessness of the universe does not rule out the value of existence; though it may be trying to discover that value. He writes: “The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart” [MS 112]. For Camus, the myth of Sisyphus “sums itself up ... as a lucid invitation to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert” [MS 7]. That is, the value of existence is expressed in the struggle of living itself.

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