

Process Via Marx:
Marx's Potential Contribution to Whiteheadian Social Theory

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Spring, 2002
(as revised 10/17/02, Published in *Process Studies* Volume 32:1, 2003)

Whitehead's outlook offers a general solution. But it is doubtful if the hungry and oppressed wretched of the earth will be "persuaded" to a harmony that for them is non-existent but that for their oppressors means continued ease and elegance.(History 279)

INTRODUCTION

It is widely understood that Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy of History, to the degree that he develops one, is Idealist and teleological. He wrote:

Human life is driven forward by its dim apprehension of notions too general for its existing language. Such ideas cannot be grasped singly, one by one in isolation. They require that humanity advances in its apprehension of the general nature of things, so as to conceive systems of ideas elucidating each other.(Adventures 24)

This means that great ideas drive history forward, and that great people (he was an early feminist) provide these ideas to humanity, usually ahead of their time. His best-known example involves the idea of "freedom." "Freedom" is itself a tricky concept, but the definition of freedom found in Whitehead's own work is basically: freely determined self-conscious action. Actualizing that idea of freedom, then, can be seen as the essential core of his teleological view of history. Specifically, Whitehead discussed how society progresses from the universal acceptance of slavery to universal acceptance of freedom (i.e. recognition of individual and human rights in theory if not always in practice). In his words, "Slavery was the presupposition of political theorists then; Freedom is the presupposition of political theorists now" (Adventures 13). It is the role of intellectuals to develop the outer limits of human self-consciousness, and eventually society will catch up.

These notions, like freedom, might conflict directly with the society at large and even with their own context. For example, Plato was a vocal advocate of the Greek slave system, although according to Whitehead in introducing notions of freedom Plato led – eventually – to the 19th century re-evaluation of slavery that happened globally. But Whitehead was not one-sided in his observations. He also observed, "The slaves were the martyrs whose toil made

progress possible" (Adventures 21). And this paper will argue that a close reading of Whitehead reveals that Process metaphysics supports, even demands, a more immediate and practical emphasis on the role of the slaves even more than the role of the great intellectuals, in spite of some of Whitehead's own comments. This emphasis belies a remarkable similarity to and comfort with Historical Materialism, as developed in the work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. So much so, in fact, that Process Theology can and should adopt the methods and be informed by the conclusions of Marxism, including the conclusion that the next great step forward in human history requires a social revolution to overthrow the domination of global capitalism. Parsons may have found some of Whitehead's own observations disheartening, but I will argue that the ground is fertile enough that Process can speak to the "hungry and oppressed wretched of the earth" with the strength and passion previously associated only with Marxism. In short, that Process Philosophy also demands a social revolution and justice for all.

VIA HEGEL

Whitehead's way of understanding the role of ideas and is curiously similar to that developed by G.W.F. Hegel. Whitehead himself commented on the similarity between his metaphysics and Hegel's thus: "This development [of "unbounded permanence acquiring novelty through flux"] is nothing else than the Hegelian development of an idea" (Process 167). But in terms of the development of human self-consciousness in history most people, like Parsons, have focused on an apparent difference. To wit, Hegel famously observed in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that it is the slave who arrives in history as the person conscious of her or himself as a free individual -- or at least definitively starts down that road (in the section entitled, "Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" Phenomenology 111-119). Hegel argued that because the slave is productive and confronts fear of the master, this leads to a

situation in which the master actually becomes the dependent one while the slave progresses.

Hegel's version may not be historically true, but the important insight here is that the oppressed drive history forward by rebelling. While Hegel and Whitehead both emphasized the role of the notion of freedom, the apparent difference lies in which class of people develops this notion first.

However, this difference is an illusion. People have come to accept it because of the emphasis Whitehead gave to the role of ideas, but what he was really saying is much closer to the Hegelian version than is generally acknowledged. And not just to Hegel, the really important similarity is with Karl Marx and his theory of class struggle and social revolution, which developed out of Hegel's "Master/Slave Dialectic." Hegel wrote: "Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman [the slave] realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own" (Phenomenology 118-119). Hegel's insight (Whitehead's as well) was that it is the nature of consciousness to be free and self-knowing. In this dynamic of master and slave only one can be free and ultimately that will be the one who has self-knowledge. The argument is that because the slave actually produces, or more properly reproduces, the means of her/his and the master's existences the slave comes to realize his/her role as productive human being, conscious of being free (in thought at least). But living a life of oppression contradicts this sense of being a productive person, and further as this oppression is at the hands of those who are not productive and enforced through violence and fear, the oppression becomes all the more intolerable and the slave must revolt (at least intellectually if not actually). The slave thus develops a sense of self out of this contradiction; and through the struggle to be free, a sense of freedom. Conversely, by virtue of the master's dependence on the slave for the reproduction of her/his existence, the master actually loses his/her self as a free and self-conscious person. Now, to be clear the point

here is that this dynamic is true for classes of people acting in history, not (necessarily) individuals acting in their own lives.

This seems at first glance to be counter-intuitive. But masters actually do live in and through their slaves, and slaves live in spite of their masters. The interesting fact, pointed out by Marx, that the dominant ideas of any culture are those of its ruling class helps us to understand why this seems counter-intuitive (and why Whitehead's own speculations ended up with the wrong emphasis). Hegel was telling us that fully realized self-consciousness comes from the underside of history, not from the ruling side. Marx then suggested that this is in spite of the sense of itself the ruling class wishes to project. The masters tell themselves and the slaves that the masters are superior. But in fact the slaves are superior by virtue of their attaining self-consciousness, and it is thus the oppressed who drive history forward as they struggle to actualize their sense of themselves, qua free human beings.

There is one curious example of this phenomenon from popular culture, which the reader might find illuminating, and it comes from a "Dilbert" comic strip:

Boss: Carol, I forget, how do I address an envelope?

Carol: I'll do it.

Carol to Dilbert: I'm training him [the Boss] to be helpless. It's part of my master plan to eliminate him. I do everything for him. Soon he'll lose his ability to solve small problems alone. Then I'll "accidentally" book him on a one-way trip to South Korea. Before he goes I'll tell him they have a death penalty for speaking English. We'll never see him again. Buwahaha!!!

Dilbert: It's worth a shot.

Boss: Carol, what do I dial for an outside line?

Carol: I'll do it. (Cuberville 172)

Marx's most important contribution here was the observation that as history has developed to the point of having basically two classes – owning and working -- the next resolution of this class struggle should be the final one as society will be left with only one social class, that is a socialized working humanity without rulers and ruled. Some have rejected this

analysis citing the failed example of the Soviet experiment. And while space does not allow a complete analysis here, I will point out that the death of the class struggle has been greatly exaggerated. Globalization of the economy stalled somewhat after the Great October Revolution as a result of capitalist restraint, especially during the Cold War, but has been reborn with a remarkable and frightening vengeance. And thus the observations of both Marx and V. I. Lenin are in many ways more relevant today than they have been in 80 years (e.g. Lenin's *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*).

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

So the struggle we observe in history between those who dominate and those who are dominated is the logical outcome of consciousness itself confronting domination and fear. Marx (with Engels) went on, quite famously, to point out that all history is in fact the history of class struggle.¹ Their contribution was to note that the ruling class in each historical epoch was one of the subservient classes in the previous epoch.

The actual philosophy, as it applies to Process, turns on a distinction between efficient cause and final cause that Whitehead borrowed from Aristotle.² Specifically, "Efficient causation is the term used by Whitehead to speak of the effectively caused influence which the environment of the actual world has upon whoever and whatever emerges in the present and in the future" (Via 15). In this context, then, the efficient cause of the movement of history is the struggle between those who are dominated and those who dominate. The formal cause would be where one could look back to Hegel (Whitehead, of course, has a different version of this final cause, but they are remarkably similar).

The Political Scientist, Michael Parenti, has a pithy way of putting this issue of causation: "The ruling class throughout history has only wanted one thing: Everything. If you don't know

that you are in a very sad place. If you know that and know nothing else you know more than if you know everything else but don't know that"(Parenti). His point being that the greed of the ruling class eventually destroys itself, as it is unsustainable. Greed threatening the survival of the oppressed is the efficient cause of revolutionary change. The direction that revolutionary change takes, Whitehead could say, is conditioned by a final cause that Marx misunderstood as accidental (to the species). Marx's teleology is a weak one based on an observation of how human beings happen to behave (human consciousness and its tendency towards freedom being a happy accident of evolutionary history), whereas Hegel and Whitehead's is rooted in the structure of reality (particularly the divine).

One key observation behind this theory of class struggle is that the ways of thinking found in rulers and ruled are generally shared in common by members of each class and not between the classes. Marx discussed this in terms of the material conditions of life conditioning consciousness, and the observation that class experience is predominate in most people's experience. We all have class-consciousness: that is rulers think like rulers and ruled think like ruled. This is to be expected from Hegel's insights, but the conclusion takes on added significance in Marx's work. All of this is not a contradiction to Marx's observation I mentioned above about the dominant ideas being those of the ruling class. That point concerns social discussions of ideas, and control of the culture, rather than various individuals own experiences of life. The rulers control the means of cultural production as well as of material production and thus control the ideas that are disseminated most widely. However, they cannot control the basic fact that the ruled find themselves in the experience of being ruled and will eventually demand freedom. This process of the ruled coming to know themselves and demand freedom is wide

spread but unacknowledged by the ruling class' culture, and is clearly alien to their current experience as well.³

My own unique contribution here is the observation that if actual occasions are conditioned most closely by those occasions with which they are surrounded and with which they share similar situations, experiences, and contexts, then it only makes sense that when one shifts the focus from actual occasions to complex societies of occasions such as human beings, one should find that human beings with similar class experiences share a certain view of the world; and over time will tend toward similar behaviors in response to that experience – they will struggle together to become free. In short, the physical poles of these actual occasions share their experiences in common. Going further, on the other side, the mental poles would be receiving nearly identical input from the divine initial aim (or ideas imbedded in history, some would add) in the form of encouragement of the impulse to freedom, as well as deriving class specific conceptual prehensions from the physical poles. And in that sense, the conceptual prehensions gathered by physical poles are exactly the formation of class-consciousness (the awareness of one's class location on the basis of one's experience). The only difference between Marx and Whitehead on this point would be that Marx places the general motivation for revolution in the contradiction between experiencing oneself to be free and equal and nonetheless being exploited (this is the bit from Hegel), where Whitehead would add to that the initial aim (whether this be from God or from historical tradition).

Whitehead's system therefore predicts the necessary existence of class-consciousness and class struggle in societies that maintain class divisions. Although this may seem trivial, it is not: the existence of class-consciousness is a vital and motive part of the class struggle model of history. Without a unified consciousness of social location there could be no class struggle, there

would just be the more random actions of isolated individuals acting on base impulses. And Whitehead explicitly and repeatedly rejected this isolated and individualistic interpretation of society and history -- although it was more popular with Charles Hartshorne (*Ideology* 77).

This discussion has been brief, but that is only because I am confident that the basics of Marx's theory of history are familiar to the reader. Thus far I hope I have made clear those aspects of the theory that are central and provide the logically necessary components for Process metaphysics to be able to adopt the whole theory: class struggle and class consciousness. This discussion, further, is not alien to Whitehead's own reflections. In *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead remarked about a number of class issues and even offered praise to what he called, "the economic interpretation of history" (*Adventures* 66). This praise concerns the place Marxism has for the human desire to be free. He also noted how the ruling class maintains a monopoly on literary expressions, and even offered a version of class struggle in his analysis. That text does read very much like Marx: "Thus, even when the minority is dominant, the plain economic facts of life must be the governing force in social development." And, "Indeed, one general end is that these variously coordinated groups [classes] should contribute to the complex pattern of community life, each in virtue of its own peculiarity [its class consciousness]" (*Adventures* 67).

SIMILARITIES IN THE SYSTEMS

Whitehead commented on the similarity his work had with Marx, but in reference to Hegel. "It is now evident that the final analogy to philosophies of the Hegelian school, noted in the Preface [to *Process and Reality*], is not accidental" (*Process* 167). And the way in which he incorporated experience into the system takes this analogy even closer to Marx. "The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and

interdependent" (Process 18). Therefore I conclude that a mutual agreement on the question of class-consciousness and on the overall direction of history (towards freedom) is a general (although unstated) agreement between Marx and Whitehead on the nature and existence of class struggle. Both parties to the discussion would seem to agree that individuals acting collectively in history make real social change. And, while Whitehead did not use the language of political economy, and thus did not discuss socialism per se, he did suggest a utopian vision of sorts that incorporates values dependent on socialism for their actualization in human history – Freedom, Adventure, Zest, and Peace.

Given all this it is surprising that social and political thought remains an area of weakness for Process.⁴ It is surprising especially because there is a wealth of material dating as far back as 50 years discussing the connections between Whitehead's philosophy and Marx's theory of history.⁵ Yet, this critical theory of history has not been seriously taken up and incorporated into Process thought. I would, therefore, like to suggest that this particularly potent socio-historical method can be incorporated into Process theology with surprising ease, and this suggestion is not unique to me, I should hasten to note. The strongest language on this subject has come from James Marsh, who wrote, "...I will show how Whitehead's metaphysics requires a radical social theory rooted in and deriving its basic inspiration from Marx" (Transcendence 112).

Why then has Process been reluctant to seek out Marx? I suspect that because theologians have generally advanced Process thought, many Process thinkers have been reluctant to seriously consider the avowed atheistic system of Marx as a viable historical methodology open to use by Process. This is a mistake, what I am suggesting is that the historical study and methodology known as Marxism is fluid enough to be incorporated into Process thought seamlessly, and that Whitehead's own reflections can be seen to demonstrate the openness of

Process thought to this union. Some claim this work would strengthen Marxism (specifically Kleinbach and Marsh). Marsh suggested both need each other, "In general, the hypothesis I shall develop is that Whitehead's is a metaphysics in search of an adequate social theory, and Marx's is a social theory in search of a metaphysics" (Transcendence 118). I personally believe Marxism has its own perfectly serviceable metaphysics (this is part of a larger work to come), but that is not important here. However, in agreement with Marsh, I would say that Process thought needs Marxism in some form in order to seriously confront the social and political realities with which we live, and with which Process theologians have been rightly growing more concerned.

It is well known that Latin American Liberation Theology found its own ways to blend Marxism with theology. Some theologians -- Juan Luís Segundo, Clodovis and Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutierrez, and Jon Sobrino to name a few -- came to see the historical process described by Marxism as one aspect of the divine relationship with humanity: God's preferential option for the poor. What they were doing, in essence, was incorporating an analysis of class struggle into their social thought. In doing so they discovered that the methodology of Historical Materialism was tremendously potent and useful in their context. I submit that the current context of global capitalist imperialism calls out for social analyses that can speak with that kind of profundity, and Process Theology can and should make use of the same sorts of insights. In short there is no conflict, and Marsh even added, "Because God is Processive, changeable, and dialogical, God is compatible, *contra* Marx, with human freedom and creativity" (Transcendence 119). Even if Marx himself would not agree, the point is that Process Theology's understanding of God fits perfectly well with Marx's social theory. The important implication in Marsh's comment is that Marx actually fits much better with Process Theology than with Liberation Theology, in spite of the latter's more widespread use of Marxism.

WHICH MARXISM

"Marxism" is a catchall term that means many things to many people. In this context it is important that I use terminology that will help to clarify rather than confuse. Thus, on one level, Marxism refers to the historical science called Historical Materialism, or Marx's "materialist conception of history." When people talk about Marx and Marxism this is usually what they have in mind. It is Historical Materialism that is important here and it is this aspect of Marxism generally that I suggest is useful, indeed vital, to Process thought. But Marxism on another level refers to Dialectical Materialism, the term given to the more general philosophical theory developed especially by Engels in his work with Marx. Some people, Joseph Needham most notably, saw significant overlap between the "metaphysics" of Process and Dialectical Materialism. But this is pushing farther than one needs to go to make the point I am trying to make here. Dialectical Materialism is the philosophically atheistic part of Marxism and on that level Process Theology, especially, need not necessarily agree. Put more plainly, Dialectical Materialism is like metaphysics (Marxists generally do not use that language) and those who agree with the metaphysics of Process have no need for an alternative. Disagreement on the question of metaphysics does not preclude Process Theologians from taking the same advantage of Historical Materialism as Liberation Theologians, who also have their own metaphysics.

The point is that Historical Materialism has been used by other theologians for decades, and can be just as useful to Process thought. Dialectical Materialism provides the philosophical details behind Marx's own interpretation of Historical Materialism. Other philosophical details, that is other systems of metaphysics can be, and indeed are, equally in agreement with Historical Materialism. This basic agreement has been generally overlooked because Whitehead and some of his followers (most notably Hartshorne) interpreted his metaphysics in more politically

conservative ways. Russell Kleinbach and Randall Morris, whose work I am in general agreement with, separately claimed (for Morris the better term might be implied) that these interpretations are not logical conclusions from Process metaphysics, but rather reflections offered from a particular social location by people whose most serious work was focused on other issues. Which is to say that Whitehead, in particular, offered political insights in a slightly less rigorous way than he brought to the work that really interested him. Marsh concluded, "Whitehead's, then, is the general theory of which Marx would be a particular instance, and Marx saves Whitehead from becoming, after a certain point, a comforting, class-based ideology" (Transcendence 118-119). However, Whitehead was at times impressed with revolutionary activity, and had his own political involvements (that were at times radical) although he did not devote himself to this task (Parsons discusses this). And he did have a few passionate remarks spicing his work. "There is a greatness in the rebels who destroy such systems: they are the Titans who storm heaven, armed with passionate sincerity. It may be that the revolt is the mere assertion by youth of its right to its proper brilliance, to that final good of immediate joy. Philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world – the fairies dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross" (Process 337-338). This sounds a bit like a revolutionary, one gifted in his use of the English language.

WHITEHEAD'S REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY

As I understand Whitehead's work there are two principle areas where he might be seen to disagree with a class struggle model for understanding – and more importantly acting in – history: the basic conflict assumed in class "struggle," and the issue of the motive force in history being those on the underside.

The first issue, conflict, involves the deepest levels in both systems and at first glance Whitehead's emphasis on harmony seems to preclude agreement. And it is true that the issue of conflict is central to Hegelian/Marxian dialectics: the thesis begets its opposite, the antithesis and the contradiction (in practical questions, read conflict) between them resolves itself in a synthesis, which then becomes a new thesis, and so on.

Earlier I claimed that Process Theology could make use of Historical Materialism without worrying about the metaphysics of Dialectical Materialism. Because of the language it is possible someone might conclude that this statement implies that the dialectical method itself is not an issue in Historical Materialism. This is not true, nor is it my intention to make this kind of claim. Historical Materialism is itself a dialectical science, relying on Marx's inversion (or correction) of the Hegelian dialectic. This is significant because the model of Historical Materialism sees the progression of history as a series of dialectically related moments; in its broadest outline, the creation of the capitalist class (thesis) creates its opposite in the working class (antithesis) and the conflict between the two leads to socialism (synthesis). It is this level of philosophical detail, I think, that Needham had in mind in his discussion of Marx.

This model is not really as alien to Whitehead as it may seem, and in fact a number of other scholars have at various times remarked that Whitehead was a dialectical thinker himself. For example Morris wrote, "I believe that Whitehead's concept of adventure together with his understanding of order and novelty, provides us with a dialectical philosophy of history" (Transcendence 178). This means that there is really no disagreement between Whitehead's system and Marxian class struggle in terms of harmony. George Allan went so far as to claim, "For both [Hegel and Whitehead] history is a process of clashing differences that constantly give rise to a reconciling new achievement and then the emergence of new differences" (Conning

213). My suggestion is that Whitehead's emphasis on harmony is in complete agreement with Marx's emphasis on synthesis, in fact Whiteheadians might claim it is the drive for harmony that leads the dialectic to resolutions, to syntheses. For his part Marsh simply observed: "Finally, Whitehead and Marx are both dialectical thinkers" (Transcendence 118). The detail for him was found in the emphasis both give to the reconciliation of internal contradictions as a way to understand the movement of history (Transcendence 117).

Parsons went even farther with his discussion of *Adventures in Ideas*.

He [Whitehead] has a strong materialistic sense of history: 'The great convulsions happen when the economic urge on the masses have dove-tailed with some simplified end.' He also recognizes why 'gradualism' may be insufficient: 'It may be impossible to conceive a reorganization of society adequate for the removal of some admitted evil without destroying the social organization and the civilization which depends on it.' Can war, for example, be eliminated without eliminating an economic system that seems to require war? (History 282)

Parsons pointed out that Whitehead mostly discussed the possibility of violence in the course of the transition possibly being worse than the status quo. However, Parsons also pointed out that the ruling classes have usually used violence as a means of securing their power, and thus any net reduction in violence, even if it requires violence to secure it, is obviously to be preferred. Logically then, according to Parsons, Whitehead was not in a position to argue against the revolutionary transformation of society if this leads to greater harmony and peace. As Morris strongly argued, this lapse was due to Whitehead's own social location. In fact Morris claimed: "There is a sense, therefore, in which progress is made only through struggle, through the introduction of discord into an established social order provoking it to new adventure" (Transcendence 182). So it would seem that the class conflict model does fit extremely well with Process metaphysics. Marsh proved this in his much more detailed discussion, but for my purposes I hope to have demonstrate an obvious lack of contradiction between Whitehead and Marx on this question.

Second, the question of who is actually moving history only appears to involve a disagreement. As I demonstrated above, the whole question of the role of ideas in history, despite some appearances, is actually a secondary issue with the primary issue being who acts on these ideas. And on that point Process is already comfortable with Marx via Hegel. Of course, Whitehead did make a number of remarks in which he implies a kind of causal efficacy to the power of ideas in history. In particular, he implied that these ideas are the product of leading figures in the society (ruling class origins) even where these ideas are in direct contradiction to the organization of the society out which they came.

That there is more freedom today than in the ancient world is undisputed, although the situation today is not as advanced as Whitehead would have hoped. Nonetheless there is more freedom. So, was Whitehead correct? Maybe. But what is important here is that his remarks about Plato and freedom are not in contradiction with the issue of class struggle. The point for Process here is that the ideas are manifestations of the initial aim given by God or transmitted by tradition through history – that initial aim is the final cause in Process metaphysics. Class struggle is more a question of efficient cause and subjective aims. And on that point, all of my supporting authors agree, Whitehead was saying things that sound very much like Marx. What I am suggesting is that Process can adopt the class struggle model without making any concessions on the question of initial aim or final causation and can reap all the obvious critical theoretical benefits.

WHITEHEAD'S MATERIALISM

George Allan, in an earlier work, discussed Whitehead's philosophy of history at length. Among his observations was one concerning the relationship between freedom and causation. "For Whitehead the two are compatible: besides the non-original aspect of concrescence

represented by the efficacy of the past, there is the originative aspect which has its ground in the freedom of the actual entity to determine its own completeness" (Approach 33). However, "Freedom is always freedom within the limits of obligation determined by the weight of the past; determination is never complete because the data for concrescence never fully restrict the range of possible ways in which they may be integrated" (Approach 34). In Marxist language, the same observation is described as the material base of society conditioning consciousness, including decision making. Marsh went so far as to claim that, "Both Whitehead and Marx are nonreductively 'materialist' in the sense of insisting on the importance of embodiment..." (Transcendence 115).

Allan then concluded his discussion by noting that Whitehead's philosophy of history is not a relativist one: Whitehead deals with concrete facts, or what Marx called the material conditions of life (Approach 80). These stubborn facts, to use another Whiteheadian phrase, are the efficient cause in history. On this level Whitehead was just as much a materialist philosopher as Marx. "Whitehead's is a social or organic theory of reality according to which each new individual is conditioned by its environment. Efficient causation is the means by which the environment exerts its power over subjects" (Transcendence 27).

Whitehead's solution to the obvious dilemmas of the crude materialism of 18th century English philosophy was sophisticated, and curiously similar to Marx's (whose solution was dialectics). This was a central conclusion in Marsh's work. Both were responding to the obvious failures of the earlier philosophy and both came out with similar solutions (not identical, but similar). Allan laid it out quite succinctly by noting that the very title, "Process and Reality" refers to "becoming and stubborn facts," which is nearly identical to the way Marx would describe his philosophy of history, "change and material conditions" (Approach 86).

KLEINBACH v. MORRIS

I have concluded that Whitehead's philosophy does not just have logical space for an ethic of social revolution; it actually demands it. Others have written extensively on why these revolutionary conclusions were absent in Whitehead's own reflections (whether it is the system itself, in which case my argument would be mistaken, or just Whitehead's application of it at the time). I have quoted two of the better-known writers on this question rather freely. But the substance of that debate deserves some attention. One of them, Morris wrote:

Kleinbach's assertion that Whitehead's 'images of civilization are more reflective of a liberal gentleman than they are of a rigorous application of his philosophy of organism to social theory' [Via 60] is misguided. The antithesis he perceives between Whitehead's personal reflections and a rigorous application of Process metaphysics to social theory simply does not exist. Quite the opposite in the case. (Transcendence 214)

I think Morris is quite mistaken here. I may not have made this clear but Morris' complaint was not so much about the "liberal" political claims of Process thought as it is about the claim of being "objective." His contention (which is not universally supported) was that Whitehead thought his system was an objective metaphysics that just happens to support one particular political ideology. Rather, Morris claimed, the ideology had a determining role to play in the development of the metaphysics. So, Morris' challenge to Process is two-fold: to recognize and correct (1) the ideological influences and (2) the ideological conclusions. I (following Kleinbach) have argued that the problem is only with the conclusions.

Morris, I think, presented more of an ideological critique of Process than a development of Process itself. Kleinbach was putting forth a development of Process, though even there one finds trouble as his later work seemed to back away from some of his earlier conclusions. Fair enough, but I still think Kleinbach was on to something in his first book. I do not agree with

Morris in this regard and find his comments to be a bit flippant. He offered no justification for this analysis of Kleinbach; he just dropped it in as if the reader already agreed with him.

For Morris, bourgeois liberalism is inherent in Process metaphysics because that was the ideology of the man who first developed Process metaphysics. He argued that Process itself must be corrected, and it must be done so with full self-knowledge, by those who would do this work, of their own social location as well as the social location of Whitehead (and Hartshorne). In my reading Kleinbach made the more convincing case: that bourgeois liberalism was the interpretation Whitehead gave to his own metaphysical speculations.⁶ I will not go as far as Whitehead and claim that his metaphysics, or any metaphysics for that matter, is objective. The philosophy is a model of reality. To the degree that any model helps us understand, and especially to anticipate, the world around us and act accordingly then it is good and sufficient. Is any philosophy objective? Hardly, therefore objectivity or not is not the issue, usefulness is the issue. Nonetheless I think I can confidently claim that Kleinbach's conclusions – rather than Morris' -- are more convincing, for the reasons I have given above to support the agreement between Whitehead and Marx.

The fact of the agreement between Process and Historical Materialism, and Whitehead's own praise of the "economic interpretation of history" on at least that one occasion suggest to me that the two systems are closer than Morris implied even though I have drawn material to support this basic agreement from Morris' own work. In fact, in the middle of his book Morris wrote: "The emphasis that Whitehead placed upon the ideal of harmony cannot be overestimated; however, I do not believe that this places him at odds with the Hegelian dialectic" (Transcendence 178). So, if there is no contradiction with the Hegelian dialectic on history, then

how is it that Kleinbach is wrong? I do not think there is a very good answer to this question, if one exists at all.

What is important is Morris' very profound discussion of Whitehead's own reformist ideology. I claimed above that for Whitehead's historical vision to succeed socialism is necessary. Specifically, if the ideals the universe moves towards (some would say, are lured to by God) are defined by Freedom, Adventure, Zest, and Peace then the goal, on the scale of human life, must be socialism.⁷ Whitehead, according to Morris, did see this in some sense. Morris suggested that Whitehead had adopted the ideology of the "New" Liberals in England (Transcendence 89). These New Liberals were the precursors of the Labour Party, which did have an explicitly democratic socialist ideology (at least until Tony Blair). Now the difference between Labour and the Communists, to make it explicit, was the issue of class struggle and therefore of revolution. And I have already shown how Whitehead's philosophy supports class struggle -- that is a revolutionary interpretation. Therefore the issue must be one of Whitehead's interpretation (as Kleinbach said, contra Morris).

CONCLUSION

To return to my (mis)use of Morris, he concluded that, "Process theologians can no longer allow a modern liberal democratic project to masquerade as the logical consequence of an objective metaphysical system" (Transcendence 221). His is a call to action, as is mine. Or put more tentatively, the tremendous agreement that I have demonstrated between Process and Marxism calls for much more dialogue. The fact that Historical Materialism can plug into Process with such ease points to an even deeper level of agreement and calls for even deeper levels of conversation between them on questions of metaphysics. I hope to have made a small contribution in this regard.

On the historical side, Process does support the revolutionary goals of socialism, and in fact demands them; Whitehead himself just did not see this. But I submit these conclusions are unavoidable in the world today. The reformist agenda of Whitehead himself, and of the New Liberals and then Labour, has simply failed to move toward its stated goals (especially in the last decade) in spite of their earlier claim that the Cold War was the inhibiting factor. With the Cold War over and capital temporarily triumphant and heading down the road toward fascism (in the United States at least) the reformist program is being shown up as fundamentally inadequate. People are protesting in the streets because this triumphant capitalism has behaved exactly as Marx and Lenin predicted: it disregards the interests of the masses of humanity, of the planet and all of its species, and is pushing ahead – as it must according to its own internal logic -- with policies that will destroy the life sustaining capacity of planet Earth, let alone the human devastation that it leaves in its wake.

Times such as these call for a radical analysis of society and history. That radical analysis is Marx's Historical Materialism. The way is open for Process Theologians to adopt the methods and therefore the potency of Historical Materialism as they seek to confront the grave crises facing humanity in the 21st Century. All that remains is the actual work.

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