

Worldly Religion in Deleuze and Whitehead: Steps Toward an Incarnational Philosophy

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***"Behold, I am making all things new."
-Revelation 21:5***

In his magnum opus, *Process and Reality*, Whitehead attempts to articulate a novel cosmological scheme that, among other things, is responsive to modern Western civilization's need for the "secularization of the concept of God's functions in the world."¹ He was referring not only to the need to secularize, or concretize, the anthropic God of mystical feeling and religious worship (what Whitehead calls God's "consequent nature"), but also to the need to understand God's more-than-human cosmic function as an original impulse granting coherent value to the experience of actual occasions of every grade (i.e., God's "primordial nature"). With no less sense of urgency, Deleuze (and Guattari) argued in *What Is Philosophy?* that, in an age when "we have so many reasons not to believe in the human world," philosophy's most pressing task is to "give birth to new modes of existence, closer to animals and rocks," modes of existence which renew "[belief] in this world, in this life."² Like Whitehead—whose speculative philosophical flights are bounded by that "essence to the universe which forbids relationship beyond itself, as a violation of its rationality"³—Deleuze emphasizes *immanence* as opposed to transcendence, *this world* as opposed to the next.

In what follows, I draw on Whitehead, Deleuze, and their contemporary interpreters, in the hopes of taking a few steps closer to a viable philosophical religion. In particular, my paper dwells on their appropriation of several under-appreciated dimensions of both Platonic philosophy and Christian spirituality, not in order to defend some parochial point of view, but merely to explore the related questions of what an immanent God might be, and what, with such

¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: The Free Press, 1929/1978), 207.

² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 74.

³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 4.

a God, humanity might become. For Deleuze and Whitehead, speculative philosophy, unlike dogmatic religion or hubristic science, does not paint the firmament on an umbrella, as if such human artifice might hold the ever-rising tide of chaosmogenesis at bay; rather, genuine philosophical thinking “tears open the firmament and plunges into the chaos.”⁴ I must add, however, that the philosopher’s task includes not only the dark descent into the groundless depths of Creativity. The worldly philosopher must also return to the surface to share the good news in the light of common day.

This second task is especially difficult in that both Deleuze and Whitehead generated concepts in response to encounters with *non-ordinary* problematics, which is to say that the solutions distilled by their concepts problematize naïve egoic subjectivity by acting as alchemical catalysts that alter not only the contents of conscious thoughts, but the normally taken for granted imaginative background of thought itself. The concepts their philosophizing creates reposition thought on new, as yet undetected planes of immanence. They are *hermetic* thinkers whose philosophizing is in service not only to theoretical explanation, but to worldly renewal by way of the intensification of the hermeneutical depths of experience. Intensifying the hermeneutical depths of experience involves raising the groundlessness of Creativity to the level of conscious activity, thereby exploding the representational mirror constitutive of Cartesian reflection and replacing it with a transparent window open to participation in the ongoing work of God in an unfinished world-in-process.

It is important in the context of Whitehead and Deleuze’s efforts to creatively disrupt and transform the common sense experience of modern society, to forge connections with the project of establishing coherent social values and politically just institutions. Deleuze’s philosophy in particular has been criticized for being “politically irrelevant” by Peter Hallward due to its perceived “otherworldliness.”⁵ Isabelle Stengers has also criticized Deleuze’s tendency to celebrate the adventures of solitary, heroic creators who fearlessly dive into chaos while at the same time downplaying the conditions of creativity provided by their habitat and their inevitable need for social recuperation upon returning to consensual reality:

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 202.

⁵ Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London: Verso Books, 2006); quoted in Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, 226n9.

...all creators have learned [what] makes them able to “dive” without being swallowed. A dive cannot be improvised, but demands equipment. Unlike those who may happen to “sink” into chaos, creators are those who know what they experience “matters,” and that they will be able to recount something of what has happened to them, that is to come back...even from the land of the dead.⁶

Stengers contrasts Deleuze’s celebration of unhinged creativity with Whitehead’s tremendous respect for the lessons of history and continual emphasis upon the importance of acquiring new habits in a way that is sensitive to the habitat these habits depend upon. “Each task of creation,” writes Whitehead, “is a social effort, employing the whole universe.”⁷ While Hallward’s claim may or may not be justified, Stengers’ Whiteheadian corrective to Deleuze’s penchant for skinny-dipping in the Acheron allows us to receive inspiration from the latter without forgetting the pertinent imperative of the former regarding the worldly responsibility of the philosopher:

...[to] seek the evidence for that conception of the universe which is the justification for the ideals characterizing the civilized phases of human society.⁸

When it comes to the influence of the mainline religious traditions of the West upon philosophy, both Whitehead and Deleuze are extremely critical. Whitehead’s ire is almost always directed at the idolatrous habit of conceiving of God along the lines of an all-powerful imperial ruler or distant unmoved mover.⁹ “Religion,” writes Whitehead, “has emerged into human experience mixed with the crudest fancies of barbaric imagination.”¹⁰ Deleuze also mocks the idea of a “great despot” or “imperial State in the sky or on earth” so typical of monotheistic commonsense.¹¹ While this particular habit of religious thought is deemed dispensable, Whitehead is unwilling to jettison religious values outright, despite calls by the modern-minded to found civilization instead upon the abstractions of mechanistic science:

⁶ Stengers, *Thinking With Whitehead*, 272.

⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 275.

⁸ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1938/1968), 105.

⁹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 343.

¹⁰ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925/1960), 192. The contemplative conception of God as unmoved mover is obviously not as crude; what it lacks is the emotional and moral intensity required to engender religious vision.

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 43.

Unfortunately for this smug endeavor to view the universe as the incarnation of the commonplace, the impact of aesthetic, religious, and moral notions is inescapable. They are the disrupting and the energizing forces of civilization.¹²

Whitehead points to the “Galilean origin of Christianity” as an example of a non-despotic religious persona, Christ, who “neither rules, nor is unmoved,” but “dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love.”¹³ Deleuze also singles out Christian philosophy, both for praise and for disparagement. Those pre-modern Christian philosophers (such as Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, and Giordano Bruno) who were bold enough to risk their lives by challenging church authority and injecting a dose of immanence into Physis and Nous still refused to “compromise the transcendence of a God to which immanence must be attributed only secondarily.”¹⁴ Later modern Christian philosophers (such as Blaise Pascal and Søren Kierkegaard), though they were still men of faith, created concepts that recharged, rather than diminished, immanence. They were

concerned no longer with the transcendent existence of God but only with the infinite immanent possibilities brought by the one who believes that God exists.¹⁵

Deleuze suggests that, in the modern period, *belief* replaced *knowledge* as the dominant image of thought.¹⁶ The “will to truth” that had guided philosophy for so long lost its viability, as with the new technical power of modernity came also a crippling epistemic skepticism, an inability to grasp truth outright. No longer could the productivity of thought be “guaranteed in advance by the inherent connection between the good and the true”; rather, Deleuze believes that philosophical thought in the modern period required “trespass and violence,” treating the thinker of thought not just as a trustworthy friend, but also as a potential enemy.¹⁷ Truth in the modern period can only be *inferred*, tracked with suspicion but without certainty. The new plane of belief is not simply destructive or crippling, however; it is also the necessary condition for the actualization of new mental and physical experiences. As with the Christian thinkers of immanence, Deleuze emphasizes the “unforeseeable directions of thought and practice” that

¹² Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 19.

¹³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 343.

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 45.

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 74.

¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 53.

¹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139.

belief makes possible, directions to be judged not based on the *object* of a belief, but on a belief's *effect*.¹⁸ A related feature of modern philosophy for Deleuze results from thought's encounter and struggle with the unrepresentable natural forces underlying perceptual and affective experience, forces which paradoxically "*must but cannot* be thought."¹⁹ Given modern thought's confrontation with the infinite forces of cosmogenesis, its concepts can no longer be understood to represent a stable reality or to mirror a static cosmos; rather, as Deleuze scholar Joshua Ramey argues, "what matters...in an idea is...the range of experimental possibility it opens onto."²⁰

Whitehead shares with Deleuze a sense for the importance of pragmatic, experimental thinking. In the context of religious experimentation, asking whether or not God really exists becomes irrelevant. What becomes important is the sort of thoughts and practices that *belief* in God makes possible for the believer, and for the society to which the believer belongs. "The power of God," writes Whitehead, "is the worship He inspires."²¹ He continues:

The fact of the religious vision and its history of persistent expansion, is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience.²²

The "religious vision," as Whitehead understands it, "gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension," providing life with "something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest."²³ The religious vision, though aesthetically and emotionally ultimate, cannot be monopolized by the limited doctrines of any religion in particular. What can be said is that the rising or falling tide of each religious tradition through the ages depends upon the ability of its concepts, symbols, rituals, myths, architecture, and personae (etc.) to inspire worship in such a way that the human soul's intuition of God is called forth naturally from spiritual resources deeper than the everyday reach of reason.²⁴ As Whitehead understands it, the psychology of modern civilization has little patience for the traditional image of God as an omnipotent dictator.

¹⁸ Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, 13.

¹⁹ Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, 16.

²⁰ Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, 16-17.

²¹ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 192.

²² Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 193.

²³ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 191-192.

²⁴ Stengers, *Thinking With Whitehead*, 133.

In this respect, such images are “fatal,” since “religion collapses unless its main positions command immediacy of assent.”²⁵

More often than any religious image per say, Deleuze’s target is the illusion of *transcendence* as such, which results whenever we “[interpret immanence] as immanent *to* Something.”²⁶ The illusion of transcendence resonates with three other illusions, or “thought mirages”: 1) *universality*, which results when the immanent phenomenon (or plane of immanence) is conceived as immanent “to” a concept, 2) *eternity*, which results when we forget that concepts must be created and are not waiting in the sky for thinkers to discover, and 3) *discursiveness*, which results when concepts are reduced to logical propositions.²⁷ These illusions become a thick fog obscuring the plane of immanence, condemning the philosophical and religious thinker alike to continually grasp after immanence as though it might be made immanent “to” something, whether it be “the great Object of contemplation [the neo-Platonic One], the Subject of reflection [the Kantian transcendental subject], or the Other subject of communication [the Husserlian intersubjective transcendental].”²⁸ (Each of these illusions resonates with Whitehead’s fallacy of misplaced concreteness.) The plane of immanence cannot itself be thought, since it provides the very condition for thought.²⁹ Whenever a thinker believes he has thought the plane, we can be sure he has only contemplated, reflected, or communicated an idol.

The pure immanence of the philosophical phenomenon can be likened to “the friend,” *Wisdom*, She who provides the condition for the possibility of philosophy.³⁰ The friend is the paradigmatic “conceptual persona” of philosophy. Conceptual personae, according to Deleuze, have a “somewhat mysterious...hazy existence halfway between concept and preconceptual plane, passing from one to the other.”³¹ In the case of the friend, it must be asked what it could mean to become friendly if the friend had not once been, and could not become again, a stranger. For Deleuze the friend and the stranger remain necessary illusions for philosophy;

²⁵ Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 191.

²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 45.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 49-50.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 51.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 37.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 3.

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 61.

philosophy, in other words, “requires this division of thought between [friend and stranger].”³² The philosophical creator of concepts must remain divided against herself at the same time that she befriends the image of thought projected in the division. To cancel (*Aufheben*) this division, as Hegel attempted, would be to dissolve the necessary condition of thinking (Hegel believed that his dialectic had reached the end of philosophy, which is why he claimed no longer to be a philosopher, but to have become wise). The vitality of philosophy depends upon a philosopher’s willingness to dwell within (without becoming immanent “to”) continual crises of agonism and reconciliation, meeting therein a proliferation of strange friends and friendly strangers. Deleuze writes:

It is as if the *struggle against chaos* does not take place without an affinity with the enemy, because another struggle develops and takes on more importance—the *struggle against opinion*, which claims to protect us from chaos itself.³³

To *dwell* in crisis is no easy task. But this is the task required of the modern thinker, especially if he is a Christian philosopher who has accepted the risk of thinking God’s immanence. To secularize the concept of God, as Whitehead and Deleuze demand, is to uncover “thought’s relationship with the earth,”³⁴ to dig up what has been buried beneath the foggy illusions of transcendence estranging humanity from its terrestrial home. To think with the earth is undoubtedly a creative act; but it is also a matter of recovery, or *resurrection*, and of uncovering, or *apocalypse*.³⁵

Christian philosophy’s paradigmatic conceptual persona is Christ, “the Word” who “became flesh and dwelt among us.”³⁶ At first blush, He may seem, like other conceptual personae, to possess a less than incarnate, hazy existence closer to the transcendence of spirit/heaven than the immanence of the earthly plane. As John said, “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it”³⁷:—Indeed, traditional theology has all too

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 69.

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 203.

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 69.

³⁵ These Christological concepts can be read in parallel to Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophical concepts of “reterritorialization” and “deterritorialization” (*What Is Philosophy?*, 69-70).

³⁶ John 1:14.

³⁷ John 1:5.

often emphasized Christ's transcendence, making Him more divine than human (and making humanity more sinful than redeemed).

Despite His initially ghostly outline, Christ's ideality is not in any way *abstract*: He is rather an *intercessor*, the *seed* of a peculiarly Christian mode of thinking. "A particular conceptual persona," writes Deleuze, "who perhaps did not exist before us, thinks in us."³⁸ However, of Christ it is said that He was both in the beginning before us and will be in the end after us. His omnipresence lays out a uniquely immanent image of thought based on *incarnation*. The Christian plane of immanence demands a creation of concepts whose defining problematic, or spiritual ordeal, is *death*, and whose solution, should it be realized, is an earthly *resurrection*. The Christian planomenon is unique because it is founded upon the birth, death, and resurrection of God on earth, which is to say it depends upon the possibility of the *becoming-immanent of transcendence itself*. Only then can the Christian thinker become inhabited by *living* thinking. "My old self," writes Paul,

has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.³⁹

Like the philosophical friend, Christ's teachings can appear strange. "I tell you," He said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."⁴⁰ How can an earthly human being—normatively tied to family, friend, race, and nation—possibly live up to such an impossible, indeed *infinite*, demand? It is a demand that does violence to opinion and breaks with all commonsense. Nonetheless, this demand provides the peculiarly Christian problematic, an ordeal whose resolution requires *becoming-incarnate*, and thereby participating in bringing about an as yet unrealized providential plan(e), "on earth, as it is in heaven."⁴¹ This is the strangeness of the "Galilean origin" of Christianity mentioned by Whitehead: it generated a religious imaginary in which the persuasive love of a worldly advocate replaces the coercive power of a transcendent dictator. While Whitehead did not believe it possible, or even desirable, to construct a doctrinal unity out of the world's diversity of religions, he did believe

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 69.

³⁹ Galations 2:20.

⁴⁰ Matthew 5:44.

⁴¹ Matthew 6:10.

that it is possible, amid these differences, to reach a general agreement as to those elements, in intimate human experience and general history, which we select to exemplify that ultimate theme of the divine immanence, as a completion required by our cosmological outlook.⁴²

In other words, while humanity will certainly continue to disagree as to the particular qualitative aspects of religious facts and their proper moral interpretations, some coordination of these facts along a single plane of immanence may at least be attempted. Whitehead's cosmological candidate for the ultimate religious theme is Divine Eros. His philosophical intervention into traditional theology aimed to transform the transcendent God of "coercive forces wielding the thunder" into the creaturely God of persuasion, "which slowly and in quietness [operates] by love."⁴³ Given humanity's recently seized, god-like powers of technology, sustaining our planetary civilization would seem to depend upon the realization of such a secular earth ethos. Our civilization is in dire need of a world-renewing metaphysical consensus regarding the divine nature. If we are unable to attune our human beliefs and practices to the divinity of the world, our collective behavior runs the risk destroying that world. According to Whitehead, the spirit of religion, though it is from time to time "explained away, distorted, and buried," has never once entirely left us "since the travel of mankind towards civilization."⁴⁴ It can be said, however, that whenever religion takes flight from worldly concerns, it is the surest sign of a world nearing its end.

Whitehead traces the gradual realization of the concept of divine immanence through a "threefold revelation" stretching approximately twelve hundred years: 1) it begins in Athens with an intellectual innovation by Plato, 2) then passes into Jerusalem where the person of Jesus Christ exemplified the apocalyptic (ἀποκάλυψις- to "un-cover") power of Plato's concept, and 3) finally it culminates in a metaphysical interpretation of these events generated during the formative period of Christian theology.⁴⁵

1) Whitehead regularly praises Plato's depth of intuition. Just as often, he admits Plato's failure to achieve a coherent overall statement of his conceptual scheme: he was "the greatest

⁴² Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1933/1961), 161.

⁴³ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 166; *Process and Reality*, 343.

⁴⁴ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 172.

⁴⁵ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 166.

metaphysician, the poorest systematic thinker.”⁴⁶ It is for one concept in particular, though, that Whitehead was lead to crown Plato “the wisest of men”: the idea that

the divine persuasion [Eros] is the foundation of the order of the world, but that it could only produce such a measure of harmony as amid brute forces [Chaos] it was possible to accomplish.⁴⁷

2) It was this idea, conceived in principle by Plato, that the person of Jesus Christ was to reveal in actual deed. Though the historical records of His life are scattered and inconsistent, “there can be no doubt,” writes Whitehead, “as to what elements...have evoked a response from all that is best in human nature”:

The Mother, the Child, and the bare manger: the lowly man, homeless and self-forgetful, with his message of peace, love, and sympathy: the suffering, the agony, the tender words as life ebbed, the final despair: and the whole with the authority of supreme victory.⁴⁸

3) Finally, it was the early Church fathers who made the first sustained effort to grope towards a coherent account of God’s persuasive agency in the world.⁴⁹ The major fruit of their labor was the direct statement of the divine immanence in the world in the third person of the Trinity. Unfortunately, despite this theological statement, the Church fathers failed to attain adequate metaphysical generality because they still exempted an infinite God from the categories applicable to the finite actual occasions involved in the becoming of the spatiotemporal world.⁵⁰ Like Plato in many of his written dialogues, they were unable to disavow the notion of a derivative physical world poorly imitating the Ideas eternally realized in the mind of a disincarnate God.

Deleuze’s work has been read as an attempt to “overturn” Plato.⁵¹ In any attempt to “overturn” Plato it should be remembered that little more is required than continuing to “turn over” Plato—as in continuing to turn over the pages of his dialogues to be reminded that, like Whitman, he is large and contains multitudes.⁵² As Emerson put it:

⁴⁶ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 166.

⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 160.

⁴⁸ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 167.

⁴⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 167-169.

⁵⁰ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 169.

⁵¹ Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, Ch. 4: “The Overturning of Platonism,” 112cf.

⁵² See Whitman’s “Song of Myself,” section 51.

the acutest searcher, the lovingest disciple could never tell what Platonism was; indeed admirable texts can be quoted on both sides of every great question, from him.⁵³

Plato was equal parts poet and philosopher. He wrote *dialogues*, always leaving the *doctrines* for his characters. His meaning is never on the surface, even when it comes from the mouth of Socrates. Reading Plato, like reading the metaphysical experiments of Whitehead or Deleuze, is an infinite interpretive activity.

Deleuze's reading of Plato's dialogues destroys the Platonic two-world theory of perfect Ideas poorly copied by sensory images, but he is allured by Plato's alternative conception of pure Difference. Where Aristotle reduces difference to that derived from the commonsense comparison of similars, understanding Plato requires risking the sanity of one's ego in pursuit of the dark, difficult, and dangerous Idea of Difference in itself. Plato's is an ontology of singularity, where knowing an individual (be it ideal or actual) requires directly intuiting its uniquely authentic line of descent, rather than representing, identifying, or abstracting its general form. As Ramey puts it, "Knowledge is not a matter of generalization but of participation." He continues:

The claim to participation is not simply the claim to be identified as a member of a class or token of a type. It is a claim to have passed a test or to have a basis for one's claim. The difference between the just and the unjust, pretenders to justice and authentic stewards of justice, is not a difference between any two, but an internal and constitutive difference. It is the difference an 'immediate fact' of participation makes...It is the selection of an icon from within a prodigious field of idols, false images.⁵⁴

The difference is *initiatory*, "acquired by each person on their own account."⁵⁵ That is, it has to do with undertaking the descent into the chaos of the underworld and returning to tell the tale. As many scholar-practitioners know, philosophy without initiatory experience quickly turns stale and becomes overly abstract. Without ritually enacted stories to perform on infinite planes stretching beyond the relative horizons of commonsense experience, a philosopher's concepts cannot catch fire and acquire the persuasive agency of divine personality. The philosopher's desire to partake of divine Ideas is a creative act, allowing for the ingression of these Ideas into the light of common appearance as physically instantiated signs. Said otherwise, after the Christian-Platonic initiation, the philosopher's world is transfigured into a problematic network of occult icons

⁵³ Journal entry, Oct. 1845.

⁵⁴ Ramey, *The Hermetic Deleuze*, 118.

⁵⁵ Deleuze, "Mathesis, Science, and Philosophy," foreword to Johann Malfatti de Montereaggio, *Mathesis, Or Studies on the Anarchy and Hierarchy of Knowledge* (Paris: Editions Du Griffon D'Or, 1946), 147.

whose meaning can only be uncovered intuitively by the mental magic of talismanic thinking. Ideas are traced into appearances as signs, moments of discontinuity in extensive physical space-time out of which the intensive oddity of self-reference emerges.⁵⁶ These recursive oddities unfold themselves into the physical plane like the organs of a developing embryo, erupting as problematic forces requiring of the flesh-hewn mind not new representations of a supposedly extra-mental or extra-bodily world, but self-immolation through eternally recurring death and resurrection. Thinking is an ecstatic, violent act, always killing the neurons which support it, “making the brain a set of little deaths that puts constant death within us.”⁵⁷

Whitehead’s and Deleuze’s immanent and incarnational readings of Christianity, along with their retrieval of Plato’s participatory doctrines of Persuasion and Difference, are crucial ingredients in the world-renewing medicinal brew that is sorely needed by the contemporary world. Their attempt to secularize God follows from their belief in the divinity of the world, and in the capacity of humanity to become adequate to this divine immanence. “God,” writes Whitehead

is in the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts...In so far as man partakes of this creative process does he partake of the divine, of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives death...to...irrelevancy. His true destiny as co-creator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur.⁵⁸

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⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 21-22.

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 216; Curiously, Christian esotericist Rudolf Steiner says almost the same thing: “The chief characteristic of ordinary thinking is that each single act of thinking injures the nervous system, and above all, the brain; it destroys something in the brain. Every thought means that a minute process of destruction takes place in the cells of the brain. For this reason sleep is necessary for us, in order that this process of destruction may be made good; during sleep we restore what during the day was destroyed in our nervous system by thinking. What we are consciously aware of in an ordinary thought is in reality the process of destruction that is taking place in our nervous system” (Lecture: 1st May, 1913; <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/OccSciOccDev/19130501p01.html> [accessed 12/16/2012]).

⁵⁸ Lucien Price, *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead* (New York: Mentor, 1954), 297.

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