
A Perspective of the Universe

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Pre-Operation

It is certain that all bodies whatsoever, though they have no sense, yet they have perception ... and whether a body be alterant or altered, evermore a perception precedeth operation; for else all bodies would be alike to one another. (Francis Bacon in Whitehead 1967: 68-69)

Taking Account

"There is an apportioning out that can register and an apportioning out that happens more indeterminately" (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 5). The apportioning out that can register is "sense" meaning cognition: apprehension. The apportioning out that happens more indeterminately is a perception preceding cognitive operation. Apprehension without the "ap-" and with the emphasis on the new first syllable: *prehension*. It all begins with an uncognitive *taking account* of an as-yet indeterminate apportioning out (Whitehead 1967: 69). Difference is founded upon this pre-operation ("else all bodies would be alike"). A body comes into its own already finding itself in a difference-making taking-account. As yet it can have no sense whether it is alterant or altered. "Half-abstracted from the start" (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 52). And yet it is already in the process of landing. In an "underlying activity of realization individualizing itself" (Whitehead 1967: 70).

Modal Location

Perhaps it is simply too early to make a concrete distinction between alterant and altered, affecting and affected-by. For the underlying activity is a push that pulls. The body is pushed into a taking-account already in process, and this pulls it toward a self-individualizing realization. Not yet one or the other, agent or patient, the body is finding itself in an undisentangleable “interlocking of modes” (Whitehead 1967: 70). Bare activity. Every site is a prehensive interlocking of reciprocal modes in bare activity. There is no “simple location” (69-71). The smile spreads over the face, as the face fits itself onto the smile (71). The couch fits itself to the body, as the body spreads itself over the couch. The fit is already apportioning this double potential the instant the couch is perceived, even at an uncomfortable distance. In the underlying activity of every perception, there is one two-way movement of reciprocal interfusion already incipiently, actively taking account. “Our body penetrates the sofas on which we sit, and the sofas penetrate our body” (Boccioni 1975: 67). “What emanates from bodies and what emanates from architectural surrounds intermix” (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 61). A modal location is a *field* of experience.

Agency and Patience

Body and sofa “take hold and hold forth” (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 9). To take hold is to show agency. To hold oneself forth for what will come is to show patience. The landing site's prehension interfuses agency and patience, indissolubly alterant-altering. “Distinguishing between subject and object should be avoided” (49).

Beyond Simple Location

“That which is being apportioned out is in the process of landing” (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 5). The site is in the process of apportioning itself out, as the body is apportioning itself to it. The site lands itself for the body, as much as the body lands the site. The site stretches between, in a single two-way movement of

potential. Do not presume to know concretely where the person who makes architectural-body sense lies. She lies in the field of her potential. "We cannot define where a body begins and where external nature ends" (Whitehead 1938: 30).

Potential is the Stream

Potential is the stream one can enter twice. But "no two moments have identical streams in which to rest a weary foot." Reciprocally, "no two moments offer up an identical foot." "Nothing stays in place as place but flux" (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 4).

Fielding Potential

"Landing sites abound within landing sites" (2002: 9). The architectural surround is a criss-cross field of many streams. A field of nested abundance. It is not to begin with a form. It is not yet to begin with a figure-background configuration. A populated field of alterant-altering interfusion. Agencies-patiencies abounding for the apportioning. For anything in particular to happen, a particular expanse must be taken. "The taking of a particular expanse to be a landing site happens in a flash" (9). Having been *taken* to be, the landing site now *is*. To be is to be had in a flash.

Pulses of Persons

To be is to be had in a flash. "These events are decision-like" (2002: 9). A portion of field potential has been had. The sofa's holding forth has been taken hold of. Its perceptual activity disappears in the taking of comfort. Seated comfort stands out from the background. It takes the foreground, where it will figure as being the experience. The field is now configured. Its event has taken form. The sofa rests in the background, patient provider of plush. Agent and patient have separated out. Subject and object. Person and thing. The architectural body has fielded its potential into personable form. This happens in a flash and "is over in a flash." The form-taking is no sooner decided than it "yields to whatever can

come next" (9). Back into the stream. Taking, yielding; figuring, backgrounding; potential resolved, potential returned; taking place and staying in flux. Personing pulses with field potential. At each pulse it draws the abundance of the field into a unifying standpoint. That standpoint expresses a decision-like event in the currency of affect: comfort. An affective value is a selective expression. It is a qualitative translation of a modal location.

Taking Place

The taking form of decision-like events is a taking place. A position is the standpoint the affective translation of a modal location sits itself into, assigns itself as a site. But "assigned positions quickly lose ground: one moment's nearground slips into the next's farground" (71).

Consciousness Flickers

In the pulsing of the person, "consciousness flickers; and even at its brightest, there is a small focal region of clear illumination, and a large penumbral region of experience which tells of intense experience in dim apprehension. The simplicity of clear consciousness is no measure of the complexity of complete experience" (Whitehead 1978: 267).

Rhythm, History, Life

"There is a rhythm of process whereby creation produces natural pulsation, each pulsation forming a natural unit of historic fact." These "transitions of history exhibit forms of order." "The essence of life," however, "is to be found in the frustrations of established order." Its "aim is at novelty of order" (Whitehead 1938: 120). Does taking comfort qualify as life? Only if it flickers. Is taking comfort death? Yes, if it stays in place.

A Perspective of the Universe

"The things which are grasped into a realized unity, here and now, are not the castle, the cloud, the planet, [and the sofa] in themselves; but they are the castle, the cloud, the planet [and the sofa] from the standpoint of the prehensive [affective] unification. In other words, it is the standpoint of the [sofa] over there from the standpoint of the unification here. It is, therefore, aspects of the castle, the cloud, the planet [and the sofa] which are grasped into unity here" (Whitehead 1967: 70). This is a perspective. But it is not a perspective *on* a portion of the universe. It is a "perspective of the universe." (Whitehead 1938: 108). Each realization figures itself out against the background of its own unification, but that figuring holds its unity in simultaneous contrast with an endless abundance of "potentialities for alternative realizations"(106). Its foregrounding of itself *configures* itself to them. It figures *with* them, implicitly. Each decision-like event comes into its own individuality *with* an infinity of alternate forms. "It expresses its own nature as being this, and not that ... combined *with* the sense of modes of infinitude stretching beyond its own limitations." In this sense, it implicitly "expresses its necessary relevance beyond its own limitations." "It expresses a perspective of the universe" (107-108). Its standpoint is a region of the world's potential, flickeringly taking place. It tells of intense experience nested in the larger penumbral region of dimmer experience. It is a perspective of experience, in the same sense in which it is a perspective of the universe. The world is landing sites within landing sites; regions of experience within larger experience. The world is the larger of the experience. It is of experience, for larger or for smaller. Every experience is a worlding. To land is to world.

Refrain

"It is certain that all bodies whatsoever, though they have no sense, yet they have perception ... and whether a body be alterant or altered, evermore a perception precedeth operation; for else all bodies would be alike to one another" (Francis Bacon). Bodies whatsoever, "a taking shape of surrounds" (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 4). Bodies whatsoever in the any-space-whatever of landing, less a body as such than a bodying-forth. Bodyings-forth as instants of existence, as organisms

that person, as architectings of mobility. Bodies whatsoever because “else all bodies would be alike to one another.” Whatsoever because in excess, always, of this or that pre-constituted body: organisms that person take account, field forth, apportion out, bodies in the making.

“Any one instance of existence involves the notion of other existences, connected with it and yet beyond it” (Whitehead 1938: 9). Bodies in the making not as humans already existing but as perceptions on the cusp of environmentality, an ecological becoming. “This notion of the environment introduces the notion of 'more and less', and of multiplicity” (9). Prehending not as perceiving before the world, but as the push-pull of the withness of worlding.

Pre-operation, a preacceleration agitating in potentia. Pre-operation, how the many become one (Whitehead). “Perceptual landing sites occur always in sets – a flock of birds flying in formation.” (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 10). To land perceptually is to field-with in agitation, it is to become-body in a pre-operation that subtracts for a tending that apportions out. Organisms-that-person agitate in the mix, but always in a withness of environment: a becoming ecology of practices.

Whatsoever activity, bare activity: “A perspective of the universe.” Prehension as a fielding of the milieu in its unfolding, resolving into an occasion, the occasion conditioned by an affording for or a being taken account of. A perspective of the universe is a lure. “The world always gets in our way as still more world” (2002: xii). An alluring moreness. Emergence in the milieu of the between, an architectural surround is a conjoint transformation, a relational dynamic. “Her fielding of her surroundings never ceases, continuing even in sleep” (7). A dance of attention of the bare activity of becomings coalescing into a coming event. Pre-operation in an “underlying activity of realization individualizing itself” (Whitehead 1967: 70). Organism that persons not as a human body so much as a push that pulls across matters of fact. “Each instant is only a way of grouping matters of fact” (Whitehead 1938: 200). Each instant, a landing site for a taking place. Each taking place a prehensive interlocking of reciprocal modes. Matter of fact: the thisness of takings place, the thisness of architectings that world.

This-ness: a flocking. A quality of experience that folds the many in the one, an interfusing of agency and patience, indissolubly alterant-altering. "A tentative constructing toward a holding in place" not of the one, but of the polyphony of potential: Do not presume to know concretely where the person who makes architectural-body sense lies (Arakawa and Gins 2002, 23). She lies in her potential. A flocking toward concrescence, the many in the one.

Tweaked toward "the *What happens next?* of life" (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 43), concrescence is a taking of subjective form. Its forces converge into a thisness of experience that immediately interfuses with events in the making. To be is to be had in a flash. "The organism-that-persons drags its whole world along as a pull-toy (3). Organism that persons: "a local agitation that shakes the whole universe" (Whitehead 1938: 188). A populated field of alterant-altering interfusion.

An organism that persons: a perspective, a populated field of alterant-altering interfusion that lands, sometimes narrowly, sometimes widely. "Feeling is the agent which reduces the universe to its perspective for fact. Apart from gradations of feeling, the infinitude of detail produces an infinitude of effect in the constitution of each fact" (13). Feeling, a perspective of the universe, a taking, a yielding; a figuring, a backgrounding. Feeling, how perspective concretes. Feeling, how importance fields. Feeling, the germ of expression where the many become one and are increased by one.

"Importance passes from the World as one to the World as many" (29). Importance, a taking-shape of surrounds that activates the thisness of life in the making, push-pulling into resonance the agitations of potential. Importance, how "perspective is imposed upon the universe of things felt" (15). Dynamic relation, where process occasions.

The universe of things felt: potential resolved, potential returned. Consciousness flickers.

Collective individuation in the milieu of expression. "Expression is the gift from the World as many to the World as one." (29). A multiplicity in the affective tuning, a background-foregrounding that oscillates as vibratory intensity from importance to expression, from expression to importance. "Complexity, vagueness and compulsive intensity" (98). Life-living as relational fielding that architects mobility, life-living as how the world worlds, across individuals, across species and scales, tending, always, toward the flickering. No once and for all of consciousness: consciousness in the interstices of manys and ones.

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