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Alfred North Whitehead'in Organizma Felsefesinde Dinamik Benlik Kurgusu
The Dynamic Self in Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism

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The Dynamic Self in Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism

Abstract: Throughout the history of thought, the body and the soul have been accepted as two fundamental determinative entities in the understanding of human nature. The soul-body problematic, which is sometimes considered as two separate substances, sometimes as two components that together make up a different substantive existence, mostly resulted from the opposition between materialist and spiritualist forms of thought. These two ontologies can be traced back to the Ancient Greek period. Since then, both forms of thinking have often been concerned with finding the constant base behind the being, the uniqueness behind the multiplicity, and the existence behind the phenomenal world in the discussions on the issue of what reality is. Accordingly, body and soul, which are the main references in the definition of human, have gained value according to the characters of change and stability. In order to indicate the permanent aspect of the human being and to express the self, the concept of soul as an immaterial substance has been used, and there has been a strong tendency towards the belief that the soul constitutes the essence of the self as it is unchangeable. The idea of becoming, which has its origin in the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, clearly emphasizes that reality is more about understanding the background of change than stability. This implies that there is no need to seek a constant substance in the definition of the self. Contemporary English thinker Alfred North Whitehead, similarly, adopts an attitude that aims to explain reality in the process, unlike classical metaphysics' reference to spatial stability in understanding reality. This attitude assumes a dynamic metaphysics of the self based on process and flow in a holistic framework, instead of considering the soul and the body as two separate substances and explaining the self in spatial stability only through the concept of the unchanging soul. This idea is based on explaining the self, which is formed by the soul and body in an integrated way, as an entity that has intense connections and interactions with the external world (nature and society). The organism's coming into existence, the sensory activities of the body, which plays a mediating role in the interaction of the self with the external world, reveal the background of his views on self-consciousness, which is one of the concepts that form the basis of the self in Whitehead's thought. The process attitude that Whitehead puts forward while defining human nature criticizes the Cartesian philosophy that ontologically fragments human nature with the soul-body distinction. According to him, Descartes' modern theory of self could not put some issues such as the relationship between the subject and the external world, human experience and the reality of the objective world on a convincing basis. Instead of an ontological distinction between subject and object, Whitehead assumes a subject who knows and recognizes this world because it is itself a part of the objective world. This aspect allows the self to say that it not only ensures its integrity within itself, but also has an integrated structure with the external world through bodily (sensation, perception, etc.) ways. Thus, the perceiver and the perceived between the subject-external world are considered as components of the same dynamic whole. In this relationship, the individual self and the external world mutually construct each other. In this construction process, the consciousness of the self about the other is realized through sensory means and meaning. An individual's goals and orientations determine his/her way of understanding the external world. Thus, the individual reconstructs the external world by changing it in line with his own goals. The external world, on the other hand, motivates the individual to adapt in his activity towards his own goals, to act in harmony, and thus to satisfy his needs at the maximum level. Whitehead aims to explain the self in accordance with scientific methods. On the basis of this method, it is stated that a large number of subatomic particles that make up an object are both individuals and form that object together with other atoms. Accordingly, as a

conscious being, a human also carries both individual and social characters. Therefore, the self possesses autonomy and sociability simultaneously. The self can neither be seen as a mere being in itself, isolated from the external world, nor can it be defined as a being devoid of personal identity, which can be explained entirely through connectivity.

Keywords: History of Philosophy, Process Philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead, Philosophy of Organism, Self

Alfred North Whitehead'in Organizma Felsefesinde Dinamik Benlik Kurgusu

Öz: Düşünce tarihi boyunca beden ve ruh, insan doğasının anlaşılmasında iki temel belirleyici kavram olarak kabul edilmiştir. Bazen iki ayrı töz, bazen birlikte farklı bir tözsel varlığı meydana getiren iki bileşen olarak kabul edilen bu kavramların ele alınma biçimleri çoğunlukla materyalist ve spiritüalist yaklaşımların temelini oluşturmuştur. Bu iki ontoloji, temellerini Antik Yunan döneminde bulur. Kadim Grek felsefesinden bu yana, her iki düşünme biçimi de gerçekliğin ne olduğu meselesine ilişkin tartışmalarda çoğunlukla değişenin arkasındaki değişmeyi, çokluğun arkasındaki tekliği ve fenomenal/duyusal dünyanın arkasındaki varlığı bulma kaygısını taşır. Öyle ki bu dönemde gerçekliğin anlaşılmasındaki ilkeler, insan doğasının tanımlanmasında da belirleyici olmuştur. Buna göre insanın tanımlanmasında temel iki referans noktası olan beden ve ruh, değişim ve sabitlik karakterlerine göre değer kazanmıştır. Bu dönemde daha çok, bireysel insanın değişimsiz/kalıcı yönünü belirtmek, kendiliği ifade etmek amacıyla maddeüstü bir töz olarak ruh kavramı kullanılmış, ruhun değişimsiz olması itibarıyla benliğin özünü oluşturduğu inancına yönelik güçlü bir eğilim söz konusu olmuştur. Ortaçağ ve modern dönem boyunca insanın tanımlanmasında baskın ve belirleyici olan sabitlik kurgusuna karşı, kökenini antik Yunan filozofu Herakleitos'ta bulan oluş düşüncesi, gerçekliğin sabitlikten çok değişimin arka planının anlaşılmasıyla ilgili olduğunu açıkça vurgular. Bu husus, benliğin tanımlanmasında sabit bir töz arayışına ihtiyaç olmadığını ima eder. Çağdaş İngiliz düşünürü Alfred North Whitehead, gerçekliğin anlaşılmasında klasik metafiziğin mekânsal sabitliğe referansta bulunmasından farklı olarak gerçekliği zamansal bir süreç içerisinde açıklayıcı bir tavır benimser. Bu metafizik anlayışa paralel olarak, insanın tanımlanmasında ruhu ve bedeni iki ayrı töz olarak ele almak, benliği sabit olduğu için salt ruh üzerinden açıklayarak onu mekânsal olarak algılamak yerine sürece ve akışa dayalı dinamik bir benlik metafiziği benimser. Bu düşünce, benliği dış dünya (doğa ve toplum) ile yoğun bağlantıları, etkileşimleri olan bir varlık olarak açıklamayı esas alır. Organizmanın varlık alanına gelmesi, benliğin dış dünya ile etkileşiminde aracı bir rol oynayan bedenin duyusal faaliyetleri, Whitehead düşüncesinde benliğin temelini oluşturan kavramlardan biri olan özbilince dair görüşlerinin arka planını ortaya koyar. Whitehead'in insan doğasını tanımlarken ortaya koyduğu süreççi tavır, bir yandan ruh-beden ayrımıyla insan doğasını ontolojik olarak parçalayan Kartezyen felsefeyi eleştirir. Ona göre Descartes'in modern benlik kuramı, özne ile dış dünya arasındaki ilişkiyi, insani deneyimi ve nesnel dünyanın gerçekliği gibi birtakım meseleleri ikna edici bir temele oturtmamıştır. Whitehead, özne ile nesne arasında ontolojik bir ayrım yerine, bizzat nesnel dünyanın bir parçası olması hasebiyle bu dünyayı tanıyan bir özneyi varsayar. Bu husus, benliğin kendi içinde bütünlüğünü sağladığı gibi dış dünya ile de bedensel (duyum, algı vb.) yollarla entegre bir yapıya sahip olur. Böylece özne-dış dünya arasındaki algılayan ile algılanan, aynı dinamik bütünün bileşenleri olarak kabul edilir. Bu ilişkide birey benliği ile dış dünya birbirini karşılıklı inşa eder. Bu inşa sürecinde benin ötekine yönelik bilinci duyumsal yollarla ve anlam üzerinden gerçekleşir. Bireyin hedefleri, yönelimleri, amaçları onun dış dünyayı anlama biçimini belirler. Böylece birey, dış dünyayı kendi hedefleri doğrultusunda

değiştirerek yeniden oluşturur. Dış dünya ise bireyin kendi hedeflerine yönelik eylemselliğinde uyarlama, uyumlu davranma ve böylece ihtiyaçların azami derecede tatmin edilmesi için onu güdüler. Whitehead, benliği, bilimsel yöntemlere uygun bir şekilde açıklamayı hedefler. Bu yöntemin temelinde, bir nesneyi meydana getiren çok sayıda atom altı parçacığın aynı zamanda hem birey olduğu hem de diğer atomlarla birlikte o nesneyi meydana getirdiği ifade edilir. Buna uygun biçimde bilinçli varlık olarak insan da hem bireysel hem de toplumsal karakterler taşır. Bu nedenle benlik, otonomluğu ve sosyalliği eş zamanlı ve düzeyli olarak kendisinde bulundurur. Benlik, ne dış dünyadan soyutlanmış salt kendinde bir varlık olarak görülebilir, ne de tamamen bağlantısallıklar yoluyla açıklanabilen, kişisel kimlikten yoksun bir varlık olarak tanımlanabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Felsefe Tarihi, Süreç Felsefesi, Alfred North Whitehead, Organizma Felsefesi, Benlik

Introduction

It is obvious that the self-concept throughout the post-modern period and the ways of thinking related to this concept are handled in the pre-modern period, by approaching an ontology identical to its substantive aspect, which is assumed to be fixed, with different concepts and scientific-philosophical concerns. While the expression of constancy in the efforts to understand and define human and its nature in the ancient period was mostly maintained through the concept of soul, it became more complex by expanding to include solutions for the problems created by the subjectivity-objectivity distinction with Descartes in the modern period. The attitude of the Cartesian philosophy, which centered the subject in the existence and knowledge process, gave impetus to the approaches that questioned the value of the external world in the formation of the subject in later times. Thanks to the post-modern emphasis on the inevitability of the individual's relationship with the external world for the formation of the self, it has often been stated that the explanation of the self through subjectivity is insufficient to define human nature, that its objective aspect is decisive in the formation of the self, and therefore, the self will attain a possible integrity only by understanding the subject and object aspects. In this context, any post-modern sense of self had to either adopt a self-construal that bases itself on Descartes' subject-centered substantive and closed-epistemological reality, or effectuate a point of view contrary to this fiction. In short, no post-Descartes theory of self could ignore Descartes' self-construal.

On the other hand, the substantive self-construal that prioritizes the perception of space, and the view that the self is formed in line with some a priori and fixed principles has also received its share from the criticisms of the Cartesian philosophy of self-understanding after Descartes. The idea that human nature, which is dynamic, active, changing, unpredictable, reflecting the spirit of time or reflected in the spirit of time is one of the principles in the formation of the self and has been openly defended by many contemporary philosophical systems, especially by the likes of process philosophy and pragmatic thought.

Our study aims to explain Whitehead's dynamic self-construal based on the assumption that there are organic ties between the individual and the external world, as a due diligence, as an alternative to Descartes' Cartesian self-understanding or Kant's self-understanding based on noumena and phenomenon ontology. Whitehead tried to complete the self-construal that he developed in the context of process philosophy by first basing the philosophy of the organism. The concern for understanding the basis on which the self, which the individual as an entity has as intense interactions with the material and external world, is formed, to reveal the dynamic flow of relations between the individual and the external world, to determine the

position of the thinking individual in this philosophy, can be considered as the main compelling background in his organismic philosophy.

In his work *Process and Reality*, Whitehead presents a metaphysical approach different from the classical ones. This approach offers a self-construal that can serve as a basis for morality, value and philosophy on these concepts. In order to understand such a self-construal in terms of Whitehead's thought, first of all, some terms in his metaphysics such as metaphysics itself, actual being/s, connections (nexus) and the view of society to which these concepts are related must be clearly understood. The clarification of all these concepts and the schema of comprehension is possible by revealing how the human being as a living organism, should be understood in a holistic manner by Whitehead. For this reason, before explaining the nature of the self in Whitehead's thought, it would be appropriate to explain his organismic philosophy.

There are, of course, various philosophical systems in the past and today that prioritize the view that human beings are organisms in nature by focusing on some biological features and natural processes that shape human nature. The main ones of these systems are materialistic/mechanistic thought, naturalism and evolutionary biology. The materialist/mechanistic approach argues that man is basically composed of physical matter and is subject to the laws of nature. Accordingly, human behavior and consciousness can only be explained by physical processes such as biochemical responses in the brain. It is obvious that this approach ignores the supra-material qualities of man and explains it in a way that reduces him to matter. Naturalism, on the other hand, ignoring human individuality and autonomy, explains him as a part of the natural world and with an ontology that can be explained only by natural laws. This approach, by giving priority to the understanding of nature, to which man is a part and dependent, in the explanation of man, both abstracted man from the qualities that cannot be explained by matter and ignored his independent subjectivity. On the other hand, biological evolutionism clearly argues that man, as an organism, changes only depending on natural conditions, that he can survive as long as he adapts to natural conditions, and that the passive human being is dependent being, in a cause-effect relationship, to the active nature. Thus, not the human being, but the natural sphere in which he lives and the conditions in which the nature forces him to change effectively play a primary role in determining the human behavior and value field.

Whitehead does not accept that the mere concept of organism is sufficient for human nature and the personal identity that is designed to be built upon this nature. While he accepts the biological aspect of human existence that includes some dependent obligations in its relationship with nature, he emphasizes that experience, subjective consciousness and creativity are interconnected and this bond can only be understood in the process. In this sense, the important distinction between Whitehead's approach and other philosophical perspectives on the possibility and value of defining man as a mere organism is his emphasis on the primacy of process or becoming. This emphasis basically implies a dynamic process of human existence that characterized by individuals' constant interaction with their natural and social environments and shaping their experiences, rather than seeing people as static, space-dependent passive beings. Seeing man as the center of experience, Whitehead refers to the idea that human consciousness involves a complex interaction of perception, thought, and emotion that influences the understanding of the external world and his actions towards this world. Thus, according to Whitehead, consciousness emerges through the integration of bodily experiences, social interactions and creative processes. Because unlike the philosophical systems in which man is accepted as a mere part of nature, a purely biological/organismic being, Whitehead believes that

the concept of creativity in man is one of the determining factors of his nature. For this reason, he emphasizes that human agency and creativity have an active role in shaping individual and collective experiences, in contrast to biological determinism and approaches that accept nature as active and human as passive in the relationship between human and nature.

The fact that Whitehead has a different attitude from the self theories that see man as a mere organism, that this attitude assumes a theory of self based on the perception of time, flow and becoming, contrary to the classical and modern theories of self that prioritize the perception of space and stability, necessitates discussing the possibility of a self-construal that has both stability and dynamism. It can be stated that, throughout the history of philosophy, besides the self-theories of classical thinkers such as Descartes, Locke and Kant; Charles Horton Cooley's mirror self, George Herbert Mead's social self, Freud's psychoanalytic self, Sartre's existential self or Dennet's narrative formational self, are used as basic concept in the construction of personal identity. Whitehead, as having a different perspective, prefers to express the self in the flow as an encompassing concept through the metaphysics of experience. In this sense, our study aims to reveal Whitehead's efforts to make sense of the self through process metaphysics in the history of philosophy, in which the theory of the self is discussed from different perspectives. The main effort of our study is trying to reveal how the concept of self, which is inevitable for a theory of morality and value, can be explained without the concern of mere stability through Whitehead's philosophy of organism, and thus to contribute to the discussion of the self. In other words, explaining whether the construction of personal identity is possible without the concern of substantiveness based on the concept of absolute stability, through Whitehead's thought, can be expressed as the contribution that our study aims to make to the discussions on the field.

1. The Formation of the Subject in Whitehead's Thought

Whitehead sees the philosophy of process as a way of thinking as the philosophy of the organism. The philosophy of organism offers an alternative theory that can help to make sense of personal identity by trying to reveal the nature of man as a living being in a world that includes multiplicity, diversity and movement, and the possibility of his being a whole and self-identical being despite the multiple experiences he has had directly or indirectly in the life process. This theory voices a challenge to the modern understanding of the self. Whitehead's philosophy of organism clearly aims to reveal the analysis of the relations between the organism and the world in which the organism lives, to explain the conscious individual based on the dynamic relationship between these two. He begins by making an analysis of the act of experience first in his subjectivist doctrine reshaped with reference to Descartes' theory of the self, then seeks a ground where he can reconcile the self with the diversity of experience. Whitehead, aims to deconstruct the self sense of modern thought and then reconstruct and re-explain it in accordance with his own perspective of processional integrity. This goal does not adopt the explanation of the self by ignoring the external world for the sake of substantiveness, nor the explanation of the self through pure sensations, devoid of an onto-epistemological basis. From his perspective, the first state involves inadequacies for it completely ignores the sensations and cannot adequately grasp the importance of the body in the formation process of the self; however the second situation is problematic because it reduces the self to mere sensations, the effects of the external world on the body and mind, thus depriving personal identity of any basis. In both cases, ontological integrity could not be achieved in distinction

between substance and attribute, and the self could not be revealed in a holistic way in terms of both its inner relations and its relations with the external relations.¹

The substance-attribute theories put forward in the ancient period acted on the assumption that the human mind is capable of revealing and understanding the inner workings of nature. For this reason, there is a strong commitment to the belief that the changes existing in nature are qualities perceived through sensory means, to the idea that the substantive remains identical with itself over time despite qualitative changes. The modern understanding way of human nature includes the idea that the self's perception of changes in the external world can only be explained in a sensuous way, based on the assumption that the self is a permanent substance. For instance, Kant assumes a model between the perceiving substantive self and the perceived qualitative external world in such a way that subjective senses express an objective world. Whitehead's quest is for the possibility of forming a self-model suitable for human experiences. While Hume's bundle of perception theory left the assumption that there must be certain constancy in order to survive, the idealist theory emphasized that the particulars should be united under a universal roof, starting from the point that the external world can be misleading. Whitehead's self-construal aims to reach an alternative offer to the phenomenalist and the monistic idealist points of view.

From Whitehead's point of view, the subjectivist sensationalist type of thinking can be explained in two separate principles by analyzing the two concepts that make up this type. These are the subjectivist principle, which is based on the ontological approach that reveals the self-experience only in terms of sense impressions, and the sensuous principle, which Whitehead says lacks what he calls the subjective form.² The subjectivist principle is based mainly on the acceptance of the principles that the substance-attribute distinction is the ultimate ontological foundation, that Aristotle's definition of primary substance is a subject, and that the experiencing subject is the primary substance. Indeed, Aristotle and idealist theory presuppose a distinction between universals and particulars. In this assumption, subjects are accepted as primary substances or particulars (which Whitehead calls actual entities) and predicate attributes are accepted as universals. But Whitehead rejects these three premises on which the subjectivist principle is based. According to him, these assumptions are erroneous arguments arising from the belief that language has the power to reveal the nature of reality, as in Ancient Greek thought.³

Modern philosophy, while explaining the self, accepts the subject as an independent, unchangeable, absolute and separate substance from the object. Descartes' cogito explicitly declares that this substance needs nothing but itself to exist, there is an ontological distinction between the experiencing and the experienced, and the independence of the two from each other. Whitehead argues that although Descartes, who started his philosophy with self-experience, managed to explain the experiencing self in an admirable way by developing subjective judgment in this respect, he could not compensate for the lack of connection with the external world that is experienced.⁴ According to Whitehead's determination, Descartes and later modern self theorists assumed that language and the categories derived from it could reveal the essence of nature, as did the ancient philosophers. This attitude prevents any further analysis of the subject itself and insufficient emphasis on existential categories based

¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, ed. David Ray Griffin - Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1978), 156.

² Olav Bryant Smith, "The Social Self of Whitehead's Organic Philosophy", *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 11/1 (01 Temmuz 2010), 2.

³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 157.

⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 159.

on actual subjective experiences. Because modern self-perception assumes an ontological distinction between subject and predicate, and presents substantial subject and object as completely separate and different entities.⁵ Thus, the fact that the subject is included in the objective field or is one of the components that make up the objective field is suspended. This point implies that the distinction between the subject and the external world is not as clear as the modern self-narrative advocates, and the boundaries between the subject and the object are blurred.⁶

The later merging of substantial subject ontology with sensuous epistemology has created an understanding that knowledge must be based on perception or a process that begins with perception. This understanding has led to an awareness that a universal quality actually qualifies a particular substance. Thus, the attainment of a universal quality will begin with the perception and characterization of a particular substance. To put it more clearly, the idea that each particular participates in the universal and makes up its components, and that one should start from the particular substance for the path to universal has gained strength. This has been seen as a way to establish the integrity between the particular and the universal, to ensure that the object is knowable based on the perceiving character of the subject. For this reason, Whitehead realized that it is important to make a reliable analysis of the perception process, which is the most basic of the cognitive process, as a way of knowing the external world and ensuring the integrity between the knower and the known. However, the concern for integrity makes it impossible in sensualism/sensationalism to connect the subject to the objective world through perceptual processes. Because the doctrine of pure sensation attempts to place sense impressions on a meaning ground that is disconnected from objective beings.⁷ This disconnection causes skeptical attitude towards the reality of the objective world to gain momentum making the problems of mind-body relationship and subject-objective world interaction inevitable. Whitehead saw that the modern sensuous perspective weakens or ignores the objective element due to the completely subjective acceptance of perception, and therefore he argued that the Cartesian figure of the modern subject needs to be balanced with an objective principle in the flow of experience.⁸ What Whitehead did, then, was to propose an alternative theory that would replace Descartes' subject with a renewed subject that notices/recognises an objective data. Having stated that it is impossible to live as if there is no objective component in the experiences of the subject, Whitehead implies that common sense contains enough objective elements to eliminate this impossibility.

For Whitehead, subjective perception is seen as an integrative stage that connects the subject to the external world and connects the external world to the subject. This is because he accepts that there is a purposefulness/intentionality in perception. For example, instead of the proposition "the stone is gray", which indicates that there is an abstraction between the subject and the verb, he underlines that my experience of "perceiving this stone as gray" is more real. Perception is regarded as an objective element that has entered the subject's experience from the surrounding world. It thus refers to the ground or activity where the self encounters the objective world imposed from outside. The modern theory of the self leaves the subject passively as he encounters the data of the objective world.⁹ This is because modern

⁵ "Descartes' Cartesian philosophy assumes two kinds of substance. It may seem obvious to a common-sense view that there are minds, and there are bodies; but there is no sufficient reason in the Cartesian system why there should be two kinds of substance rather than one." says Dorothy Emmet. [Dorothy Emmet, *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism* (London, Calcutta and Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan, 1966), 18.]

⁶ Smith, "The Social Self of Whitehead's Organic Philosophy", 3.

⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 157-158.

⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 160.

⁹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 159.

philosophy, which started with Francis Bacon and lived its systematic and peak period with Descartes, has always emphasized knowledge and conscious thought, in a more particular saying, self-consciousness. However, the conscious in itself or self-consciousness, according to Whitehead, is only a part of the experiences in the relations with the surrounding world and is temporary. The conscious or unconscious flow of experience and the self-explanation of the individual through these experiences continues after the consciousness in itself or self-consciousness stages.¹⁰

Modern scientific criticism argues that the internalization of perceptions and sense impressions from the objective world into consciousness can be misleading. By contrast, Whitehead's perspective implies that such misleadings arise not from the objective world or from the subject's perception of the objective world, but from sensory images abstracted from the objective process. In this sense, a comprehensive continuum is formed as a result of the actions and activities of particles that contain principles within themselves and interact with each other throughout an encompassing flow. The level of consciousness leaves out the background of what one is aware of in this continuum and the blurred awareness of the activities that cause that thing to appear.¹¹ Whitehead seeks to remove the blur on the connections of the self in the present with the world, with past selves, and with the experiences of past selves. In this sense, he emphasizes that the philosophy of organism is the reverse and re-creation of Kant's thought because, in Kant's thought, there is a transition from subjective data to an objective world. For the philosophy of organism, the subject or subjective experiences are manifested in an objective world itself. Whitehead conceptualizes the subject emerging from the objective world as a superject (super-object).¹²

Whitehead often emphasizes the concept of perception in the formation and definition of the self. Instead of explaining the self as an abstracted absolute fixity in the subject-object distinction, he aims to present it as belonging to an objective world and a participatory and integrated structure felt through this world. The beginning of the relational integrity between the subjective character of the self and the objective world is the perception process, which is the first stage of the subject's understanding of the external world.

Whitehead states that there is no self in Hume's philosophy, as Hume also admits. Instead, he reminds that Hume uses the concept of the perceptual bundle to refer to the so-called self as something that inherits past experiences and has the capacity to remember. This bundle of perception reveals the relationality of ideas arising from the experiences of the subject, which varies over time, rather than the self.¹³ What enables the formation of personality in this change consists of inherited pieces of experience that are transferred to the self in the next stage of the process, one after the other and each time. Indeed, Whitehead expresses it as; "All alike, ultimate truths are actual entities; these actual entities are complex and interconnected droplets of experience."¹⁴ In this complexity, consciousness filters the vaguely aware causal effects for the organism to continue its daily life, and paints the event as a result of these effects. The formation of this picture ensures that the result is fixed at a higher level of consciousness, abstracting it from the causal sensory continuities that precede it.¹⁵

Reacting to the idea of entity based on the substance-accident distinction, Hume asks whether the ideas about substance originate from sense impressions or from thought, to the

¹⁰ Smith, "The Social Self of Whitehead's Organic Philosophy", 4.

¹¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 167.

¹² Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 88.

¹³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 166.

¹⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 18.

¹⁵ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 168.

view that references the distinction between substance and accident in reasoning and argues that the information this distinction gives us is clear.¹⁶ According to Hume's critique of the idea of substance, it is unnecessary to discuss a union that includes the body's ability to perceive the external world as we have no sensual impression of this union.¹⁷ Whitehead, unlike Hume, accepts the relationship of the self with the body. According to him, the self has a very close sense of identity with the body. The body's leadership in sense perception is the starting point for the mind to connect with the external world. To put it more clearly, the body plays an intermediate role in human interaction with the external world. Thus, our knowledge of the external world is formed from our knowledge of our body.¹⁸

Discussions about whether the body is perceived directly or not, or whether there is a difference between the perception of the body and the perception of the external world, generally arise from two different self-perceptions. These are the spatial and temporal senses of self. In its spatial aspect, the self presupposes that the body is relatively different, close, and belonging to the external world, some kind of identity between the self and the body. It can be said that this ancient view was shaken by Descartes' thought, which assumes the distinction between *res cogitans*¹⁹ and *res extensa*.²⁰ By fixing the self to thought, Descartes states that the body is not a substantive part of the self, and that the soul has the power to reflect on its own thought as often as it wishes and in this way to be aware of its own thought.²¹ Whitehead, points out that the body-self connection in the distinction of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* is meaningless and devoid of experiences and purposes. Such a distinction implies that nature is inanimate, arguing that any matter in the external world is simply an externality, as in the interaction of each of the particles that make up that matter with the others.²² According to him, Descartes' concept of *res extensa* expresses, fills in and explains the content of scientific materialism. The doctrine of nature, in which all matter has certain qualities, occupies and moves in space, and which the space is seen as an unchanging container for these matter particles, is an approach that Whitehead rejects in his philosophy of organism. He states that the idea that nature is inanimate is an indefinite thought/vague speech. Because nature is a field that deserves deeper research and discussion regarding its details, the basic components that make it up, and the interconnectedness of these components.²³

Communities, in which some common understandings are achieved through some mutual connections between their units/components, form a kind of order in themselves. Some of these connections are analyzed in terms of temporal relations and through a temporal sequence rather than broad social structures within a fixed space. This collection of order, which exists through connections along the temporal line, is expressed as a permanent object. From Whitehead's point of view, it is possible to talk about the existence of the concept of the person, whose connections exist, albeit loosely, thanks to this order maintained over time or

¹⁶ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 15-16.

¹⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 118.

¹⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 81.

¹⁹ *Res cogitans*: Descartes' designation for thinking substance which along with extended substance (*res extensa*) constitute his dualism. The term presumably designates not only the individual mind which thinks but also the substance which pervades all individual minds. [Ledger Wood, "Res Cogitans", *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), 271.]

²⁰ *Res extensa*: Descartes defines matter or body as *res extensa*, an "extended thing," a portion of space. Extension is, like thought, a "primitive" idea not admitting of definition. [Roger Ariew vd., *Historical Dictionary of Descartes and Cartesian Philosophy* (Maryland, Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), 99-100.]

²¹ Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, ed. John Cottingham vd. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 335.

²² Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 132.

²³ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 127.

along the historical path. In Whitehead's thought, it can be said that the universe is a vast network of experiential beings that are in contact with each other. However, the concept of experience here carries a deeper meaning than its generally known content. In his philosophy of organism, experience encompasses not only the network of relations between conscious and permanent entities, but also the subatomic particles that make up these entities. In other words, one of the concepts describing his philosophy, panexperientialism,²⁴ is the view that if human evolution goes all the way to subhuman particles, then human experience must have emerged at the subatomic level through deduction. In this case, it is assumed that not only humans, but also individual cells, individual molecules, individual atoms, and even subatomic particles such as photons or electrons have a sense capacity and subjective levels of interiority.²⁵ In this sense, the emergence of living things cannot be attributed to the superior survival values of individuals or societies. What makes existence and survival possible must be sought in the interaction and harmony of much deeper, more particular particles.²⁶

Thus, human looks like a social structure in which each individual is connected with the other through experiential bonds, and the interaction takes place at a lively and high level. Each individual member of a society has to act on some internal and external principles on the basis of his own internal and social connections in order to maintain both his own existence and the existence of the society. These principles create a dynamic and developing individual and society. Although this occurrence itself is permanent, a new society and new individuals appear because it is always developing. Likewise, the organism's commitment to life requires an internal dynamism. The inner dynamism of the organism reminds us of the interconnectedness of each atom or subatomic particle that makes up that individual. Thus, the human body adapts to environmental change and development over time, but in this adaptation process, it also allows the emergence of a dominant, regular and permanent object called the self by changing himself and the life sphere he is in.

Whitehead shows that the self can be dissolved from the harmonious unity that exists in the relationship between mind and body, and a harmonious environment that this unity creates. Considering that each actual being has some degree of experience and that the actual beings of the body constitute a society conducive to the development of the body, we can say that all networks constitute a kind of communication sphere. The cells of the body forming the network within this sphere are in positive and harmonious communication with the brain cells. Brain cells communicate with the personal order called the self through the permanent object. The individual is in this surrounding communication network as a whole with his physical and mental characteristics. In other words, the individual, both as a subject, agent, and sensitive and conditioned being, is changed and transformed by the environment he is in, while at the same time directing this environment.²⁷

The self, as an individually organized permanent object, is much more complex in character than atomic material units, which undergo little change over time and repeat a transformative pattern of movement peculiar to their individuality throughout their individual history. However, Whitehead's analysis of the self will of course require contacting all actual beings in the process. According to him, the permanence of an object indicates that it is a temporal

²⁴ Panexperientialism is the philosophical claim that argues that experience exists throughout nature and that mentality is not essential to it. [Gregg Rosenberg, *A Place for Consciousness* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2004), 90-93.]

²⁵ Christian De Quincey, *Radical nature: rediscovering the soul of matter* (Montpelier, Vt: Invisible Cities Press, 2002), 183, 217.

²⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 64-65.

²⁷ Smith, "The Social Self of Whitehead's Organic Philosophy", 9.

society. The self is a permanent object as a means by which the body has temporal and environmental/spatial continuity. However, the permanence adopted by Whitehead for the self does not mean a soul that always remains constant and self-identical throughout the entire time between birth and death, but rather the dynamic self of the individual, which ensures its internal unity in relationship to the body and mind and which assures its integrity with the external world. Thus, for Whitehead, the importance of organismic philosophy in the formation of the self stems from the value he places on the body. Because, according to him, the sensory body represents not only the receiving but also the giving and changing quality of the self in the flow of information. More broadly, Whitehead's emphasis on the dynamic self is fundamental to empathizing with other people and the environment, developing connections and values, and building relationships with the natural and social environment in accordance with these values.²⁸

2. The Self and The Self-Creation

It is possible to state that one of the most basic fictional concepts in Whitehead's philosophy is self-creation. However, it can be said that throughout the history of philosophy, the concepts of self-creation and self-organization are often confused, used interchangeably, or the distinction between the two concepts is not emphasized enough. Self-creation and self-organization can be considered as key concepts in Whitehead's development of a self-understanding different from fixed or given self-construals for substantial and spatial perception. Therefore, in order to better understand his theory of self, it is necessary to understand exactly what he means by the concept of self-creation, and for this, the distinction between self-creation and self-organization should be revealed.

The main purpose of self-creation theory is to develop a metaphysics of becoming against Descartes' idea that nature is a vast spatial occupancy that exists over time. Thus, he aimed to challenge the concept of organism-in-itself as a limited being and the theory of abstracted matter. Instead, he proposed a holistic entity design created by organisms that do not lose their individuality, in which the relations between organisms are decisive. The idea that the ontological distinction assumed between Descartes' *res extensa* (space) and *res cogitans* (thinking) theories is insufficient in understanding the organismic entity aims to develop a spatial thinking model.²⁹

Instead of the assumption that fixed movements are measurable, Whitehead argues that the relationality between organisms is part of a fluid temporality that cannot be measured at a fixed scale. Based on the principle that "time becomes a variable quantity depending on the speed of realization processes that can be located at several different moments at the same time", which is assumed in the time-space relationship of the theory of relativity, he states that the universality of a certain space will not be in question at a certain fixed time, but that there can only be a local present where each event takes place in conjunction with each other. In this sense, in the philosophy of organism, in which Whitehead tries to establish a new basis for nature and organism by using the theory of relativity, the fluent interconnections and relations between organisms in spatial variability play a decisive role.³⁰

Whitehead, on the one hand, argues that unlike the empirical thought, which argues that the past plays an important role in determining the present and the future, the new and

²⁸ Smith, "The Social Self of Whitehead's Organic Philosophy", 14.

²⁹ Alain Beaulieu, "Alfred North Whitehead, Precursor of Theories of Self-Creation", *Revue d'histoire Des Sciences* 65/1 (2012), 85.

³⁰ Beaulieu, "Alfred North Whitehead, Precursor of Theories of Self-Creation", 85.

original is decisive in defining the human being, on the other hand, he distances himself from the Kantian noumena thought, which assumes an a priori space that will enable experience. The process has a character that transcends any pre-existing objectivity and references events and the connections between events. In this respect, he emphasizes that the formation of the subject emerges from the objective world and matures as a process. The acceptance of the objective world as a neutral set of values and ontologies as a reality with the subject's orientations, expectations and the network of relations it establishes with the external world implies that the philosophy of organism is based on realist foundations. Nonetheless, this criticism of constancy and substantialism not only enables him to challenge positivism, but also destroys the logic of "knowing subject/known object", thanks to the concept of superject (super-subject) he developed. The organic unity of real thought as superject is not an origin, but a result in the midst of an infinite number of insights. Whitehead's philosophy of organism aims to explain how objective data passes into subjective satisfaction and how the order in objective data provides intensity in subjective satisfaction, instead of the concerns of explaining the appearance of subjectivity in objectivity adopted by Kant or revealing how the objective world manifests from subjective existence. Accordingly, the subject emerges in the middle of the world, which is accepted to be objective, within and as a part of all objectivities. Thus, Whitehead expresses not as a center, an organic origin of the flow towards the objective world, but as a super-subject, the subjective being that is in the middle of an infinite number of objective apprehensions.³¹

According to Whitehead's dynamic cosmology, the organic linkages and reciprocal changes that enable nature to transform itself, based on actual events, indicate that there is no repetition of any phenomenon occurring in nature. In this sense, every event that occurs in nature is not identical with another event, no matter how similar it is. However, the process involved and brought about by each event that takes place in the local or immediate present to which it belongs is not accidental, but has its own rationality.³² The rationality and rejection of randomness lie in the fact that each local and immediate present has a determination in itself. Emphasis on the fact that even fixed objects, which are seemingly resistant to time and are believed to be immutable, turn into nature in the process, thus pointing out that processes are not fixed, but are in a state of change by passing from one state to another, each of which has an inner stability. This approach clearly states that reality should be sought in the whole of the process, in the connection of each "now" that creates this unity with the past and future "nows", rather than in the particular parts abstracted from time and other particles that make up existence.

This unpredictable dynamism of the philosophy of organism raises the question of whether Whitehead adopted a chaos cosmology. He, on the one hand, argues that there is no radical distinction between order and disorder, moreover, rejects the idea of continuous encirclement and progress that includes being predictable. According to him, disorder as well as order is an important element for the world. For we do not have strong reasons for understanding and accepting that the real world is purely ordered or simply disordered. Order and disorder exist as possibilities in the universe. These possibilities assume that irregular characters form a coherent network.³³ He expresses this issue as follows:

'Order is a mere generic term: there can only be some definite specific 'order', not merely 'order' in the vague. Thus every definite total phase of 'givenness' involves a

³¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 86-88.

³² Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 125.

³³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 110.

reference to that specific 'order' which is its dominant ideal, and involves the specific 'disorder' due to its inclusion of 'given' components which exclude the attainment of the full ideal. The attainment is partial, and thus there is 'disorder'; but there is some attainment, and thus there is some 'order'. There is not just one ideal 'order' to which all actual entities should attain and fail to attain.³⁴

The above statement shows that Whitehead assumed a partial order in his philosophy of the organism, which he believed was necessary for the dynamism of the organism. Within each local process, the organism is bound by the rules that rationalize that process. However, the progress and change of the process also causes the binding rules of the previous local process to change. For him, creativity that can be understood in this way is the universal principle that characterizes ultimate truth.³⁵

This is how Whitehead makes the distinction between the self-organization of a fixed being and the self-re/creation of a being with partial disorder. The first phase or part of this bipolar cosmological approach creates the understanding of immanent nature, which gives the organism the capacity to create a progressive and self-renewing autonomous field, while the second phase or part creates chaos as a ubiquitous possibility in the universe, aiming to neutralize a complete and definitive evolutionary occurrence.³⁶

Although Whitehead adopts a progressive philosophy of organism, this view is not a linear approach like the one adopted by Darwin and his advocates in the theory of natural selection. The reason for this is that Darwinian natural selection insists that the organism is passive in the face of environmental conditions, that the organism has to adapt to the conditions imposed by the environment in order for the life process to continue, and that the continuation of life depends on how well the organism adapts itself to these environmental conditions. On the other hand, the change or adaptation brought about by these conditions in the organism has a linear structure in natural selection. Although external factors are not ignored in Whitehead's philosophy of organism, it is emphasized that these factors are selectively internalized by the organism and eventually the organism builds and renews itself. Thus, in the development and renewal of the life process as a whole, the organism is indebted to the existence of environmental conditions as well as the environmental conditions is indebted to the organism. Thus, the self-creating/constructing organism is also accepted as the cause of the transformation that takes place in it.³⁷

Just being a living being or a living organism cannot be a defining feature for a person to have a self.³⁸ Therefore, the emergence of his self is possible only through connection/s. He refers to this concept (of connection/s) as nexus. The view that the self, which is the most basic dynamic or pillar of morality, is a living bond reveals the idea that the self should be evaluated in relative situations in order to define human beings, and that his connections with the environment can develop from an organic being to a human being who has a self. In this context, the idea that one of the most basic characters of human beings has a dynamic nature structured through society in a fiction that can create itself in a flow or process, realize it through connections with the other, and have a self, can be seen as one of the basic approaches in Whitehead's self-construal. However, he emphasizes that this society is a structured society. A structured society implies that a community will continue to exist even if some of its characteristics change. To put it more clearly, the society has some features that are not

³⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 83-84.

³⁵ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 21.

³⁶ Beaulieu, "Alfred North Whitehead, Precursor of Theories of Self-Creation", 88.

³⁷ Samuel Butler, *Evolution, Old and New* (London: A. C. Fifield, 1911), 345-348.

³⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 159-160.

absolutely binding, but allow us to express that society as that society. Although these features are not in absolute terms, they exist in that society on a dynamic and suitable basis for possible developments and changes. This presence allows the individual to take an active role in that society and to contribute to change of the society in which he lives.³⁹ This allows Whitehead to define the nature of the self through the bond it establishes with the elements it is in. However, we need to question the meaning of the self being a set of bonds, a "wholly living bond". To put it more clearly, if there is a physical, intellectual, etc. relationship between an individual forty years ago and the current state of the same individual, then what makes it possible or meaningful to say that the present individual is still same of the individual forty years ago despite the differences, that is, that allows us to say that the individual is identical with himself?

Whitehead answers this question by establishing a fundamental and descriptive link between the person and society. According to him, the ideas of social order and personal order cannot be considered separately and independently from each other. In this sense, society refers to the state of being in a bond with the social order that allows the formation of society. The permanent object is defined as a social order that has taken the special form of the personal order. In Whitehead's thought, the relationship between nexus and society is expressed in such a way as to indicate that the bond has a common ground in each individual of the society with all other individuals. In other words, each of the individuals who make up the society expresses a common element just like the society itself. The thing that provides permanence to the social being of the individual and the society itself by making individuals related to each other in this way is expressed as nexus. Whitehead states that this connection is the basic identifier of sociality itself.⁴⁰

In this sense, Whitehead bases the self on the connectivity it establishes with the other fellows of the society in which it lives. This bond also emphasizes the integrity of both self and society. For this reason, he argues that defining the self as the absolute identity between the past, present and future of the individual, and explaining the human through the concept of soul, which has some permanent characteristics, in order to reach such a definition, cannot explain some aspects of human nature and its dynamism. Before he defines the human nature or the self, which expresses a very complex phase of the human being, he gives examples with the scientific method, by giving an explanation about the cell. According to him, the basic characteristic of a cell is not to exist in absolute identity with its predecessors by inheriting from its own past, but are its reactions to external stimuli, the solutions it produces for the problems it encounters, and the efforts it makes for these solutions. The first case, which describes the organism in terms of hereditary characters, causes a strict determinism, while the second case refers to the adaptation and progress of the organism, its originality and subjectivity. According to him, the focus point in explaining the self with reference to space or stability is wrong. What matters is not the need to explain the continuity or permanence in determining the self, but the form of the whole of the reactions that the individual develops to continue to exist in the dynamism he is in. Only in this way can we reveal the uniqueness of the individual's personal identity or self that allows us to distinguish him from others. In this sense, it can be said that Whitehead tries to explain the self in a way that focuses on identifying the aspects that distinguish the human individual as an organic and thinking being from other homogeneous individuals. This implies that each organism contains subjective characters. According to Whitehead, this subjective character becomes concrete in the uniqueness of the

³⁹ Forrest Wood Jr., "A Whiteheadian Concept of the Self", *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 4/1 (1973), 58.

⁴⁰ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 34.

organism's reactions to external stimuli. The subjective purpose that guarantees the originality of the organism in the life process occurs when it creates an innovation that is not found in the hereditary data of its primitive stage.⁴¹

Whitehead emphasizes that heredity prevents us from grounding the self on and explaining it with social bonds, based on the hereditary characteristics of the organism and on originality that it creates as itself. It would not be a convincing explanation to say that an individual is an organism that comes into existence in a deterministic framework with hereditary features, as well as to say that the individual forms his/her self as a living thing consisting of only ties. This means that the self is revealed through a process that involves not just heredity or just external ties, but both. The organism can achieve unity only by experiencing each of the events that make up its life. This implies that what ensures the integrity of the self in Whitehead's thought is a process integrity that includes each of the events that the individual has experienced throughout his life, thus consisting of a chain of effects and reactions. Thus, the process assures the integrity of the self. In other words, the "self", which will enable us to understand the human being as beyond just being a living organism, is not absolute and fixed, and cannot be expressed with the concept of the soul, which is assumed to be the basis of the self with these concerns. Instead, he sees the self as a living link that supports the chain of personal order, from which each of its links extends throughout the historical course. In this sense, he abandoned the concept of real existence as the unchanging subject of change, which expresses the effort to define man on a fixed basis.⁴² The Whiteheadian self is also not an unchanging subject of change. Rather, it is seen as a self-created being, guided by its ideal of self as a real being, as individual fulfillment, and as a transcendent creator. John Goheen, expresses two important issues in terms of value discussion in this process of self-creation for Whitehead: "i. unity, which is the ultimate end guiding the self-creative entity; ii. novelty or uniqueness, which every phase of the creative activity involves..." Such explanation of the self-creation, for Whitehead, implies that the individuality of the self doesn't prevent us to think him as integrative being with the nature that surrounds, and that personal identity as a concept that -in some sense- include fixity, is not an obstacle to innovation and uniqueness for the self.⁴³

Moving from the concrete ground, Whitehead uses the categories and inferential concepts he applies to real and concrete entities such as cells, molecules and intercellular spaces to understand the self. This attitude clearly demonstrates the concern about self-explanation in a positive scientific method. As a matter of fact, although the self is an abstract concept, it expresses the living and dynamic connection of real beings with all of them. This connectivity requires inclusion in the definition of self, such as originality, taking responsibility, taking the first step and moving. The world, as a real being, has a character in which transcendence is intertwined in terms of being the creator of itself, and reality in terms of being created. The fact that the world as a real being is guided by its own purposefulness in self-creation is also reflected in Whitehead's understanding of the self. According to him, the self follows a course from a concrete reality to abstract perfection. This course includes its own reality, its connection with the other, and the reality of the other.⁴⁴ "Actual entity", as a concept that Whitehead uses as a method of concretization, has two fundamental features that are critical to the understanding of the self: the relationship or connection of the data of the past with the present, and subjective purposefulness. The fact that the temporal unity of the self must

⁴¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 104.

⁴² Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 29.

⁴³ John Goheen, "Whitehead's Theory of Value", *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1941), III/447.

⁴⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 85.

include a connection with the past of the organism or individual clearly gives rise to the deterministic viewpoint. Although some anti-deterministic approaches argue that the choices or the forms of signification in the present determine what the past is, one of the main points overlooked here is that our past actions also produce tendencies or acts that affect our present choices. In this sense, Whitehead does not embrace the idea of an absolute break with the past because to put a distance between the past and the present, with the present's absolute interpretation of the past, is to pacify the past by limiting it entirely within the present. In other words, the idea that the past is passive until you adopt a decision or interpretation made in the present, and that the past will be active through meaning in the present after adopting the mentioned decision or interpretation does not seem to be consistent with Whitehead's view of the integrity of the self, which includes both subjective purposefulness and connection with the past. However, the subject has the opportunity to evaluate and interpret the past in the present and to reconstruct the the meaning of past in the present.⁴⁵

The idea that the past is a hypothetical area that is always constructed as new meanings within the present is possible by constructing the past experiences semantically, not directly and phenomenally. In other words, the individual who is in the present can express the past freely and always have the flexibility to re-interpret the past. Thus, the fact that the past is hypothetical and that it can be determined by the individual who has experienced this past allows us to say that the past consists of the free choice of the future.⁴⁶

Whitehead states that if philosophy evaluates the organism or living being in its own meaning, it should deal with the possibilities and limitations that the living being has been given throughout his life in his relations with the world in which he was born. Man lives between the limitation of being bodily born or existing, and the flexibility of having a past through the immediate experiences of his individual history.⁴⁷ Therefore, the idea that the present is absolutely determined by the past causes rigid determinism in the self-construal. Although a real being has a perfect connection with every substance in the universe,⁴⁸ it cannot be said that the rearrangement of the elements of the past is the only thing in the formation of the real being. The connection of the past with the present is determined by the meaning and value attributed to the past realities in the present. Determining of how the elements of the past is comprehended is also the guarantee of innovation. The subjective form is therefore immediate innovation; it is how the subject feels about this objective data.⁴⁹ In the relationship between the organism and nature or the external world, he describes the reality of the external world as eternal objects that are the pure potential of the universe. These pure potentials grasped by actual beings are necessary for a contingent actual world. The fact that the reality of the external world is only of a formal character and that this form has content with its meaning by the perceiver implies that the real world, perceived as a thing-in-itself, is freed from being static with subjective meaning or orientation. As a matter of fact, Whitehead states that the alternative to a pluralistic universe is a static monistic universe with no unrealized potentials.⁵⁰

Whitehead emphasizes that time has a developmental character for the self. This character allows individual real situations to provide original elements for new creations.⁵¹ Accordingly,

⁴⁵ Wood Jr., "A Whiteheadian Concept of the Self", 61.

⁴⁶ Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* (New York: Pocket Books, 1987), 501-502.

⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 129.

⁴⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 41.

⁴⁹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 354.

⁵⁰ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 46.

⁵¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 210-211.

since the past includes the direct or indirect experiences of the self, the construction of its current state includes some elements from the past. The self of the present is more encompassing, advanced, developed, and comprehensive than the self of the past, due to the accumulation of past direct and indirect experiences and its ties to the present.⁵² In this sense, the present self has to be a self that is not disconnected from the past, but is always newer than the previous selves.

Whitehead's self-construal, which includes the elements of the past and presents these elements as a whole in the present, allows him to constitute a creative process scheme for the self. In this scheme, the subject, on the one hand, includes the characteristics of being responsible, for it is considered to be related to the direct and indirect experiences of the past, on the other hand, the characteristics of being original and creative, since it can interpret and evaluate these experiences in the present. Thus, the self is seen as a dynamic flow where the past is important in some aspects, and which, however, allows the subject's choices about comprehending the past, rather than being seen as a totality of ties or connections within the existing. This approach also makes it meaningful for the individual to have a current sense of responsibility for his past actions.

Conclusion

Alfred North Whitehead's thought of self is based on a dynamic search for reality, against the classical metaphysics which include the thought that the reality should be understood as a mere spatially fixed throughout the time. This quest includes a perspective towards solving the problem of becoming/change that has been discussed since the Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. The idea of the modern period, which assumes an ontological distinction between subject and object, and that the subject is a necessary and sufficient prerequisite for "existing", is a compelling idea for the constructed self, whose connection with the external world is realized, for Whitehead. On the other hand, the disintegrating approach, which deprives the self of its inner integrity with the distinction of noumena and phenomenon, is also seen as a problematic approach for Whitehead. In this framework, Whitehead's fiction voices a challenge to the self-construals that cannot provide the individual's inner integrity and connection with the external world. In the perspective of process theory, the structure of the individual integrated into temporal and spatial integrity in a way that does not ignore his own inner autonomy draws a picture built on three basic pillars: i. The self must be understood as a creative outcome of past and potential. The creative character of the self, both itself and its environment, indicates that it can always reconstruct the connections between itself and the external world through subjective meaning and interpretation. ii. The self's relation to the rest of the natural and social environment should be understood as being in a dynamic activity that always implies innovation and unpredictability, iii. The self should be understood as the initiator of all this original and new mobility. Such an understanding of self creates a basis for the individual, which must have a sense of responsibility at the same time, on which the past self can always be reconstructed, on which thought and behavior change is possible, and which allows him for self-creation.

The individual self is not an absolute self, but a self constructed in the course of life. This is a process in which the individual takes an active role in the first degree and directly in the formation of his own self. In Whitehead's thought, the individual creates his own self. However, of course, this creation emphasizes not a one-sided actualness of the individual, but the mutual interactions of multiple beings, the effect of each being/element in this interaction

⁵² Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 238.

on the formation of the self, and the internalization of these effects by the individual. Thus, the self refers to a collective meaning-making and construction process in which the self-possessed individual is significantly active. The interaction between the individual and external objects is organized by the individual through sensory and mental processes and is included in the formation of the self. Whitehead advocates an understanding of the self which takes time and process as a reference, and suggests that the self is formed in a flow, instead of ways of thinking that centralize the perception of space, such as absoluteness. In this sense, he assumes that the self, which determines the way of making sense of the external world and the reference intervals, is represented in a flow in the relationship of the individual with the external world. Thus, the formation of a dynamic, active and open to development self revealed as a character attributed to human nature in Whitehead's philosophy.

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