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COMPARISON OF WHITEHEAD AND SRI AUROBINDO – version 3

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- I. Why is it important to compare these two philosophers
 - A. What is metaphysics and why is it important?
 1. Metaphysics is the attempt to articulate and to criticize the fundamental concepts in terms of which explanation is performed.
 2. The metaphysical system in terms of which we perform explanations defines for us the limits of what is sane, and the limits of what we consider to be possible.
 3. One of the primary defining characteristics of a civilization is the metaphysical system (or the loose collection of metaphysical systems) in terms of which it thinks.
 - B. One important dimension of our work here at CIIS is the attempt to articulate a metaphysical system which can serve as a partial basis for a new, “integral” civilization.
 - C. Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo were the greatest constructive metaphysicians of the 20th century. Their respective works exhibit both important similarities and important differences. I believe that the next step in the general line of philosophical development leading to a metaphysical system for a new civilization is the reconciliation and integration of the thoughts of these two great thinkers.
- II. General considerations conditioning any attempt at synthesizing the two systems
 - A. Whitehead can be considered to be a culminating point in the Western philosophical tradition. On one hand he was entirely conversant with the history of Western philosophical thought, on the other hand he was more intimately conversant with modern logic, modern mathematics, and modern science than most other philosophers. His philosophy offers up an ontology and epistemology which is entirely adequate to the methodological and interpretive needs of modern Western civilization.
 - B. Sri Aurobindo was, by all accounts, a great yogi of the Vedic tradition. He was intimately conversant with the data of yogic experience – both first-hand and through a deep exploration of the relevant texts.
 - C. I would like to suggest that Sri Aurobindo’s ideas, in the form in which they are presented, are not adequate to dealing with the intimate details of science. Whitehead’s ideas, on the other hand, were formed in essential ignorance of the data of yoga. Thus a fully integral philosophy will require a synthesis of both of their systems.
 - D. In a remarkable display of the deep coherency of the evolutionary process, their ideas are so formed that such a synthesis is entirely possible.
- III. Outstanding similarities
 - A. Both thinkers refuse to be caught by logical exclusion, and both argue for something like complex contrast as the ultimate mode of integration.
 - B. Both thinkers are “panpsychics” – i.e., both acknowledge the inseparability of consciousness and matter.
 1. For Whitehead, this is expressed as the necessity of both a mental and a physical pole for every actual entity.

2. For Sri Aurobindo, this is expressed as the inseparability of Consciousness and Force (Chit/Shakti).
 - C. When we follow Sri Aurobindo's involutory scheme down to the level of the lower hemisphere, we find that the fundamental unit of finite being that emerges "on the surface" is very similar to Whitehead's actual occasions. I believe that this is a crucial link that ties their philosophies together.
 - D. Both thinkers are glimpsing (though in very different ways) similar metaphysical absolutes – this will be explored below.
- IV. Outstanding differences
- A. Their understanding of metaphysical method are very different.
 1. Sri Aurobindo is much less sophisticated about philosophical methodology, and he presents his system as a kind of revealed truth, a simple description of yogic experience.
 2. Whitehead, on the other hand, is more sensitive to the provisional nature of mental descriptions. He presents his metaphysical ultimates as "tentative descriptions of ultimate generalities," and he encourages an ongoing, more or less scientific process of testing through which these tentative descriptions can be refined and modified over time.
 - B. Their ultimate sources of validation are different.
 1. For Sri Aurobindo, philosophy must ultimately justify itself to the experience of accomplished yogis.
 2. For Whitehead, philosophy must ultimately justify itself to science and to "common sense."
 - a) A digression on the meaning of common sense:
 - 1) Language is the limit of what is expressible in speech.
 - 2) Common sense is an abstraction from language. It is those uses of language that are considered sane.
 - 3) Metaphysical schemes are abstractions from common sense.
 - 4) To say that metaphysics is to justify itself to common sense is to say that the metaphysical scheme must be experienced as sane in the context of a linguistic community.
 - C. The two thinkers have a very different understanding of time
 1. On the importance of the time issue in a comparison of Alfred North Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo
 - a) The issue of freedom can't be separated from the issue of time.
 - 1) A decision cannot be fully and properly free if its outcome is known, in advance, by any entity in the universe.
 - b) Many people feel forced to uphold the doctrine of God's complete knowledge of all things, past present, and future.
 - 1) This seems to be dictated by some abstract notion of God's perfection.
 - c) Some people, have an intuition of the eternal presence of every moment.
 - 1) For these people, there is a subjective sense that the ultimate existential dignity of each moment requires each moment to be eternally present.
 - d) It is Sri Aurobindo's acceptance of something like b) above that seriously compromises his otherwise pervasive respect for the freedom of individuals.
 2. Descriptive:
 - a) Whitehead starts from temporally situated experiences, and tries to use the intellect to reason out the eternal factors which underlie it.
 - 1) There are at least four modes of time in Whitehead's metaphysics
 - a) The eternal mode which characterizes creativity, eternal objects, and (almost as strongly) the Primordial Nature of God. These factors are

eternal in the sense that they never change, but have no existence outside of or transcendent to temporal process.

- b] The everlasting mode which characterizes the Consequent Nature of God. The CN is in time, always growing but never ending.
 - c] The linear time of personally ordered societies.
 - d] The acutely temporal mode of actual occasions, which actualize a particular, finite portion of the extensive continuum. (It may be possible to characterize this temporal mode as fractal, but Whitehead nowhere suggests this particular formulation).
- b) Sri Aurobindo starts from the vision of an underlying “timeless” existence which he seems to think is necessitated by “Reason,” and validated by certain defining yogic experiences.
- 1) There are at least 5 modes of time that I can discern in Sri Aurobindo’s metaphysics
 - a] Time in the upper hemisphere
 - i] The Timelessness of Sachchidananda
 - ii] The three modes of Supermental time
 - a} The simultaneous co-presence of all actualities that have ever been and ever will be, with no spatiotemporal differentiation
 - b} An eternal presence of an unvarying sequence of actualities
 - i} The simultaneous co-presence of all actualities that have ever been and ever will be, but here experienced as arranged in a sequence
 - c} The experience of eternally living out a linear sequence
 - b] Time in the lower hemisphere
 - i] Living through finite linear sequences, with no conscious sense of eternity
3. Interpretive:
- a) In order to explore this difference, we need to establish a background against which the difference can be understood. This is a description of the various poises of Being in relation to time.
 - 1) Timeless
 - a] The mode of temporal existence characterizing Sachchidananda
 - b] Ultimately, even time cannot come into existence without the sanction of Sachchidananda.
 - c] Sachchidananda is a complex contrast comprising both the potentiality for unleashing time, and the power of sanction which upholds the movement of time, and which may, at least periodically, withhold that sanction. Sachchidananda is the transcendent timeless potential out of which time itself manifests.
 - d] Sachchidananda is the unconditional enjoyment of the actuality of every potential, and the potential for every actuality, for every form of existence.
 - e] Sachchidananda contains within Him/Her/Itself the capacity to enjoy the contrast between actuality and possibility. These two are distinguished when Mind stipulates a set of conditions in terms of which the distinction is to be made between them. This is the formal cause for a universe. When it is enlivened by the Divine Purpose, it is the initial aim of a universe.

- f] Spirits, or jivatmans, exist as elements in the concrete reality of Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda is a complex contrast of one and many.
- g] Sachchidananda is an infinite, beginningless and endless concrescence in which actuality and possibility are not yet differentiated. It is purusha and prakriti entirely undifferentiated. Mahapurusha and Mahaprakriti
- 2) Temporal
 - a] Time (prakriti, Supermental Consciousness/Force), when it is in play, enacts the various ingressions of various divine qualities as an ecstatic exploration of the possibilities shaped by the set of conditions separating the possible from the actual. It is the exploration of an actual space. Sachchidananda, as PN, shapes the space, the ultimate scheme of indication which determines the limits of the actual, but *God Him/Her/Itself does not know beforehand the events that will unfold in that space over time.* Prakriti is Creativity, who/which brings forth multiplicity by an active enactment of unfolding forms within a set of conditions for the actualization of possibility.
 - b] Prakriti is an infinite, beginningless and endless process of actualizing, or of progressively differentiating the actual from the possible according to an endless array of “schemes of actualization” It is Consciousness/Force operating at the level of Supermind.
 - c] Modes of temporality
 - i] Eternal
 - a} To be eternal is the mode of existence of an entity which is invariable throughout all possible schemes of actualization.
 - b} It is, in practice, impossible for us to distinguish between factors which are properly eternal, and those which are unchanging throughout our own scheme of actualization, our own cosmic epoch
 - c} Metaphysics is an attempt to approximate the discernment of eternal principles
 - d} By the principle of the “identity of indiscernibles,” (Leibniz) an experience of an unchanging eternity is identical to the experience of an instant.
 - e} God is only eternal insofar as He/She/It is primordial. The eternal is an abstraction from the concrete, which is forever in process of actualization.
 - ii] Everlasting
 - a} To be everlasting is to be is a complex contrast among
 - i} The timeless presence of Sachchidananda, which transcends all schemes of actualizations, within an actual scheme that that He/She/It sanctions.
 - ii} An eternal experience of an ever-unfolding creative advance of that (and, theoretically, many other) divine scheme(s).
 - b} God will, after they are finished, have an eternal experience of all past events, but this does not mean that God knows them before they happen. The potential for never-ending novelty is one of the attributes of the Divine.
 - c} God (= Supermind), is the everlasting factor in actuality. Souls may be individualizations of God, each with a perspective of the PN as their formal cause.

iii] Immortal

- a) To be immortal is to be a personally ordered society that exists with unchanging formal cause, and with no abstraction in objectification of personal memory (memory of past actualities in the same personality), throughout the duration of all schemes of actualization or, more practically, through a given spatio-temporal epoch. This might be the experience of “the psychic personality”

iv] Mortal

- a) To be mortal is to be a personally ordered society with a duration smaller than that of the cosmic epoch in which it finds itself.
- b) It may be impossible to know, from inside, whether mortal existence is the immortal mode of being with abstraction in objectification of the past, or whether it is, in fact, only a short-lived episode in the creative advance.
- c) This is the mode of existence proper to mental personalities, personalities which do not know their own ultimate duration
- d) Abstraction in objectification may be what Sri Aurobindo means by Ignorance.

v] Instantaneous

- a) Maximum abstraction is objectification, to the point where no distinction can be made among the occasions of the past. In our cosmic epoch, at least, there is reason to think that instantaneous occasions can fractally include one another.

4. The comparison:

- a) Sri Aurobindo is very interested in the timeless mode of existence proper to Sachchidananda. Whitehead does not seem to have explored that notion as fully. He seems to have restricted his philosophy to the domain which we are here calling the temporal and the everlasting. Perhaps we might speculate that creativity and the eternal objects are a partial representation of Sachchidananda in Whitehead’s thought.
- b) Whitehead’s God and Sri Aurobindo’s Supermind are both attempts to give expression to the everlasting.
- c) Sri Aurobindo is very interested the immortal mode of being. The awakening of the psychic being is, in part, the realization of one’s immortality in this particular sense. In effect, Sri Aurobindo wants to show us that we are, in essence, finite perspectives of the CN, immortal personalities, and not, therefore, subject to death. I think that this may be what Whitehead is pointing to in his essay “Immortality.”
- d) Whitehead, at least before “Immortality,” seems to have held to a doctrine of the mortality of personalities.
- e) The universe of instantaneous actualities is, I suggest, what Sri Aurobindo refers to as the Inconscient.
- f) Sri Aurobindo makes what seems to be the erroneous assumption that the everlasting cannot be surprised. In this sense, he confuses the eternal with the everlasting.

D. The two thinkers have a very different understanding of the relationship among the fundamental factors of existence.

1. A polarized reading might suggest:

- a) Whitehead seems to hold that the freedom of actual occasions requires their mutual transcendence.
 - b) For Sri Aurobindo, the fundamental factors are ultimately unified in the being of Supermind and in the being of Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo rejects ultimate pluralism, and envisions all of creation as taking place within the incorruptible unity of the One. Sri Aurobindo embraces one non-dual concrete whole comprised of the Eternal Objects, Creativity, Appreciation of Value, God and the Actual Occasions. This position strongly compromises Sri Aurobindo's justification of freedom and moral responsibility.
2. However:
- a) Both thinkers are working towards a position which holds both overarching unity and differentiated individuality in a complex contrast.
 - 1) Whitehead's notion of mutually transcendent individuals is balanced by
 - a] His principle of relativity, which posits the immanence of all past actualities in each emerging occasion
 - b] The immanence of God (as initial aim) in each emerging occasion
 - c] Some kind of immanence of each completed actuality in God.
 - 2) Sri Aurobindo's insistence on the One Embracing Unity is balanced by:
 - a] The non-dual transcendence of the Nirguna Brahman of which even unity cannot be predicated
 - b] The inherent capacity for self-differentiation which is a defining characteristic of Sachchidananda
 - i] The Dance of Shiva, in which the one and the many are both needed for the expression of Sachchidananda
 - ii] The ability of Sachchidananda to inhabit many poises of itself
 - c] The three principles of Transcendence, Universality and Individuality which are intrinsic to Supermind
 - d] The intrinsic freedom of Sachchidananda which operates in each of its individual expressions.
- E. They each imagine a very different way in which the creative advance comes into being.
- 1. For Whitehead, the creative advance is a relationship between finite occasions and the CN which transpires in the environment created by the eternal existence of creativity and eternal objects, modified by the primordial concrescence which is the PN. Within this scheme, there is movement both towards greater complexity and richness, and towards more trivial forms of order. There is no ultimate either of complexity or of triviality in the eternal creative advance. The CN, however, is always getting richer.
 - 2. For Sri Aurobindo, the creative advance is the expression of an ultimately concrete actuality which exists timelessly, and of which all temporality is a partial expression. For Sri Aurobindo, therefore, all manifestation is a process of self-diversification, self-limitation and self-absorption on the part of this timeless absolute. This is creation from the top down, which makes high-level concrescence normative, requires an involution to make low-level concrescence possible. With Whitehead, Sri Aurobindo sees the creative advance itself as beginningless and endless. Sri Aurobindo, however, sees our current cosmic epoch, which is an evolutionary scheme, as having a definite end. This can be understood on the analogy of an actual occasion, which is always guaranteed to have some final satisfaction.
 - a) Also, when manifestation is seen as moving from above downwards, the independent existence of subtle worlds (worlds consisting of high grade

occasions without the presence of low grade occasions) becomes entirely natural.

- 1) Note that the existence of the subtle worlds can be easily and coherently expressed in terms of Whitehead's metaphysics.
 - 2) Note that it may be possible to produce a coherent doctrine of the creation of subtle worlds from the bottom up.
- F. The two thinkers have a different understanding of the nature of the continuity of the self.
1. For Whitehead, the continuity of the self is a property of certain societies. The continuous individual is not an ontological ultimate. At least in PR – "Immortality" may be suggesting an analogy between CN and Personality, which make personalities finite but everlasting.
 2. For Sri Aurobindo, a discontinuous manifestation in epochal time is a mode of expression for an eternal soul, and the eternal soul is a mode of manifestation for a timeless spirit. Thus personal order is primary, rather than derivative. (If this is correct, then we might understand the Inconscient as a situation in which Souls have gotten so lost in temporality that their own intrinsic continuity has become unconscious). With this idea of the continuity of the self, reincarnation in some form becomes an imperative feature of the cosmic situation.
- G. With these differing positions on the status of the metaphysical ultimates comes a very different understanding of God, Freedom and Evil.
1. God
 - a) Whitehead: God and actual occasions are all mutually transcendent. God is intrinsically limited in power and in knowledge.
 - b) Sri Aurobindo: There is nothing other than Brahman, but Sachchidananda (the highest understanding of Brahman possible for a mere intellect), is a complex contrast of One and Many. We might be able to say that for Sri Aurobindo, Absolute freedom is a distributed phenomenon.
 2. Freedom
 - a) Whitehead: the mutual transcendence of all occasions guarantees the ultimate importance of the creative freedom of all actual occasions.
 - b) Sri Aurobindo: Every occasion experiences both relative freedom and absolute freedom. The relative freedom is very much like the freedom that Whitehead explores. The absolute freedom is the freedom conferred on the occasion by its ultimate identity with the One. Sri Aurobindo can be read as minimizing the importance of relative freedom. But I am thinking that he should have said that the One Free Will of Supermind is inherently distributed across all manifested individuals.
 3. Evil
 - a) Whitehead: Evil is the inevitable by-product of individual freedom leading to clashing agendas. God holds evil in check by His/Her/Its provision of coordinated initial aims. God aims at richness of experience, and thus must tolerate evil as a necessary cost of the rich experience of free individuals. Good and Evil pertain to individuals only insofar as they are parts of societies.
 - b) Sri Aurobindo: Evil is a dependent complementary of the fundamental Goodness of the Divine. Evil is finite, Good is infinite. In the evolutionary process, evil expresses itself as the environment of the Inconscient (*structural evil*), as the intentional activity of beings (physical and subtle) dedicated to the maintenance of Inconscience (*active evil*), and as the mentally generated *error*, emotionally generated attachment to error leading to *falsehood*, and the

destructive activities which follow on the functioning of a will perverted by falsehood (*evolutionary evil*).

- H. Given all of these differences, there is a profound difference in the underlying mood of their respective philosophies.
1. Whitehead's vision is ultimately tragic. Individual finite occasions, though they are experienced by the CN, are nonetheless doomed to a vanishingly brief existence. God is subjected to the evil generated by the individual freedom of the occasions, and must get by on a slight excess of good. There is no ultimate outcome to the creative advance.
 2. Sri Aurobindo's vision is ultimately comic. The existence of finite occasions is a Divine play with absorption in multiplicity which will ultimately be culminated in a blissful return to the complex unity of the Divine in which individuality and unity are simultaneous in ultimate, untroubled bliss.
- V. Specific comparison of metaphysical ultimates.
- A. There have been, to my knowledge, two book-length attempts to compare Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo. My knowledge here comes from a doctoral dissertation entitled "Process Pluralism and Integral Non-dualism: A Comparative Study of the Nature of the Divine in the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo." – written by Ernest Simmons at Claremont in 1981. I have not read either this dissertation, (or the Singh book referenced below) in any detail.
1. According to Simmons, Satya Prakash Singh wrote a book called "Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead on the Nature of God." (Aligarh: Vigyan Prakashan Press, 1972)
 - a) In this book Singh suggests the following map:
 - 1) PN = Sachchidananda
 - 2) CN = Supermind
 - 3) Creativity = Consciousness-Force
 - b) I agree with the equation of Creativity and Consciousness Force. I do think that Supermind has some interesting analogies with the CN, but the equation of the PN with Sachchidananda is entirely off base. Sachchidananda is the being of all that is. The PN is just an ordering of the eternal objects.
 2. Simmons disagrees with Singh.
 - a) He suggests;
 - 1) "Consciousness in the pure and transcendent sense of Sri Aurobindo is more parallel to the understanding of Creativity as universal subjectivity." (p. 11)
 - 2) "The Universal poise of Brahman, understood impersonally as Sachchidananda and personally as Isvara, parallels the PN and CN of God.
 - 3) The individual poise of Brahman parallels the world
 - 4) The Superjective nature of God parallels Supermind
 - b) This idea repeats the confusion of PN with Sachchidananda. I don't know how he sees an analogy between the individual poise of Brahman and the world. I can make neither heads nor tails of his equation of the Superjective nature of God with Supermind.
- B. I would suggest the following comparison:
1. The world of value
 - a) There is a distinction in the Vedic teachings between the Nirguna Brahman, the Brahman beyond all qualification, and the Saguna Brahman, the Brahman which is the ground of all qualities. I suggest that Sri Aurobindo uses "Brahman" to refer to the Nirguna Brahman, and Sachchidananda to refer to the Saguna Brahman. The Nirguna Brahman is the absolutely incomprehensible nature that must underlie and sustain everything comprehensible. It is the radically open dimension of Being, beyond both unity and multiplicity. That same

Brahman, when seen as the source of manifestation, is comprehensible as the overall system of manifestation. This overall systemic unity is implicit in Whitehead's metaphysics. It is explicit in Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics as Sachchidananda.

- b) Sachchidananda is the unactualized ground of all possible manifestation.
 - 1) As unactualized, it can be understood as:
 - a] The unordered eternal objects (Sat)
 - b] Intrinsic Valuation (Ananda)
 - c] The Consciousness which is the ground of all mentality (Chit)
 - d] The Force which is the ground of all energy (Shakti)
 - 2) The comparison to Whitehead here seems fairly clear:
 - a] Sat = unordered eternal objects
 - b] Ananda = Value, which Whitehead doesn't elevate to the status of a metaphysical ultimate, but which could, I think, be so elevated without in any way disrupting Whitehead's system
 - c] Chit/Shakti = Creativity, here understood as a principle of unrest in which consciousness has not yet been discriminated from energy
 - 3) Sachchidananda is not "actual" in Whitehead's sense as something which decides among a set of possibilities. It is not, however, a mere abstraction from actuality. While Eternal objects, Creativity and Value are each abstractions, they are abstractions from Sachchidananda which, rather than being deficient in actuality, is better understood as the concrete actuality of all possibilities, or as the concrete possibility of all actualization.
- c) God, for Sri Aurobindo, is not a separate entity so much as it is the Supermental mode of functioning of Sachchidananda. In Sachchidananda, the eternal objects have not yet been ordered, and One and the Many have not yet been differentiated. A Diversified Manifestation requires unified pole around which diverse realities can be coherently articulated. God is not a separate entity in any sense, but is rather the means by which Sachchidananda contains, pervades and inhabits all manifestation.
- d) Supermind, as we will see, performs the functions that are performed by the PN and the CN, but in a rather different scheme.
 - 1) At every level of Supermind there is always being, bliss and consciousness/force (eternal objects, value and creativity). No one of these factors can be peculiarly associated with any level of Supermind, or with any level of the involutory/evolutionary scheme.
 - 2) Supermind can be understood as operating in three different poises. In an involutory perspective these three poises are understood as three descending stages. For other purposes, they can be understood as three coordinate and equal realities.
 - 3) The three modes
 - a] Comprehending Supermind
 - i] Here the eternal objects are ordered. This ordering of the eternal objects, which persists unchanged throughout the poises of Supermind, is analogous to Whitehead's PN
 - ii] The Consciousness knows and the Force upholds the PN in its undivided unity.
 - b] Apprehending Supermind
 - i] Here the eternal objects are held apart from each other, and each defines a perspective from which the totality can be known

- ii] The one consciousness looks simultaneously through all of the perspectives, while the Force upholds the complex unity in diversity of the totality. Here there is a nascent separation of Consciousness and Force. The Consciousness is as if divided, where the Force remains entirely undivided.
 - c] Projecting Supermind
 - i] Here the eternal objects are as they were in the apprehending Supermind . . .
 - ii] But here the accent is on the many perspectives, each of which, from its own point of view and as its own consciousness, knows all of the others while still knowing its identity with the one. Force upholds this play of diversity in unity. This is a further differentiation of Consciousness, and a first differentiation of Force which, though always one, yet apportions itself appropriately to the experience of each Supermental individual. *This, I suggest, is the immortal aspect of personality. Each individualization of Supermind is an eternal soul.*
- 4) In Sachchidananda and in Supermind, possibility and actuality have not yet been differentiated. This is what Sri Aurobindo should have meant by the Real-Idea. The Real-Idea knows all possible actualities and all actual possibilities. But the Supermental individuals must also know, or apprehend, their counterparts in the lower hemisphere, just as the CN apprehends each concrescence. Thus each Supermental individual must have a kind of primordial knowing, the Real-Idea, and a kind of contingent knowing – a prehension of lower hemisphere developments. Each Supermental individual is constellated around a particular eternal object. Each will participate in all lower hemisphere actualities, but in particular with those lower hemisphere actualities which are constellated around the same eternal object which is their essence. In this way Supermind functions as CN, and Supermental individuals function as the eternal dimension of personality.
- 2. The world of change - the lower hemisphere
 - a) Mental time, or linear time, as Whitehead and Aurobindo both understand it, is the process of actualization of possibility. It is precisely the differentiation of possibility from actuality that separates the upper hemisphere from the lower hemisphere.
 - b) The separation of possibility from actuality can only be accomplished by the selection of a set of possibilities and a set of initial conditions (this is God/Supermind in the function of a principle of limitation).
 - c) Since God's freedom is distributed, God, as Supermind, cannot know what will ultimately be actualized by this process. The final satisfaction of any process of actualization will be a novel element in the Divine Nature.
 - d) This separation of possibility from actuality may be understood as a fundamental manifestation of the capacity of Sachchidananda to self-limit.
- 3. PN and Creativity
 - a) The PN in Whitehead can be understood as a modification of the Being (Sat) of Sachchidananda which is associated with the highest level of Supermental functioning, and the functioning of all manifestation which the Supermind supports. Of course, in Sri Aurobindo, this modification of the PN must be simultaneously a modification of the Consciousness/Force. Every lower level in the involution must involve some further modification of this sort.
 - b) Creativity, or Consciousness/Force, functions in something like four different modes in Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical cosmology:

- 1) As the primordial Consciousness/Force of Sachchidananda, it upholds the unmanifest, unified being in its absolute actual potentiality and potential actuality, in utter bliss.
- 2) As the Consciousness/Force of Supermind, it upholds the self-diversification of Sachchidananda, the Dance of Shiva, the manifestation of determinate truths of the one Truth, the expression of varied eternal objects.
- 3) As the Consciousness/Force of the lower hemisphere, it upholds the varied play of Consciousness and Force, held separated as mental and physical poles of occasions, and exploring varied relations of dominance and submission between the two poles.
- 4) As the Consciousness/Force of the Inconscient, it is the ultimate ground of evolutionary play, the intelligent but unconscious probability wave, occasionally collapsing into actuality, of the physicists.