Whitehead

1) Obita Dicta

after Seminary Oct 18

1. 〈Telepathy?〉 – sfce. intense case of our inheritance &

the environment. So 〈with〉 table – its sense data..

only pt of it – its past is partly in my mind &,

your past is however little I know you

2. Electron is always the character of its environment

& Really ” ” an organization of the whole world.

3. Start from physics or psychology & generalize in either

direction. Electron is grasping together all its perceptions

of the brother electrons

4. All electrons perceive. Mental-physical go

together. as Aquinas thought (contra Descartes).

(Kant’s aesthetic should have been bigger)

5. Organization is analysed by the mentality. not made by it

Blind intuition is the physical relation

Epistemology is not the beginning ā la Kant

thought to be the theory of perceptivity ~~〈?〉~~; the knowing is only

analytic of its perceptions. Why shd space & time only come

from the mind. Mentality is analytic of the data. They

(i.e. internal world data) depend on some account of the

2/ body wh. tells you about the rest of the world.

Finally you must get the physical 〈?〉 & then the

analytic side, inheriting the emotional & sense data.

Mentality ∨is∨ Active but negligible in “nature”

no gap bet. live & dead. Sometimes the mental

is so much bigger & more important that it is different

> “matter”

Emergence (Morgan) of enduring objects & historic

routes summing up antecedent

Mental side always there in the world. Contrast

or reversion in 〈?〉, in consciousness too. Inherent (this)

is the creative process – property of reversion (consciousness,

relaxation. play need reversion.

The more achievement, more reversion. low in

electron & lower in empty space.

Spinoza has much of this. Modes suddenly appear.

Why needed if substance is all. Individualizations – mode

are the reality. Common principle of the activity is

Spinoza’s substance. – wrong – to have modes is the primary

attribute S say. (Descartes awfully near S.)

~~Leibnitz monads O.K. ok that~~ cant have all these

experien ” ”

3/ God = the principle of order. An occasion has in itself an ideal

as to its better issue. Not a grand future

God as the ideal – an element wh. has to be taken

account of in everything. Complete conception concrescence

of all ideals in all occasions

Responsibility: bec. everything has its ideal 〈with〉 it

& in it.

God is not creative – the ideal concept 〈with〉 other things

creates Creativity is in the transitory world – God is

a social entity in all possible issues. Always in the

world as

Savior not creator. – Tho savior could loosely be called

creator.

Function of the ideal is always there

Christian tho’t

Jehovah is built up on Darius, barbaric will

Christ – a lurch towards God as Logos – wisdom, ideal

We are always relapsing towards Jehovah again &

again, resurgent & beaten. Not dying out.

Oct 18 Prof. Whitehead

1926

Phil & all other regions of thought

Fundamentals as they look for Phil

Two allied formulation: 1. Soc. Eth. founded on

original sin

Also on ” virtue

2. Thou shall 〈?〉 not steal (individualism) equally true &

Property is robbery equally false

Here jurisprudence & soc. ethics meet

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Phil. deals 〈with〉 generic concepts of ~~wipes~~ widest scope –

of universal application. To elucidate thought in all

science by getting a harmonious scheme so that each special

field can is relation to the generic concepts.

Discovery of ultimate meaning & Survey of human

interests. (as elements stand in bottles) & the formulation of

belief as they exist. With that imaginatively to formulate

of generic conception wh. will harmonize & place the special

interests. Immediate experience sh’d be interpreted by those

Logical coherence & logical deductions.

Paradoxes will arise & either the scheme or else

the special science’ principles need modification. criticizing

where its special ideas fail to fit to best generalizations

Also stimulus to the imagination so that new sciences

2/ Stimulus to 〈poetry?〉 of thought

Final & supreme test = adequacy to cover & be exemplified in

ordinary experience. Appeal to practice is nothing but a

confusion of inadequacy of your general notions (Hume wrong in

〈upsetting?〉 causation yet believing in it)

The Ocean of immediate experience lies outside

the canals of sciences

Any set of principles that are working well in any field

the job of that science is to stick to em & work them out as far

as they will go . Then good bye to philosophy away their life

time. Copernican theory O.K for Galileo.

Newtonian mech. materialism is very convenient for

over 2 centuries the scientist needed to stick ~~〈?〉~~ to it

How far Darwin would go was the job of his time

Economic man a godsend. & useful to work out

Scientist nearly infallible as to their immediate job but

habitually overstate the scope of the validity of their method

Overstatement the curse

Philosophy provides the imaginative background for the

reformulation. Who despises metaphysics adopts the

metaphysics of the nursery.

3/ Soc. science will always reflect & influence current phil. in

a peculiarly intimate way – ethics depends on our concept of the

ends of society Cant discuss end 〈without〉 asking

what is the world anyway.

Descartes: substance = the entities are the real

actual things wh. compose the real world

Other entities (not so real) help

Attributes form, qualities, predicates (“eternal objects”)

Expressing the how & what of the diversities (ingress into the

real entities) Real entities are 〈?〉 on its own account.

Many substances for Descartes – each independent.

God. minds. extension (bodies) ” ”

Principle 51 “requires nothing but itself to exist”

substantial character in merely that.

This view is fatal to understanding of the world. Protestant

civilization & 10 commandments are these. Fatal to

original sin & original virtue. ˅For˅ Whatever you are infects

the world. Descartes denies this (as above) & rules out all

correlative & complementary truths & ruins a century of thought

This has haunted phil. ever since – Spencer’s

unknowable. Hegel’s absolute

4/

1. What needs nothing but itself has private property in its

own life.

What principles will fulfill private ends 〈without〉 robbery is

the topic of social ethics.

Any reference to an end is made irrelevant

by Descartes. Ends are intruders of Descartes right.

Here he is just phrasing the science of his time wh. abhors

final ends & extrudes them 〈?〉 physics. Phil. was made

in Descartes to conform to physics & so made morals

imposed on an alien universe by the crude device of the will

of God. Thus you must start with God & cut off your main

source of getting at God. Ontological proof is rejected by

neo scholastics

Newton confirms this in his physics

Nature 〈without〉 consciousness or meaning result, no ethics possible

〈?〉 aesthetics

Alternative to Descartes

To say what (Solidarity

1. All entities required in order to exist

2. It is an end in itself for itself

an achievement. got an inside.

3. It is a process terminating in itself as the result

4. It is also a character conditioning other

5/ processes wh. terminate in ends beyond itself & other

Notion of value & process & society here essential to

any entity

Arises from the other processes & helps on the others

So an entity is an attainment not only by its own originality

but by reason of what it inherits & makes possible beyond

itself. This is social solidarity.

Value anywhere is infectious throughout the universe

Grasps other occasions, the how expressed by the eternal

objects

“Property is robbery” assets that though

Each inherits from the whole world, but ˅has˅ its own

end

Question

1. Evil? Evil = destructive ; plunging world in direction of nothingness

Original Sin interference

There is an actual world because of the order

Pain rightly used is the destruction of the incongruous element

on behalf of a wider order.

Blind perceptivity in matter

2. Education?

Knowledge (detached) Browsing, Romance

action, emotion belief, rationalization

The cycle of a day.

6/ Romance is when action & emotions are 〈agreeing?〉. up to 10-13

8-12 its

maximum

Then it wants to get clear about things. Real love in

knowing things exactly but this goes 〈with〉 romance. It welcomes

precision even in the romantic stage. Real relief to know

exactly what it is.

Romance. precision. disciplined experiment &

” power

Catch, convict, defense of freedom, train.

SOCIAL ETHICS SEMINARY

October 18th, 1926

Prof. A. N. Whitehead.

DR. CABOT: I do not know anybody that I would rather hear than Prof.

Whitehead. As I read in his books the thing that strikes me is that whereas most of

us come to any subject with a certain body of knowledge on one side of human life and

study, he comes with a fund of knowledge from so many sides. I said two weeks ago

that I thought one of the necessities for anyone who tried to approach the social

sciences was to be interested in all the different sides of life of a human being,-

in the side that deals with beauty, in the side that works in science, in the side

that reflects philosophically, in the side that is interested in the state. As we

know from Prof. Whitehead’s writings he has distinguished himself not only in mathe-

matics and the natural sciences but of late years in philosophy

Most philosophers are a little shy about physical sciences, and most men who know

physical science are distinctly shy about philosophy. But Prof. Whitehead, like our

own Prof. Lawrence Henderson, is one of the few people perfectly at home on each side

of that unfortunate division. I am sure he feels it as much as anyone would an un-

fortunate division, this one of the philosophers and the men of science.

PROF. WHITEHEAD: I should like to start by disclaiming the impertinence of

thinking that one could come to a seminary in a department that is concerned with

social ethics and with social sciences, as a special department of thought, and con-

tribute anything on that specialized side, which wants not only study but which also

requires that expert formation by years of quiet prosecution of that study. I have

not the slightest belief that I am qualified in any way to give advice or any sugges-

tions. I hope nothing that I say will be construed in that sense.

But of course there are general relations whichare in philosophy and all other

regions of systematic thought, and that general type of relation, though it varies in

emphasis and aims in regard to its various sides, yet has a common aspect for all

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sides, all topics of thought. But in addition there are certain more special rela-

tions I think between philosophy and social ethics. But in dealing with the funda-

mentals, which is, I see, the topic we are to discuss, I do not conceive them as the

fundamentals as they look from the point of view of this department, but the funda-

mentals as they look from the point of view of the department on the first floor of

Emerson Hall. And just to give the point which I shall work up to first, so that it

will be thoroughly understood, the two allied formulations that I want to work up to

are:

(1) I think that Social Ethics is founded on two great doctrines, one the

doctrine of original sin, and the other the correlative doctrine of original virtue,

both in the theological sense.

(2) Then there is another two aphorisms both of which I think are partly true

and both of them partly false, and they are antagonistic aphorisms in a way, yet they

have to be conciliated: one is the commandment “Thou shalt not steal”, which is the

great proclamation of individualism, and the other is the statement that “property is

robbery”. And I think they are equally true and equally false, and that the concilia-

tion between them is where law and the lawyers and social ethics and social sciences

meet.   
 Now I have gone to the middle of my talk that it will be seen how I am gradu-

ally working up to the sort of light that philosophy has to bestow. In talking of

philosophy one must be a little careful because everybody knows that philosophy is

the one subject in which there is no authoritative 〈blank〉 The voice of

philosophy is the voice 〈blank〉 but every philosopher has his own voice.

So I do not put it down as the statement of philosophy, but what appears to me to be

a natural and true outcome of philosophy in this statement.

What is the scope of philosophy? It deals with the generic concepts of the

widest scope, those concepts which have universal application; and then it endeavors

to elucidate thought in every particular science, in every region of thought, by the

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production of a harmonious, logical scheme of such wide generic concepts. So that

the special notions, the special concepts of each special topic of human thought,

can be expressed in terms of specializations of these generic concepts, so that

philosophy is what we may term the discovery of the ultimate meanings, seeing what we

can say ultimately,and in terms of which all special meanings find their place.

It follows from this view that philosophy should start, is really a survey of

human interests, just as the physicist has all the nice little elements in bottles

all around the laboratory, so philosophy must start by a survey of human interests,and

its accrued data are the formulations of belief which are found and held to in respect

to these topics of interest. Then having got hold of them its next pursuit is

imaginatively to formulate a scheme of generic concepts which performs the function

which I have described above, of enabling the beliefs, the formulations, the special

formulations of the special interests, to find their meanings in terms of these

broader concepts.

So the tests which philosophy applies should be in the first place, the clear

definition of its ideas, and that definition is promoted by their mutual interconnection

and then also it appeals to their obvious exemplification as an interpretation of the

immediate experience apart from the 〈blank〉 by this scheme.

Again there is the logical coherence of the scheme and there are logical deductions

which are also applied. And finally, having had all this, it then proceeds to conceive,

to go back to its source in a more particular comparison with the accepted principles

of the various systematic sciences. I think it gets its starting ground from one or

more of these sciences. Usually when we speak of any particular philosophy (it is to

? repudiate) 〈blank〉 but I think then we have to consider whether we can

interpret under this common system of ideas or accepted principles. Then we never

get perfect success, and any such scheme will suggest some paradoxes, and the conclu-

sion is that either the philosophic scheme of thought requires modification or the

principles of the special science in question require modification--probably both.

So I look on philosophy as endeavoring to get a general notion of universal

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applicability, by generalizing from special sciences, by modifying it so as to suit

all the special sciences, and then having their special notions in that way. In the

first place it is a critic of the notions of any one science, by pointing out where

its special ideas fail to fit into what seems to be the best generalization. But it

is not only a critic. It is also a stimulus to the imagination, because the special

ideas of any one science will turn out to be a certain specialization of these

philosophic generic notions, and philosophy would provide also the vision of possible alternative modes of specialization. So philosophy should not only be a critic but

an aid to the imagination. It should act really as a stimulus, what we may term the

〈blank〉 of thought in that way. It is not a neat little cast-iron view, but

a view of general potentialities which are suggested by ideas common and generalized

from all the special sciences. And then finally, there is the final and supreme test

for all philosophic thought, of adequacy; namely, are rhere whole regions of immediate

experience which escape from any exemplification whatever of our philosophic scheme?

Now when we appeal to practice as Hume does, for Hume has in a sense demol- ished causation-- he says practically what the gentleman did in the eighteenth century,

“I am not such a fool as to think that nothing follows from anything--that unless you

think there are fixed and definite consequences, you will be knocked down before you

live many hours.” Now the appeal to practice, to what we believe in practice is

supplementary philosophy, as supplementing philosophy is nothing but a confession of

the inadequacy of your philosophic ideas, because whatever you believe ought to find

its place as interpreting, as a specialization of these general notions. Practice

ought to exemplify these principles and not to supplement them. Now practice as

distinct from the special formulations of special sciences, practice is the ocean of

immediate experience which lies outside the petty canals which are the various

sciences. . . . . . is not really countenanced by any of the

great leaders.

Newton’s statement that we are like a child picking up shells by the ocean. - - -

The importance of philosophy to any particular science varies. When a set of prin-

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ciples have been elaborated for a particular science which are working well, which are

finding their exemplification in all the topics of the special science, and whose con-

sequences require further elaboration and further concentration of experience, the

job of scientist as to stick to those principles and work them out. They may be

adequate or they may not be adequate. But you cannot move a step until you work out

and see how far those principles will apply, and where they begin to break down. And

that is only found by scientists sticking to those principles and elaborating them.

And when a science, as it often does, gets into that state it may say goodbye to

philosophy,- at least its particular workers need not bother about philosophy during

their lifetime.

For example, when Galileo had adopted the Copernican hypothesis and had got his

telescope and observed how it simplified the orbits of the planets, and looked at the

planets and saw the mountains of the moon and the moons of Jupiter and the horns of

Venus and all that, he did not want to be looking to the right or to the left. It

was perfectly obvious that the Copernican hypothesis was the job of scientists.

Astronomy was 〈blank〉 It so happened that the Copernican hypothesis in the

sense of Galilo was just as wrong as the wrong as the idiocentric hypothesis. The

physicists said that the earth was at rest and Galileo said that the sun was at rest.

Both in our modern sense had as much right to say so, and yet 〈blank〉

But there was not the slightest doubt as to what was the way of looking at things

which was going to elicit progress. Then we got the next great formulation which

turned out to be the Newtonian materialistic mechanism. That in a sense formulates

to perfection certain aspects of the universe which 〈blank〉

As a matter of fact--andhow often this is so--for a couple of centuries or more it

was the job of scientists to stick to it. Then we got Darwin’s theory of natural

selection. The way in which all biologists until quite recently raged against the

inheritance of acquired characteristics was a perfectly legitimate characteristic,-

namely how far natural selection and the theory of evolution based on the idea of

natural selection would be carried, how far the facts would be truthfully interpreted

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in that way. And we could not know whether that point was inadequate until about two

generations of scientists had worked on it from that point of view.

Then we come to a more definite social science. The economic man was a godsend

to political economy, because we wanted to know what would happen insofar as mankind

was simply and absolutely swayed by the economic motive. And until you had worked that

out theoretically and compared it with practice, you do not know, have no way of know-

ing, how far the economic motive was dominant, how greatly important, or whether it

was simply absent. And there again when you have once got the economic man, the

economists had to live with him for about a couple of generations, and then he becomes

a fearful nuisance. But scientists--I am using science in a general sense in which

philosophy is a science----I think if you look at the history of science it is prac-

tically the mistakes made by the scientists as to what is their immediate job,- how

almost naked they are. But they are always and habitually overstating the scope or

the validity of the line of thought in which they are engaged. I think the history

of science is really a most melancholy example of the overstatements of mankind. Why

people cannot moderate their statements according to the evidence--if people would

only stick to that idea of what may be perfectly sound mythological device is not

thereby a final and adequate principle--

Now as soon as you have come in a science to the limit of some very fruitful

principles or if you are dissatisfied with the scope of the work which your existing

principles suggested, philosophy provides the imaginative background for the reformu-

lations of general principles, and it is a point that cannot be too often brought h ome--

I am always repeating it, that whosever goes out to despise metaphysics always ends by

adopting the metaphysical nostrums that were prevalent in his nursery. And they had

often very good metaphysical nostrums in the nursery. But the point is, in all that

they have an imaginative idea of the general principles ~~〈?〉~~ which you are seeking. The

specialization due to your particular science is really congruous to metaphysics, and

the beauty of metaphysics is that is should stimulate imagination over the whole realm

of physical science. If it does not do that it is not doing its job--and I think very

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often it is nnot doing its job. It has shrunken into a pitiful science which has no

interest beyond itself.

Now so far as social science is concerned its principles will always reflect

and in turn influence philosophy in a peculiarly intimate way. I think it is peculiarly

intimate because our conceptionsof social ethics necessarily depend upon the conceptions

of ethics generally and our conception of the end towards which the organization of

society is to be directed. And you cannot discuss ends without asking yourself, what

is the world anyway? We have to come down to a general metaphysical question.

At this point I must specialize in dealing with philosophy, and I am interested

in that type of philosophy which is peculiarly a continuation of the physical sciences.

These great adaptations of philosophical ideas to the physical sciences were made by

Descartes, and though nobody says they are Cartesians now, everybody who is both a

physicist and a philosopher is much more a Cartesian than they like to admit. I shall

start from Descartes. I think he has many merits. He is extraordinarily clear because

he is French, and he is short. He has not that appalling volubility of some philoso-

phers. He is short and clear and definite and has the supreme merit that where he is

wrong he is clearly wrong. And so provided we dare to differ from Descartes I shall

start with him.

He commenced by asking what we have to say about the substances composing the

world. Now a substance to Descartes--not to the antecedent scholastics--means the

entities 〈blank〉 which in the fullest, simplest sense are the real, actual things which

compose, by reason of their own reality and actuality, the real world. What are the

things whose reality is the reality of the real world, Then there are the other enti-

ties in terms of which substances must be described. They are not real in the same

sense as a substance is. There are various ways of talking about them. They are

called attributes, forms, qualities. Each word we use has a long history which usually

suggests a philosophy which you want to repudiate. For that reason I have called them

eternal objects. But anyhow, however we call these attributes, such entities express

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the how and the what of the diversities of the identities which are involved in the

of the real entity. Thus they are essentially inherent in the real entities and cannot

be conceived without reference to them. It is for that reason that in my own works I

have said that it is in their nature that they have ingression to the real entities.

Descartes takes as the distinguishing mark of the substance the fact that in some sense

or other the substance--I use here the slang phrase--is “one its own”. The real entity

is something of its own, it is individual, has its own spirit and independence. It is

real on its own account, and for Descartes the world is composed of a multiplicity of

substances of various kinds, and each substance is an individual with its own indepen-

dence. Each one of us--I am in a certain sense just what I am. In fact he had three

kinds of substances, God, Mind, Bodies, and so far I think any realistic philosophy

must agree with him there. But now, and this is the important point for science in

general and for social ethics in particular, he formulates more particularly what he

means by the independence of each individual substance. He says in the first book of

his Principles of Philosophy,- in Principles 51 we find this statement: “And when we

conceive of substance we merely conceive an existant thing which requires nothing but

itself in order to exist.”

That is the great program of individualism and substantivism. I think it is in

that a substance is merely, in sofar as it is real entity, an existant thing which

requires nothing but itself in order to exist. There are two points to notice:

(1) That it requires nothing but itself in order to exist.

(2) That its substantial character is merely that.

I think this view of substance is absolutely fatal to any adequate understanding of

the world, and of thinking of it. Embodying that view of substance in a philosophic

scheme means an inadequacy which I think really embodies all the divisions. I put it

here under 〈blank〉 specialization and in the Ten Commandments, namely all the

individualism which is destroyed by sound ethics. It is fatal to those two twin doc-

trines which I wish to impress, namely, the doctrin of original sin and of original

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virtue, which I look on as the foundation stones: namely, the doctrine that whatever

you are infects the world, so that the world derives from you an original sin and an

original virtue, because whatever you are infects the world. Now that is exactly what

is denied by Descartes, because he says each real agency requires nothing but itself

in order to exist.

Still as I read Descartes I feel what an admirably clear way that is,- the idea

that the real being is in some sense on its own. You then go and over-emphasize it,

put it in an unbalanced way as a philosophic principle, and you thereby rule out its

correlative supplementary truth. You manage to rule that out, and instead of making

it antithetical you make it 〈blank〉

And when you have done that you very often, in that small divergence, ruin a whole

century of effort.

Now this Cartesian view, remembering what Descartes means by substance, namely

that he means the real entity, has haunted modern philosophy ever since, including

those philosophers who are explicitly anti-Cartesian. For example, I think it is

responsible for 〈blank〉 looking for something that requires nothing but itself

in order to exist, and it is fatal to ethics for two reasons. If you look at various

real things as requiring nothing but themselves in order to exist:

1. Whatever requires nothing but itself in order to exist has a private pro-

perty in its own life, to please itself. You thus get privacy of what you are

〈blank〉 I look on as social ethics as a conciliation of the two diverse

expressions by the statement “Thou shalt not steal” which is the assertion of a measured

privacy, and “property is robbery”, which is an assertion of the complete socialism.

And both law and social ethics are engaged in conciliating these opposed statements.

They are considering what principles there can be which should regulate society, in

which there can be a fulfilment of private ends which do not constitute robbery. How

you can have private ends in a society without robbery is really, I hold, the topic of

social ethics.

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1. Where I think that this formulation of Descartes is fatal to ethics is

that according to it any reference to an end is made to be irrelevant to real existence.

The only thing is that it requires nothing but itself in order to exist. It is a uni-

verse in which morals are meaningless. Its conceivable ends, according to this the

attainment to ends are intruders in what would be adequate apart from them. We all

know in saying this I am only pointing out that Descartes was merely emphasizing as

an absolute philosophical principle the great method of logical discovery of the

natural science of his time, namely that final ends are a nuisance in the discoveries

of physical law.

Aristotle constructed his ethical science on the basis of explaining it by the

final end, and Galileo and the whole of the modern scientists of the 16th and 17th

centuries extruded the final ends from physics. And the result is you get a definition

of what it is to be real in terms by which final ends are extruded. Philosophy was

made to conform to the methodology of physics, and in doing so it parted company I

think with morals and ethics. So morals in that point of view are imposed on a alien

universe by the crude device of the will of God. Now of course it is a crude device,

because you see, if morals simply arise from the universe and the will of God you are

precluded 〈blank〉

You first have to know God before you get your morals. You can’t go the other way

round. And you cut off your main source from getting your notion of God. And we all

know that Descartes came down extrinsically on the entological view, which neo-

scholastic theology rejects. And this development of 〈blank〉 in a universe

without any did not remain a curious possibility, but it was the idea that was actually

worked out by Newton’s successors, and its responsibility to a conscienceless, meaning-

less nature, a nature without conscience, engaged in moving itself about. And the

Cartesian God is a frail bulwark against it since it depends on entolological truth,

which is a tour de force. It is manifestly inadequate by reason of the inadequacy

of its analysis of our immediate experience.

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I am discussing the relationship of philosophy to what I conceive to be

social ethics, and I have pointed out how a philosophy which has exclusively taken its

starting point from science in one of its phases has had a 〈blank〉

The difficulty is that it has crated for all the other great topics of man’s thought

〈blank line〉

I conceive the alternative to Cartesian doctrine, if you are to put it on realistic

lines and on Cartesian lines at that, to be that to say what an actual entity is we

require four headings:

1. It requires all other entities, all other actual agencies, in order to

exist. It is exactly the opposute of what Descartes says,- the assertion of

solidarity.

1. It is an end in itself, for itself. I think that is a characteristic of

being actual,- that it is an end in itself for itself, namely every actual entity is

an achievement for itself. It has an inside to it.

1. It is a process terminating in itself as the result, and
2. It is also a character testing for processes which terminate in other

actual entities beyond itself and other than itself.

So here we have a notion of value and of process and of sociability, society,

essential to the actuality of an entity. So the specific value of the individual

occasion arises from the ends attained and also from the ends beyond itself which are

attainable by reason of itself. It arises from the ends antecedentally attained by

the other processes and the ends beyond itself which are attainable by reason of the

character which it is imposing on what we may term the creative process. So an actual

entity is an attainment for itself, individualized attainment, not only by reason of

its own originality but by reason of what it inherits or makes possible beyond itself.

For you cannot dissociate the actual entity even on the side of its own individual

attainments to the total society. And this is the doctrine of social solidarity which

I express by the two doctrines of original virtue and original sin. The value of any

one is infectious throughout the universe. An actual occasion thus is a concrescence.

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It is an attained individual value and also a qualification and concrescence beyond

itself. It has a four-fold 〈blank〉: it grasps other occasions into itself,

and the how of its grasping it determined by the eternal objects, and an occasion as

grasped into another one is what we may call objectified. Thus “property is robbery”

asserts the essential solidarity of individual values. “Thou shalt not steal” asserts

the individual value of each occasion over its own. So right to existence is the

ultimate right that there can be, the ultimate foundation of all rights, provided that

in this specific embodiment 〈blank〉 also the intensity of attainment in the uni-

verse, including its own intensity of attainment.

And then it can be further held as the foundation of morals. So that there may

be a mutual aid, a mutual intensification throughout the universe as equivalent to the

intensity of attainment in the individual parts that it leads thereby. It includes

therefore the summation into each entity of a harmonious past and in particular the

particularization of this harmonious past. It leads to historical roots of successive

occasions, all in that harmony with each other and each summing up all its

with a particular 〈blank〉 What we call an individual object, a human being,

an electron, from its life to its death is such a historically rooted occasion. Each

as it stands in its immediate presence is a sommation 〈blank〉 of the past by reason of the

peculiar harmony, its peculiar reproduction of the character of its antecedents. So

that the particular occasion of its past is the dominant element in its own presence.

But in principle every being, an electron or a man, inherits from the whole world not

his immediate presence but it inherits its own past as that past in the world of which

in a peculiarly intensive sense it is the summation, and that is the doctrine of what

I call original and of original virtue.

DR. CABOT: Will you say a little more about original sin?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: Sin is the worst part of it. The point being that I conceive

evilnot as something negative but as something destructive. In so far as it is pro-

ductive of intense self-satisfaction,in its own immediate occasion, insofar as it has a

measure of self-satisfaction, in that respect it is a good. But that peculiar, that

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special actual entity attaining that particular end may be attaining a less formal

self-satisfaction than was open to it for itself; or what is even still worse, may

be by its qualification of the entities that succeed,may be 〈blank〉 to the

world in general of a more intense actuality, a more intense self realization which

would otherwise be open to it, and that is evil. So evil is really plunging the

world in the direction of nothingness. It is tending to destroy it by destroying

the order. I hold that the order in the world --that there is an actual world of

some peculiar intensity because there is a remarkable order, and if there was no

order there would be the cross-purposes which would be wiping out the world. It

would be sinking to a pit of empty space--it would be sinking to a ripple of non-

entity.

And I hold that the intensity of realization depends on the favorable envirpn-

ment and on the order, and insofar as there is order there there is both ∨?∨ in order,

there is both ∨?∨ in reality. And evil is that which is destructive of order and is

destructive of reality. So far as it ministers to immediate intensity it is so far

good. And the world being not wholly a good world, and owing to the fact of original

sin, even the best that is open, the ideal, has also always its side of destructive-

ness. And in so far as it is destructive, insofar it has been put to do the work

of evil. But insofar as it tends towards the greatest reality which is open from

the standpoint of the present, insofar as it is that, it is good.

The pain in world I hold in every sense, mental and physical, insofar as

it is rightly used is the destruction of the incongruous element on behalf of the

wider order.

And of course the doctrine of original virtue is just the opposite of that,

namely, that the virtue has exactly the opposite effect.

DR. CABOT: What becomes of causation?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: Causation is memory. There is no distinction. The past is

in you as a formative element, is in an electron as a formative element. And the

memory is perceptive. It is the past and the present as conforming to the aspect of

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the past which is objectified. And this doctrine takes fundamental perceptivity

out of the mental sphere and puts it into the physical sphere, because the fundamental

relationship on the physical side is the taking account of the past, and there it is

fundamental as you term blind perceptivity. It is not reflective but it is the un-

thoughtful achievement, the self-satisfaction when 〈blank〉 ideas have sunk below...

the sheer self-satisfaction arising from this concretion of the past.

I hold that when Hume asked where was causation he ought to have been told to

look at memory. Then I hold that that mentality ∨?∨ is the analysis, is a futrher develop-

ment in the immediate occasion in which it is, a partial analytic by means of concepts

of the same eternal objects which function in determining the objective occasion,-

the physical objectification of the antecedent occasions. These same eternal objects

function as concepts, and that the concept is analytic and correlative, thereby dis-

closing the identity of the eternal object in the 〈blank〉 with the identical ob-

ject on the objective concrescences of the external world. And the end attained there

is the satisfaction arising from knowledge, from the agreement or disagreement of a concept with the analysis of the particular occasion of the external world in the given

occasion. So perceptivity is properly physical perceptivity and it is in causation

and the certain eternally systematic characters of this objectivication of the rest of

the world in our immediate physical occasion are the characters, the special temporal

relations, and the change of the temporal relations which are investigated in physical

science. We know 〈blank〉 Other sides are definitely

new to us. We know in the past, and the general sense of power, and see the world

around us--all that is our knowledge of the objectivication of the world in us.

DR. CABOT: What did the Newtonian physics do with time?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: The Newtonian physics took time as a going concern. It tes-

tified ∨to∨ the formal relations that it gains by time and said, there are the successive

relations which we call time relations, which we are going to examine. But time did

not enter really very fundamentally in, though it is very convenient to us, a very

clear and beautiful machinery. The point is that there is no actual occasion. Any

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actual occasion is essentially a transitional process. It is arising as a concretion

and in being what it is it thereby becomes the character of a concretion beyond itself.

It passes itself on and remains a character and a concretion beyond itself. So any

actual entity can be looked on as complete. You then have the world as collection of

complete entities. Then you have no use for time. Then the next step you take is to

say that time is a 〈blank〉 Then our whole world is essentially transitional. Then

you get the whole world of appearance as illusionary and having a lower reality, that

is something behind the veil, and then you have recourse to the Absolute. If you are

to have a reality of time you must take hold of the actual process, which is not

stopped by the occasion but passes beyond it. It seems to me you have to preserve

for the actual occasion its own individuality. It must be something in itself, how-

ever trivial. If you take an immediate occasion, one immediate occasion of an electron

trivial as you like though it has its importance in the whole scheme of things, but as

a thing in itself trivial. But when you get to the deeper realities like the people

here, then you get a certain intensity of importance.

DR. CABOT: Would you apply the fundamentals that you have been stating to

particular classes of the social sciences, such as education? What difference would

be made in the way that education should be formed if one thought as you do rather than

as Descartes did?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: I hold that knowledge, for example, and character arises in the

process. The enduring object is the historical root, the idea of man as enduring,

that the concrete idea is myself, now, as a summation of antecedent occasions which

have a practical congruity to each other, harmony, and therefore in a peculiar way we

enforce each other and produce an intensity of actualityby reason of their derivation.

And the conclusion from that is that if you 〈blank〉 has implanted a static

character, the static entiry is arising in the occasion, in the transition of a pro-

cess from occasion to occasion, so as to strengthen and intensify the achievements, to

intensify the reality of the succeeding occasions. And thus I hold that all knowledge

does not arise primarily but from a static entity surveying the world, but that it is

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an outcome, that knowledge always grows in this way, in a race or in a man or out of

any small occasions there is always the cycle, action, emotion, belief, rationaliza-

tion. That you always have that cycle. That there is the entity in its transition,

gaining in its emotional value, generating beliefs and attaining to a deeper morality

in which there is a purging of belief. And that, I think, can be applied to the whole

stretch of human history or to the human being, or as I say to any particular situa-

tion. Each day we go through little cycles.

And I hold that education, when you come to it in this way, there is the first

discipline to very early stages of action and emotion which have to be got to harmony.

Then you get detached beliefs. That I call,taking it up at that last point, where

you have action and emotion and belief in the young child, there is a stage I call

the stage of romance, and that in dealing with any topic at first there is always the

stage of romance, when you are trying to see what it means. You have your detached

beliefs, your actions and emotions in regard to it. And that the mistake of the older

type of the 17th, 18th and 19th century education, was that it entirely forgot that

stage, and looked on education purely from its later age. Then when you got to

romance--and I believe for a child there is a great epoch of romance extending more

or less to somewhere between ten and thirteen, and is particularly vivid, (it varies

with different children--I should have thought it was somewhere between eight and

twelve when it was in its height) and then it is rapidly going off in a desire to

clear its ideas. We get the age of precision, when we learn things clearly, and I

think that with a properly taught child there is real love in knowing things exactly.

And I think very often, especially in the newer education which has in the most praise-

worthy way emphasized the necessity of romance, I think very often they have forgotten

that romance is only one stage, and keep the child in the romantic stage when it

really would welcome the discipline of precision, and what is more, it won’t be able to

face life until it has it. Luckily nature provides a child of any ability with a

real desire to know exactly what it is. And when you have romance and precision you

get your further rationalization, namely, you get really that stage of disciplined

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experimentation and a disciplined power of yourself forming general ideas, testing

them, and that is the stage of what I term rational power. There is that other stage

in which the young man can think for himself and has his reason and his precision

and his knowledge, and I think that it is a great mistake to think that all subjects

run through those epochs, those various stages, together. Of course it differs in

different children, but some subjects starting when other beliefs are well on towards

the rational or have some glimmer of the last stage. And I hold that that point of

view has arisen out of the idea of the essential process of development form entity to

entity along the historical root of transition.

DR. CABOT: Do you care to take the questions suggested for discussion?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: To tell you the truth I should think it rather impertinent

to answer those. They are just the questions I should ask you rather than to state

myself.

PROF. YOUNG: There is one very obvious application of the present philosophical

attitude, and that is some of the old problems of sociology, such difficulties as that

of universal society, the reality of the state, the institutional society. Those

things seem to be resolved by some such scheme of relation.

PROF. WHITEHEAD: Of course I want to free that general scheme more as an

actual relation. What I would suggest is that it is a philosophical point of view

which makes solution in the hands of experts possible, whereas to my mind the Cartesians

would throw it up at once. It is by the nature of the case impossible, unless you start

with some view of the inherent solidarity. That is the line I should take. I should

not claim that anything I had said thereby finished up the problem. I should only

say that it made the solution possible.

PROF. YOUNG: The lines on which it does make the solution possible suggest

themselves.

PROF. HOOTEN: The question I have in mind is perhaps off the main point, but

I wonder what you think are the limits of achievement of the social sciences?

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PROF. WHITEHEAD: I am rather shy of putting any limits to them. I do not think,

to speak frankly, that they have got very far yet. I do not know whether that is a

heresy. But I do think that they are enormously important. I think all those have

been thought of for over 2000 years, and probably entered into Egyptian speculation.

But the fact that they have not got far is no reason why they should not quite surely

make good progress. Because nothing to my mind is more fallacious than the idea that

some partifular difficulty has beaten mankind for a long time that it finally wont be

resolved. In the history of mathematics so many perplexities which were perplexities

from the beginning, during the 19th century, from 1850 onwards, were in the most extra-

ordinary way cleared up. When mathematicians finally got their principles up to the

mark suddenly a whole lot of things became perfectly easy. And in the realm of

practice, take the problem of flying. It started with the 〈blank〉 Of course

they had the birds to show them it was possible, but nobody solved it. It wanted just

the general discovery of engine and motor power, then the petrol, then the internal

combustion engines, then the enormous amount of experimentation, and finally a con-

vergence of ideas from all sorts of places comes in the the thing is done. By the time

you get it it is done in a very short time. And the problems which revolve about

astronomy. Mankind had made very little progress from the earliest Mesopotamians to

the time of Galileo; Galileo died as Newton was born, and in about two generations...

So I do not see why the slight progress which has been made--now that the psychologist

has come on the scene (and he is apt to be a little hasty in his applications) and now

that we know so much more about physics--I do not see why social science should not

make really rapid progress. I am sure that in one social science-- that is education--

I am sure there is more to be learned in education than ever has been found out, and

that we are on the eve of learning it, because we have just begun to think about it

from the point of view of psychology, etc.

PROF. FORD: I wish Prof. Whitehead would explain somewhat more his statement

that an entity is an end in itself. Just what does that mean?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: What I mean is, there is a measure of se;f-satisfaction or

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self-dissatisfaction, and that that, in sofar as there is no reflective memory gained

of it, no knowledge--that is perhaps a very minor thing that is something--it

gets highly intensified in particular entities like ourselves. It is a joy to be

alive, and that is so even when there is no reflection. It is creative fact that the

self-satisfaction when it is positive passes into a character of reproduction in the

next occasion; the superseding occasion when it is self-dissatisfaction it passes into

an occasion when it is a measure of avoidance of what is past. And if it is purely

dissatisfaction that is a plunge towards nonentity. It has really got self confidence

before it and that arising out of the elements. What the world is for that entity is

represented in that entity; what the world is arises our of the conditions. Usually

it arises out of the environment, out of its inheritance of the whole world, its

creative formation, unity of individuals arising out of how the past is for it, and

also characterized by the fact that in being itself it is also in character what is

going before. That is also an element in it. If it has its dissatisfaction its

inception of avoidance is an element in its dissatisfaction, you see. I do not think

you can separate the various functions. There is the one entity which in being one

side of itself is also the other side of itself. It must pass on because it is a

passing on, and I think that it is pragmatically creative action, and I think the prag-

matists are so far right, but wrong in not making everything an end in itself, because

if you have really a passing on there is no test of whether a thing is working or not.

It is the ends which are the test.

DR. HEXTER: 〈blank〉

PROF. WHITHEAD: I look on that as first arising from the concept of “Thou shalt

not steal”, the concept that every entity has a right is defeated and thereby there is

loss in the world, unless it has an environment and an inheritance generally which, if

the environment is such as to defeat the inheritance which it has from its own histori-

cal past. I look on the antecedent of an entity, of an enduring entity--I am thinking

of a somewhat developed entity, the antecedents of which have divided into two parts,

the inheritance from its own past 〈blank〉

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what would be taking the enduring entity as summed up in the existing one. And the

existing entity has its earning just as capital does. But it also exactly the same

principle has the great universe behind it as a background for various intensity of

objectivication. That is, its environment and in sofar as the environment is unfavorable

and checks the achievement it might have from its own historical root, it is being

robbed. Insofar as the environment enables it--in a favorable environment--insofar as

the entity checks the development of the environment, it is robbing it. An entity may

itself be destroyed, but after it the deluge. And I can see that the primary doctrine

of social ethics is the question of environment as predominantly due to the society of

social entities in which any one entity is 〈blank〉

And I hold that the laws of nature are really the laws of the 〈blank〉 which

dominate the environment, because a domination 〈blank〉 of entities of the same kind, all

with historical roots succeeding each other, thereby typifying themselves in a con-

gruous way in every occasion of the environment, and thus every occasion of the environ-

ment takes a definite congruity because of the congruity of all these antecedent occa-

sions. And the enduring organisms and that congruity is really the laws of nature.

.....And then the Creator put in electrons! But it is the development of electrons,

their gradual development, developing an environment which bears the character of an

electro-mechanic 〈blank〉

The environment grows with society, and that a society has to be a society of

like entities which create an environment favorable to each other, and there you get

a stable and successful society. And you may have a society of dissimilar entities

which you get favorable to each other.

The elctrons and the protons are most elemental 〈blank〉 which exist in

such throngs that there are no entities of the same aboriginal type other than those,

and we are living in an electronic, protonic stage as it were. And it is exactly

true that we create environments favorable to each other, and also we see to it that

the associating organisms are favorable to us, and we have the sense to build the

world and to bring up domestic animals which are favorable to us, and we have the sense

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to be favorable to them. I simply take the obvious facts of the social sciences and

generalize. And why indeed that is that the bigger organisms are the organisms we

can observe and the smaller organisms which we cannot observe individually have as a

matter of fact exactly the same attributes or existing in throngs with allied species,

and in a general environment formed by 〈blank〉 just as the American nation.

It is exactly the same principle.

DR. CABOT: The animals form a society and each gives a favorable environment

to the rest?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: Yes. And now we have the theory of the electron

The sun radiates its messages. A certain number of them go to pieces.

DR, CABOT: Is that original sin in the 〈blank〉

PROF. WHITEHEAD: I do not know. I think that the world is going on to a very

different state of affairs, so far as I know immortality, prolonged existence. Some

animals may be transforming themselves to a higher side, to a side which has a

from the lower side. I do not think that philosophic doctrine and the pointing out

that possibility has anything to say for or against. You cannot expect it to because

some organisms go to pieces, some live a very long time, and some develop into higher

forms. That is the general theory of organisms. We cannot decide on those subjects.

General philosophy can have no opinion whatever.

DR. CABOT: I should like to know what would constitute the authority of the State.

PROF. WHITEHEAD: The social authority, you mean, the justification for it?

DR. CABOT: Yes. The State orders me to go to war, and I do not believe in war. What am I to think of it?

PROF. WHITEHEAD: I think you have to obey your conscience. If you think war is

wrong and the state tells you to do it, I think you have to obey your conscience. On

the other hand, I think you have to have a certain modesty in regard to the authority

of your fellow countrymen influencing the state. But if after having given all the

weight you can to the necessity of maintaining the state and the evil therefore of re-

sisting it, and as to whether that is not a greater evil than participation in war--

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having given all authority to that, if still you think that you are right, I think you

have to resist. I may say that in entering this great country I had to strain my con-

science to sign a statement. The statement of belief that I had to sign justified

George III. and made the fathers of the American Constitution robbers. But I strained

my conscience.

DR. CABOT: I want to get at the idea whether the larger entities, the larger

organisms like the state. had by virtue of their larger bulk any authority over the

smaller organisms?

PROF, WHITEHEAD: No, I do not think so. I think by virtue of asserting integra-

tion of thought, I think there is a necessity of maintaining a general organization,

a harmoniously organized group, Man is essentially social, and therefore a primary

duty is to maintain society, and I think you have to weigh that. You are ultimately

brought back to the individual conscience. It may be wrong but you have to do it. But

I think the other people gain in feeling that society has to be maintained. I do not

think a nation ought to go to war ever unless it thinks that the crisis is sufficiently

great to justify itself in restraining forcibly if necessary those of its citizens

who believe that they ought not to go to war. I believe that is one of the evils of

going to war. To go to war for frivolous reasons comes to mean logically that you shall

be prepared to do that, and if you are not prepared, what are you to do? I do not think

you should do it merely because there is a man living there who says you ought to.

But if you go to men in the army and ask them to mutiny, I think the state has ?

just as I think the state ought not to go to war unless conscription would be necessary.

It is reason not to go to war unless unless the evil to be averted is greater than

that evil. You might say no evil can be greater than that.

DR. GLUECK: I was wondering what some of the criteria would be whereby the state

could fix responsibility in case of any particular act of any of these entities called

human beings, as a practical proble, take the case of the violation of 〈blank〉

PROF. WHITEHEAD: I think that is a special problem of social science and of the

lawyers. I think it is where you meet the lawyers, and both have something to say.

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But I am afraid I have not thought out anything of that. I do not think either it

could be got without the appeal to further principles than any that I have stated,-

the principles that I have stated have been so general. I think they are principles

which would come in, but would require to be enforced by more special principles

applicable to the especial type of society.