

Sam - say, Bill, what do you think about Whitehead's philosophy? Do you think it is a revision of Plato's philosophy, as Whitehead says?

Bill - I have read Whitehead's books, and know that he often talks about Plato, but does he really say his philosophy is a revision of Plato's?

Sam - Why, yes, let me look up the passage. - Here it is on page 53 of Process and Reality

"... in one sense by stating my belief that the train of thought in the lecture is Platonic, I am doing no more than expressing the hope that it falls within the European tradition. But I do mean more. I mean that ~~it falls within the European~~ if we had to render Plato's general point of view with the exact changes made necessary by the intervening two thousand years of human experience in social organization, in aesthetic attainments, in science, and in religion, we should have to set about the construction of a philosophy of organicism."

Bill - Does that really say anything?

Sam - What do you mean?

Bill - Well, Whitehead is putting forth his own system, which he believes to express the truth as far as it is to be attained from ~~the~~ society, art, science, and religion. Right?

Sam - ~~That's~~ True

Bill - Then wouldn't any ~~earlier~~ earlier philosophy agree with Whitehead if it were modified in the smallest way to express the truth,

Sam - I suppose so.

Bill - ~~That's~~ ~~Whitehead's~~ ~~philosophy~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~as~~ ~~Plato's~~ ~~philosophy~~ ~~is~~ ~~no~~ ~~more~~ ~~true~~ ~~of~~ ~~Plato's~~ ~~philosophy~~ ~~than~~ ~~any~~ ~~other~~.

Sam - No it isn't, but tell me, is it true.

Bill - It is, if Whitehead's philosophy is true.

Sam - Bill, you are a follower of Plato's philosophy are you not?

Bill - Well, I would say that I agree with it in so far as it is in agreement with the developments in society, art, science, and religion over the past two thousand years.

Sam - Of course, will do you think Whitehead's philosophy agrees with Plato's?

Bill - Well, what are the basic elements of Whitehead's philosophy?

Sam - He ~~also~~ also says on page 53 of *Process & Reality* the following:

"In such a philosophy, the actualities constituting the process of the world are conceived as exemplifying the ingression (or participation) of other things which constitute the potentialities of definiteness for any actual existence, the things which are temporal arise by their participation in the things which are eternal. The two sets are mediated by a thing which combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential. This final entity is the divine element in the world, by which the barren inefficient conjunction of abstract potentialities obtains primordially the efficient conjunction of ideal realization. This ideal realization of potentialities in a primordial actual entity constitutes the metaphysical stability whereby the actual process exemplifies general principles of metaphysics, and attains the ends proper to specific types of emergent order. By reason of the actuality of this primordial valuation of pure potentials, each eternal object has a definite, affective relevance to

each concretum process. Apart from such
admirers there would be a complete degeneration of
eternal objects unrealized in the temporal world.

Novelty would be meaningless, and inconceivable."

Bill - It seems that in Whitehead's philosophy, ~~and that~~ the
~~actual entities~~ actual entities are temporal, except
for God, and the eternal object as only potential.
On Plato, the ideas, or eternal object, are the only things
which are real, and the temporal things ~~are~~ only are
in so far as they participate in these. However, rather
than go into this, I would rather ask a few questions
~~about it~~ to see how Whitehead could answer them.

Sam. Fine.

Bill. ~~Is~~ Is it possible for anything not to be what it
is?

Sam. No.

Bill. And there are some things which will be known
to a person ~~and other things that will not be known~~
~~by that person.~~

Sam. True.

Bill. Then the person is knowing.

Sam. True.

Bill. But there are also other things the person
does not know.

Sam. True.

Bill. Then the person is not knowing, but then a
~~person~~ person is both knowing and not knowing.

Sam. It seems then that a person must know everything
if he knows anything. George, you know
Whitehead better than we, do you see how he
can escape this conclusion.

George. As I see it, it is not inconsistent with his
philosophy.

Sam. How is that.

George. Let us represent a person A knowing a

fact \exists by ARB . Then, as used above, a person A is knowing if $(\exists x)(ARx)$ and is not knowing if $(\exists y)(\neg ARy)$. ~~As~~ so defined, not knowing is not the negation of knowing and the law of the excluded middle which was mentioned before has not been violated.

Sam. Very fine.

Bill. I must say I am confused by these relations what are they.

George. Whitehead defines a relation as follows on page 224 of Process and Reality. "A relation between occasions is an eternal object illustrated in the complex of mutual prehensions by virtue of which those occasions constitute a nexus."

Bill. That means there are eternal objects that ~~no single actual occasion can prehend~~ ~~but which are prehendible by a nexus of actual occasions~~ ~~mutual prehensions in which~~ could have ingression in no single actual occasion but must mutually ingress into a nexus of actual occasions.

George. Not exactly.

Bill. What then.

George. As I see it this means there is some given actual occasion which ~~prehends~~ ~~off~~ prehends a number of other occasions. A relation has a ingression into the given actual occasion if these prehensions together partiticipate in the eternal object in question. Thus the subjects of the relation are really the prehensions of the given actual occasion.

Bill. Then the relata of any relation are prehensions of the actual occasion in which the relation has ingression.

George. Yes.

Bill. Then all knowledge is self-knowledge.

George. How is that?

Bill: The ~~pre~~prehensions of an actual occasion constitute the actual occasion.

George: Yes

Bill: And all relations, including the knowing relation have these prehecns, as their relata.

George: Yes, but the prehecns themselves are the way other ~~things~~ occasions are present in the given occasion.

Bill: Then if a person sees the sun, the sun is in him.

George: Not the actual sun, but the objectified sun.

Bill: What is the ~~obj~~ objectified sun?

George: The sun as it appears, ~~pre~~prehended in other actual occasions.

Bill: But that is what I cannot understand.

George: It is simply a generalization from common experience. People experience other things as objectified in them.

Bill: I simply cannot see that.

Sam: Bill, so you say relations such as Whitehead claims to exist, are impossible.

Bill: So it seems to me

Sam: ~~Bill, if your dog is your father, then your dog is a father isn't he Bill?~~ your dog is a father isn't he Bill?

Bill: yes.

Sam: Then he is your father.

Bill: yes.

Sam: And you sometimes beat your dog

Bill: yes

Sam: So you beat your father.

Bill: yes, but I also beat your father.

~~Sam: I don't think that's a good point to bring up.~~

~~Sam~~ Sam. I think you are joking, Bill.
It seems that if we do not accept the
doctrine of prehension, then we beat our
fathers.

Bill. This is so,

Sam. Do you think it is good to beat your father.

Bill. No.

Sam. And the ~~truth~~ truth is good.

Bill. True

Sam. Then we must accept the ~~idea~~ doctrine
of prehension.

Bill. I am forced to admit this.

Sam. Good. Now we should explore Whitehead's
philosophy further. George, what is truth
according to Whitehead?

George. Whitehead says truth is a relationship
between a proposition and the actual world of a
given actual occasion.

Sam. And what is a proposition?

George. A proposition is the possibility of an
eternal object having ingress in a definite
set of actual occasions.

Sam. I see. Would truth be different for every
actual occasion?

George. In that every actual occasion has a
different actual world, truth would vary,
but if the same ^{singular} proposition were in both of
any two occasions then its truth value
would have to be the same.

Sam. Could you give an example.

George. Yes. For Plato, it would not be true
that he influenced the philosophy of Whitehead.
Whitehead would not be in his actual world.
However Plato is in Whitehead's actual world,
so for him, this could be true. ~~Plato~~ Plato

could be aware of the possibility of influencing the future, but ~~the~~ truth relation would not exist for ~~the~~ proposition of this sort, as there would be no corresponding occasions in the actual world. Sam, Very good. Now tell us what happens in the case of general propositions.

George. In general, general propositions would not necessarily be the same for different actual occasions. In cases, where by the scope and form of the proposition, it would necessarily ~~be~~ have the same truth value for all occasions, and it is true, then Whitehead ~~is~~ terms a proposition metaphysical.

Bill. Now, I am interested in Whitehead's theory of judgement. Would it agree with the Myth of the Cave in the Republic?

George. Could you go over the Myth in the Cave, so I could have a fresh grasp of it.

Bill, of course. Men are tied in fixed position in a cave. All they see is the shadow projected from other men that walk by. ~~They~~ They think this ~~is~~ shadows are the real things of the world. One of these men are freed he now sees that the others only perceive shadows and understand the relation of the men walking by to their shadows. Next he is forced outside and sees the sun, which is the idea of all ideas.

George. I think ~~that~~ that this myth would indeed illustrate ~~the~~ Whitehead's theory of judgement.

Bill. How is that.

George. The shadows would represent presentational immediacy. In pure presentational immediacy, nothing beyond the presented sense in their presented regions, are judged. Symbolic reference

is symbolized by the ~~Plato's~~ understanding of the relation of the man to their shadows. Through ~~the~~ symbolic reference presentational immediacy is correlated to causal efficacy. Finally, metaphysical truths are represented by the seen, they are not obtained even through symbolic reference, but by the forms of the ideas involved.

Bill. ~~Why?~~

Sam, Very Good. Now, what is good, according to Whitehead?

George, Something is good if it is beautiful.

Sam, When is something ~~not~~ beautiful?

George, A datum for an actual occasion is beautiful if it is such that the subjective forms of the ^{comprehension} prehension of the datum satisfy certain conditions. If these subjective forms do not inhibit each other the minor form of beauty is achieved, if the contrast of these subjective forms are harmonious, then the major form of beauty is achieved. Whitehead discusses this in Chapter VIII of Adventure of Ideas.

Sam And what is evil?

George, In order to ~~answer~~ answer this we must look at data which are not beautiful. There are again two cases, ~~the first~~ the first occurs if the subjective forms inhibit each other so that negative prehension occur. This is termed anaesthesia. The second occurs if there ~~are~~ are positive prehensions, which are felt to be mutually destructive. This is termed aesthetic destruction. Physical pain, sorrow, horror, and dislike are examples of this.

Sam, Due to the multiplicity of the actual world of any actual occasion, it seems unlikely that any occasion would simply experience good or

evil. What does Whitehead say about this?

George, indeed, this is the case! In fact without it no good would be possible.

Sam. What, are you ~~being~~ joking. This seems a major divergence from Plato. For him the evil of the world is contrast to the idea because of such incompatibilities of the actual world.

George. Be that as it may, the harmony required for the second form of beauty. The harmony must either involve contrast between what has been and what may be, or be decadent. Thus, conservatism depending more destructive of the possibility of new beauty, is evil. Progress is the adventure of ideas.