

It seems to me that Niebuhr is mistaken in what he takes Whitehead to have in mind in distinguishing, as he does, between the "practical" reason that Ulysses shares with the foxes and the "theoretical reason" that Plato shares with the gods (cf. *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*: 71 f.). Indeed, he makes the very mistake I myself also make in supposing that Whitehead means to distinguish between "*existential*" understanding or faith, on the one hand, and "*reflective*" understanding or faith, on the other (cf. *On Theology*: 71).

In point of fact, Whitehead's distinction is more like Bultmann's between the "work thinking" of which science and technology are in their respective ways the elaborations and the very different kind of thinking involved in the understanding of existence as such that is given with existence and of which philosophy, in the form of "existentialst analysis," is the elaboration. Or, again, it is parallel to Hartshorne's distinction between "the inductive reasoning of science and everyday life" and "the presumed reasoning, not easy to classify, which is at work in the construction of systems of metaphysics and theology."

In short, Whitehead's distinction has to do (in my terms), not with the two levels of living understandingly, but with the two dimensions—horizontal and vertical, empirical and existential-metaphysical—of experience and reason.

This is not in the least to question, however, that Niebuhr's essential point is sound: anything like my distinction between the two levels of living understanding—i.e., the primary level of self-understanding and life-praxis and the secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory—is valid only "provided it is understood that no sharp line can be drawn between the two," since the human spirit is a unity, and even "the most perfect vantage point of impartiality and disinterestedness in human reason remains in organic relation to a particular center of life, . . . seeking to maintain its precarious existence against competing forms of life and vitality."