

"[The metaphysician] is seeking, amid the dim recesses of his ape-like consciousness and beyond the reach of dictionary language, for the premises implicit in all reasoning" (*AT*: 380).

Significantly, Whitehead here seems to represent the metaphysician as seeking with just that "strained attitude of introspection" of which he is otherwise so critical (293). This may serve to confirm that what is really deserving of his criticism is not "the attitude of introspection" as such, but rather the superficiality of introspection insofar as it is undertaken on the presumption that the sensationalist doctrine of perception is valid. After all, there can be no understanding of "that crude evidence on which philosophy should base its discussion" apart from understanding oneself and one's experience, any more than there can be such self-understanding apart from understanding that evidence, i.e., "language interpreting action and social institutions" (291; cf. 210 f.).

As for what Whitehead means by "the premises implicit in all reasoning," what could he mean except the presuppositions, or necessary conditions of the possibility, of all that we think, say, and do as understanding beings? And how could the metaphysician possibly find these premises—or justify any claim to have found them—except by the method of "presuppositional analysis"?

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