

The picture one gets from the way Whitehead writes is something like this:

"The basis of experience is emotional." And so emotion ("affective tone") is always involved in experience, whether or not experience also involves conscious discrimination, and whether or not it further involves knowledge, properly so-called—both consciousness and knowledge being "variable factors" in "the more elaborate examples of occasions of experience" (*AI*: 225 f.).

So far, so good. But why assume, as Whitehead evidently does, that you cannot abstract even from emotion (or "affective tone"), and so also from experience, and still have *concreteness* or actuality? That he *assumes* you cannot do this is evident when he says that "the interplay of subject with object . . . is the stuff constituting those individual things which make up the sole reality of the Universe. These individual things are the individual occasions of experience, the actual entities" (228). But where does he ever *argue* for his assumption?

One place, perhaps, is where he argues from "the doctrine of human experience as a fact within nature" (237). "[A]ny doctrine," he says, "which refuses to place human experience outside nature, must find in descriptions of human experience factors which also enter into the descriptions of less specialized natural occurrences." Why? Because "[i]f there be no such factors, then the doctrine of human experience as a fact within nature is a mere bluff. . . . We should either admit dualism . . . or we should point out the identical elements connecting human experience with physical science." But this argument, simply as such, is obviously question-begging if it is taken as an argument for the identity of "individual things" generally with "individual occasions of experience." For whether or not we can abstract even from experience and still have actuality or concreteness is precisely the question; and so it won't do simply to assume—again!—that experience as such, at least, must be among the "factors," analyzable in descriptions of experience, that also enter into the descriptions of less specialized natural occurrences.

And this must seem all the more obvious to anyone for whom "metaphysics," like "science," is properly concerned with "*structure*," as distinct from "stuff," and which, accordingly, is, in its own way, abstract—abstracting from everything in and about experience except its purely formal, logical-ontological structure.

Thus one may entirely agree with Whitehead that "[i]t is the business of rational thought to describe the more concrete fact from which that [sc. scientific] abstraction is derivable" (239). But one may also insist that the proper part of "metaphysics" or "ontology" (cf. 231), in such a description is exhausted by describing the purely formal, structural *factuality* of the more concrete fact.

The same response, *mutatis mutandis*, is to be made to Whitehead's claim that, "in so far as we apply notions of causation to the understanding of events in nature, we must conceive these events under the general notions which apply to the occasions of experience. For we can only understand causation in terms of our observations of these occasions" (237).

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