

1. There is a difference in principle between *analysis* with a view to discerning the necessary and *generalization* with a view to understanding the necessary in concepts and terms otherwise employed to understand the nonnecessary. (By “the necessary” here I mean the least common denominator of all possibilities, and so the most abstract possible structure, or *ratio formalis*, of things.)

2. What is at stake in the denial of “vacuous actuality,” “mere matter,” etc.? What is at stake is the insistence that all observable pattern and structure or behavior are always the pattern and structure or behavior of *something*—and of something *concrete*. If science as such can get along perfectly well without ever asking what the concrete something is that is patterned and structured or behaves in a certain way, metaphysics cannot; for metaphysics is the theory of the concrete as such (as well as, therefore, the abstract as such). But if there is, in this respect, or to this extent, an important difference between the modes of abstraction typical of science and metaphysics respectively (cf., e.g., *Insights and Oversights*: 207), metaphysics, properly so-called, is nevertheless abstract in the way in which it, too, deals with the concrete. As the theory of the concrete (and the abstract) as such, it seeks nothing but the necessary, which is to say, the least common denominator, the most abstract possible structure, or *ratio formalis*, of all concrete (and abstract) things. Thus for it, even as for science, there is a complete abstraction from the actual concrete thing—in its case, so as to analyze concreteness (and abstractness) as such, whereas in the case of science, abstraction is for the sake of observing the pattern and structure or behavior of actual concrete things.

3. What is there for metaphysics as such to do? “‘Matter’ taken as ultimate is but the shadow of our own will to exploit or use things rather than to sympathize with them or share in their life” (*Creativity in American Philosophy*: 152). If science is, in fact, the development of our will to exploit or use things, while religion and morality, in their different if related ways, have to do with our sympathizing with things or sharing in their life, metaphysics would seem to have nothing to do but

to understand or contemplate that which would be, no matter what—regardless of our exploitation or use, and equally regardless of our sympathy or sharing.

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