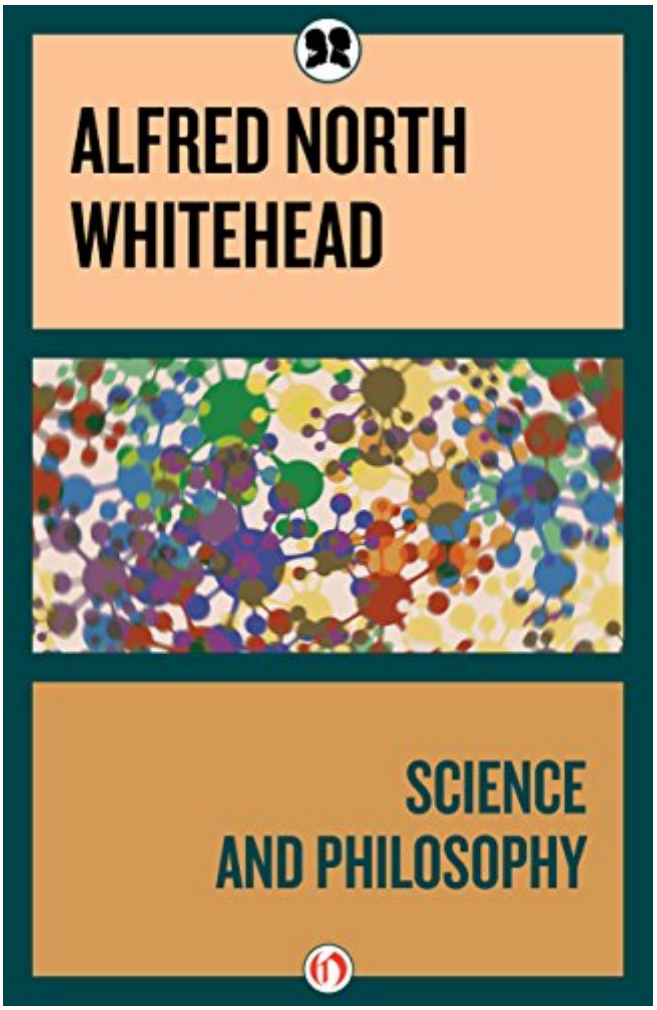
Science And Philosophy



Synopsis

This is a collection of many of WhiteheadÃ¢â ¬â„¢s papers that are scattered elsewhere. It was the penultimate book he published, and represents his mature thoughts on many topics. Philosophical Library has done a great service by publishing a representative collection of his writings on the subjects of Philosophy, Education and Science. The portion on Philosophy includes five papers: Ã¢â ¬Å“ImmortalityÃ¢â ¬Â•, Ã¢â ¬Å“Mathematics and the GoodÃ¢â ¬Â•, Ã¢â ¬Å“Process and RealityÃ¢â ¬Â•, Ã¢â ¬Å“John Dewey and His InfluenceÃ¢â ¬Â• and the Ã¢â ¬Å“Analysis of Meaning.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â The first three chapters consist of WhiteheadÃ¢â ¬â„¢s personal reflections illumined by flashes of his lively humor. They are picturesque and amusing. The remainder of the book consists of chapters on Philosophy, Education, and Science. They cover in depth his positions on many scientific and philosophical matters in an extraordinarily unified way. The final section of the book is devoted to excellent surveys of Geometry and Mathematics as well as a paper on EinsteinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s theories.

Book Information

File Size: 1187 KB

Print Length: 316 pages

Publisher: Philosophical Library/Open Road (November 4, 2014)

Publication Date: November 4, 2014

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00NOC5LPK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #197,469 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #81 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Individual Philosophers #111 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Metaphysics #318 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Science > History & Philosophy

Customer Reviews

This collection of essays is one of the key pieces in understanding both the man and his philosophy. The autobiographical sections are intimate without ego, showing the evolution of the man as a person and as a thinker. The essays on education, while not as comprehensive as the collection "The Aims of Education" (which STILL does not exist on Kindle) are nonetheless extremely useful insights into Whitehead's philosophical and pedagogical method. The essays on science exemplify in essay form themes that will be developed in detail in his triptych (Essay on the Principles of Natural Knowledge, The Concept of Nature, The Principle of Relativity) as well as his Science in the Modern World (which does not exist on Kindle, either, but which can be downloaded as a .PDF from the Internet Archive.)Along with Concept of Nature, this collection provides a good introduction to Whitehead's thought. Science in the Modern World would probably be the next step, and then Religion in the Making. After that, things get difficult.What makes these essays so valuable is that they are compact gems that illuminate not only special aspects of Whitehead's thought, but reasons why delving into that thought is a worthy enterprise.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) was an English mathematician [he is credited as co-writer with Bertrand Russell ofÃ Â Principia Mathematica] and philosopher, best known for developing Process Philosophy. He wrote many other books such asÃ Â Modes of Thought,Religion in the Making,Adventures of Ideas, etc.The first essay is titled, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Autobiographical Notes,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• in which he recalls of his early education: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“such studies included history---namely, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. I can still feel the dullness of Xenophon, Sallust, and Livy. Of course we all know that they are great authors; but this is a candid autobiography.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 12) He admits, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“I have never been able to read Hegel: I initiated my attempt by studying some remarks of his on mathematics which struck me as complete nonsense. It was foolish of me, but I am not writing to explain my good sense.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 14) Later, however, he adds, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“it is true that I was influenced by HegelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| But lack of first-hand acquaintance is a very good reason for not endeavoring in print to display any knowledge of Hegel.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 124)Particularly interesting was his description of his relationship with Bertrand Russell: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In 1903 Bertrand Russell publishedÃ Â The Principles of Mathematics.. we coalesced to produce a joint work. We hoped that a short period of one year or so would complete the job. Then our horizon extended and, in the course of eight or nine years,Ã Â Principia MathematicaÃ Â was producedÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Russell had entered the University at the beginning

of the eighteen nineties. Like the rest of the world, we enjoyed his brilliance, first as my pupil and then as a colleague and friend. He was a great factor in our lives, during our Cambridge period. But our fundamental points of view---philosophical and sociological---diverged, and so with different interests our collaboration came to a natural end.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 17)He concludes the essay with the statement, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Philosophy is an attempt to express the infinity of the universe in terms of the limitations of language.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 21)In another essay, he reflects, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Those of us who have lived for seventy years, more or less, have seen first the culmination of an epoch, and then its disruption and decay. What is happening when an epoch approaches its culmination? What is happening as it passes toward its decay? Historical writing is cursed with simple characterizations of great events. Historians should study zoology. Naturalists tell us that in the background of our animal natures we harbor the traces of the earlier stages of our animal race.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 33)He states, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the Jews have been a priceless factor in the advance of European civilization. They belong to each nation, and yet they impart a tinge of internationalism. They are eager in respect to concepts relevant to progress, just where we have forgotten them. They have a slightÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •ever so slight---difference of reaction to those commandments which disclose ideals of perfection. They constitute one of those factors from which each period of history derives its originality.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 74-75) He adds, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“They supplied ideals beyond conventional habitsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Jewish history, beyond all histories, is composed of tragedies.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 81)He asserts, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Logic, conceived as an adequate analysis of the advance of thought, is a fake. It is a superb instrument, but it requires a background of common senseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|. My point is that the final outlook of Philosophic thought cannot be based upon the exact statements which form the basis of special sciences. The exactness is a fake.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 104)He recounts Bertrand RussellÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s discovery of a contradiction in the logical/mathematical system of FregeÃ Â]: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“FregeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s answer [to Russell] commenced with the exclamation, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœAlas, arithmetic totters!ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| But Bertrand Russell, was equal to the occasionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Russell introduced the notion of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœtypesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ of entities. According to that doctrine, the notion of number should only be applied to a group of entities of the same typeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Russell was perfectly correct. By confining numerical reasoning within one type, all the difficulties are avoided. He had discovered a rule of safety. But unfortunately the rule cannot be expressed apart from the presupposition that the notion of number applies beyond the limitations of the ruleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It follows that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| the complete explanation of number awaits an understanding of the

relevance of the notion of the varieties of multiplicity to the infinitude of things. Even in arithmetic you cannot get rid of a subconscious reference to the unbounded universe.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 110-111)He asserts, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Mathematics is the most powerful technique for the understanding of pattern, and for the analysis of the relationships of patternsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Having regard to the immensity of its subject-matter mathematics, even modern mathematics, is a science in its babyhood. If civilization continues to advance, in the next two thousand years the overwhelming novelty in human thought will be the dominance of mathematical understanding.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 117) He concludes this essay with the statement, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The task of philosophy is to reverse this process and thus to exhibit the fusion of analysis with actuality. It follows that Philosophy is not a science.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 121)After residing in America for some time as a lecturer, he observes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“I do feel that if a man is going to do his best he ought to live in America, because there the treatment of any effort is such that it stimulates everything that is eager in one.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 123)He says of his bookÃ Â Process and Reality, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Almost all of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœProcess and RealityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ can be read as an attempt to analyze perishing on the same level as AristotleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s analysis of becoming. The notion of the prehension of the past means that the past is an element which perishes and thereby remains an element in the state beyond, and thus is objectified. That is the whole notion. If you get a general notion of what is meant by perishing, you will have accomplished an apprehension of what you mean by memory and causality, what you mean when you feel that what we are is of infinite importance, because as we perish we are immortal. That is the one key thought around which the whole development of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœProcess and RealityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ is woven, and in many ways I find that I am in complete agreement with BradleyÃ Â].ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 125-126)He states, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The besetting sin of philosophers is that, being merely men, they endeavor to survey the universe from the standpoint of gods. There is a pretense of adequate clarity of fundamental ideas. We can never disengage our measure of clarity from a pragmatic sufficiency within occasions of ill-defined limitations. Clarity always means ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœclear enough.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 132)He observes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“One source of vagueness if deficiency of language. We can see the variations of meaning; although we cannot verbalize them in any decisive, handy manner. Thus we cannot weave into a train of thought what we can apprehend in flashes. We are left with the deceptive identity of the repeated word. Philosophy is largely the effort to lift such insights into verbal expression. For this reason, conventional English is the twin sister to barren thought. Plato had recourse to

myth.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 136)He laments, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“a decay of individuality finally means the gradual vanishing of aesthetic preferences as effective factors in social behaviors. The aesthetic capacities of the producers and the aesthetic cravings of the buyers are losing any real effectiveness. The canalization of the entire range of industry is in rapid progress. Apart from the dangers of economic prosperity, there is in this decay a loss to happiness. Varied feelings are fading out. We are left with generalized mass emotion.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 169)He asserts, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Logic and Mathematics have given way under the scrutiny of two thousand years. Today we have less apparent ground for certainty than had Plato and Aristotle. The natural rebound from this conclusion is skepticismÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ There is no understanding, because there is nothing to understand. Complete skepticism involves an aroma of self-destruction. It seems as the negation of experience. It craves for an elegy on the passing of rational knowledge---the beautiful youth drowned in the Sea of Vacuity.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 223)This is a fascinating collection of essays, that will be ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“must readingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• for anyone interested in Whitehead and his thought.

Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts (Popular Culture and Philosophy Book 9) The Lord of the Rings and Philosophy: One Book to Rule Them All (Popular Culture and Philosophy) The Summary Guide of the Kybalion and Hermetic Philosophy: The Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece Infinity and the Mind: The Science and Philosophy of the Infinite (Princeton Science Library) Knowing the Score: What Sports Can Teach Us About Philosophy (And What Philosophy Can Teach Us About Sports) Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy) The Story of Analytic Philosophy: Plot and Heroes (Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy)