

Marsilio's Reading Group

Led by	Marsilio Gagliano
Title	Alfred North Whitehead – Modes of Thought: Nature Lifeless
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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the last reading group session, Oswy Gothly suggested that we follow up our discussion of Nagel's article with the discussion of some metaphysical issues, that is – in Oswy's words – issues about "the nature of reality, e.g., what constitutes an object." I looked through the transcript with an eye towards listing the various metaphysical concepts we referenced during the discussion, and what a list it was:

- nothing, stuff, thing, process, substance, entities, properties, states, actions, reaction, pure reaction, interactions, potential, abstractions, emergence, chaos, naturalism, dualism, monism, materialism, mechanism, idealism, universals, meaning, reality, existing, independent existence, subjectivity, objectivity, first cause, and spontaneity –

These are a few of the terms that we used which carry metaphysical or ontological overtones.

For example, we talked about whether consciousness was a 'thing' or a 'process' and whether it is an 'emergent property' of other things or processes. Someone might argue that thinking of consciousness as a 'thing' is wrong because consciousness is really a 'process' or 'event' and that thinking of consciousness as some 'thing' that we 'have' rather than 'do' (action) is to mistake an 'abstraction' for 'reality'. (Simulat, for example, argues that consciousness is not a thing, but a process; and since he also argues that consciousness is an emergent property, we might ask whether processes can be properties and whether such properties belong to other processes or to things.)

The difficulty with metaphysical concepts is that they do not have a determinate meaning outside of the metaphysical systems in which they occur. To understand what Aristotle means by 'matter', for example, involves understanding also what he means by form, actuality, potentiality, change, divisibility, substance, being, accident, cause, etc. Isaac Newton's conception of 'matter' would be quite different, requiring that we understand such concepts as space, distance, motion, time, velocity, acceleration, mass, momentum, force, etc. So comparing Newton and Aristotle on the issue of 'matter' requires comparing "matter – as – it – operates – in – Aristotle's- system-of – metaphysical-concepts" with "matter – as – it – operates – in – Newton's- system-of – metaphysical-concepts."

The difficulty is compounded because we are each of us, Aristotle's and Newton's, and in at least two respects. First, Aristotle and Newton have influenced the patterns of our own thinking, patterns which we inherit in some way by being members of linguistic communities who have read Newton and Aristotle and/or others who have been influenced by them. Secondly, as thoughtful individuals, we have developed our own system of concepts within which concepts like "matter" or "mass" or "thing" takes on a certain meaning. Ontologies are like belly buttons; everybody's got one.

One way to address the difficulty is to read together and discuss a metaphysical text and patiently work through the issues to see where the commonalities and differences in our concepts might lie. But which text? The text should be free, available, and short; it should deal with a metaphysical issue; and ideally it should contribute to the development of our immediate linguistic community –

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our reading group – by taking our previous discussions in new directions, neither condemning us to repeat them nor leaving them behind all together.

I have found two essays by Alfred North Whitehead which I think do the trick; they are entitled "*Nature Lifeless*" and "*Nature Alive*" respectively. I would like to make a few introductory comments to the first, "*Nature Lifeless*," which we will discuss.

Whitehead first published this essay in 1933 and again in 1938, the second time in a text entitled *Modes of Thought* (which is the version we will read). In 1933 the foundations of theoretical physics were being shaken by the debates between classical physicists (most notably Einstein) and quantum physicists (most notably Niels Bohr); at stake in the debated was the fundamental nature of matter itself. (The debate continues.)

Crumbling was the concept of matter that has held sway since the 16th century – the concept various subspecies of which one finds in the works Galileo and Newton and with which Descartes, Hume, and Kant wrestled. Both relativity theory and quantum mechanics challenged this view of matter, which had reached the apex of its success in the 19th century.

Whitehead refers to this notion of matter as "the common-sense notion." He calls it the common sense view not to endorse it as true (as in the phrase, 'of course, that's just common sense'). He calls it the common sense notion because, although its validity was being challenged on many fronts in physics, it still "reigned supreme in the work-a-day life of man kind. It dominates the market-place, the playgrounds, the Law Courts." (p. 177.) Neither does he think it completely false.

He says that "this general notion expresses large, all-pervading truths about the world around us." (p. 177.) What he questions is "how fundamental these truths may be." He does not think it an adequate answer to the question: "What are those primary types of things in terms of which the process of the Universe is to be understood?" (p. 197.) So the issue he is dealing with is precisely the sort of metaphysical question Oswy wanted to think about. Another connection to our pervious discussion lays in an argument by analogy that Vladimir Apparatchik contributed to last week's discussion about the relationship among subjectivity, physicalism, matter, and consciousness: Vlad said, "People said the same thing about life, [namely, that one could not account for it in terms of matter]. There had to be a life-force.

We now know that is not needed. I know subjectivity makes the question of consciousness much harder, but I suspect this extra stuff or process will go the same way of the life-force." Note that we have here a metaphysical argument about a common sense notion that we share as a linguistic community ("we now know') about 'life' and 'matter' (or nature, physicalism, etc.) which is analogous to the issues of 'mind-consciousness-subjectivity' and 'body – matter - nature' that we encounter in the mind-body problem.

Of course, Whitehead is not directly concerned with the mind-body problem in the current essay; so we want to avoid rehashing those issues too much. But he is interested in those "primary types of things in terms of which the process of the Universe is to be understood," a universe that contains not only minds and bodies, but also newts, super-novas, poker games, care insurance policies, and so forth.

Read, see what you think, and welcome to the wild and woolly world of metaphysics!

Yours, Marsilio (July 12, 2009)

http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Whitehead/Whitehead_1938/1938_07.html

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DISCUSSION:

Marsilio Gagliano:

I hope you all got a chance to take a look at the note card which introduces today's reading. I thought it more efficient than the head up display green thingy.

I am very interested in some initial reactions to the reading. From there we can plot a path for today's discussion. Did anyone find anything worthy of remark in the reading?

[12:15] Simulat Almendros: I liked the discussion of common sense and how it doesn't accord any more with what's known from science

[12:15] Marsilio Gagliano: I guess also, common sense in an historically indexed term.

[12:15] Renald Starostin: I found it interesting to consider how much of the newer scientific models have seeped, however accurately, into common sense.

[12:16] Alaya Kumaki: I liked the primary types of things in terms of the process of the universe is to be understood

[12:15] Marya Blaisdale: There was one thing that stood out for me (and I admit I didn't finish reading it so I could be a bit off on this - but I'll paste the part and then put out a comment

[12:15] Marya Blaisdale: "*The colour and the sound were no longer in nature. They are the mental reactions of the percipient to internal bodily locomotions. Thus nature is left with bits of matter, qualified by mass, spatial relations, and the change of such relations. (181) This loss of the secondary qualities was a severe restriction to Nature. For its value to the percipient was reduced to its function as a mere agent of excitement. (185) In such ways the Hume-Newton interpretation omits our intuitive modes of understanding.*"

[12:16] Marya Blaisdale: My initial comment on that is, Why is so much importance placed on our intuitive modes of understanding? Intuitions are not the basis for learning about what is true - surely intuitions are the motivator to find out what the truth is, irrelevant of whether that perceived truth caters to the intuition or proves counter intuitive - but, intuition cannot be deemed an adequate mode of understanding.

[12:16] Simulat Almendros: Agree Marya

[12:17] Alaya Kumaki: well intuitions didn't have the same meaning all the way in history

[12:17] Simulat Almendros: Also - I wonder why in metaphysics the answer "I don't know" isn't acceptable

[12:17] Marsilio Gagliano: so we have a) common sense, b) intuition, and c) an historical modification of what belongs to common sense

[12:17] Thoth Jantzen: intuition can only access what we currently think we know and in the contexts of our understandings about that....

[12:17] Marsilio Gagliano: let's start with the relationship between common sense and intuition

[12:17] Marya Blaisdale: I think that applies to a lot more than metaphysics though Sim lol

[12:17] Thoth Jantzen: ...so in that sense, I agree with Marya as it being insufficient.

[12:17] Alaya Kumaki: looking to the root, of tuitions, there is learning there, in - and tuitions

[12:18] Oswy Gothly: I liked the way he tackled head on the idea of nature as a flux of activity which raised the problem of how we put content into that flux. That seems to me to be the essence of the problem about what objects are

[12:18] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, I was just going to say something to the effect that common sense informs intuition... and vice versa.

[12:18] Thoth Jantzen: intuition can be useful, but u have to keep in mind it is subject to our own limitations...and be aware we all have them.

[12:18] Alaya Kumaki: no talking to this vague impression, that some do take as in - tuitions

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- [12:18] Marsilio Gagliano: common sense relies on clear and distinct sensory appearances; such appearances are often stable
- [12:19] Alaya Kumaki: inner tuitions, is a self ability of oneself to teach oneself
- [12:19] Marsilio Gagliano: giving the impressions of things that endure identically over time; we all have that sort of experience? no?
- [12:19] Simulat Almendros: nods
- [12:19] Marya Blaisdale: do you mean the interpretation of those appearance is stable, Marsilio?
- [12:20] Marsilio Gagliano: I mean I think the chair I'm sitting on now is the same chair I was sitting on yesterday
- [12:20] Oswy Gothly: Its a practical way of going on in the world?
- [12:20] Renald Starostin: No... the inference tends to be ones of stability, I think, is the notion, Marya
- [12:20] Marya Blaisdale: okay, thx Ren
- [12:21] Marsilio Gagliano: Henri Bergson argued, Oswy, that such stable patterns in sensation were of pragmatic value
- [12:21] ZJ Folsom: in a more eastern sense intuition is atunement to an inner teacher
- [12:21] Simulat Almendros: At base our minds are set up to detect things in the world at our scale of existence, in both time and space - things that come and go really fast are invisible and things that change very slowly seem permanent
- [12:21] Marsilio Gagliano: they allow us to control the environment by objectifying it
- [12:21] Oswy Gothly: Doesn't mean that is all there is to say about things ... Especially after a few drinks
- [12:22] Renald Starostin: We depend intimately on stability.
- [12:22] Marsilio Gagliano: how much stability do we add to our perceptions? How much of it is reflective of the way the world really is?
- [12:23] Marya Blaisdale: but what if that inference is wrong? I mean in the sense that the chair you are sitting on, may look like the one you sat on yesterday, but it isn't actually it?
- [12:23] Simulat Almendros: Oswy - I'd say that a proton is a thing to another nearby proton because they interact - but we have to work really hard to perceive a proton as a thing because we don't really interact with individual protons
- [12:23] Marsilio Gagliano: inference is a cognitive function; when i catch a baseball i see the same ball fly through the air
- [12:23] Simulat Almendros: so perhaps 'things' can be defined as the components of a mutual interaction
- [12:24] Marsilio Gagliano: I'm not sure that is inference, at least not a logical process involving language
- [12:24] Renald Starostin: Marya, often those inferences are wrong. I think Whitehead's point was that according the scientific models emerging at the time, such inferences are ALWAYS wrong.
- [12:24] ZJ Folsom: things are thinks made solid
- [12:24] Marsilio Gagliano: inference, intuition, sensation, common sense
- [12:25] Marsilio Gagliano: isn't stability inherent in perception itself
- [12:25] Renald Starostin: Marsilio... stability, or stabilization?
- [12:25] Marsilio Gagliano: it is not as if I perceive flux when I 'see' my tea cup on the table
- [12:25] Simulat Almendros: we can perceive fleeting things can't we? A meteorite say?
- [12:25] Marsilio Gagliano: true, fleeting is a part of perception to
- [12:26] Oswy Gothly: If perception is part of conceptualisation then I think stability is inherent in it.
- [12:27] Alaya Kumaki: the learning process is ever-growing, its a cumulation, can it be finite in one glimpse?

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- [12:27] Marsilio Gagliano: I just want to make the distinction between inference from premises to the truth of a certain statement and 'seeing' the cup, one cup, which is different from other cups, on the table
- [12:27] ZJ Folsom: stability a transatory phenomena
- [12:27] Valimare Naimarc: When we observe a meteorite we will compare that to other things have experienced. If it doesn't match previous experiences we can make something up. Like it was aliens. However even that is based on previous experience. When people think about aliens they usually think of something that walks on to legs and has a head.
- [12:27] Alaya Kumaki: can we say, a work in progress
- [12:27] Simulat Almendros: how is perception part of conceptualization? I thought that concepts could involve things we don't perceive
- [12:28] Marsilio Gagliano: I think of a meteorite, no matter how fleeting, as a thing that endures as somehow the same even though it changes places
- [12:28] Marsilio Gagliano: whether alien or rock, I still think of it as a noun, a substance
- [12:28] Valimare Naimarc: I think conceptualization makes use of other things we perceive, we take what we are familiar with and modify it.
- [12:28] Thoth Jantzen: can't you make inferences in your own mind as part of your perceptual or cognitive processes? I mean, 'seeing' involves drawing inferences, too, in the process of understanding (or trying to understand) what you're seeing... but we also refine our inferences all the time...
- [12:28] Renald Starostin: Sim, I think the difference is that perception involves input on the spot. Conception is the organization of perception, some of which may be past.
- [12:29] Valimare Naimarc: I think that is why metaphor is popular.
- [12:29] Oswy Gothly: I meant that perception was our conceptualisation of the world. We receive sense data and we organise it ie conceptualise it. It doesn't stop conceptualisation having a wider remit?
- [12:29] Valimare Naimarc: Renald right
- [12:29] Thoth Jantzen: ...as we gain new information about what it is we're thinking / perceiving.
- [12:29] Alaya Kumaki: Marsilio, we usually build on others discovery, if we would start from scratch, we wouldn't find a meteorite actually, many never saw anything as this
- [12:29] Simulat Almendros: that's our common sense now Mars - but perhaps the ancients just saw it as a flash of light - a momentary crack in a celestial sphere perhaps
- [12:30] ZJ Folsom: concepts color precepts --like rose colored glasses
- [12:30] Alaya Kumaki: therefore there is a commons base from what we start our perceptive concept on
- [12:30] Marsilio Gagliano: I think that for some reason, I see "things" as primary, and "events" as what things do
- [12:30] Thoth Jantzen: I think they probably say it much as we do - just interpreted it differently based on what they 'knew' of the world, yes, Sim?
- [12:30] Valimare Naimarc: Alaya, yes I agree
- [12:30] Alaya Kumaki: and this common base isn't always base on common senses
- [12:30] Marsilio Gagliano: my very language is built on that view
- [12:31] Valimare Naimarc: Alaya, That is why you can conceptualize something and you can tell me about it and I can understand. It's because it works off a common base.
- [12:31] Marsilio Gagliano: Page 194, Some S is P.
- [12:31] ZJ Folsom: $E=mc^2$ energy matters matter is an activity of energy
- [12:31] Marsilio Gagliano: Some subject has some property.
- [12:31] Simulat Almendros: agree Thoth - just pointing out the possibility of varying interpretations of the same information
- [12:31] Marsilio Gagliano: We all think that way, no?
- [12:31] Thoth Jantzen: ok

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- [12:32] Alaya Kumaki: we usually do interpret things along with the bases that some have given to us, first
- [12:32] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, I'm not sure... but it certainly tends to be the case for speakers of languages with put subject or object first, as in the case of Indo-European.
- [12:32] ZJ Folsom: not sure if I do, Marsilio
- [12:32] Simulat Almendros: (scales fall from eyes - now I know what the numbers and lines in the essay meant Mars :-)
- [12:33] Marya Blaisdale: Marsilio, are you asking if we think that some 'things' have properties?
- [12:33] Marsilio Gagliano: Much of western philosophy takes "S is P" as a given; things (subject) and properties (predicates); if inference is seen as a linguistic act
- [12:33] Alaya Kumaki: this is also what I'm starting from, by my zero basis, attributes .. or the matter.. When I'm using my common senses, without the pre establish others information
- [12:34] Marsilio Gagliano: a mode of reasoning from premise (sentence) to conclusion (sentence) – so does our very way of speaking commit us to a metaphysics?
- [12:35] Simulat Almendros: seems so Mars in many cases
- [12:35] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, commit is too strong, I think. But it pushes. Or pulls, heh
- [12:35] Thoth Jantzen: I think the other way around, Marsilio.
- [12:35] Alaya Kumaki: is it a resonance effects then?
- [12:35] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio Well we certainly like to use categories to organise our perceptions.
- [12:35] Marsilio Gagliano: so does Whitehead; and he thinks this way of speaking arises from the characteristics of our sensation, especially clear and distinct sensations like sight
- [12:35] Thoth Jantzen: a metaphysical approach is 'intuitively' the easiest one to infer and our language reflects that intuition... and it is could be one reason why we do have certain problems explaining things about reality we have come to understand that differ from that perspective.
- [12:36] Alaya Kumaki: maybe language is a parabolic effect ..
- [12:36] Marsilio Gagliano: so ontology recapitulates philology?
- [12:36] Simulat Almendros: I'm interested that in many cases one way of speaking causes metaphysical problems whereas another way of speaking doesn't cause those problems, even though both ways of speaking are talking about the same concern
- [12:37] Valimare Naimarc: I think that our perceptions shape our language and our language can shape our perceptions. It's both
- [12:37] Renald Starostin agrees with Valimare
- [12:37] Alaya Kumaki: since human are a receptacle of the world , while being also part of it, we sure are as the parabol in the circle
- [12:37] Oswy Gothly: Valimare I think I agree with that.
- [12:37] Marsilio Gagliano: Val, another way to say that is to say perception is theory laden
- [12:37] Thoth Jantzen: Yes. And our perception shapes our intuition and affects how we interpret things... hence 'metaphysics'.
- [12:38] Marsilio Gagliano: and there is truth to that; but suppose for a moment someone did not learn to speak
- [12:38] Oswy Gothly: I also agree with that
- [12:38] Teleo Aeon: only when a sentence is written in a serial language and in serial form such as the use of the western phonetic alphabet system does this bias towards serial sentencing solidify into the self evident... in my opinion.
- [12:38] Valimare Naimarc: Thoth, I agree with that
- [12:38] Alaya Kumaki: ah, conceptual transmission, would stop but not inner tuitions, learning
- [12:38] Marsilio Gagliano: do you think reality would still break up into 'things' -- discreet, non-identical things - for that person?
- [12:39] Thoth Jantzen: I agree - the serial nature of language is also a problem. It is hard to explain things that way well that are not 'serial' phenomena or thinking that is not serial.

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- [12:40] Alaya Kumaki: lol what is the aim of transmission, if you can see for yourself?
- [12:40] Teleo Aeon: nods Thoth
- [12:40] Simulat Almendros: I'm reading a book that says we don't actually perceive anything directly - that we instead have experience of the world where everything in our perception is meaningful and that meaning isn't necessarily linguistic
- [12:40] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, It would depend on whether said person could take part in the human language games. Speaking would not exclude that person?
- [12:40] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, something along those lines seems very deeply ingrained in human thinking. Where the breaks occur between things varies, but we tend to always break them. If nothing else, it's required for each of us to "be".
- [12:40] Alaya Kumaki: maybe transmission occurs without words.. since objects don't talk
- [12:41] Valimare Naimarc: Thoth. We can have multiple threads of language going ie a web page, where people can follow what thread of language they want so the idea being presented is not linear. Unfortunately you can't pull that same trick with a book very well.
- [12:41] Marsilio Gagliano: I think something like that is embedded in most sentient animals that must negotiate with their environments from a distance
- [12:41] Thoth Jantzen: we perceive only the effects of things on our environment, i think, sim, not the things themselves.
- [12:42] Renald Starostin: Ah... things themselves...
- [12:42] Alaya Kumaki: yes, many sentient being negotiate within distance.. without words
- [12:42] Valimare Naimarc: Thoth, yes, all of our observations are indirect.
- [12:42] Marsilio Gagliano: so I think "thinginess" is not just an effect of language
- [12:42] Thoth Jantzen: that doesn't invalidate them, but it does help correct one's perspective, i think.
- [12:42] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, I'd say perception first, then language.
- [12:43] Valimare Naimarc: Thingness is an effect produced by our brains to organize information to deal with the world around us.
- [12:43] Alaya Kumaki: language has its place, but not all the place in that exchange pattern
- [12:43] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio It could be that the world breaks up so to speak along the lines of our conceptualisations. The world is ready so to speak to be conceptualised.
- [12:43] Valimare Naimarc: Imagine trying to hunt without seeing the deer as separate from the trees.
- [12:43] Marsilio Gagliano: But Val also had a good point before, we perceive some things because of the way we speak
- [12:43] Renald Starostin: We do, it's mutually conditioning.
- [12:44] Vajra Raymaker: over determination, Oswy?
- [12:44] Renald Starostin: But there is perception without language, either before acquisition or after. Though after it's rare and special.
- [12:44] Simulat Almendros: I'd say that rocks are things even if nobody is around to perceive them
- [12:44] Marsilio Gagliano: And from the 1500's to the early 20th century, the fundamental "facts" of the world were understood to be "things"
- [12:44] Teleo Aeon: I think thingness has a very visual Bias. Space is connected in visual terms... whereas hearing is disconnected in spatial terms. Things can be heard from all directions at the same time and these are spatially disconnected phenomena. Unlike the visual space.
- [12:45] Marsilio Gagliano: they were bits of matter remaining identical with themselves as they moved in empty space
- [12:45] Alaya Kumaki: because of our definition, because of what was integrated, transmitted, by many means, not just other language, but mostly, I see in that an overemphasis of language in our culture, which bring much more imaginary conception than real observations

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- [12:46] Valimare Naimarc: Simulat, The rock will be there if no one is around to see it, however is our brains that make it a separate thing from everything around it. I could just as well say the rock is not an object of it's self but rather simply a part of a bigger object called earth
- [12:46] Valimare Naimarc: You could go as far as to say there is actually one thing, the universe
- [12:46] Marsilio Gagliano: make it a part, it still differs from other parts and the whole
- [12:46] Alaya Kumaki: this language we have is , from out definition, i made my own meaning , and expression
- [12:46] Marsilio Gagliano: and it's difference is still spatial
- [12:47] Renald Starostin: It's difference isn't just spatial.
- [12:47] Marsilio Gagliano: so Val, your part may be just another "thing"
- [12:47] Marsilio Gagliano: not just, but very much so
- [12:47] Oswy Gothly: So for Whitehaed we saw the world as bit in a spatial theatre
- [12:47] harmoniasophia Scribe: Val, I really need to understand what validity hunting has outside the value I place for its purpose, what is to the deer that I place value over what its own needs and am I deceived that which I value is nothing more than the product of my own need to define who or what I am by placing value where it need not be
- [12:47] Teleo Aeon: you can prove that a rock is there even if no one sees it... by getting someone to bang it at a distance... then you can hear it... so there is more than one sense which can prove the existence of objects other than seeing them directly.
- [12:47] Simulat Almendros: Valimare - if you look at the earth from afar its one thing - but up close its many things - so when a rock slides down a mountain and starts an avalanche the avalanche is an avalanche of things
- [12:48] Marsilio Gagliano: distance is a spatial notion
- [12:48] Alaya Kumaki: most of our integrated conception are made out of theory , out of context, and many more assumptions, how can we talk really
- [12:48] Marsilio Gagliano: we hear things at a distance
- [12:48] Valimare Naimarc: Simulat, yes its all in how you look at it
- [12:48] Renald Starostin: Sim, Valimare... doesn't that just demonstrate that things are composite? Analytic?
- [12:49] Simulat Almendros: yes Val - its why I propose that things define themselves by mutual interaction
- [12:49] Alaya Kumaki: we have to go back to our inner tuition, , as sentient being, ground zero
- [12:49] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, It's the bitness that is now under attack?
- [12:49] Renald Starostin: How different is an avalanche from a stroke, if you look at them from comparable distances?
- [12:49] Valimare Naimarc: Renald, We see a rock as an object because of how our brains organize the information so I would say it is analytic
- [12:50] Renald Starostin nods
- [12:50] Simulat Almendros: a stroke, Renald?
- [12:50] Marsilio Gagliano: bitness ... yes, the bitness
- [12:50] Alaya Kumaki: Renald, where did you get the stoke information or the avalanche, if its not from an indirect source than your own sentient experience
- [12:50] Renald Starostin: A sudden change in blood flow in a brain, Sim... like a sudden flow of rocks on a slope.
- [12:50] Alaya Kumaki: by distance, ...
- [12:51] Thoth Jantzen: we see only the photons reflected from the rock that hit our eyes, sense the changes in air pressure from the sound waves travelling through the air caused by an avalanche....we don't sense the things themselves, just their effects in our environment...
- [12:51] Alaya Kumaki: this distance , we are place from others, doesn't make of the language some things that can transmit the real thing, to you, its not possible

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- [12:51] Teleo Aeon: I see Ren, you are meaning like a touch sense... yes avalanches of feeling are commonly alluded to. So there is some correspondence there..
- [12:51] Thoth Jantzen: it's an important thing to remember, even if we use shorthand to say we 'see' or 'hear' 'something'.
- [12:52] Alaya Kumaki: its remain imaginary
- [12:52] Marsilio Gagliano: but Thoth
- [12:52] ZJ Folsom: basically Thoth touch our primary and only sense
- [12:52] Valimare Naimarc: Thoth yes. My keyboard feels hard because of electromagnetism I am actually never touching the keyboard its self.
- [12:52] Marsilio Gagliano: let's not get ahead of ourselves
- [12:52] Alaya Kumaki: we are back to primary, matter..
- [12:52] Renald Starostin: Actually, Teleo, I mean in a structural sense. We can perceive a rock as a thing, or as part of thing, or as made of things.
- [12:52] Marsilio Gagliano: our conception of photons may be that of little bits of stuff as well
- [12:52] Alaya Kumaki: primary types
- [12:53] ZJ Folsom: not matter touch we also touch with mind
- [12:53] Thoth Jantzen: well, Marsilio, I think forgetting those things (or not realizing them) leads us astray in certain subtle fundamental ways, no?
- [12:53] Teleo Aeon: ok Ren
- [12:53] Marsilio Gagliano: If we look at page 179; there we can find a list
- [12:53] Valimare Naimarc: Thoth,. it amazes me that we make sense of the world at all.
- [12:53] Simulat Almendros: Renald - with a stroke you have a blood clot interacting with an artery blocking it - the clot and the artery are things to each other - but I'm not sure that they really become things to the stroke victim because the victim can't act on them
- [12:53] Thoth Jantzen: that's what allows us to think of things like qualia or universals, for example, no?
- [12:53] Simulat Almendros: but the clot and arteries would be things to the surgeon coming to the rescue
- [12:53] Renald Starostin: Sim, if there are no people or animals in the way, who is the avalanche victim?
- [12:53] Alaya Kumaki: I bet that u never think of that qualia before someone suggest it to you
- [12:54] Thoth Jantzen: well, Valimare, our brains evolved at this level of organization/structure. It amazes me that we have worked out things from quarks to galactic clusters :o)
- [12:54] Simulat Almendros: not saying there is a victim Renald - just saying that an avalanche is a bunch of things
- [12:54] Marsilio Gagliano: *"There are bits of matter, enduring self-identically in space which is otherwise empty. Each bit of matter occupies a definite limited region. Each such particle of matter has its own private qualifications, such as its shape, its motion, its mass, its colour, its scent. Some of these qualifications change, others are persistent. The essential relationship between bits of matter is purely spatial. Space itself is eternally unchanging, always including in itself this capacity for the relationship of bits of matter. Geometry is the science which investigates this spatial capacity for imposing relationship upon matter. Locomotion of matter involves change in spatial relationship. It involves nothing more than that."*
- [12:54] Marsilio Gagliano: True or false?
- [12:55] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio It seems that that conception of objects however comfortable it may seem cannot be sustained
- [12:55] Renald Starostin: Right, Sim. I'm just saying that most "real" things are bunches of things.
- [12:55] Simulat Almendros: common sense says true Marsilio :-)
- [12:55] Thoth Jantzen: it is not purely spatial, for starters...
- [12:55] Vajra Raymaker: true, Mars, I would say

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [12:55] Marsilio Gagliano: but contemporary science says, true only so far
- [12:55] Vajra Raymaker: I'll fall
- [12:55] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, I have heard people on this site saying that all there really is is patterns in fields and that is it.
- [12:55] Simulat Almendros: OK Renald - I'm saying the same thing :-)
- [12:55] Thoth Jantzen: it is also causal/temporal, and I think that is more fundamental, perhaps...
- [12:56] Marsilio Gagliano: like waves in water, Oswy - a wave is neither a bit in empty space
- [12:56] Thoth Jantzen: though I'd need to also add in a few other things for context. ;o)
- [12:56] Vajra Raymaker: though the bit about space unchanging in its capacity to relate objects I would worry about, if space is not Euclidean
- [12:56] Marsilio Gagliano: and it's identity requires change
- [12:56] Simulat Almendros: Oswy - I've said that :-)
- [12:56] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio Yep. What I have read on QM seems to point in that direction
- [12:56] Thoth Jantzen: yes, Marsilio
- [12:57] Valimare Naimarc: Marsilio, I have no problem with what you said except space isn't unchanging. It is currently expanding, mass warps space .etc
- [12:57] Marsilio Gagliano: but of course, we speak of light as both a wave and a particle
- [12:57] Thoth Jantzen: and change implies a temporal relationship.... either between a 'thing' and it's own previous state-sets, or other things.
- [12:57] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, Whitehead's description is... difficult. But I understood his point to be that science emerging when wrote was asserting that model was false. The one you quoted.
- [12:57] Valimare Naimarc: I also don't know if I would say it is otherwise empty
- [12:57] Marsilio Gagliano: wave-particle duality
- [12:57] Marsilio Gagliano: yes that passage is about the notion of matter that gathered steam from 1500-1900
- [12:57] Valimare Naimarc: It appears under normal conditions to be empty, but it isn't really
- [12:58] Alaya Kumaki: if I answer true or false to this, I immediately place myself in a new situation, of conceptualisation,, which isn't the one I'm in, actually, Marsilio, since I'm listening to you saying that, and not positioning my conception in front, as a comparative to this, you got
- [12:58] Marsilio Gagliano: it is still common sense for may but it is no longer "scientific", for many, that is
- [12:58] Oswy Gothly: The issue now is how to explain the patterns?
- [12:58] Marsilio Gagliano: it's even common sense for us when we fry eggs in the morning
- [12:59] Renald Starostin: Marsilio, I'm not sure about that. I think the parts of it that were common sense before 1500 still are. But people have haphazardly absorbed a lot of the newer models into common sense, too. Surprisingly quickly.
- [12:59] Marsilio Gagliano: so we are in trouble
- [12:59] Simulat Almendros: the patterns are emergent - new things at a higher level that don't exist at a lower level, but that interact with each other
- [12:59] Vajra Raymaker: yes, and it IS haphazard I would guess, Ren
- [12:59] Marsilio Gagliano: it has deep historical and biological roots, Renald, I agree
- [13:00] Thoth Jantzen: yes, Sim.
- [13:00] Renald Starostin: Well... historical and neurological, let's say.
- [13:00] ZJ Folsom: and conspiracy roots :)
- [13:00] Thoth Jantzen: that is well illustrated by human society, for example, and other things.
- [13:00] Teleo Aeon: knowledge is gained and transmitted and then eventually solidifies into the self evident... taken for granted then as reality..
- [13:00] Alaya Kumaki: so spatiality is a lot involve there since I'm listening to you telling me this, but I could get into virtual realisation of those things you are saying, and pretend , cogitate

Marsilio's Reading Group

them until I create an inner puzzle of them in my mind, but not in fact, or a comparative with all the facts that I memorised already, from my own experience , mixed with other, that I have integrated, to pretend to a possibility of this conceptions realism

[13:00] Marsilio Gagliano: what is important about the passage is that it expresses simply and clearly the essence of matter as seen in the development of early modern science

[13:00] Renald Starostin: Oh, it is overall haphazard, Vaj. I've observed that everywhere, in my own thinking included.

[13:01] Thoth Jantzen: the thing is, there are fundamental principal operative at all levels of reality. New ones do not emerge, but the fundamental ones are able to be expressed with more variety and complexity at increasing levels of complexity in structure.

[13:01] Thoth Jantzen: evolution is one of those things... (point to genetics and memetics as examples of this)

[13:02] ZJ Folsom: how so Thoth?

[13:02] harmoniasophia Scribe: Alayaright over the top :-))) what do they say "in one ear out the other" hehehehe

[13:02] Vajra Raymaker: Well, so do we want to discover how many of our seemingly theory neutral metaphysical concepts are rooted in a sort of 19th century-science/common sense world view? Mars?

[13:03] Thoth Jantzen: consider the example I suggested, ZJ.

[13:03] Marsilio Gagliano: That would be a start, Vajra, that's why I think whitehead is useful

[13:03] ZJ Folsom: more into memetic evolution of humans now, Thoth

[13:04] harmoniasophia Scribe: synchronicity

[13:04] Thoth Jantzen: ZJ, they are both examples of similar principles expressed at different levels of structure/complexity....

[13:04] Marsilio Gagliano: so I take no one holds that he fundamental realities or principles that constitute the objects of ordinary experience are bits of matter

[13:04] Renald Starostin: Vaj, Mars, a primary challenge may be getting people to understand they have and use metaphysical concepts.

[13:05] Marsilio Gagliano: at least not like the bits whitehead talked about?

[13:05] Alaya Kumaki: Vajra , I wonder how much of what we know, we do really know, or pretend to know cause some wanted many to take things as they wishes us to think we finally know :) ^^

[13:05] Vajra Raymaker: Oh, interesting, Ren!

[13:05] Vajra Raymaker: True

[13:05] Thoth Jantzen: memetics is much more robust than genetics, for example. And genetics is really about a form of persistent change and adaptation.

[13:05] Renald Starostin: Mars, I don't hold that, no... But I hold very little in that regard :-)

[13:05] Marsilio Gagliano: no one is a 19th century materialist in the crowd?

[13:06] harmoniasophia Scribe: philosophies and science like to meander, this tends to absolve a sense of responsibility takes discernment Alaya, intuitiveness

[13:06] Simulat Almendros: Mars - I'd say that maybe the idea of fundamental is an idea that needs to be tested for validity and usefulness

[13:06] Renald Starostin: I have a suit made of 19th century material, does that count?

[13:06] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio I think that there are still explanations that say there are fundamental entities eg Strings these are the modern bits they are not like the 19th 20th century bits but they are still the fundamental bedrock on which all else is based.

[13:06] Alaya Kumaki: memetics is really a natural process, that has its dark side ,, and can drown us into the void of factual reality

[13:06] Vajra Raymaker: I was thinking about philosophers' semi technical metaphysical concepts, Ren, rather than the metaphysical presuppositions in every day speech. I think philosophers themselves are more contextually bound than is often admitted

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [13:06] Thoth Jantzen: yes, Alaya
- [13:07] Marsilio Gagliano: strings are fundamental, like atoms were fundamental
- [13:07] Thoth Jantzen: ...it is based on the fundamental properties of the world - laws of physics, etc.
- [13:07] Marsilio Gagliano: the devil is in the details
- [13:07] ZJ Folsom: memetics is still where genetics were pre-1950
- [13:07] Marsilio Gagliano: what do you mean by the laws of physics, Thoth?
- [13:07] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio here are also those who would claim that if you explain strings then you can derive an explanation of everything from them at least in theory.
- [13:08] Marsilio Gagliano: they are universal principles in terms of which every item of experience can be given a description
- [13:08] Alaya Kumaki: Ren, how many patches has this suit now :P ^^
- [13:08] Renald Starostin: Vaj, I agree. I just know that the very narrow usage of the terms "metaphysics" and "metaphysical" sometimes puts people in the position of thinking they don't operate with any.
- [13:08] Oswy Gothly: Could I also just register that the theory of memes is highly contested see previous debates and discussion on SP.
- [13:08] Marsilio Gagliano: that's why we call them fundamental
- [13:08] Simulat Almendros: strings are made of more fundamental stuff called filaments :-)
teasing
- [13:08] Alaya Kumaki: Ren, this must be a fundamental suit
- [13:08] Marya Blaisdale: lol
- [13:09] Renald Starostin: I wear my fundamentals under my suit.
- [13:09] Marsilio Gagliano: so who believes that something can be the same as itself at an instant?
- [13:09] Alaya Kumaki: XD
- [13:09] Marsilio Gagliano: is that fundamentally true?
- [13:09] ZJ Folsom: we haven't meme DNA equivalent --yet
- [13:09] Simulat Almendros: I don't know Mars :-)
- [13:09] Thoth Jantzen: essentially, the laws of physics, as I understand it, describes the relationships and properties of what we understand to be the fundamental processes/entities that make up the world. Some of this understanding may not be complete or even fundamental. For example, thermodynamics could be 'emergent', say, from QM and causality, for example (and don't tell me they are mutually exclusive!). ;o)
- [13:09] Alaya Kumaki: ok, it came from the attic, not the basement - heritage ^^
- [13:09] Renald Starostin: Mars, if a thing can be said to be, it is at least the same as itself at an instant -- if instants can be said to be. Hmm :-)
- [13:10] Marsilio Gagliano: I have problems with it Sim - is "velocity at an instant" a meaningful concept
- [13:10] Vajra Raymaker: lol Alaya, fundamental suit
- [13:10] Simulat Almendros: but with a bicycle - is it fundamentally atoms, or is it fundamentally a bicycle?
- [13:11] Marsilio Gagliano: is the instant a reality or an abstraction, Ren
- [13:11] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, what is an instant?
- [13:11] Simulat Almendros: Aren't there aspects of a bicycle that are not found in atoms?
- [13:11] Thoth Jantzen: ZJ - there reason for that is in genetic the genes are substrate dependent on certain types of structures. Memes are much more flexible and can be expressed/imprinted on many 'substrates' in different contexts.
- [13:11] Renald Starostin: Mars... reality is an abstraction... or a construction.
- [13:11] Marsilio Gagliano: well, instance is like a point, it has no dimension
- [13:11] Simulat Almendros: and if there are how can you talk about which is fundamental?

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [13:12] Alaya Kumaki: how much did we inherit, from our memetic, from the direct family... concepts, from the beginning, and how much abstraction do we start with , before the experimentation?
- [13:12] Marsilio Gagliano: in classical physics, it is the value of some equation describing a continuous line at some point on that line
- [13:12] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio Does instant make sense in Space Time terms?
- [13:12] Renald Starostin: Sim, I'm suspicious of fundamentals. They smell too much like absolutes.
- [13:12] Teleo Aeon: Reality is always interpreted in strict accord with the types of instruments used to gain the evidence.. so if you use particle sensors and time dependent data acquisition you will tend to find particles. Waves are not easily sensed nor is the data easily manipulated..
- [13:12] Simulat Almendros: agree Renald
- [13:12] Marsilio Gagliano: the instant is part of the very foundation of classical physics
- [13:12] Thoth Jantzen also thinks that memetics, as currently viewed, is viewed in too limited a fashion. He believes that when you have a brain - any brain - you have something dealing with (creating/using) memes.
- [13:13] Thoth Jantzen: simple brains just use simpler memes in simpler ways.
- [13:13] Marsilio Gagliano: if we don't know about it, we might as well give up talking about the 'laws of physics'
- [13:13] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, we don't see the world in the same way as classical physics now?
- [13:13] Simulat Almendros: I disagree Thoth - but that's another discussion :-)
- [13:13] Marsilio Gagliano: we usually don't have the patience to worry about such things though
- [13:14] Marsilio Gagliano: I dunno about you Oswy, but still can see it that way - I hear elements of it in much of what we say
- [13:14] ZJ Folsom: memes are what its all about!! Without them no discussion here - even no here
- [13:14] Valimare Naimarc: I view the meme as useful analogy. Even though it was not intended as one
- [13:14] Thoth Jantzen: meme is more than analogy, val. it is how brains deal with the world. ALL brains.
- [13:14] Simulat Almendros: Mars - time is well handled by the equations of physics without us having to know what an instant is, or whether it exists
- [13:14] Pun Couffer: Some see the world similarly to how Aristotle saw it (those are pretty numerous), some see it similarly to how Newton saw it, some see it how the modern physicists see it, and there are also many other views of nature.
- [13:14] ZJ Folsom: yep Thoth
- [13:14] Alaya Kumaki: we have a lot of lies, or misinterpretation we have integrated from the attic of our inebriated load...as they did with the flat earth concept
- [13:15] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio I am more used to the idea of time slices but they can vary.
- [13:15] Marsilio Gagliano: explain Sim; what equation might you have in mind?
- [13:15] Simulat Almendros: and in fact both string theory and quantum loop gravity say that there are no dimensionless instants
- [13:15] ZJ Folsom: genotype>>phenotype>>memotype
- [13:15] Pun Couffer: I'm not talking about human history, I'm talking about the human situation. In mankind as a whole, there are still many worldviews, lots of them heavily outdated.
- [13:15] Simulat Almendros: that there is a smallest unit of time; Not an instant
- [13:16] Marsilio Gagliano: true Sim, but relativity theory says there is not
- [13:16] Thoth Jantzen: yes. At least the smallest that can be said to make any sense... you can 'say' 'ok, I'll cut that in half'...but you really can't.
- [13:16] Marsilio Gagliano: relativity theory depends on continuous functions

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [13:16] Simulat Almendros: but the thing is that I've used time in physics equations most of my life and have never had to worry about what an instant is
- [13:16] Thoth Jantzen: just like things cannot be infinitely dense or infinitely hot.
- [13:16] Alaya Kumaki: attic memes, or basement, still in fresh present condition of conservation. For fresh uses, daily uses, mmm, which are the best? Can a good meme age well, as wine, and old attic knowledge, are they all outdated?
- [13:16] Marsilio Gagliano: so we can't just cite the authority of this or that branch of science to settle the question, Sim
- [13:17] Thoth Jantzen: we can say it, and some math can be used to 'show' it, but that doesn't mean that it is possible in reality.
- [13:17] Marsilio Gagliano: so I was really serious when I asked, which equation
- [13:17] harmoniasophia Scribe: if we were to see the instance as it is a thing in itself we would no longer need this causal chaos philosophy neither would science be of any value....all would be moot
- [13:17] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, Disunity of Science, what next??
- [13:17] Renald Starostin is glad he's not a physicist.
- [13:17] Simulat Almendros: maybe its a question to which we can just shrug and say "who cares?" if its a question whose answer doesn't matter to anything
- [13:17] Pun Couffer: Pretty much all equations, Marsilio. We can take the simplest one: the relation between speed, time, an interval, and distance travelled.
- [13:18] Pun Couffer: Time interval, even.
- [13:18] Alaya Kumaki: who care or who need them? And for what interests?
- [13:18] Marsilio Gagliano: metaphysics is the pursuit of question at which one may shrug one's shoulders as if they do not make any difference
- [13:18] Pun Couffer: The equation includes time, but we don't need to know what an instant of time is exactly.
- [13:18] Vajra Raymaker: What are we trying to establish here? That contemporary physics is more likely to be true than ancient physics? And its concepts more apt?
- [13:18] Valimare Naimarc: Pun, right
- [13:19] Renald Starostin: Oh... I wouldn't describe metaphysics that way.
- [13:19] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio and it's the thought that they don't make a different which is itself a metaphysical position.
- [13:19] Simulat Almendros: yes Mars - I think that metaphysics is great for personal exploration to get at one's assumptions, but it may be no more than that
- [13:20] Teleo Aeon: I hope no one seriously believes there are no metaphysical assumption in Science..
- [13:20] Pun Couffer: Modern physicists did what the ancient ones didn't: for centuries, they tested their assumptions against reality, and brushed up their assumptions when reality said 'wrong'.
- [13:20] Renald Starostin: Vajra, that's a good question, and I don't have an answer. Whitehead seemed to be saying that any physics sense roughly 19th century presents a social and cultural problem. I don't know how relevant that is to this discussion.
- [13:20] Simulat Almendros: of course science has assumptions
- [13:20] harmoniasophia Scribe: Pun, I would agree for in that instant time would cease to relevant, as we can clearly see, our questions do not really question what is, but rather they focus on our ideas of what is, and is our ideas that blind what is
- [13:20] Marsilio Gagliano: The next time someone refers to the theory of relativity as if it were descriptive of reality (and I think it is to some extent) either that person has to seriously inquire into the ontological status of the instant or stop talking about reality and rest content with talking about 'what scientists say'

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [13:20] Valimare Naimarc: I think it is safe to say that something is what is at any given smallest unit of time, whether that be an instant or otherwise.
- [13:21] Vajra Raymaker: ditto Teleo. Metaphysics is unavoidable it would seem.
- [13:21] Pun Couffer: Thus, I'd say there's a specific argument (the above one) which we can use in defence of modern science.
- [13:21] Teleo Aeon: Sim, it has metaphysical ones too
- [13:21] Marsilio Gagliano: something is what it is, I agree
- [13:21] Alaya Kumaki: yeah , we can do more comparative than before Harmonia, with many archives and international exchange even
- [13:21] Pun Couffer nods to Harmonia
- [13:22] Marsilio Gagliano: metaphysical inquiry is distasteful to many
- [13:22] Simulat Almendros: ooo Mars - that's a metaphysical assertion that needs backing up :-)
- [13:22] Marsilio Gagliano: precisely, it does open to question such fundamental beliefs; I can well understand why would hope it doesn't matter much in the end
- [13:23] Pun Couffer: Something is what it is. It seems like a tautology.
- [13:23] Renald Starostin: Things are what they could be, just never all at once.
- [13:23] Pun Couffer: $x=x$. X is anything. It should be always correct.
- [13:23] ZJ Folsom: lol -question ALL 'beliefs'
- [13:23] Simulat Almendros: I won't quibble Teleo - I'd say that when you are talking about the assumptions at the base of your structure of understanding that you can call them metaphysical assumptions, or you can just call them assumptions at the base of your understanding - the latter seems clearer to me :-)
- [13:24] Marsilio Gagliano: so does "is" mean "="?
- [13:24] Teleo Aeon: Mars, I don't have a problem with it myself.. I am more interested in what the metaphysical assumptions are and how they operate... then one can of course critique those in order to find new ones or bury ones that no longer accurately describe reality...
- [13:24] Valimare Naimarc: Asking is something the same as its self at any instant of time is to ask if it is what it is.
- [13:24] Marsilio Gagliano: the dog = brown.
- [13:24] Valimare Naimarc: is-if
- [13:24] Alaya Kumaki: sure, but Marsilio, it may be cause of memes of local repulsions acquired, preconceptions of what it is.. Is it, are we able to re evaluate our pre conception as abstract as they are, are we capable of discernment about that
- [13:24] Pun Couffer: Okay, it doesn't always mean =.
- [13:24] harmoniasophia Scribe: no not really Pun , the tautology is in justifying the conception of what is, what is, is never discerned in the defense
- [13:24] Marsilio Gagliano: I do metaphysics because I want to be aware of all possible preconceptions
- [13:25] Alaya Kumaki: than we are back to inner - tuition. We can teach ourselves, again and again
- [13:25] Vajra Raymaker: Mars, I am not sure what you are arguing here. The point about the instant is that Relativity has metaphysical commitments, I take it. But I don't understand what your take is generally on the relation between science and metaphysics.
- [13:25] Simulat Almendros: And Mars - I personally have no problem with having what I know about reality being stuff I've learned from science instead of a direct contact with reality - I do take it on faith that there is reality and that scientists can learn about it
- [13:25] Teleo Aeon: wave particle duality is a classic problem point for metaphysical assumption..
- [13:25] Renald Starostin: "Is" includes "=" among what it can mean.
- [13:26] harmoniasophia Scribe: I would say I learn as I un-teach what I believe to be true, as nature fundamentally is of a different substance than the form I taught myself to believe

Marsilio's Reading Group

[13:26] Marsilio Gagliano: I think scientific positions have metaphysical implications and rest on metaphysical pre-conceptions; I want to be clear about what those implications and preconceptions are; and I want to be rigorous about it

[13:26] Vajra Raymaker: okay, Mars

[13:27] Teleo Aeon: Mars, that is exactly what also interests me about metaphysics. You can't easily get to how something maybe wrong if you can't unpick what the assumptions are and the basis on which they were made.

[13:27] Simulat Almendros: sure Mars - but its not reasonable to suggest (as many do) that we know nothing until we have nailed metaphysics

[13:27] Marsilio Gagliano: I want to track those implications and preconceptions through time

[13:27] Valimare Naimarc: I just look into what ever I find interesting because it is a way of entertaining myself.

[13:27] Marsilio Gagliano: me Teleo

[13:27] Pun Couffer: About wave-particle duality: Bohr, the main architect of modern conceptions of microscopic events, said that wave picture and particle picture of events in microscopic world are complementary. The catch is that our language is inept to express what's really is going on in microscopic world, so we have to use two imperfect pictures to get some idea of what's going on with atoms and smaller particles.

[13:27] Vajra Raymaker: through time... you mean, through history?

[13:27] Marsilio Gagliano: yea!

[13:27] Vajra Raymaker: history of science?

[13:27] Marsilio Gagliano: through history

[13:27] Oswy Gothly: I agree Marsilio, and that is what Whitehead is doing in this article. It has great value. It also means that science and philosophers have to work together

[13:28] Valimare Naimarc: Pun, and I agree with that

[13:28] Pun Couffer nods.

[13:28] Marsilio Gagliano: I just went through the derivation of the ideal gas laws from classical mechanics the other day

[13:28] Renald Starostin: Oswy, I'm not sure it means they have to work together. It means they have to be able to talk in ways that allow them to continue to talk.

[13:28] Marsilio Gagliano: really blew my socks off

[13:29] Teleo Aeon: heh

[13:29] Vajra Raymaker: kewel

[13:29] Oswy Gothly: OK Ren I agree but there is hostility to that as Marsilio says

[13:29] Marsilio Gagliano: what Whitehead has to say really hits the nail on the head with respect to the derivation

[13:29] Renald Starostin: Oswy, exactly. :-)

[13:29] Marsilio Gagliano: each assumption upon which statistical mechanics is predicated is false; yet the theory is essential to so much of our thinking

[13:30] Renald Starostin: Not false... incomplete.

[13:30] Pun Couffer: That, or roughly correct.

[13:30] Renald Starostin grins and nods.

[13:30] Teleo Aeon: false in that it is falsifiable in its current state, Mars ?

[13:31] harmoniasophia Scribe: incomplete would render untrue as all sorts of unwarranted assumptions ensue from shadowy conceptions that empirically appear true

[13:31] Marsilio Gagliano: take on assumption

[13:31] Oswy Gothly: I am running out of time here. Could we continue this where Whitehead gets to next ie how do we add content to our modern conception of matter or nature. Can we get back to objects?

[13:31] Renald Starostin: Assumptions have local adequacy, that's all.

[13:31] Marsilio Gagliano: the effect of gravity has to be ignored

Marsilio's Reading Group

- [13:31] Pun Couffer: Well, odds are that all we know about physics today is false, too.
- [13:32] Renald Starostin: Objects?
- [13:32] Marsilio Gagliano: objects ... the history of the term?
- [13:33] Marsilio Gagliano: object as in objective/subjective or object as synonym for thing?
- [13:34] Pun Couffer: I wonder if anyone analyzed the question of irrefutability or refutability of a theory by experiment.
- [13:34] Marsilio Gagliano: object as in "metallic object"
- [13:34] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio, What I really meant was that Whitehead ends his article by saying that the fundamental question is, How do we add content to the notion of bare activity? Activity for what? Producing what? Activity involving what?
- [13:35] Pun Couffer: Or, to be precise in what I mean, did anyone analyze the question of endurance of a theory to experiments.
- [13:35] Vajra Raymaker: I have thought about that Pun -- have you read Quine? Or Putnam?
- [13:35] Marsilio Gagliano: We could read Ch. 8 where he does that, Oswy
- [13:35] Pun Couffer: I read Two Dogmas of Empiricism. Nothing else by Quine or Putnam.
- [13:36] Marsilio Gagliano: Kuhn would be the place to start for the classic critique of Poppers falsifiability theory
- [13:36] Renald Starostin: heh
- [13:36] Pun Couffer: Which book?
- [13:36] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio He has interesting things to say about the relationship the fusion of mind and world?
- [13:36] Marsilio Gagliano: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions
- [13:36] Renald Starostin: Reactions to Kuhn would be... interesting
- [13:36] Marsilio Gagliano: They would
- [13:36] Pun Couffer: I read The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Did offer a different view, but I don't remember seeing any explicit criticism.
- [13:37] Marsilio Gagliano: well, paradigm change is not the result of a simple falsification as any theory can be qualified 100 times
- [13:37] Oswy Gothly: I would also be happy to look at Kuhn and Popper. If you prefer?
- [13:37] Pun Couffer nods.
- [13:37] Pun Couffer: Okay, I guess it is a criticism of main Popper's idea, then.
- [13:37] Marsilio Gagliano: I don't know what is available for free
- [13:37] Vajra Raymaker: Pun, there is a huge literature.
- [13:37] Renald Starostin: Right... paradigm change isn't about falsification, per se. It's about the... hmm... sociology of science? ;-)
- [13:38] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio I don't think you need to decide now. I am sure if you want you will find a willing audience here ready to get involved in any discussion you care to raise?
- [13:38] Marsilio Gagliano: and only the gods know what we did today that might tie in
- [13:38] Alaya Kumaki: maybe the economic sociology as well, Ren
- [13:38] Marsilio Gagliano: I think we are basically a group of realists; with more or less confidence in the objectivity of science
- [13:39] Pun Couffer: I know there are a lot of books about philosophy of science. However, I was wondering if anyone analyzed this idea. Kuhn seemed to elaborate his fundamental concept of how things change, but I was thinking of analysis of theories.
- [13:39] Vajra Raymaker: The second part of Two Dogmas is what to follow. Then Putnam on Quine
- [13:39] Oswy Gothly: Marsilio excellent defence of metaphysics I feel I am not alone.
- [13:39] Alaya Kumaki: the economics of sociology, make prevail many theories over others
- [13:39] Pun Couffer: For instance, there are many interpretations of sub-microscopic phenomena, none of which are currently refutable.
- [13:40] Renald Starostin: Economics did play a role for Kuhn, yes, Alaya

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- [13:40] Pun Couffer: So, in this case, I'd be interested in what kind of reality and what kind of theories fit in what ways with one another. A completely dumb theory would probably be refuted earlier, generally speaking. Of course, there are some dumb irrefutable theories, too.
- [13:41] Alaya Kumaki: Pun, as well as an earlier can be , re integrated
- [13:41] Pun Couffer: Many-World Theory is a completely dumb irrefutable theory of sub-microscopic phenomena.
- [13:42] Alaya Kumaki: when some find out about the round, earth, they return to the flat one, later for a while
- [13:42] Pun Couffer: IMO, it has equal scientific value as my Invisible Flying Spaghetti Monster theory of sub-microscopic phenomena.
- [13:42] Renald Starostin: What exists and what doesn't, that's it in a nutshell.
- [13:43] Hokon Cazalet: I agree Pun, if it cant be proven false/true by experimentation, its not science
- [13:43] Pun Couffer: I've read the book, Alaya.
- [13:43] Renald Starostin: No, it's not science.
- [13:43] Pun Couffer nods.
- [13:43] Alaya Kumaki: what is taken, as real, is not always real..
- [13:44] Renald Starostin: But which things are worth trying to prove or disprove, and which methods are effective, that's changed.
- [13:46] harmoniasophia Scribe: I find the things I value I see so reality of these things is hearsay, imo
- [13:47] Pun Couffer: My impression is that Kuhn is how things are in science, and that Popper is how things should be.
- [13:47] Alaya Kumaki: I always been amaze of what method were taken to find about earthly form.. Earlier, now we have spaceships, I can easily link the method, with the question and the proportion /human view, and the object of the quest is,
- [13:48] Renald Starostin: That's a good summation, Pun. Both have importance.
- [13:48] Alaya Kumaki: but, overview, as what I call bird view, is known .. being on the top tree make you see the whole forest
- [13:50] Pun Couffer: (And Feyerabend is how things seem to a madman)