

L II 5. ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD was the most recent of the great philosophers. He is included in my list because of the importance of his writing. Some of it is highly rewarding reading, and the few books (besides his mathematics) that are hard to read are also important. His philosophy has been very influential since the mid-20th century. Northwestern University published a series of books dealing with the works of living philosophers; each provided analyses of their works by other philosophers. After books on John Dewey and George Santayana, the third such volume dealt with the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. That volume, published in 1941 includes 18 essays by other philosophers on different strands in Whitehead's work, so is a good source if one wants to investigate any particular aspects of Whitehead's philosophy. Some libraries have other books on parts of his philosophy.

The Whitehead book that I would most highly recommend is entitled ADVENTURES OF IDEAS, a book which emphasizes the effect of certain major ideas and the importance of adventure in promoting the slow development of human civilization. This is thinking big, and exposes readers to thinking on a broad scale about life and civilization.

SCIENCE AND THE MODERN WORLD is in some parts not as easy reading, but it is a fascinating book, and it seems to me worth tackling specially if one wants to get an explanation of some key aspects of modern science.

PROCESS AND REALITY is the third book that completes Whitehead's basic philosophy, but it is a very difficult book, partly because he redefines some words to give them special meanings, and it is very difficult to keep those special meanings in mind every time one of those words is used in his philosophy. Some philosophy departments devote a whole course to this book.

His shorter and less fundamental books are THE FUNCTION OF REASON, a book of essays entitled THE AIMS OF EDUCATION AND OTHER ESSAYS, and the last book before he died MODES OF THOUGHT published in 1938. The most difficult of his short books that I am aware of is RELIGION IN THE MAKING. Even the part of philosophy that most people regard as too abstruse Whitehead has dealt with very readably in a dandy little essay entitled "Nature and Life", which is included in MODES OF THOUGHT.