

I take sharp exception to Hartshorne's statement, "Metaphysics . . . cannot be divested entirely of a personal element, though metaphysicians should, and I do, strive valiantly to transcend the merely personal" (*Creativity in American Philosophy*: xiii).

The only truth in it, so far as I can see, turns on exploiting an ambiguity in "metaphysics." If what is meant by the term is the metaphysical beliefs that a particular person, in fact, holds to be true, then, indeed, metaphysics cannot be divested entirely of a personal element—nor can any other beliefs, by the very meaning of the term! But if, on the contrary, what is meant by "metaphysics" is the objective of metaphysical inquiry and reflection, properly understood and conducted, then, while there may indeed be an irreducible "personal element" in *any actual pursuit of the objective*, which any conscientious metaphysician will indeed valiantly strive to transcend, *the objective itself*, so far as I can see, is entirely divested of any such element.

I believe—and *can* believe—metaphysically, or in any other way, only at my own risk. But doing metaphysics, just like any other form of critical reflection, is not a matter of believing, but of determining as best one can what is, and is not, worthy of belief, which, as such, can only transcend the "merely personal."

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