

What, fully thought out, is the import of ^{Hardshorne's} ~~his~~ statement, "We need to distinguish between formal and material predictions" (LP, 134; cf. "The Idea of God--Literal or Analogical?")?

In particular, what does one do with his further statement: "Besides obviously formal and obviously material ideas about God we have descriptions whose classification depends partly upon one's philosophical beliefs. . . . according to panpsychism, psychical concepts are categorial, universal in scope. However, even so they must be different from the purely formal concepts, for example, contingency, which has a single literal meaning applicable to all cases, the meaning of excluding some positive possibilities. . . . [Furthermore,] contingency and relativity apply not only to individuals but to groups of individuals, and not only to concrete, but also to more or less abstract entities. . . . Thus, even assuming panpsychism, the most general psychical terms, though universally applicable to concrete singulars, and in this sense categorial, are not purely formal in the same sense as the other categorial terms. To apply them to things, one must know on what level of concreteness the things are" (LP, 139 ff.)

One suggestion is that the "purely formal concepts" of which ^{Hardshorne} ~~he~~ speaks here are what John Passmore speaks of as the "invariant conditions of discourse," in compatibility with which constitutes a view or statement "absolutely self-refuting" (Philosophical Reasoning, p. 80). According to Passmore, what is presupposed in discourse is "always something formal, e.g., that there are true propositions, that these have implications, that they convey something" (Ibid., p. 77). Elsewhere he observes that "infinite regress" arguments sometimes serve the important function of bringing us

to see the limits of explanation, what have to be accepted as 'brute facts,' and the limits of criteria, what distinctions have to be accepted as just recognizable. This is always something formal: that something exists, that things have properties in common, and are related to one another, that there are continuities and discontinuities, that some propositions are true and some false. These are not conclusions deduced from an infinite regress: they are, indeed, not conclusions at all. But that they are not, and cannot be, conclusions, the infinite regress argument helps us to see" (Ibid., p. 37).

What, then, are the "material predications" which need to be distinguished from "these invariant conditions of discourse"? ^{Hartshorne's} ~~His~~ argument suggests they are either "symbolic" or "analogical" predications, which can themselves be distinguished only in dependence upon "one's philosophical beliefs." Against this background, one can make sense of two statements of ^{Hartshorne's} ~~His~~ which, on the face of it, are contradictory: (1) "If metaphysics knows anything, it must either know God, or know that the idea of God is meaningless. Neutrality as to God means no metaphysics. The choice is a theistic metaphysics, or an atheistic metaphysics or a positivistic rejection of both God and metaphysics." (2) "Hence the alternative to panpsychic idealism is not materialism or dualism, but agnosticism or positivism. The alternative is epistemological or methodological, not ontological. Ontology . . . is idealistic (in the panpsychic or realistic form) or nothing" (RST, 176, 84). In the former statement, ^{Hartshorne's} ~~He~~ is speaking from the standpoint which recognizes that the issue of metaphysics is, in the most formal sense, twofold: (1) Are there any "invariant conditions of discourse" or "purely formal conceptions" such as positivism, however self-contradictorally, denies in rejecting metaphysics? and (2) What

"philosophical beliefs" (theistic or atheistic) best explicate the content or "material" meaning, in the sense of the analogical meaning, of these "purely formal concepts"? In the latter statement, ^{Hankel's own} ~~it~~ is speaking from the standpoint of his own "philosophical beliefs" that panpsychism alone enables one to understand the "invariant conditions of discourse" as more than "purely formal conceptions"--the only alternative being the "epistemological or methodological" denial that there even are such "invariant conditions."

Also intelligible from this, perhaps, are the rights and the limits of Coreth's effort to provide "a methodical-systematic laying of the foundations" of metaphysics. Such an effort is right insofar as it deals with the first of the two issues that metaphysics involves--namely, whether there are any "invariant conditions of discourse" or "purely formal conceptions" such as positivism denies. (Significantly, Coreth's style of reasoning is principally "self-refutation," i.e., he tries to show that the denial of metaphysics is "absolutely self-refuting" because it requires one to presuppose the very things it denies.) On the other hand, the limits of Coreth's reasoning lie in the treatment he gives to the second issue of how the conditions of our discourse are to be materially explicated.