

What is Whitehead's answer to the question, What is the difference between "bad and good metaphysics"?

If "the chief error of philosophy is overstatement" (*PRc*: 7), then the difference between bad philosophy and good is presumably the difference between philosophy that succumbs to overstatement and philosophy that succeeds in avoiding it. If, further, "[t]here are two main forms of such overstatement," namely, the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and the dogmatic fallacy, then the difference between bad philosophy and good is presumably the difference between philosophy that commits one or both of these fallacies and philosophy that manages to void committing them.

As for the relation between "overstatement" in Whitehead's sense and "extremism" in Hartshorne's, they clearly seem to converge quite closely, even if they are not exactly the same. This seems all the clearer when one considers the two philosophers' closely convergent views on what makes for progress or advance in philosophy. If progress, for Hartshorne, presupposes "well-balanced" and "properly specified" statements, for Whitehead, it requires "coordination" of the variety of general truths expressed by philosophical systems and "conciliation" of their differences.

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