

What is my real quarrel with Whitehead and Hartshorne?

Perhaps my real quarrel with Whitehead and Hartshorne is only with their failure to distinguish clearly and sharply enough between metaphysics, strictly and properly so-called, and philosophy, including "speculative philosophy." (If this were so, it would be clear why I have rather more of a quarrel with Hartshorne than with Whitehead—namely, because Hartshorne has a lot more to say about the difference as well as the relation between the two, even while continuing to hold a view of metaphysics that is indistinguishable, finally, from "speculative philosophy" in Whitehead's sense of the words.)

After all, I allow that philosophy has the ~~critico-constructive~~^{existential} function of answering the existential question as well as the analytical function of developing, finally, what is properly distinguished as metaphysics. Consequently, I can say that "there is very little in Hartshorne's philosophy for which I do not also find a place, even if I feel compelled to distinguish it as indeed philosophy rather than metaphysics in the strict and proper sense of the word." But maybe there is nothing in what Whitehead means by "speculative philosophy" of which I couldn't say pretty much the same thing.

What occasioned this question and these reflections on how I might answer it were the following sentences from the chapter on "speculative philosophy" in *Process and Reality*:

"[Philosophy's] ultimate appeal is to the general consciousness of what in practice we experience. Whatever thread of presupposition characterizes social expression throughout the various epochs of rational society must find its place in philosophic theory. Speculative boldness must be balanced by complete humility before logic, and before fact. It is a disease of philosophy when it is neither bold nor humble, but merely a reflection of the temperamental presuppositions of exceptional personalities" (17 [25]).

Allowing, as I do, that philosophy has the ~~critico-constructive~~^{existential} task of answering the existential question—so as thereby to pierce the blindness, as Whitehead puts it, of activity in respect to its transcendent functions—one

need not hesitate in joining Whitehead in calling for "speculative," i.e., *constructive*, boldness. And this is all the more so, because the constructive boldness that Whitehead calls for is not the only thing he takes to be required. Indeed, he insists that such boldness has to be balanced by complete humility before logic and before fact, which is to say, by complete humility before "whatever thread of presupposition" runs through "what in practice we experience," to the general consciousness of which philosophy, he argues, makes its ultimate appeal. But what can this mean other than appealing to the results of philosophy in its other aspect or function as analysis of presuppositions, and, centrally, as analysis of the necessary conditions of the possibility of human existence (metaphysics in the broad sense) and of any existence (metaphysics in the strict sense)?

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