

I can only wonder whether I couldn't make my points more effectively if I were to distinguish more systematically, and therefore more clearly and consistently, between (1) explicating metaphysics *formally* and (2) explicating metaphysics *materially*.

The first way of explicating metaphysics would require clarifying "being," or "reality," more or less as I've done in my "Ten Theses," by focusing on "the ontological difference," in the sense of the difference between "a being," or "a reality" (*das Seiende, ein Seiendes*) and "being," or "reality," or "reality as such" (*das Sein*). Ideally, this would be done so as to leave room for any attempt—classical, revisionary, neoclassical, or what have you—to fill in this purely formal clarification by explicating some material answer to the question, What is "being," or "reality"?

The second way, then, would require arguing for this, that, or the other material answer to this question—including my neoclassical answer, according to which "being" is either concrete or abstract, and concrete being is "becoming" (or "conrescence"), while abstract being is the necessary conditions of the possibility of "becoming" (or "conrescence")—the most abstract of which are, in the case of metaphysics in the strict sense, solely what I distinguish as "transcendentals," and, in the case of metaphysics in the broad sense, also what I mean by "existentials."

An instructive example of proceeding in these two ways is offered in effect by Ivor Leclerc in *Whitehead's Metaphysics*. Leclerc argues that Whitehead entirely agrees with Aristotle in understanding metaphysics as the attempt to conceive "a complete fact," or "a complete existence." "By 'a complete fact' Whitehead means precisely what Aristotle meant by the *that* which 'is in this sense.'" Thus, "[w]hen Whitehead says the problem [*sc.* of metaphysics] is 'to conceive a complete fact' he means thereby what Aristotle meant in declaring the problem to be: 'what that is which *is* in this sense [*sc.* in the sense of οὐσια].'" (17 f.). But, of course, as Leclerc goes on to show at great length in the rest of his book, Whitehead's *solution* to the problem significantly differs from Aristotle's

precisely because he takes "a complete fact," or a 'fully existent' entity," to be "an actual entity," as distinct from "a particular and actually existing thing," which is to say, an enduring individual that Aristotle takes *οὐσία* properly to refer to. So whether Leclerc ever makes my distinction between "formal" and "material"—and I have not confirmed that he does—he certainly employs it, or something very like it, in arguing for his understanding of Whitehead's relation to "the great philosophical tradition."

1 September 2008; rev. 15 October 2009