

Metaphysics is “the study seeking necessary truths about existence” (*AD*: 17).

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All metaphysical questions are alike in that all of them are *the* metaphysical question put from a particular standpoint (cf. *AD*: xii).

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“[S]trictly speaking, there is but *one* metaphysical, innate or strictly universal and necessary idea or principle, concreteness (containing internally its own contrast to abstractness)” (*CSPM*: 32). Accordingly, metaphysics may be defined as “the unrestricted or completely general theory of concreteness” (24).

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Metaphysics has the task of elucidating what we can and cannot mean by any of our basic concepts. It concerns, not “What are the facts?” but “What is it to be a fact?” The category of fact, not any particular application of the category, is the issue.

My metaphysics responds to the question, “What is it to be a fact?” by saying, “To be a fact is not only to be included in other facts, including *the* fact, the all-inclusive fact, but also to include ~~them~~^{it}—any ordinary facts as well as the extraordinary fact—some by a specific and definite necessity, others by a generic and indefinite necessity.”

Of course, if Hartshorne’s right that there is really only one metaphysical question, even as there is really only one metaphysical idea—concreteness—I could say just as well that the question my metaphysics answers is “What is concreteness?” or “What is it to be concrete?” which—because concreteness includes its own contrast with abstractness—also includes asking and answering

the question, “What is abstractness?” or “What is it to be abstract ?” I take for granted, in other words, that “factuality” is to “concreteness” as “a fact” is to “a concrete,” using “concrete” nominatively rather than adjectivally.

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Metaphysics is a matter both of analyzing our most fundamental concepts and of so relating them that they are all fully taken account of and coherently related to one another. The significance of the fundamental concept “God,” rightly understood, is that it is capable both of fully taking account of all other fundamental concepts and of coherently relating them—indeed, unifying them into one fundamental concept. In this sense, “God” is “the very pinnacle of metaphysical knowledge,” even while God as concretely actual and thus as distinct from the utterly abstract essence-existence to which the concept as such refers, “utterly transcends metaphysical analysis.” In this sense, I can say with Hartshorne, “[W]e can conceive that God is greater than we can conceive. Any concrete reality whatever is greater than we can exhaustively conceive. This is so in a radically unique sense, with the divine actuality, for it is the adequate integration of all actuality as so far actualized” (*AD*: 85).

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Hartshorne argues that we have to live and think as though the past were indestructibly real, for otherwise “fact” would have no definite meaning. “God” merely makes this necessary idea more intelligible, that’s all.

I would prefer to argue that we have to live and think as though there is an objectively real world, including the past and the future as well as the present, that is independent of our fragmentary living and thinking, because otherwise “reality” would have no objective, impartial meaning. The strictly transcendental concept of God as the universal individual that is real for everything and for which whatever is is real in turn only makes this necessary thought more intelligible, that’s all.