

## *On Metaphysics*

According to W. A. Christian, there is a general logic of inquiry that can be and is specified in accordance with various special interests, thereby giving rise to such special inquiries as are characteristic of science, morality, religion, and so on.

The question is whether metaphysics is to be reckoned among the undertakings whose characteristic inquiries can be thus accounted for. Clearly, if the answer is affirmative, the inquiry characteristic of metaphysics can only be conceived as the inquiry specified by the “special” interest necessarily involved in, or implied by, all special interests—i.e., the *existential* interest—in which case, metaphysics is conceived as indistinguishable from philosophy.

Assuming, on the contrary, that metaphysics and philosophy are to be distinguished, one must answer the question negatively. Metaphysics is not one inquiry among others, even the “special” inquiry that philosophy is rightly conceived to be; rather metaphysics is a matter of transcendental argument from *all* special inquiries, including the existential inquiry of philosophy. Thus the metaphysician seeks to explicate the transcendental concepts and principles necessarily implied by all special inquiries, in this way explicating the structure of ultimate reality in itself, as distinct from its meaning for us.

3 April 1982; rev. 5 August 2002