

It is widely held that there cannot be merely conceptual or nonempirical reasons for asserting the existence of anything, at least apart from elements in an abstract system like real numbers.

But to this it may be replied that it is not existence but only actuality that always and in principle transcends conceptual necessity. That the property to which a concept refers is *somehow* instantiated in concrete actuality is its "existence." But just *how*, or in what concrete form, it is instantiated is its "actuality." Thus, for example, that the property to which the concept "concrete particularity" refers is somehow instantiated may well be a nonempirical or merely conceptual necessity, because there could not not be some concrete particulars. And so, too, as Anselm discovered, the concept "God" may likewise be existential a priori or by necessity. But this applies only to the somehow actualized, not to the how, or the concrete form, in which the property is instantiated, whether "concrete particularity" or "God." At the level of utter abstractions, or "transcendentals," merely being actualized or instantiated somehow is not contingent or empirical but necessary or conceptual.

This point, arguably, is the real issue concerning metaphysics. Again and again, controversy over the issue ignores the distinction between existence and actuality, i.e., the indefinite "somehow instantiated" and the definite how of instantiation, as well as the related distinction between such utter abstractions as "concreteness" or "God" and all more specific abstractions that are not necessarily, but only contingently, instantiated, because their being instantiated excludes the instantiation of other specific abstractions.

That the most general classes of facts, such as "concrete actualities," are nonempty, have some members, is a conceptual necessity. This does not obliterate the distinction between conceptual and transconceptual truths. But it does treat "necessarily instantiated" as a conceptual truth applicable to abstractions of the highest rank of generality. Thus, to the distinction, conceptual and factual, or merely contingent, must be added the distinction between utterly abstract, and so noncompetitive or nonexclusive concepts, and less abstract, and so competitive or exclusive concepts, as well as the distinction between necessarily and contingently instantiated concepts—these additional distinctions being only verbally different ways of formulating one <sup>and the same</sup> distinction.

(Tracking Hartshorne, *Insights and Oversights*: 297 f.)