

Logical-Type Distinctions

General Comments

1. We need a general or neutral idea of ultimate reality spanning the differences between all logical types, hence applicable, e.g., to individuals as well as to events or states and to abstract properties as well as to groups of individuals. So understood, "ultimate reality" contrasts only with "unreality," "mere appearance," or "fiction."

2. But we also need several logical-type distinctions spanned by the utterly general or neutral idea of ultimate reality as such. Specifically, we need distinctions between:

- (1) events (or states);
- (2) individuals;
- (3) groups of individuals (or aggregates);
- (4) abstract qualities (or properties); and
- (5) God.

3. God constitutes a unique logical type, because, while God is an individual, insofar comparable with all other individuals, God <sup>the individual,</sup> ~~is~~ also the only metaphysical, or necessarily existing, individual, insofar incomparable with all others.

Special Comments

1. In some places, Hartshorne speaks of "levels of existence," distinguishing three such: (1) "the occurrence [sic!] of certain actual states of individuals"; (2) "the existence of certain individuals"; (3) "the existence of certain kinds of individuals or of certain class-properties" (LP: 63 f.; cf. RSP: 204 f.). Of these he says, "the kinds [sc. of individuals = class properties] cannot exist save in individuals, nor the individuals save in states; still, in which individuals or states they exist remains a further, a contingent determination." "Individuals exist in states, each of which can only be

contingent; but that there are states embodying the individual may or may not be contingent, depending upon whether or not the definition of 'state of X' involves any arbitrary selection" (LP: 64, 66). "Contingency is found wherever one goes from the abstract toward the concrete. 'Something exists' does not entail 'Animals exist,' this does not entail 'Foxes exist,' and this does not entail, 'Fox here with torn left ear exists.' Any step toward concrete particularity is logically a non-necessary one. But, likewise, any step from the particular to the specific of which it is a particularization, or from the specific to the generic of which it is a specialization, is logically necessary. Thus, when we reach the most abstract and universal conceptions, we arrive at entities which are entailed by any statements whatever, and this is precisely what necessary means" (LP: 97). (I observe that Hartshorne's illustrations here, "Something exists," "Animals exist," etc., correspond exactly with what he elsewhere distinguishes as "metaphysical category," "generic character," "specific character," "individual being or existent" [CSPM: 101]. Clearly, "levels of existence" is not anything like as happy a formulation as "levels of reality." [cf. 14 below]) Of the abstract Hartshorne says: "the more abstract something is, the less it derives its character from other things and the more universally they derive theirs partly from it" (LP: 83). This is, presumably, a "rule" explicative of the logical structure of "abstract," or "relatively abstract." Along the same lines, Hartshorne says that "only the completely abstract is non-contingent or absolute, everything less abstract is contingent and relative" (LP: 140). "Whereas both individuals and abstractions (other than those of uttermost generality) can have aspects of relativity, can depend in some way and degree upon contingent relations . . . only individuals, not abstractions, can feel or think or remember" (CSPM: 154).

2. "An abstract idea is always neutral as to the particular concrete reality in which it is or may be actualized, and this is inherent in the very meaning of 'abstract' and 'concrete.' Either, then, God's reality is wholly abstract, or <sup>[God]</sup> ~~he~~ has a particular concrete actualization which is contingent. But if the concrete reality which actualizes divinity is contingent, what can it mean to say that God's existence is necessary? The answer . . . is as follows: to exist is always, and this is the universal meaning [sc. of 'existence' that contingent and necessary existence have in common], to be somehow actualized in a suitable concrete (and contingent) reality; but . . . in ordinary cases of existence not only is the particular concrete reality contingent, but also it is contingent that there is any concrete reality <sup>[at all]</sup> embodying the predicate. In the divine case, however, the predicate is to be thought of as inevitably actualized somehow, that is, in some suitable concrete reality. Thus contingency has two forms: either (1) both that and how the predicate is actualized or concretized are accidental; or (2) only the how is accidental, while the that is necessary. Existence in general and always means, somehow actualized in a contingent concrete form, just what form, or how actualized, never being necessary" (AD: 38). Even so the assumption is ~~fake~~ <sup>false</sup> that "the existence of an individual must be concrete or particular and can in no case be abstract and universal," and so one is not forced to choose between "taking divinity as a candidate for contingent existence," contrary to the clear implications of worship, and "supposing that 'necessary existence' means the necessity of a particular or concrete actuality," contrary to the no less clear implications of logic (37).

3. "Modern logic has made a point of the distinction between 'predicates,' which individual cases may 'instantiate' or 'embody,' and the individual

cases themselves [which] 'exist' only in a tautological sense. To be an individual is to exist in the only sense in which an individual can exist. A predicate, in contrast, may have a sort of thinkable reality, and yet not exist, that is, not be instantiated" (AD: 49 f.).

4. "The existence of an individual is always more abstract than the actuality of events" (AD: 51). "If . . . contingency is in the step from universal to particular, or from more to less universal forms, then it is also (for this is the same) in the step from the more abstract to the more nearly concrete. But then [contrary to the 'Platonizing' procedure of looking for the necessary or universal in the direction of the concrete] the necessary should be looked for in the opposite direction, facing toward the more abstract! Does this form of anti-Platonism (or moderate Platonism) invalidate the [ontological] argument? Only if one assumes the extreme neo-Platonic or classical form of theism as its conclusion? . . . Suppose, however, we take what is often termed the Aristotelian view of universals or forms, that they are not ultimately and absolutely separable from concrete instances, what then becomes of the proof? Answer: it takes on a neoclassical form. Universals must have some embodiment (if in nothing else, in some mind thinking them). It follows that contingency cannot have its ground in the mere contrast between 'predicates' and 'exemplified predicates.' For some predicates must be exemplified, or there would be nothing to talk about, whether universal or particular. The ground of contingency is rather in the distinction between specific and generic predicates, or between more and less determinate ideas. Specific predicates always involve mutual exclusiveness. They are competitive ways of specializing more general notions, alternative 'determinates' under higher

'determinables'; but the bare 'somehow specialized, somehow concretized,' when

*Of course, except for extreme determinates which is an event, predicates are determinates as well as determinates*

applied to the highest determinables, is not competitive with anything positive whatever, but only with the ultra-Platonic negation, 'mere form not specialized, not concretized at all.' . . . 'The most general universal is somehow particularized' is a completely general statement affirming no definite particular whatever. The contingency of each definite step toward particularity only means that, instead of this or that step, other equally definite steps might have been taken; it does not mean that no definite step might have been taken. To affirm this last as possible is to attribute complete self-sufficiency to the abstract or universal. . . . the ontological argument is valid if, and only if, the individuality of God is conceivable as a pure determinable, which, like all pure determinables, by the Aristotelian principle (implied by the extensional assumptions of modern logic?) must be particularized and concretized somehow. . . . the necessary aspect of deity is simply the ultimate determinable as bound to be embodied in some concrete determinate form" (AD: 56 ff.).

5. "That ordinary predicates neither exist necessarily nor necessarily fail to exist is inherent in their meanings. For they describe a conceivable sort of world which excludes other sorts likewise conceivable, and to do this belongs to their very function as predicates of the usual type. . . . Modal status . . . is always a priori or logical; but of the three forms of modality [sc. contingency, positive necessity, negative necessity (= impossibility)], contingency alone makes existence a question of extra-logical facts. The others make it an a priori necessity, positive or negative" (AD: 60). "It might be thought that there are four forms of modal status: contingent nonexistence, contingent existence, necessary nonexistence, necessary existence. But the distinction between positive and negative contingency is not, like that between

positive and negative necessity, an affair of meaning alone. It belongs thus to a different logical level. . . . It is 'existence' in this sense only which is 'not a predicate,' and it is not a predicate precisely because it is this sort of existence. . . . whereas ordinary contingent existence is not a predicate, contingency as such and its negative, necessity as such, are predicates" (AD: 60 f., 76).

6. "Neoclassical theism . . . distinguishes existence and actuality, and does this in reference not only to God but to all things. What is exceptional about God is that in <sup>[God]</sup>him alone is it possible to treat existence as not only different, but different modally, from actuality, i.e., so that the one is necessary, the other contingent" (AD: 78).

7. "What theists say ['God'] means . . . is, 'an individual' who yet is not simply an individual, whose 'nature' or quality is not simply a quality, and who 'exists,' but not simply as other things exist. . . . To take God to be simply an individual, simply having a nature or quality, simply existing, is certainly a category mistake. Deity must itself be a sort of category, and the supreme category, and until its rules have been investigated, there can be no demonstration that any relevant rules have been violated" (AD: 76 f.)

8. "The existence of God, alone among individual existences, is an eternal or a priori truth, which means that other truths of individual existence (and specific kinds of existence) are not eternal and not a priori. . . . To favor the distinctively a priori truth of theism is precisely not to favor the a priori truth of things in general. It is to insist upon the general absence of such truth" (AD: 192).

9. "The necessary being is the ultimate determinable without which determinates would determine nothing" (AD: 204).

10. "The ontological principle may indeed be applied to more than just God. What it cannot do is apply to individuals other than God; rather, it applies to all abstractions or determinables on the highest level of generality" (AD: 244). "The divine essence, and all equally general or abstract essences, cannot conceivably be unactualized, but the more particular essences may or may not acquire actualization" (AD: 248).

11. "Properties universally instantiated cannot be uninstantiated, or in other words, logic cannot deal with a simply empty universe. The widest class cannot be empty. . . . but divinity is in a definite, though unique, sense strictly universal. Just as any entity is identical with itself, so is any entity, according to the meaning of theism, related to God as its creator and sole adequate knower. Relativity to the divine is as essential to existence as self-identity. To deny this is to deny not simply the existence but the logical possibility of deity" (AD: 283, 285).

12. "Only if there is a real contrast between the determinate past and the determinable future can we have a basis for the concept of real possibility, of which real necessity is the most general or abstract aspect" (AD: 232). "The intelligible meaning for objective or extralinguistic necessity is, 'realized no matter what possibility is actualized'" (AD: 115). *Better: ontic* *Better: ontic*

13. "The necessary is the neutral common element of all possible alternative states of reality, the empty, featureless invariant in all possible variations. . . . the necessary can only be abstract, and the evidence for it can only be a priori" ("Religious Aspects of Necessity and Contingency": 148 f.).

14. "There are existing individuals or beings, and there are actual events or states in which they exist. . . . events occur or are actualized; they do not, strictly speaking, exist. . . . Individuality is meaningless apart

from concrete states in which the individual contingently realizes some (never all) of his possibilities" ("Religious Aspects," etc.: 150 f.).

15. "The contingency of your existence or mine is not that we exist in this state rather than some other, but that we might fail to exist in any state, that indeed there might never have been any such individuals, in no matter what states. . . . in the supreme, aboriginal, or divine individual, contingency consists only in the possibility of alternative states, but not--as in us--in the additional possibility of no state at all. Contingency with us is negative as well as positive. It includes the null state of nonexistence as a possible case; with deity the null state is excluded as logically impossible. The contingency of the particular positive states, however, remains intact" ("Religious Aspects," etc.: 151 f.).

16. "Abstractions are outlines of reality, not full-blooded realities, and no outline can dictate its own concrete filling. . . . the abstract, impossibly unexemplified essence of deity is that to know which is to know next to nothing. . . . Taken by itself, it is but the purely general outline of existence, totally without concrete filling[,] . . . the outline for which all that is concretely real provides unimaginable richness of definite actuality" ("Religious Aspects," etc.: 158, 164).

17. "God is either conceivable only as existent, or not conceivable at all, while all other individuals and kinds of individuals are conceivable as existent and also conceivable as nonexistent. But since God's concrete reality takes all contingent existences into account, this concrete reality in its particular or definite content is of course likewise contingent. And we can know this concrete content only through knowing the creatures. Here the empirical approach is alone suitable" ("Religious Aspects," etc.: 163).