

In what sense, actually, do I understand God to be *a* being?

I ask this question because it sometimes seems to me that my way of answering it has not always been as sophisticated as it could and should have been. Of course, my concern all along has been to preserve the genuinely social character of our relation to God and of God's relation to us, by insisting that God has to be conceived as a center of interaction with others and, in this sense, as an individual. But I have been no less concerned to insist on the strictly universal and therefore metaphysical, transcendental functions of God—whence my repeated statements that God is not merely *a* center of interaction, but *the* center. Even so, my guess is that speaking in this way may have only too often encouraged the assumption that my view is a "metaphysical" view in the bad sense—in that God, in my understanding, is one ^{more} matter of fact alongside others, however unique or odd.

In truth, however, God, in my view, is not a fact but integral factuality, factuality so conceived that all its aspects or dimensions can be understood as aspects or dimensions of one transcendental individuality necessarily actualized in one transcendental individual. Thus to be is either to be this individual, or one or the other aspect or dimension of its individuality, or else to be one of the ordinary, nonuniversal, nontranscendental individuals or events included in it. On this view, however, it may be more misleading than accurate to say that God is *a* being. God is not *a* being, but being-itself, although being-itself has not only one but two necessary aspects—an abstract, "primordial" aspect, in which it is the sole primal source of all things, being universally immanent in everything that is so much as possible; and a concrete, "consequent" aspect, in which it is the sole final end of all things, being that in which everything is universally immanent as and when it becomes actual. In either of these aspects, however, God is not *a* being, because God is not a fact alongside other facts. Rather, "God" fully explicates the factuality of all facts, of what ^{it} means to be a fact—namely, to participate in, and to be participated in by, the one universal, transcendental individual, whose individuality is constitutive of reality as such.

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