

### On the Question of What is Philosophy

According to Dewey, "philosophy is inherently criticism, having its distinctive position among various modes of criticism in its generality; a criticism of criticisms, as it were" (EN, 398). A somewhat similar view is also frequently expressed by Whitehead (cf., e.g., AI, pp. 125 f.; MT, p. 232), though here the emphasis falls at least as much on philosophy's being "the effort after the general characterization of the world around us" (MT, 173), as on its being "an attitude of mind toward doctrines ignorantly entertained" (MT, 233). For Hartshorne, on the other hand, "philosophy in its totality is . . . the contemplation of what has an everlasting, necessary, and at all times knowable essence, together with the contemplation of as many of the contingent features of the contemplated object as may be accessible to us." Thus "philosophy . . . is all of knowledge, though there is an aspect of philosophy which is independent of all other knowledge, as there is an aspect of the object of philosophy which is independent of all other things" (MVG, 73). I conclude from all this that philosophy is precisely "integral secular wisdom," i.e., the effort--and the results of the effort--to understand ourselves and our total environment in the most adequate way possible, as the necessary condition of our self-realization within and together with it. But what, then, is metaphysics? According to Dewey, metaphysics, "as a statement of the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds without regard to their differentiation into physical and mental" provides "a ground-map of the province of criticism, establishing base lines to be employed in more intricate triangulations" (EN, 412 f.). With this, it seems to me, Whitehead and Hartshorne would fully agree. Metaphysics is that "aspect of philosophy which is independent of all

other knowledge" because it studies that "aspect of the object of philosophy which is independent of all other things." As for philosophical anthropology, it would seem to me to have both a metaphysical and a more than metaphysical aspect. Because man is the animal metaphysicum, there is an important sense in which statements about him are metaphysical statements. (Specifically, the statement, "I exist," properly defined, is incapable of being coherently contradicted, "I do not exist" being self-refuting.) But, clearly, man is also the object of scientific knowledge, and a philosophical anthropology will have to take that knowledge into account as well. (Perhaps something very like this can and must be said about philosophical cosmology and philosophical theology as well. That is, each of these disciplines, also, may have both a metaphysical and a more than metaphysical aspect.) Only so, can it be that aspect of an "integral secular wisdom" which illumines the reality of man and enables him to realize himself as fully as is possible.