THE DIVINE BECOMING:
AN EXAMINATION OF
CHARLES HARTSHORNE'S
CONCEPT OF
GOD

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THE DIVINE BECOMING: AN EXAMINATION OF CHARLES HARTSHORNE'S CONCEPT OF GOD

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What is a suitable definition of "God," and what is implied by that definition? For the past fifty years, Charles Hartshorne has persistently attempted to answer this question. Professor Hartshorne has not been content with merely analyzing the views of his philosophical and theological colleagues concerning the conception of deity. Since the early 1930's, in scores of journal articles and some ten books, he has been constantly involved in a radical reconstruction of theistic philosophy. His efforts have born fruit in the form of a bold and novel doctrine of theism, which he variously terms "surrelativism," "panentheism," "dipolar theism" and "neoclassical theism." A leading expounder of the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, Hartshorne has for many years vigorously defended metaphysics as a legitimate area of philosophical inquiry, and, in more recent years, has just as vigorously defended the intellectual respectability of Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God. Hartshorne's work is especially important to theologians interested in applying the insights of process philosophy to theological problems and to those who see the need for a reconstruction

of traditional metaphysical concepts.

Like Whitehead, Hartshorne conceives philosophy in the grand manner of such men as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes and Leibniz. That is to say, philosophy is primarily and essentially metaphysics. By "metaphysics" is meant an investigation into "the most general features of phenomena and things,"[1] an attempt to formulate "an a priori theory of reality,"[2] and "a view of first principles that is livable and rationally defensible."[3]

Moreover, it is a central Hartshornean conviction that metaphysics is essentially religious. "Metaphysics evaporates into thin air, or it leads us to religion," he writes.[4] Since he is convinced of the incorrectness of the first alternative--which articulates the positivist notion that metaphysics is really nonsense--his metaphysics is closely allied with religious considerations. Religion is for Hartshorne a matter of worship, and he considers it the philosopher's task in this regard to clarify and draw out the implications of that which religion considers the referent of worship. Hartshorne finds that, traditionally (at least in the West), "God" is the name for the "One who is worshipped."[5] As a philosophical theologian, then, Hartshorne is concerned with developing a logic of theism. Beginning with a basic idea of God, he proceeds to determine what further conceptions and consequences that idea logically entails. He also wishes to determine which conceptions are logically incompatible with it, and finds several

time-honored notions, which have virtually attained the status of theological orthodoxy, that fail the test of consistency. Interior logical consistency is thus a primary criterion for judging a conception of God. But it is not the only one. Adequacy to experience is no less important. Concepts which have no analogue in our experience--human experience--cannot, he argues, be meaningfully applied to God, not even for the ostensible purpose of safeguarding his perfection, superiority and transcendence.[6] It is one of Hartshorne's methodological theses that the concepts we use must derive ultimately from experience as we know it. Yet, he also holds that human experience provides a touchstone from which we may generalize our concepts to apply to non-human experience, both above and below the human level.

This essay proposes to focus on a particular aspect of Hartshorne's theism, namely his contention that becoming, and hence such categories as potentiality, temporality, relativity, must be admitted as constitutive of God. Such an admission seems to stand in contradiction to views held by many eminent thinkers. To cite perhaps the clearest example of this we can recall St. Thomas Aquinas' insistence on God as "actus purus," or pure actuality--actuality, moreover, that is not derived from any previous process of actualization.[7] Aquinas (and many others are of the same mind on this issue) will not admit any becoming or potentiality in God because to do so would imply in him a lack of something, and since a lack, it is argued, implies

imperfection, the divine reality must lack nothing. Hartshorne, on the other hand, denies that to lack something is ipso facto an imperfection. For Aquinas, God is the Divine Being who is beyond the reach of becoming and change; all that he can (conceivably and appropriately) be, he is, in one eternal state of actuality. For Hartshorne, God is the Divine Becoming, who includes all change and becoming within himself; all that he can be, he either is, or will be, not in any once-and-for-all state of actuality, but in successive states of actualization.

In order to maintain God's supremacy, his superiority to all others (for only thus is he truly worshipful, as religion insists), Hartshorne conceives God to change only in the direction of increase in value, that is, only for the better. God, unlike any other individual, has unlimited potentiality for increase in value, and is therefore categorically supreme. As new values emerge into reality, become actual, God unfailingly possesses them. Before those values became actual, God could not have possessed them, for they were not "there" to possess. Thus, God becomes the actual possessor of values as they themselves become actual. Prior to their becoming actual, it must be said that God actually lacks (but potentially possesses) them.

This view, of course, rests on the contention that God cannot simply be outside the temporal process. Hartshorne's God, in a very important respect, is "in time."

And since time seems to be correlated to becoming, it would appear that the category of becoming must apply to God. Herein lies the heart of Hartshorne's radical reconstruction of the traditional manner of conceiving deity. Previously, there has been a tendency to balk at conceiving God temporally; deity, it was insisted, must be atemporal. The philosophical category most appropriate to God was, accordingly, "being." Hartshorne's contention is that "becoming" is no less, and in a significant sense is even more, appropriately applicable to God.

Expository and critical remarks in this thesis will focus on Hartshorne's conception of God as the divine becoming. Not only will the claim that his theism is more philosophically coherent and defensible than more traditional theistic concepts be evaluated, but also his claim that it is more faithful to and illuminative of the religious dimension of our lives will be considered critically.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Charles Hartshorne, Beyond Humanism: Essays in the Philosophy of Nature (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), p. 255.

[2]Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), p. ix.

[3]Charles Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1970), p. xvi.

[4]Charles Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1941; reprint ed., Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964), p. 346.

[5]Charles Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1967), p. 3.

[6]As an example, a fairly recent statement by Hartshorne concerning the idea of "creation ex nihilo" may be cited: "According to the old view, as set forth by most theologians and philosophers, God influences all things, nothing influences God. For him there are no 'stimuli'; hence when he influences or stimulates the world, it is in a wholly different way from the ordinary way. For normally, a stimulus or cause is but a previous effect, or response to some still earlier stimulus; yet God, it was thought, does not respond. He just--creates, 'out of nothing.' I think this was a mischievously unclear way of talking. We know creativity only as a responding to prior stimuli, and if we refuse to allow an analogy between such ordinary creative action and the divine 'creating' of the cosmos, we are using a word whose meaning we cannot provide." Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 12.

[7]See Anton C. Pegis, ed., Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (2 vols.; New York: Random House, 1945), I, 26.

CHAPTER II

THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATION OF HARTSHORNE'S THEISM

In commenting on Anselm's ontological argument, Charles Hartshorne has stated several times that one must have a metaphysics before he can begin to understand, let alone to defend or attack, the import of that argument.[1] This suggestion is germane to understanding Hartshorne's own conception of God. Preliminary to an examination of this conception of God, it is helpful to have some understanding of the metaphysical "foundation" on which it rests. Consequently, a brief, but reasonably adequate, summary of Hartshorne's principal metaphysical views is in order. An exhaustive exposition of these views will not be undertaken, however, as attention in later sections will focus only on one of the major features of Hartshorne's theism, namely, the doctrine that the category of becoming, or process, is applicable to deity. The primary concern in this chapter, then, is the metaphysical doctrine that "process is reality." Finally, an account of how Hartshorne's metaphysics culminates in a concept of God is also provided.

Becoming as the Fundamental Category

The "metaphysical context" in which Charles Hartshorne's conception of God is expounded and elucidated is a systematic and far-reaching attempt to overcome a long tradition in Western thought, a tradition which took "being" to be the ultimate and most general category applicable to reality. This emphasis on being as the primary metaphysical category, which characterizes the mainstream of speculative philosophy from Parmenides to Martin Heidegger, belongs to what Hartshorne terms "classical metaphysics," and which he characterizes as a "metaphysics of being, substance, absoluteness, and necessity as primary conceptions."[2] In its attempt to elucidate that which is permanent and enduring "underlying" the flux of changing phenomena, classical metaphysics tended to make being prior to, and in some cases more real than, becoming, change, process. To give an obvious and familiar example, it may be recalled that Plato divided reality into a higher, superior level, the realm of the Forms, and a lower, inferior level, the realm of sensible things--with "being" correlative to the former and "becoming" to the latter. Moreover, Plato gave the classic statement of the principle on which the distinction of superior and inferior levels is made, namely, that the most real is that which is immutable, invariable and ever self-consistent.[3] Becoming is thus taken to be an inferior mode of reality, derivative from being.

It is precisely this point of view against which Hartshorne has been contending for most of his philosophical career. His own view, which he calls "neoclassical metaphysics," understands becoming to be the primary category, inclusive of being. He writes

> There is. . .a tradition that becoming is a secondary mode of reality, inferior to and less real than being. Our view affirms the contrary, that 'becoming is reality itself' (Bergson), and being only an aspect of this reality. [4]

It should be noted that in taking becoming to be the primary metaphysical category, the reality of being is not denied. What is denied is the notion that being constitutes, or is illuminative of, the fundamental features of reality. Hartshorne is explicit on this point in his introductory remarks in Philosophers Speak of God, where he writes:

> . . .being becomes, or becoming is--being and becoming must somehow form a single reality. Modern philosophy differs from most previous philosophy by the strength of its conviction that becoming is the more inclusive category. This does not mean that it is 'more real.' We can abstract from the stages of becoming various real common features and call these 'being.' [5]

Thus, Hartshorne can claim that whereas being is "nothing apart from process" it is still "by no means nothing or negligible in process." [6]

This last claim--that being is neither apart from nor negligible in process, or becoming--provides the basic conception upon which Hartshorne's understanding of being rests. For it is by reference to becoming that he defines being, not vice versa; that is, being, for Hartshorne, is

"that which does not become." Accordingly, being is that category which refers to those features of reality which are characterized by fixity, stability, self-identity through time and change, and permanence.[7] Being is the uncreated as contrasted with the created, constancy as contrasted with variability,[8] and the non-novel as contrasted with the novel.[9] Hartshorne thinks of being as the non-dynamic, nonactive aspect of reality.

In speaking of the views of other thinkers, most notably Bosanquet, Royce, and Aquinas, Hartshorne acknowledges that being can also be associated with the affirmation that "'there is' a total reality, once for all, not only inclusive of all that has happened but of 'future events' in their full detail. . . ."[10] However, this conception of being is rejected, as it seems to involve "severe paradoxes."[11]

The principle on which the primacy of becoming is based can be initially formulated thus: for any two concepts, X and Y, X is more fundamental and ultimate than Y if X includes Y. Moreover, X includes Y if Y can be abstracted from X, but not vice versa.[12]

Hartshorne's reasons for holding that becoming includes, and therefore is more fundamental than, being may be summarized as follows. Reality is characterized by both being and becoming. These two factors must go together to form a unified conception of reality; that is, they must be related in such a way that neither is "outside" the other.

Otherwise, "the total reality 'What becomes and what does not,' is left undescribed, and so the doctrine [of reality] is left unfinished."[13] Viewed as a whole, then, reality exhibits fixed, permanent, self-identical features, and dynamic, novel, emerging features. But, as new items emerge, or become, and furnish themselves as additions to the content of reality, they make the total reality itself a new reality, enhanced by the incorporation of previously nonexistent items. In other words, becoming does not just describe a portion of reality. On the contrary, runs Hartshorne's argument, if any portion of the whole becomes, the whole itself becomes, for it is thereby a new whole:

> The 'Philosophy of Process' is not the result of an arbitrary preference for becoming, but of the logical insight that, given a variable V and a constant C, the togetherness of the two, VC, must be a variable. Variability is the ultimate conception. [14]

Again, he says: "What becomes and what does not become (but simply is) together constitute a total reality which becomes."[15] As long as the world process continues, new items are constantly emerging and "reality as a whole" never has the character of permanence necessary to associate it with being. The incorporation of instances of becoming insures that the total real is itself always becoming.

Since that which becomes and that which does not become forms a total reality which becomes, being (as that which does not become) must be the included reality, not the inclusive reality. Hartshorne observes that "the point

often overlooked here is that the common element is contained in the diverse realities as a 'common denominator,' an abstraction. . . ."[16] Being is thus an abstraction from becoming. As such, it can never refer to "reality as a whole." This means that "terms like 'reality,' or 'the universe,' or 'the truth' have no single referent, fixed once for all, but acquire a partly new denotation each time they are used."[17]

The above considerations carry weight only on the assumption that being and becoming are real; that is, the argument assumed that becoming is not illusory. But if becoming is an illusion there is really no question of whether being includes becoming or becoming includes being. In this case, becoming only appears to be real, leaving being as the sole reality. "In other words," Hartshorne observes, "the only way to make becoming less than being is to deny that there is any real becoming."[18]

This alternative is rejected on the grounds that the formulation, "being alone is real, there is really no change, no becoming," expresses no coherent idea and is therefore meaningless:

> For it may be argued. . .that being, in the form of fixed law, cannot be absolute, since this would make becoming an illusion; however, being too would be illusory, because all terms involve contrast, and if there is only being, 'being' is meaningless. On the other hand, becoming can be absolute in a certain sense, without making being an illusion. [19]

The salient point of the above remark is the contention that ideas are dependent on contrast for their meaning.

Especially is this true for what Hartshorne terms "ultimate contrasts," such as being and becoming. Each term in a pair of contrasting terms must have an illustration or exemplification; if either of the terms is without illustration, is unreal, then the contrast cannot be present, and both terms are meaningless. Accordingly, reality cannot be sheer being, all-pervasive permanence and immutability, for then becoming would have no exemplification. Nor can reality be sheer becoming, all-pervasive impermanence and change, for then being would have no exemplification. Both must be admitted, or neither can be admitted.

In taking this position, Hartshorne derives support from Morris Cohen's "principle of polarity," which "may be generalized as the principle, not of identity, but of the necessary copresence and mutual dependence of opposite determinations."[20] Cohen is concerned to warn against "the greatest bane of philosophizing, to wit: the easy artificial dilemma between unity and plurality, rest and motion, substance and function, actual and ideal, etc."[21] Furthermore, he argues that "The law of contradiction does not bar the presence of contrary determinations in the same entity, but only requires as a postulate the existence of a distinction of aspects or relations in which the contraries hold."[22]

The Concrete Units of Reality

But what, more specifically, is it that becomes? That is

to say, what are the most fundamental, concrete units or elements of reality? As Hartshorne reads the history of philosophy, metaphysical schemes that took "being" to be the ultimate category tended also to make "substances" the ultimate constituents of concrete reality. By "substance" is meant a self-same something that endures through change, a "bearer" of qualities or accidents, or, as Hartshorne has it, "a 'being' to which adventures happen, or experiences occur; to make it the primary conception is to assume the priority of being."[23] Or again, by "substance" is sometimes meant an enduring subject of change which does not itself change.

Hartshorne's alternative to the idea of substance as the primary unit of concreteness is the notion of the momentary event, state or occasion: "the unit of concrete reality is the state or singular event."[24] These events are occasions of experience, feeling or awareness; they are "pulses of experience" and are to be conceived analogously to Whitehead's actual entities. Hence, "The units of reality. . .are unit-experiences, 'experient occasions,' or 'actual entities'. . ."[25] William Christian's characterization of Whitehead's notion of "actual entities" is helpful in understanding Hartshorne's notion of event: "Actual entities are the real things (res verae) of which the universe is made up. An actual entity is an experiencing subject and is constituted by its experience. Its experience is its real internal constitution."[26] Reality

is conceived as a plurality of these events, or occasions of experience.

Events (in contrast to substances) are not themselves enduring, permanent things; rather, they are fleeting, transient, momentary pulses or "drops" (Whitehead's term) of experience.[27] This does not mean that the idea of an enduring individual or enduring subject is eliminated or disregarded. It does mean that such ordinary phrases as "identical entity," "same individual," and "same subject" really refer to common features or patterns abstracted from a series of events. Hartshorne prefers to say that the identical individual or subject is "in" the sequence of events which characterize it, and not that the sequence is in the individual.[28] The notion of substance, he argues, has traditionally involved the latter formulation as correctly elucidating the relation between "individual" or "subject" and "experience." But this "notion of substance that it is an identical entity containing successive properties is. . .a misleading way of describing an individual enduring through change."[29]

Ordinary sense perception is incapable of disclosing to us these concrete singulars which constitute reality. That is to say, we cannot lay hold of them directly by focusing our attention on the world around us; all we see here are composites, or "societies" of such singulars, and not the singulars themselves. Where, then, are they to be found, if not in external perception? Hartshorne's answer

is that the only model by which we may form a conception of singular events is our own consciousness, which provides us with the necessary data--singular pulses of experience--from which we may construct a theory of concrete singulars.

> The human specious present is the only epoch we directly experience with any vividness. . . .In perceiving the non-human world we are always apprehending collectives, both spatial and temporal. To form even a vague conception of the singulars composing these collectives our only resource is to generalize analogically the epochal and atomic characters of human experiences.[30]

Human consciousness may thus be taken as a kind of interpretive key by which we may achieve, with some measure of adequacy, insights into the structure of reality.

In elucidating the structure of "event," Hartshorne places special emphasis on its "creative-synthetic nature."[31] He means by this that every event, every pulse of experience, is a self-creation. To grasp his meaning here, we must make use of our interpretive model and consult our own experience. Analyzing human consciousness, Hartshorne finds that each specific experience is a felt unity. To be sure, there are many factors which contribute to the making of a particular experience, but these various factors converge and become one in that experience. The elements of an experience, which may be said to cause that experience, are many, but the experience itself is always one, a unity.

Now, it may seem that, since a unity is a unity of something, a single experience is, paradoxically, both a

one and a many. But "many" here refers to factors which are antecedent to the experience they make up by subsequently flowing together. The "one" refers to the experience as immediately present. Antecedent factors provide the data for subsequent experiences, but they do not provide for their own unity in that experience. This unity is precisely the novel feature, the element of becoming, in each single experience; and each experience may therefore be said to create itself by creating its own unity. Hartshorne explains:

> A person experiences, at a given moment, many things at once, objects perceived, past experiences remembered. That he perceives certain objects and remembers certain things, we can more or less explain: the objects are there, the experiences are recent and connected by associations with the objects, and so on. But an experience is not fully described in its total unitary quality merely by specifying what it perceives and remembers. There is the question of how, with just what accent, in just what perspective of relative vividness and emotional coloring, the perceiving and remembering are done. And no matter how we deduce requirements for these aspects from the causes, we still have omitted the unity of all the factors and aspects. There is the togetherness of them all, in a unity of feeling which gives each perception and each memory its unique place and value in this experience, such as it could have in no other. Causal explanation is incurably pluralistic: on the basis of many past events, it has to explain a single present event or experience. It is, then, simple logic that something is missed by the causal account. Not because of our ignorance of causes: if we knew them all, the multiplicity of causal factors would only be the more obvious, and so would the jump from the many to the new unity. From a, b, c, d. . .one is to derive the experience of a, b, c, d. . .and not just an experience of them, but precisely this experience of them. There can be no logic for such a derivation. The step is not logical,

> but a free creation. Each experience is thus a free act, in its final unity a "self-created" actuality, enriching the sum of actualities by one new member.[32]

Hence, experience, with regard to human consciousness at least, is a felt unity which comes into being with the experience; or better, it should be said that the felt unity is the experience. As such, its peculiar unity, its sensuous immediacy, is not determined by its data, the factors which constitute it. That unity is created by the synthesis of its antecedent data; it is a creative synthesis because the resultant experience is "unpredictable, incompletely determined in advance by causal conditions and laws. Accordingly, it means additions to the definiteness of reality."[33]

Hartshorne interprets the entire cosmos as operating on this model, making creativity "a fundamental principle, a category applicable to all reality."[34] The cosmos at every moment is a vast panorama of pulses of experience, each pulse creating itself as a novel, emergent synthesis, a new unity.

Thus far, mention has been made of the data which is antecedent to any event, or experience, but which is subsequently synthesized into a singular novel experience, without adequately characterizing it. That characterization must now be made. It is simply this: the data which go to make up experiences are themselves experiences. And, since every experience, as we have seen, manifests a creative-synthetic nature, these "data-experiences" are themselves

"prior acts of synthesis."[35] Consequently, each experience is a synthesis of previous experiences, events, or actual entities, these latter furnishing themselves as constituents to be subsequently synthesized: "Experient occasions have previous such occasions, whether or not closely similar to themselves, as their data."[36] We must also note that this account is at odds with "the view that data may in some cases be bits of mere matter or merely material processes, 'vacuous' of any internal life, feeling, or value."[37]

Hartshorne's analysis here is in close agreement with Whitehead's doctrine, "The many become one and are increased by one."[38] Experiences, for both Whitehead and Hartshorne, are inclusive realities, the previous experiences which furnish themselves as data being the included factors. An experience, no matter on what level, is always an experience of other experiences. Hartshorne often refers to this phenomenon as the "feeling of feeling." In its fullest metaphysical articulation, "The world may be conceived as the increasing specification of the theme 'feeling of feeling.'"[39]

Reality, according to Hartshorne, is thus a process, a dynamic becoming in which experiences come together and form novel experiences, which in turn furnish themselves as items in subsequent becomings. Incessant movement is a universal thread woven into the very structure of reality, in which novel unities, in the form of creative-synthetic

events, continually emerge. The old maxim that everything changes except change itself is not an improper description of this metaphysic, for, as Hartshorne says, "Process itself does not emerge, in eternity or anywhere else. It simply is, without alternative."[40]

However, as the above remarks have hopefully indicated, reality is not merely a process, but it is also a social process. Reality is social inasmuch as its basic constituents display "the appeal of life for life, of experience for experience"; each pulse of experience, each new item of emergent novelty, is a "'shared experience', the echo of one experience in another."[41] Actual entities are constituted by the feeling of each other's feelings. The constitutive experiences and feelings are drawn from that entity's own past experiences, as well as from the experiences and feelings of other entities. In fact, since Hartshorne adheres to the Buddhistic doctrine that every individual is a plurality of selves, one's own past is in a sense "other" to him. It may thus provide the data for future experiences.[42] "To be social," Hartshorne writes, "is to weave one's own life out of strands taken from the lives of others and to furnish one's own life as a strand to be woven into their lives."[43]

Reality is also, on this view, a cumulative phenomenon. Every emergent phase of becoming is an incorporation of previous phases of becoming, "the participation of experiences in other experiences."[44] Reality gets built up into

more and greater structures of complexity. Each new item that becomes is itself a new synthesis of previous items, which were themselves syntheses of previous items. Moreover, after having become, an experience offers itself as an available item for some subsequent pulse of becoming, thus forming a new many. Again, it is appropriate to recall Whitehead's maxim, "The many become one and are increased by one." In an essay on Whitehead, Hartshorne summarizes this doctrine:

> But what pluralist had ever clearly stated that it is the destiny of the many to enter into a novel unity, an additional reality, which, since we are dealing with a principle, not a mere fact, must in its turn be unified with the others in a further unity, and so on without end? We have here an admission not merely of emergence, but of emergent or creative synthesis as the very principle of process and reality. This is brought out in another phrase, defining the 'Principle of Relativity': 'To be is to be a potential for every [subsequent] becoming' (Cf. PR, 33). Each item of reality has the destiny of forming material for endlessly compounded and recompounded acts of synthesis--producing new and more complex realities.[45]

It may be remarked that the concept of being finds application in this account as having reference to the pastness of events, experiences, etc. After having become, the items of becoming are. That is to say, after events become, they achieve a measure of definiteness, stability and permanence. Thus, in any concrete instance of self-creative becoming, the data-experiences to be unified into a new whole do not themselves become in that particular synthesis; having previously become, they are. Hartshorne

says that "The products of creation cannot be until they are created, but having been created they are bound henceforth to be."[46] Furthermore, the transition from present to past is not characterized by any diminishing of former reality. Hartshorne eschews Whitehead's use of "perishing" in this regard as a dangerous metaphor, as it seems to imply that past events are "dead, lacking in subjective activity."[47] Events, in becoming past, are not thereby "annihilated," do not cease to be units of experience. They retain their subjective constitution.

This facet of Hartshorne's thought is termed "panpsychism," from the Greek, meaning "all soul." It is the doctrine that each concrete singular is composed of feeling, or awareness, or "units of experiencing."[48] The chief contention of panpsychism is that feeling or experience or subjective activity is not peculiar to one class of entities, for instance the animal kingdom. Rather, it extends to subhuman entities also, such as cells, molecules and electrons. Or, in Hartshorne's words: ". . .matter is experience on various subhuman levels."[49] Again, Hartshorne is following the lead of Whitehead in denying that nature, on any level, exhibits "vacuous actuality," or that any aspect of nature is merely insentient and "dead."

Lest it be thought that Hartshorne is here expounding an unmitigated animism, whereby it is held that such things as trees and rocks are unitary individuals experiencing joys and sorrows, it should be recalled that it is the

concrete singulars who are experiencing subjects. But they do not exist by themselves, in isolation; each concrete singular is invariably a member of a society of singulars. And depending on the extent to which the society is unified and presided over by a dominant and controlling member (in much the same fashion that Plato held the soul to be dominant over the body), it may or may not be said to be a feeling individual. In any case, each physically perceived object is held to be a composite of concrete singulars, a "society of actual occasions." The composite itself (for instance, a tree) may not feel or experience, but its constituents, the cells (and perhaps their constituents), may do so. Thus

> The main subdivisions of the class 'societies of occasions' consist of the linear or 'personally ordered' societies, the familiar example being a 'stream of consciousness' of a single person, and nonlinear societies, such as a tree considered as a colony of cells. Perhaps each cell is personally ordered but probably not the tree. One form of nonlinear society is that which, unlike the tree, is accompanied by a linear society of 'presiding occasions.' A live human body with its 'mind' or 'soul' is the example nearest at hand.[50]

Composites, then, are not necessarily experiencing things. But, even though they may not experience, their constituents may. Some composite things, on the other hand, have as a constituent a dominating member, which unifies the experiences of the constituents over which it presides. Human conscious experience provides the paradigm here, as has already been observed. To make the paradigm

applicable to non-human aspects of reality, "we must generalize, extend into an infinitely flexible analogy, the basic traits thus accessible to us."[51] At the same time, one must guard against supposing that, in generalizing the concept of feeling to include lower grades of entities, he will thereby know the specific details of those modes of feeling. A bird, a single-celled microbe, an electron, all may be possessed of feeling or experience in some fashion, but in just what specific fashion cannot, perhaps, be known. Accordingly, the panpsychistic view "does not undertake to tell us what particular sorts of souls other than the human there are; only comparative psychology can do that."[52]

God as World-Process

When fully generalized, the principle that societies of occasions are themselves included in larger societies yields the notion that the universe is the largest and most inclusive reality of all, having for its constituents every singular entity, as well as all composite entities. According to the process view of reality, the universe is to be conceived as the cosmic society, or the cosmic community; yet it is not itself a member of any larger society or whole. The cosmic community would have nothing external to itself to which it could be related. "There is nowhere to go from the universe,"[53] says Hartshorne. And, since the cosmos has no external environment, all of its

relations must be internal ones. Hence, the cosmos is the all-inclusive reality. It cannot be a static, unchanging reality, for inasmuch as its constituents become, the universe becomes also. The cosmic community is a "creative advance" into novelty.

Furthermore, the cosmic community must not be thought of as a mere collection of parts. A collection has no functional unity, no ordered integration, with respect to its members. A collection is thus "one" in a more trivial sense than something with functional unity, say a human individual, or an individual cell. The cosmos must be conceived as, at least, a whole--if not as an "individual." The question then naturally arises, what provides for the wholeness, the unity? The answer, put bluntly, is that the cosmos itself does--it creates its own unity, just as any subordinate actual occasion does. Indeed, the cosmos is an actual occasion, a unit-experience; or, more properly, it is a series of such occasions, since its unity is not a once-and-for-all achievement, but a continuing process. The universe becomes, creates itself a novel whole, with each inclusion or synthesis of its (continually emerging) constituents.

It is on the level of cosmic wholeness and unity that the concept of God appears in Hartshorne's metaphysics. He argues that the unitary character of the cosmos is best understood as a wholeness imposed on it "by a single dominant all-ruling member."[54] A society whose members were

not subordinate to a ruling entity would be a society in jeopardy of disintegration through lack of mutual cooperation by its members. In such a society, the decisions and actions of the members would inevitably come into greater and greater conflict, so that

> Nothing would guarantee the continuance of the society from moment to moment save the infinite good luck that they all happened to use their freedom in ways serviceable to the society. . . . If there were no radically dominant member, able to set limits to the chaotic possibilities of individual freedom, it seems that there would be no reason why the scheme of things should not dissolve in a chaos of unmitigated conflict; that is to say, in the cessation of all feeling and activity through the irresistible force of unbearable frustration.[55]

Elucidation of the process, or social, concept of God amounts, at the same time, to a form of the design argument for the existence of God. Thus, it is an a priori form of the design argument. Hartshorne's reasoning is not an inference from the fact of order, coherence and regularity exhibited by our world, to the conclusion that there must be a cosmic orderer for this world. Instead, he argues that for any possible world there must be such an ordering power, for the reason that cosmic order is inherent and necessary in "worldness" as such.[56] Put another way, he holds "that reality should be reality it may be necessary that a certain individual should be real, for this individual may be the ground of all reality."[57] The "individual" here referred to is the cosmos in its creative-synthetic aspect, or, in other words, God.

Great pains are taken by Hartshorne to make clear that God's coercive power in providing order, coherence and continuity to the cosmic process does not eliminate or render negligible the freedom and power of the lesser beings over whom he rules. Unlike many before him, Hartshorne does not think of God as having a monopoly on power. Rather, he understands God "as the being uniquely able to maintain the society of which it is member, the only social being unconditionally able to guarantee the survival, the minimal integrity, of its society, and of itself as member of that society."[58] He hastens to add that power so conceived is not the power to remove all possibility of conflict, for that would necessitate eliminating freedom also. God's ordering power extends only so far as "to set limits to the freedom of others. . . to set the best or optimal limits to freedom. . . ."[59] Balance between freedom and coercion, resulting in an order and coherence within which creativity, and hence genuine becoming and advance, is possible--this is, in admittedly general terms, what God accomplishes as the cosmic orderer of worlds. Employing the notion of a dominant, or presiding, agent as a "monarchical society," Hartshorne writes

> The 'monarch' sees to it that there is enough involuntary or unconscious cooperation to make voluntary forms of cooperation possible without intolerable risks. Men can freely decide to aid each other in this way or in that because it is decided for them that, whatever they do, the basic cooperations that maintain the society will go on.[60]

Mutual interaction and cooperation (characteristics distinctive of, and necessary for, any world) are possible, Hartshorne contends, only within an all-inclusive reality which is at the same time a singular reality dominant over its members.

With this account, the exposition of Hartshorne's fundamental doctrines in metaphysics has been accomplished. It has been seen how, beginning with the notion that becoming is the fundamental metaphysical category, inclusive of being, and taking creative-synthetic units of experience as the ultimate concrete singulars, God is conceived as the all-inclusive reality who unifies and coordinates his internal environment, advancing to novel stages with each act of synthesis. Such is the concept of deity generated by a metaphysics of becoming and process. The following chapter undertakes to show how this concept of God arises out of a religious starting point.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Charles Hartshorne, "Introduction to Second Edition," St. Anselm: Basic Writings (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 2-3; and "What Did Anselm Discover?" in The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies on the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God, eds. John Hick and Arthur C. McGill (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 321.

[2]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. xiii.

[3]See Phaedo, 78b-78e, 79d.

[4]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 13.

[5]Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, eds. Philosophers Speak of God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 9.

[6]Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion (Glencoe: The Free Press and Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953; reprint ed., New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1971), p. 20.

[7]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," in Philosophical Interrogations, eds. Sydney and Beatrice Rome (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 322.

[8]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, pp. 13-14.

[9]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," p. 321.

[10]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 17.

[11]Ibid. For a discussion of some of the paradoxes, see Hartshorne's essay "Royce's Mistake--And Achievement," The Journal of Philosophy, LII (February 2, 1956), 123-130. The chief difficulty concerns the possibility of "timeless truths," which Hartshorne maintains is entailed by such a conception of being. He claims that the assertion that events are, in their full particularity, before they become

is the paradox involved, and that there are no cogent reasons to support the assertion.

[12]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, pp. 13-14, pp. 26-27.

[13]Ibid., p. 14.

[14]Ibid.

[15]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," p. 321.

[16]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 15.

[17]Charles Hartshorne, "Personal Identity from A to Z," Process Studies, II (Fall, 1972), 209.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 23.

[20]Morris R. Cohen, A Preface to Logic (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1944), p. 75.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 74. It should be pointed out, however, that Cohen expressly says that this principle is needed "to make logic applicable to empirical issues." Ibid. Questions involving the nature of God are not, according to Hartshorne, empirical issues.

[23]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 45.

[24]Ibid., p. 23.

[25]Charles Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," in A History of Philosophical Systems, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), pp. 450-451.

[26]William A. Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 12.

[27]See Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (New York: Macmillan, 1929; reprint ed., New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 23.

[28]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 20.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 450.

[31]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 15.

[32]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[33]Ibid., p. 3.

[34]Ibid., p. 1.

[35]Charles Hartshorne, "The Philosophy of Creative Synthesis," The Journal of Philosophy, LV (October 23, 1958), 944.

[36]Hartshorne, "Personal Identity from A to Z," 210.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 26.

[39]Charles Hartshorne, The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934; reprint ed., Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1968), p. 208.

[40]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," p. 322.

[41]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 34.

[42]For Hartshorne's understanding of the Buddhist notion of the self, see his articles, "Religion in Process Philosophy," in Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective, eds. J. Clayton Feaver and William Horosz (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1967), p. 249; and "Twelve Elements of My Philosophy," The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy, V (Spring, 1974), 13. See also Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, pp. xx-xxi.

[43]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 136.

[44]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. xvii.

[45]Charles Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy: Selected Essays: 1935-1970 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 162.

[46]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 15.

[47]Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, p. 165.

[48]Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 442.

[49]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 150.

[50]Hartshorne, "Personal Identity from A to Z," 211.

[51]Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 445.

[52]Ibid.; see also Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, pp. 34-35.

[53]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 204.

[54]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 38.

[55]Ibid., p. 39.

[56]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 278.

[57]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 53.

[58]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 41.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid., p. 40.

CHAPTER III

THE GOD WHO BECOMES

The concept of God described in the preceding chapter may appear to some to be rather far removed from the God of which religious communities and traditions speak. Indeed, one of the chief criticisms which can be made against philosophers who speak of God is that the God they conceive is a mere abstraction, an explanatory principle, and not the "living God" of religion. Pascal, for instance, in recording his mystical experience, is emphatic that his encounter is with the "God of Abraham, God of Issac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars."[1]

Charles Hartshorne is sensitive to this issue. He does not believe that the idea of God which he defends is simply a plaything of philosophers, having no connection with what religion has meant by the word. He contends that, on the contrary, his view of God may be seen as springing from a basic religious understanding of the meaning of "God." He says that,

> In view of the large if not decisive part which religion has played in the very origin of the theological idea, and in view of the enormous social importance which this idea enjoys only through religion, it is doubly reasonable. . .to discover what God may be as the God of religion. . . .(For religion seems clearly to have first

title to the word.)[2]

Although religion may have "first title to the word," Hartshorne is not content to simply leave it in the hands of religion. Religion has not said all that can be said about God; nor has what it has said been altogether free of ambiguity. Professor Hartshorne believes that philosophical analysis can be brought to bear on the religious conception of God, and that the results may well be propitious for both philosophy and religion. Accordingly, the principal aim of this chapter is to show how Hartshorne's concept of God springs from an explicitly religious origin, and to trace its development from that origin to a full-blown doctrine of God.

The Religious Conception of God

Hartshorne's claim is that "worshipfulness" is religiously definitive of deity: God, for religion, "is the name of the One who is worshipped."[3] By "worship" he does not mean just an unusually high degree of respect or admiration or love. Rather, "Worship is the integrating of all one's thoughts and purposes, all valuations and meanings, all perceptions and conceptions."[4] The key to understanding the concept of worship is found in the Biblical injunction to love God with all of one's heart, all of one's soul, all of one's mind, and all of one's strength.[5] The meaning of this is clear to Hartshorne:

The word 'all' reiterated four times in one

> sentence means, I take it, what it says. It does not mean, nearly all--or, all important--responses, or aspects of personality. Simply every response, every aspect, must be a way of loving God.[6]

What could reasonably be conceived as worthy of such an all-inclusive response? Hartshorne's answer is that only a supremely excellent being, who is himself characterized by love in its supreme, or eminent, form, could serve as the proper object of such devotion. In his words: "Only supreme love can be supremely lovable."[7]

An important implication of the foregoing is that religion is not a one-way affair, whereby man relates himself to God, but not vice versa. Hartshorne takes the religious sense of God to proclaim him "the God of love and responsiveness and interaction with man."[8] The notions of "responsiveness and interaction" are dominant motifs in all of Hartshorne's writings. It has already been shown, in chapter one, how they figure prominently in his social conception of reality. Any conception of God, then, which represents him as completely aloof and independent of the world, as "wholly other," does not, to Hartshorne's mind, deserve to be honored with the adjective "religious." The relationship between God and his creatures must be a two-way affair. Hartshorne points out that "A social being receives from others as well as gives to them."[9] God is not an exception to the social nature of reality, but is rather its supreme exemplification. "A personal God," Hartshorne declares, "is one who has social relations,

really has them, and thus is constituted by relationships. . . ."[10] Since participation and mutual interdependence between God and creation is what the religious sense requires, any explication of the religious sense of God must take care to employ concepts that provide for and make explicit God's responsiveness and interaction vis-a-vis his creatures, no less than theirs vis-a-vis him.

God as the Unsurpassable Self-Surpasser of All

For God to be the "supremely excellent being," and so "superlatively worthy" of our attention, he must be without rival, that is, superior to every other individual, every other reality, whether actual or possible.[11] To worship anything which does not possess this radical superiority over all others is idolatrous. Anselm sought expression for this requirement in the formula: "thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived."[12] This radical supremacy and excellence promptly gives rise to the allied notions of "unsurpassability" and "perfection." These terms serve as a kind of shorthand for the Anselmian formula.[13]

Complicating the matter, however, is the fact that there are two principal alternative ways of conceiving perfection and unsurpassability. There are two rival interpretations of Anselm's formulation, "than which nothing greater can be conceived." Hartshorne avers that Anselm

himself did not notice this and thereby spoiled his insight in the course of working out his ontological proof for God's existence.[14]

Interpreted one way, a perfect, unsurpassable being is one who is "unsurpassable in conception or possibility even by itself."[15] Given such a conception of God, it follows that he is complete in all dimensions, immutable, wholly actual. All that he can be, he is; hence it would be absurd to speak of the divine reality as becoming better, of enjoying any measure of increase in reality or value. Being perfect, on this view, means that no change or increase is ascribable to deity, for any change in what is maximally complete could only result in diminished reality and value. It appears that this is the meaning of "none greater" that Anselm had in mind.[16] It is also one of the distinguishing features of what Hartshorne calls "classical theism."[17] According to the classical interpretation, God's supremacy and perfection must reside in his security from <u>any</u> rival, even himself in another, albeit better, state. How could the supreme reality surpass itself when divine perfection is treated as being equivalent to "absolutely complete"? The divine life could not be thought of as being anything like a process, a succession of states, in which each succeeding state is richer, qualitatively more abundant reality than its predecessor.

However, perfection may also be taken to mean "an excellence such that rivalry or superiority on the part of

other individuals is impossible, but self-superiority is not impossible."[18] On this view, God cannot be surpassed by any other, nondivine individual, though he can surpass himself. It differs from the first alternative by assigning an integral role to the factor of becoming. But note that the divine life exemplifies the supreme, unsurpassable form of becoming, since it is always in the direction of increase. What Anselm failed to see, Hartshorne says, is that the God who is perfect, and thus worthy of unqualified devotion, should be conceived as the "self-surpassing surpasser of all."[19] A reason is suggested for this neglect:

> Anselm's mind. . .was full of the Greek glorification of the immutable; he accepted the Platonic-Aristotelian argument that what is worshipful must be self-sufficient and perfect in the sense of complete, and that what is complete cannot change--obviously not for the better, and surely not for the worse. Change is a sign of weakness, it was thought, and its only value must be to remedy a prior defect.[20]

Two alternatives regarding the way in which an individual may be unsurpassable, or perfect, have now been briefly mapped out. Classical theism adheres to a doctrine of strict perfectionism, whereas Hartshorne's neoclassical theism eschews this and opts instead for a relative perfectionism. At this point one is close to the heart of the theism Hartshorne wishes to revise. Classical theism makes central to its conception of deity the aforementioned notions of immutability, self-sufficiency and completeness. This tradition spoke of God as unsurpassable in <u>all</u> respects, such that there could be nothing further or

additional which he might come to possess. Anselm, and the tradition in which he stands, conceives of God as the all-around maximum of value and reality, who actually possesses, in a single eternal actuality, every possible dimension of value.[21]

In order to place Professor Hartshorne's neoclassical theism in bolder relief, and to call particular attention to its dipolar aspect, it is helpful to fill out more fully the traditional position. It will then be explained why he argues, in opposition to Anselm, Aquinas and others, that when applied to God, perfection must mean unsurpassability in some, not in all, respects.

Following Aristotle, Aquinas conceived God to be "the First Being" in whom there is no potentiality or becoming.[22] God is actus purus, pure actuality. Not only does God not possess any potential which is to be subsequently actualized; his actuality is eternal, it is not the result of any previous actualization. As Aquinas puts it:

> . . .this first being must be pure act, without the admixture of any potentiality, for the reason that, absolutely, potentiality is posterior to act. Now everything which is in any way changed, is in some way in potentiality. Hence it is evident that it is impossible for God to change in any way. . . .since God is infinite, comprehending in Himself all the plenitude of the perfection of all being, He cannot acquire anything new. . . .[23]

As pure actuality, God is self-sufficient and complete, such that no addition to the degree of reality or value which he possesses is possible, for he possesses all pos-

sible reality and value.

Such a doctrine seems clearly to entail the radical and absolute independence of God, even to the extent that nondivine beings are in no way constitutive of the divine reality. Hartshorne raises a number of objections against this way of conceiving God, which lead him to the alternative notion of a being who indeed surpasses all other beings, but who nonetheless is capable of surpassing himself. Of course, such a being will not be the changeless, self-sufficient being of whom Aquinas and Anselm speak.

The first objection is that the idea of a God who creates and possesses all value, independently of others, makes the religious injunction to serve others impossible. A man serves God by somehow genuinely contributing to the life of God. Yet, if God is in eternal possession of all possible value, there would seem to be nothing men could offer him. That God possesses all value in a single state of actuality seems to imply that nondivine individuals do not have the opportunity of creating any value ourselves, and thus they would have nothing to contribute. Or, if they did create anything, it would be a superfluous addition to the divine possession. "The idea of a God so perfect that he eternally realizes all possible values," Hartshorne argues, "is fatal to religion, for it makes human choice of no significance whatsoever. Infinite value will exist no matter what we do."[24]

The second objection is on philosophical grounds, and

utilizes the Leibnizian notion of "incompossible values," the doctrine that there cannot be in actuality the simultaneous co-existence of all possible values, since there are some values which are incompatible, and thus mutually exclusive of each other. In illustration of this principle, Hartshorne writes:

> Being a scientist is good, being a musician is good, but the same man cannot in the fullest sense be both. Sonnets have many possible rhyme schemes, each of which is good, but each of which in a given case excludes all others. This conflict of positive values is at the root of both contingency and tragedy in existence. Between positive values there can be no uniquely right choice. And always some goods must be renounced.[25]

Inasmuch as all possible values cannot exist in one eternal state of actuality, such a notion should not be correlated with that of perfection. Rather, perfection should be thought of as "partly dynamic."[26] Since "a purely final or static perfection possessing all possible value is impossible,"[27] value must come into being, must be created, must become. To Hartshorne's mind, the doctrine of a being conceived as an absolute, all-around maximum of value is no more meaningful than the confused notions of a "greatest possible number," or of a "greatest possible magnitude."[28] Even God's appropriation of value and reality must come in successive increments.

But if God is not conceivable as the actual possessor of all possible value and reality, how is he to be conceived? Recall that the meaning of "perfection" to which

Hartshorne adheres is that of unsurpassability by another, though not by self. It was seen that God may be conceived as surpassable by himself (though by no other being) should he pass to a higher, richer state. This conception of God admits and affirms an element of becoming, hence change and potentiality, in the divine reality. Yet it must not be forgotten that there is a dimension of unsurpassability present also, for all others are inferior to God. In this sense, God is indeed absolute.

> The self-surpassing being who surpasses all others is, in certain respects, strictly absolute. It can be shown to be independent of other beings, at least for its retention of values already attained and for its assurance of surpassing other beings, actual or possible; it is also at an absolute maximum in this, that there can be no more universal superiority to others than superiority to all others.[29]

Professor Hartshorne finds an element of validity in the idea that God must be, in some respects, absolute and immutable, "beyond shadow of turning." Yet he is equally convinced that this cannot be the whole truth about God. It must somehow be the case that the eminent reality is both being and becoming. In this regard, it is affirmed that

> . . .'God,' not in any extraordinary sense, but as the term occurs in ordinary piety, refers to a being conceived as having two aspects: an abstract, eternal nature which is strictly necessary, and a total, de facto actuality, containing both the eternal nature and successive accidental qualities.[30]

Classical thinkers were acting on the basis of a sound intuition insofar as they maintained that God must somehow be

untouched by change and independent of the fortunes of the world. Their mistake, so Hartshorne argues, lies in the manner in which they construe the "somehow."

Formally, there are three possible solutions here: (1) God is in all respects immutable, absolute, actual, necessary; or (2) God is in no respects immutable, absolute, actual, necessary; and (3) God is in some respects immutable, absolute, actual, necessary, and in some (other) respects mutable, relative, potential, contingent.[31] The traditional approach is to select the first alternative, to the exclusion of (2) and (3), which are held to be defective modes of existing. (2) of course is incompatible with the superiority allegedly definitive of deity. A being who did not exist necessarily could not qualify as "that than which none greater can be conceived." For a being who did exist necessarily, whose existence was secure beyond even the conceivability of non-existence, would be superior to a being who did not exist necessarily, but only as a chance result of favorable factors supportive of its existence. Hartshorne selects (3) as the most adequate characterization. To this doctrine that God is both surpassable and unsurpassable, though each in different respects, he gives the name "dipolar theism." This label is highly significant, for it clearly calls attention to two aspects, or "poles," of God's nature: unsurpassability by others and surpassability by self. Conceiving God to be dipolar in nature allows Hartshorne to effect an attractive synthesis

of seemingly conflicting factors; thus, God is both infinite, immutable and atemporal; and he is finite, mutable and temporal. Or again, both being and becoming apply to God.

However, to avoid contradiction, the two poles must apply in such a way as not to conflict with each other. The respect in which God is immutable, for instance, cannot without contradiction be the respect in which he is mutable. Dipolar theism is Hartshorne's proposed solution to the problem of how both being and becoming can characterize God.

Monopolar and Dipolar Theism

At this point, it is useful to contrast the dipolar method of describing deity with its counterpart, the monopolar method. It may be summarized as follows:

> . . .taking each pair of ultimate contraries, such as one and many, permanence and change, being and becoming, necessity and contingency, the self-sufficient or nonrelative versus the dependent or relative, the actual versus the potential, one decides in each case which member of the pair is good or admirable and then attributes it (in some supremely excellent or transcendent form) to deity, while wholly denying the contrasting term. What we propose to call 'classical theism' is, in the West, the chief product of this method; in the Orient its chief product is pantheism.[32]

Ultimate contraries are represented as forming pairs which are polar in nature, each term of the contrasting pair corresponding to a different pole. In monopolar theism, only one of the contrasting terms is admitted as applicable to God. The other term is excluded as being

essentially defective and inferior. This method results in a being conceived as wholly absolute and wholly actual, a being unaffected by the passage of time, thus existing in an eternal present and knowing all things in a nonsuccessive, single act of cognition. The monopolar God is absolutely simple, without "parts" or constituents of any sort, devoid of internal succession of "states" (for example, in the sense of enjoying or experiencing "moments" of happiness). Contrariwise, the application of such categories as temporality, complexity, and potentiality is regarded by this method as improper. The eminent reality can be described, it is thus argued, only by utilizing the allegedly superior pole of ultimate contrasts.

Professor Hartshorne is critical of this method on two fronts. First, he maintains, on logical grounds, that the one-sided and exclusive affirmation of but one of the terms in ultimate contraries tends to deprive that affirmation of meaning. The case of unity is offered in illustration of this point. In the case of unity, it is pointed out that unity is always <u>of</u> something, and thus for there to be unity there must also be constituents that are unified. Unity and complexity are thus notions that are "essentially correlative."[33] The same is true for the other pairs of contraries. Thus, if one affirms the applicability of one of the terms, yet at the same time denies the applicability of its contrasting term, the result is that the affirmation loses its meaning.

The second objection Hartshorne levels at the monopolar method of conceiving God involves an appeal to experience. Here he finds that "experience does not. . .exhibit the implied essential inferiority of the theologically despised contraries."[34] For instance, it is true that things are sometimes found to be defective and inferior owing to a complexity insufficiently unified. Yet, sheer unity is no facile protection against inferiority, for a unity lacking in sufficient complexity is trivial and monotonous. When complexity predominates over unity the result is chaos; when unity predominates over complexity, we encounter monotony. But both extremes represent defective modes and consequently both are to be avoided, so that a balanced richness, "unity-in-variety, or variety-in-unity" is achieved.[35] In other words, it is monopolarity in either direction, yielding sheer complexity or sheer unity, that is normally judged inferior and defective. Conceiving God as simple, without constituents, would therefore run counter to "the good as we know it,"[36] which is a balance, or harmony, between the formally contrasting extremes. The monopolar conception, Hartshorne insists, compels the compromising of these basic principles.

Hartshorne proposes the following correction of the monopolar method:

> There seems a good deal of support in experience, logic and intellectual history for what Morris Cohen called the 'Law of Polarity.' According to this law, ultimate contraries are correlatives, mutually interdependent, so that nothing real can

> be described by the wholly one-sided assertion of simplicity, being, actuality, and the like, each in a 'pure' form, devoid and independent of complexity, becoming, potentiality, and related contraries.[37]

Accordingly, Hartshorne's dipolar method of conceiving deity claims to avoid the mistake made by classical theists using the monopolar method, by affirming, rather than denying, "certain all-pervasive, infinitely fundamental aspects of life--change, variety, complexity, receptivity, sympathy, suffering, memory, anticipation--as relevant to the idea of God."[38]

But Hartshorne's dipolar method of characterizing God rests upon a more fundamental contrast, that between the abstract and the concrete. That is to say, there is an abstract aspect of God's nature, as well as a concrete aspect. One set of terms, for instance "being," "absolute," "necessary," "infinite," "nontemporal" belong together as correlative to the abstract pole of the divine nature; and another set of terms, contrasts with the first set, for instance, "becoming," "relative," "contingent," "finite," "temporal"--all of these belong together as correlative to the concrete pole. Thus, Hartshorne can meet the charge of contradiction by pointing out that he does not hold God to be both necessary and contingent in the same respect. Rather, God is held to be necessary in one respect (the abstract aspect) and contingent in a different respect (the concrete aspect).

God as Concrete

Baldly stated, God in his concrete aspect is the world, or universe, in all of its extraordinary, multifarious richness, detail and variety. Yet, it must be remembered that Hartshorne thinks of the world not as a mere collection or aggregate, but rather as an organic whole possessing unity of experience. Consequently, "The creation is not just a set of creatures, it is somehow one creature, and its unity is, in some fashion, ideal or spiritual."[39] This parallels the account offered in the first chapter, in which God is held to be a society of actual occasions, each of which is characterized by a synthesis of previous occasions.[40] Moreover, God, in contrast to every other individual, has the entire world as data to be synthesized. The world is constantly becoming, is continually being made anew. It pulses and expands, increasing in content, yet remaining always an integrated, organic whole. Accordingly, God, who is the world in its cosmic, holistic unity and functional integration, is continually becoming, "creating each new state in the world process."[41]

It should be clear from the foregoing considerations that the identification of the concrete aspect of God with the universe does not imply that God is "merely physical" if that phrase is taken to mean insentiate, dead, or unfeeling. God is physical in the sense that he includes within himself all physical reality. "Physical reality,"

however, is not simply synonymous with "mere matter" for psychicalism is held to be the fundamental truth about reality.[42]

To speak of the concrete aspect of God, then, is to draw attention to the experiential aspect of his nature. The unity of the world in God is a felt unity, an experienced oneness. In its concrete aspect, reality is an "ocean of feelings"[43] which are, in turn, felt by God. This means that God is not an exception to, but the supreme illustration of, the social character of reality. For to feel is essentially to respond, and responsiveness to others is sociality. "God," Hartshorne avers, "is a socially receptive being, taking upon himself the very being of others. . . ."[44] God's awareness is a responsive integration of the awareness of others, indeed of all others, since all are in him.

Viewing God's relation to the world in this light, Hartshorne is able to say that God creates himself out of the creatures he includes. That is to say, God and his creation are not wholly distinct. Hartshorne can thus find common ground with Ikhnaton, who, in the twelfth century before Christ, composed a hymn of praise to the God "who himself fashioned himself."[45] These words compare favorably with Hartshorne's own way of expressing the relation between creator and creation: "God, in creating the world, creates a new total reality which is Himself as 'enriched' by the world (Berdyaev's term)."[46]

God fashions his own experiences out of the experiences of others. The many experiences of the creatures are data to be synthesized into the one experience of the creator; since God could have no experiences whatsoever without data to experience, and since God includes within himself all things, it may be said that God creates his own experiences out of that which is integral to him. The world is not a reality external to God, but a reality internal to him. In making the world what it is, through successive creative-syntheses, God makes himself what he is. As such, God is dependent, not independent, upon the world for his own actuality. God apart from a world to know, feel, direct, could be nothing more than a mere abstraction.[47]

Furthermore, with regard to the concrete dimension of his nature, God is not entirely simple, but also complex. In the sense outlined in chapter one, God is both one and many.[48] Or, as Hartshorne has it, God "is the many as also one, or the one as also many. The world as not God is the many merely as many--an abstraction from the many as one, as the integrated, active-passive content of omniscience."[49]

The analogy Hartshorne most often employs to explain the concrete nature of deity is that of mind and body. This is why he can speak of "the cosmos as the perpetually renewed body of God."[50] In other words, in certain important respects, God is to the world as a man is to his body. The world, taken as a plurality of less than divine items ("the many merely as many") constitutes the body of God; God

taken as the all-inclusive integrative being ("the many as also one"), is the mind, or soul, of the world.[51]

Hartshorne believes that the key to the mind-body relation is to see it as a relation between the one and the many, instead of a one-to-one relation: "There is really no possibility of really comprehending how 'the mind' influences 'the body' and vice versa."[52] The mind, as correlated to the human personality, is an integrative agency, influencing and being influenced by successive changes in the body cells. Yet "I" always experience such interaction with this many as a felt unity or oneness. And even though the relationship between mind and body is a symmetrical one, involving mutual interaction and influence, the mind is still the dominant member. "The body as a whole, as a dynamic individual unit (not a collection) or--it is the same thing--as a mind, wills: the parts of the body (which may be minds, but not that mind) respond."[53]

Extending this account to the divine case, Hartshorne conceives God as the cosmic mind whose body is the entire cosmos. The mutual influence between mind and body which is present in the human case is also present in the divine case. God is not impassive towards the world; on the contrary, he is not only open to, but requires, its influence. Without some world, God would have nothing to experience. Hartshorne is adamant that God cannot be conceived as disembodied mind. At the same time, the cosmic or divine mind exerts the dominant (yet not monopolistic)

influence on all other influences, to the degree that it sets limits to the freedom of lesser beings.

Such an analogy prompts interesting questions as to how far the similarities with the human case may reasonably be expected to extend. The principal dissimilarities between the divine case and any non-divine case are the following:

First, God is <u>supremely</u> receptive to influence by others. This means that he is open to direct influence by all others.[54] Deity is not to be conceived as a mere fragment of reality, but rather as the all-inclusive reality. God, in contrast to every other thing, has no external environment; all things are his internal constituents. Since Hartshorne holds that to know something adequately is to include it,[55] God must have the supremely adequate form of knowledge. That is, only God could know all things because only he includes all items available to know. Contrasting the human with the divine mode of knowing, Hartshorne writes:

> Granted that we do not 'include' mountains when we 'know' them, unless in some very attenuated sense of include, equally we do not know mountains, except in a very attenuated sense of 'know'--by comparison with what the word means when we say that God knows mountains. . . . Furthermore, whenever our knowledge achieves something like infallibility, it also becomes evident that it includes the known within itself. Thus we know, in a sense infallibly, the aches and pains we directly feel. Do we not also include these feelings? Are they not features of our consciousness at the moment?[56]

Second, although Hartshorne does conceive God as

cosmic mind, he does not claim that there is a cosmic brain, a localized organ analogous to its human counterpart. God as cosmic mind is suffused throughout the universe, "co-extensive with existence,"[57] and hence "in" all things. The world thus conceived is something like a vast nervous system, with every creature, every item of reality, serving as a nerve cell in the divine mind.[58] Indeed, on this view, it would be more accurate to say that, in the divine case, mind and body are coincident. They are coincident in the sense that, everywhere the world-body is, there also is the world-mind. In elaboration of this view, Hartshorne says,

> For such a mind must have, not a world-part as brain, but the whole world serving as higher equivalent of a brain; so that just as between a brain cell and the human mind there is no further mechanism, so between every individual in existence and the world-mind there is no chain of intermediaries, not even a nervous system, but each and everyone is in the direct grip of the world-value.[59]

Thus, he can also say that God's mode of knowing, or awareness, should be conceived "as clear intuition of the entire cosmos."[60]

Third, God's mode of knowing, as the immediately preceding quotation indicates, is characterized by intuitive clarity. Hartshorne argues that every non-divine case of knowing or awareness involves selectivity among data present and available for that particular act of awareness. The creatures "screen out" or abstract from the wealth of detail, so that not every aspect of the item known is

included and present to their consciousness. Nondivine individuals do not, in knowing, "take everything in." According to Hartshorne, this is true even of our own interior states, and even more true of our awareness of external states of affairs. He points out that "With perception of things outside the body, there seems no good reason for supposing a direct grasp (unless a very faint and ineffectual one) of the things we see or hear."[61] There are thus always some negative aspects in our manner of knowing things, inasmuch as there are always some excluded features in each act of knowing.

In contrast, there are no negative aspects in God's mode of knowing. Literally, whatever there is to know, whatever is actual, God knows it, without distortion, vagueness, or partiality.[62]

Fourth, the divine instance of the mind-body relation is not subject to decay or dissolution. This of course is not the case for lesser minds and bodies, and this has been one of the reasons adduced for the inappropriateness of ascribing a body to deity. If bodies are intrinsically subject to decay, surely the divine reality is not embodied! However, God is unique in that he alone is not one body among other bodies. He alone has no external environment on which he must depend for his continued existence. In an intriguing piece of reasoning, Professor Hartshorne puts his case thus:

True it is that bodies preserve themselves by

> developing new parts from time to time, to replace those that have disintegrated; but for the body as a whole to survive it is only necessary that the one process keep pace with the other. Now the fact that all bodies less than the universe seem eventually to fail to maintain such a balance is not inconsistent with the notion that the universe itself does maintain it. To have an external environment is to depend upon factors not under immediate control, and sooner or later these factors may happen to conflict fatally with one's internal needs. But the universe as a whole, if it is an organism at all, must immediately control all its parts; so what is to prevent it from setting unsurpassable limits to disintegration in relation to construction? . . .The composition involves mutability; but the unity sets limits to mutability which make corruption of the whole impossible.[63]

According to the foregoing view, God may be described, on one side of his nature, as the supreme instance or form of becoming. God is divine becoming, the cumulative "creative advance" of the cosmos. In his concrete aspect, God is the individual who is surpassable only by himself, who indeed is always surpassing himself.

God as Abstract

Thus far Hartshorne's conception of God as a concrete individual, as a personal being who has relations with the world, has been considered. Does this mean that they are simply wrong who maintain that God is not a being or a spirit, but rather being itself, or spirit itself? Hartshorne acknowledges that there is some substance to this query. Even on his view, God must not be conceived merely as a being, but also, he must somehow be conceived as being itself. "His uniqueness must consist precisely in being

both reality as such and individual reality, insofar comparable to other individuals."[64] In other words, deity must somehow be an exception to the general rule that "what is individual is not, to an equal degree, universal, and what is universal is not to an equal degree individual."[65]

God must be a radically unique individual, an individual who is also the very principle of existence.

> This is exactly the point of theism: that the ultimate principle is individual, not a mere or universal form, pattern, system, matter, or force--or that, conversely, the ultimate individual is strictly universal in its scope or relevance.[66]

That is to say, God alone is the individual who exemplifies universal characteristics. His very existence, for example, is absolutely secure; no state of affairs could be incompatible with the divine existence, hence God is the sole necessarily existing being. He alone is eternal--unborn and undying. He alone surpasses all other individuals, and alone is universal in his sphere of influence and interaction.

All of these stipulations serve to identify deity with such notions as "ground of being," "reality as such," and "being qua being." But these are all abstract principles. They are indeterminate inasmuch as they do not single out any particular state of affairs. Rather, they are principles of such generality that they are common to all states of affairs, and must therein be exemplified. Reaching for an analogy, Hartshorne once again turns to the human case,

and suggests that those personality traits which serve to characterize an individual may be seen as abstract and "highly specific universals of which each momentary state of the man is a new instance or embodiment."[67] The difference between the human and divine case is that in the latter the "personality traits" are the very principles of existence. For example, the divine may be characterized both by being and becoming, for the reason that becoming is. That is, becoming does not itself become or emerge: "It simply is, without alternative."[68]

This aspect of God's nature is the generic aspect, signifying what God is bound to be, those characteristics which he is bound to exemplify by virtue of being the unsurpassable yet self-surpassing individual. Hartshorne is as convinced as the classical thinkers that God must be, in some suitable way, immutable, necessary, independent, atemporal, infinite, et cetera. But he is equally convinced that this cannot be the whole truth about God. If it were, God would indeed be merely an abstraction, in the same way that personality traits, or generic features (e.g., "humanity") are abstractions.

> Eternally fixed, immune to influence, and incapable of increase is only the generic divine trait of universal interaction, unsurpassable in scope and adequacy--just what is properly meant by calling God 'all-knowing,' 'all-powerful,' 'ubiquitous,' also unborn and immortal. These abstractions come to the same thing. But they are empty by themselves. It is vain to interact universally and always, but with nonentity, or to have unsurpassable knowledge, but of no other individual than self. But this emptiness is

> precisely what classical theism spoke of as God when it declared him absolutely and in all respects immutable and independent of the world.[69]

The abstract features of deity together form the divine essence; the concrete features constitute the divine accidents in which the abstract, generic, essential aspects are exemplified.

Another way of elucidating the abstract-concrete contrast is by way of still another contrast, namely that between existence and actuality. That God exists, is eternal, all-knowing, supremely powerful, is a necessary and timeless truth, independent of any particular world to which God is related. Yet, just how he exemplifies this truth, in exactly what concrete state of actuality, is not necessary, nor independent of the world. God's concrete actuality depends on the particular, concrete world he possesses as items in his experience. Unfailingly, he will possess whatever world there happens to be--and just this is his abstract, necessary characteristic. God's personality traits are unfailingly manifested in concrete states. These personality traits are identical with the divine essence, and consequently they are necessary and fixed. The concrete states in which they are exemplified are contingent, and are not required by God's essence. All that is required is that they be actualized in some concrete state. In explication of this view, Hartshorne says

> Let us call the concrete state of a thing its actuality. Then my proposition is, actuality is always more than bare existence. Existence

> is that the defined abstract nature is somehow concretely actualized; but how it is actualized, in what particular state, with what particular content not deducible from the abstract definition constitutes the actuality.[70]

The Relation Between the Abstract and Concrete Aspects of God

At this point the question arises as to how the abstract aspect is related to the concrete aspect. Are they, for instance, to be thought of as rather like two sides of the same coin? There is perhaps a tendency to so conceive the relation. This would nonetheless be a misconception. The answer has been implicit in the preceding discussion. Hartshorne reiterates throughout his writings that "the concrete includes the abstract."[71] Accordingly,

> The concrete is the inclusive form of reality, from which the abstract is an abstracted aspect or constituent. Again, the concrete is the definite, for to abstract from details or aspects is, insofar, to conceive the indefinite.[72]

Concrete instances of becoming thus are richer than the abstract, generic principles or characteristics they include and exemplify. To use a Hartshornean example: an individual may exemplify or manifest friendship--but a friend is concrete, whereas "friendship" is an abstraction.[73] Still, the two aspects, the friend and his displayed friendliness, are somehow one thing together. So also with God: his concreteness includes his abstractness and forms one reality. Therefore, in his total reality

> God is neither being as contrasted to becoming

> nor becoming as contrasted to being; but categorically supreme becoming in which there is a factor of categorically supreme being, as contrasted to inferior becoming in which there is inferior being.[74]

In this way God furnishes the sole example of what Professor Hartshorne calls "dual transcendence," or the doctrine that God is unsurpassable in two dimensions: the abstract, necessary dimension and the concrete, contingent dimension.[75]

The abstract-concrete distinction provides a fruitful context within which to consider the "religious availability" of Hartshorne's dipolar God. Surely much of the attention Hartshorne has attracted is owing to his persistent efforts to articulate a theism which serves both philosophic and religious purposes. It may be that it is more fruitful for some purposes to focus primary attention on the more abstract features of reality; thus philosophy seeks principles of explanation, categoreal schemes by which to interpret diverse features of experience. The abstract aspect of the divine nature may serve this function. It is perhaps with this in mind that Hartshorne refers to God as "the supremely beautiful abstract idea."[76]

At the same time, Hartshorne maintains that dipolar theism is capable of explaining how God as "supremely beautiful abstract idea" is compatible with God as Person. Arguing that a personal God must signify an individual whose character is manifested in the activities of knowledge, choice, and love, Hartshorne, in speaking to the

issue of the religious availability of his doctrine of God, adds the following:

> God 'shares with each creature its actual world'; he takes into his actuality, as 'consequent' upon process, the life of the world, somewhat as we (in infinitely less adequate fashion) take into ourselves experiences of our friends. He does not plot it all out in eternity, and with a single moveless state register the result. He lives, genuinely lives, in unison with our living, and the only moveless feature is the basic character of infallibility of knowing, perfection of love or cherishing, adequacy of eternal ideal or purpose. Character in God, it is true, does not have to emerge, cannot improve or degenerate, and cannot in his acts be violated, but is fixed and binding, so that never will nor could he act out of character. But since being 'in character' is the mere common denominator of all the acts, it cannot involve what is peculiar to any of them.[77]

God's character thus corresponds to the abstract pole of his nature, his acts to the concrete pole. It is with the concrete side of God that we interact, and that is fundamentally important for the religious dimensions of our lives.

God as concrete is the one who is supremely open to influence, and all experiences are contributions to the divine experience. As Hartshorne puts it, "Any emotions of beauty and joy which God enables us to have, become elements in his own all-embracing experience, contributory to the richness of that experience."[78] But there is more to it than this. The experiences which God has are <u>retained</u>; their actuality is preserved in the divine memory, never to be forgotten. In this sense, the divine life may be described as the supreme repository of experience. Thus, if

our experiences go to make up God's experiences, and God's experiences, once he has them, are immortal, it becomes possible to speak of our own immortality.

This is a doctrine of "social immortality," but with an added dimension. It is social inasmuch as it involves the awareness of our endeavors and experiences by another. Yet the one who is aware and who remembers us is not characterized by the defective, fallible awareness which goes with being human. Human posterity, Hartshorne argues, is a poor repository for just this reason. One's fellows may not adequately appreciate his life; and even if they do care, and attempt to preserve him in memory, the steady passage of time seems always to diminish the remembrance, to the point that he is, to posterity, only a fraction of what he once really was. The individual fades and perishes, even in the memories of those who love him most. But

> He to whom all hearts are open remains evermore open to any heart that has ever been apparent to Him. What we once were to Him, less than that we can never be, for otherwise He Himself as knowing us would lose something of His own reality. . . . Death cannot mean the destruction, or even the fading, of the book of one's life; it can mean only the fixing of its concluding page. Death writes 'The End' upon the last page, but nothing further happens to the book, by way of either addition or subtraction.[79]

For Hartshorne, this is precisely what religious availability comes to, namely that "'religion' means the highest form of love between God and man whereby our passing lives achieve everlasting value. . . ."[80] God is

indeed the supremely beautiful abstraction, the principle of principles. But he is also much more than this in his total reality, and thus is no mere abstraction. Whitehead's final word, in Process and Reality, may also serve as the final word in Hartshorne's own view, to wit, that although our endeavors seem to fade and perish, they "live for evermore"[81] in the ever-expanding, perfectly retentive, life of God.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Pascal, Pensees, trans. by A.J. Krailsheimer (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 309.

[2]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, pp. 86-87.

[3]Charles Hartshorne, "The Idea of God--Literal or Analogical?", The Christian Scholar, XXXIX (June, 1956), 131.

[4]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, pp. 4-5.

[5]The passage referred to is found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Mark 12:30.

[6]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 8.

[7]Ibid., p. 13.

[8]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 23.

[9]Ibid., p. 9.

[10]Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 8.

[11]See Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 6.

[12]See Proslogium II in St. Anselm: Basic Writings, particularly p. 7.

[13]Although in Anselm's Discovery: A Re-examination of the Ontological Argument for God's Existence (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1965), Hartshorne maintains (p. 8) that these are not equivalent terms and suggests that "unsurpassable" is the preferable term, he does employ "perfection" to a considerable extent elsewhere. See, for example, the opening chapter of Man's Vision of God, pp. 1-56, especially p. 35; also see the recent "Twelve Elements of My Philosophy," The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy, V (Spring, 1974), 9. There is no grievous difficulty in this regard so long as it is kept in mind that perfection is not to mean "absolutely complete or maximal." Hartshorne's process view, as explained presently in more detail, takes perfection to mean, not complete, absolute unsurpassability, but only surpassability by all others.

[14]See Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, pp. 26-31.

[15]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 7.

[16]See Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, pp. 28-29, and Man's Vision of God, p. 7.

[17]See Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 34-35.

[18]Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 20.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 18.

[21]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 96.

[22]Pegis, ed., Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, I, 26.

[23]Ibid., I, 70-71.

[24]Hartshorne, Beyond Humanism, p. 42.

[25]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 311.

[26]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 21.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 129.

[29]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 113.

[30]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 149.

[31]See Man's Vision of God, pp. 11-12.

[32]Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 1-2.

[33]Ibid., p. 2.

[34]Ibid., p. 3.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 2.

[38]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 125.

[39]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 266.

[40]See pp. 23-24 above. Hartshorne has repeatedly emphasized his disagreement with Whitehead on this issue, holding that Whitehead was mistaken in viewing God as a single actual occasion. See Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead in French Perspective: A Review Article," The Thomist, XXXIII (July 3, 1969), 578; see also "Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," pp. 323-24.

[41]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," p. 323.

[42]See pp. 15-17 above.

[43]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 144.

[44]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 144.

[45]Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, p. 29.

[46]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 269.

[47]That God is nevertheless independent of this particular world for his existence will be explained presently, when the sense in which God has an abstract essence instantiated in a concrete actuality is taken up.

[48]See pp. 23-24.

[49]Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, p. 514.

[50]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 304.

[51]Lest it be thought that, in utilizing this distinction, Hartshorne is simply repeating Cartesian dualism, it should be noted that he reinterprets the mind-body relation in such a way that "extension" applies to both mind and body, and not exclusively to body. See Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, pp. 36-38.

[52]Hartshorne, "Religion in Process Philosophy," p. 260.

[53]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 182.

[54]Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 47.

[55]Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 18-19.

[56]Ibid., p. 19.

[57]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 198.

[58]See Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, pp. 97-98.

[59]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 198.

[60]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 178.

[61]Charles Hartshorne, "Mind as Memory and Creative Love," in Theories of the Mind, ed. by Jordan M. Scher (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 446.

[62]In Whitehead's terminology, there are no negative prehensions in God.

[63]Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 181.

[64]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 35.

[65]Ibid., p. 34.

[66]Ibid., p. 36.

[67]Ibid., p. 35.

[68]"Interrogation of Charles Hartshorne," p. 322.

[69]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, pp. 44-45.

[70]Hartshorne, "What Did Anselm Discover?", p. 329.

[71]See Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, p. 189, and Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. ix.

[72]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, p. 27.

[73]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 4.

[74]Hartshorne and Reese, eds., Philosophers Speak of God, p. 24.

[75]For a discussion of the principle of dual transcendence, see Charles Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," in Talk of God: Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, Vol. Two, 1967-68, ed. by G.N.A. Vesey (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 162-64.

[76]Charles Hartshorne, "Is God's Existence a State of Affairs?", in Faith and the Philosophers, ed. John Hick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 28-29.

[77]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 202.

[78]Ibid., p. 140.

[79]Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 252-53.

[80]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 212.

[81]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 413.

CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

The exposition of Charles Hartshorne's concept of God has been completed. It is an inspiring and provocative picture of reality which he paints, a "scheme of things entire" in which God and creation are seen to be jointly engaged in the process of creation. Hartshorne's view of divinity is so comprehensive, and presented with such confidence and argumentative force, that, given a basic sympathy with theistic concerns, there is a tendency for one to be swept away by his vision.

Mere laudatory remarks, however, would be out of keeping with Professor Hartshorne's own observation that critical attention to his thought has been wanting.[1] Several problems arise for a theism constructed along process lines, and some of these will now be explored. No attempt is made to provide solutions to these problems. That is a matter for another study. Every philosophy which deals with questions of broad scope and high generality seems to have, at certain crucial points, weaknesses and inadequacies. It is exceedingly difficult for one individual to "get it all right," or even to put sound insights into

adequate language. The critical remarks in this chapter will have served a useful purpose if they succeed in uncovering some important problematic aspects of Hartshorne's theism, and if they do so in such a way as to stimulate renewed investigation into the meaning and import of the process concept of God.

The Divine Simultaneity

One of the trickiest problems for Hartshorne's theism concerns the possibility of a divine present or cosmic simultaneity. Like all other experient occasions, God enjoys unity of experience in each new moment of his awareness; also there is not just one moment in God's awareness, but a succession of them. This implies that God has a past, a present, and a future; these divisions, accordingly, have reference to a cosmic past, a cosmic present, and a cosmic future. On this view, the cosmic present must somehow be interpreted as dividing the cosmic past from the cosmic future. Conceiving God as having unity of experience in the way Hartshorne does (that is, as <u>successive</u> unities of experience) seems to imply that there is a uniquely right perspective, cutting through the universe at each moment in the world process. The problem comes to this: taking into account the idea of the relativity of all temporal (and spatial) perspectives, which relativity physics apparently insists upon, how is it possible to speak of an all-embracing cosmic present? And, if it is not possible, how

could there be a division between past cosmic process and future cosmic process? A cosmic present seems necessary for the contrast.

Put another way, physical relativity makes it difficult to speak of "God now" as opposed to "God a few moments ago," for the contrast assumes a unique, simultaneous present which embraces, or sums up, the entire cosmos at that particular moment. The problem involves finding a meaning for the phrase "at that particular moment" when it is applied to the universe as a whole. Indeed, it would seem to count as a serious objection to conceiving the cosmos as a unitary individual, as Hartshorne wishes to do.

The severity of this problem--Hartshorne confesses that it is "the most puzzling indeed of all"[2]--is in large part owing to the rather heavy reliance on the analogy between human consciousness and divine consciousness. Hartshorne is aware of this and observes that

> If God here now is not the same concrete unity of reality as God somewhere else 'now,' then the simple analogy with human consciousness as a single linear succession of states collapses. I have mixed feelings about this. It seems, on the one hand, that the idea of God as an individual though cosmic being is thus compromised; but, on the other hand, I wonder if this is not rather what we might expect when an analogy is extended to include deity. Maybe it is not divine individuality that is threatened, but only the assumption that this individuality should be simple and easy for us to grasp. However, there is the haunting question, can physics, judging reality from the standpoint of localized observers, give us the deep truth about time as it would appear to a non-localized observer?[3]

The last sentence in the above quotation represents

Hartshorne's somewhat tentative attempt to formulate a solution to this problem. God, as cosmic observer of the world process, is not in one locale rather than in another, but is somehow ubiquitous. If this is the case, Hartshorne argues, God could not be thought of as moving from one region to another, and would thus not represent a shifting standpoint relative to other shifting standpoints. He says:

> As Professor John B. Cobb has remarked to me, whereas the relativity of simultaneity is connected with the question of relative motions of systems within which observations are being made compared to events being observed, unit events themselves (Whitehead's actual entities) do not move but merely happen or become. . . . The cosmos is observable only from a localized and movable station within itself--unless the observer himself be cosmic.[4]

Thus, there would be no question of transmission from one (non-divine) region to another (divine) region, and so, presumably, no question as to whether this could be accomplished at a velocity greater than the speed of light. In this way, part of the force of the objection from relativity physics might possibly be mitigated. Nevertheless, a more elaborate and extensive treatment is required if Hartshorne's central thesis that God has unity of experience through successive occasions is not to be placed in serious jeopardy.

There is another problem closely related to the problem of a divine simultaneity. Hartshorne maintains that there can be no actual togetherness of all possible values, since some values are incompatible with each other--

incompatible values cannot be simultaneously possessed by the same individual. However, it appears that God is not altogether safeguarded from possessing incompatible values. Incompatible values can be held simultaneously by different individuals. God, as the all-inclusive individual, is bound to possess every datum of value as it occurs; additionally, he possesses it with full awareness and adequacy. This being the case, would not God include the incompatible values actualized by the aforementioned individuals? Since God "feels the feelings" of all others, and since some of those others may at any given moment actualize incompatible feelings, or values, would it not follow that God possesses incompatible feelings, or values? For example: living as an ignorant, simple-minded peasant may have a certain value peculiar to that sort of life; but the life of a man with a highly-trained intellect, and wide knowledge, may have a value peculiar to <u>that</u> kind of life. Yet the two lives are incompatible with each other. A person who endeavors to live both lives simultaneously would be divided against himself, and could not adequately realize either one.

It may be objected that a person <u>can</u> achieve both values, so long as he attempts each at a different time, so long as the two endeavors are not made simultaneously. But if two different individuals did actualize such values simultaneously, God would have to include them simultaneously. Or is this the problem of simultaneity and the possibility of a cosmic present over again? Certainly this sort of

objection assumes that two individuals can simultaneously actualize values, and that God simultaneously experiences these. But, as Hartshorne says:

> By speaking of the perfect as 'enjoying' the values of things, I mean to exclude the idea of a mere collection of all things. The surpasser of all others must be a single individual enjoying as his own all the values of other individuals, and incapable of failing to do so. For this, it is enough to suppose that the being is bound to have adequate knowledge of events when and as they occur, and thereafter. For adequately to know values is to possess them; and to surpass the values of other beings it is enough to possess the values of every one of them from the time these values exist.[5]

That these are important considerations is born out by the fact that one of the chief arguments Hartshorne employs against the notion of perfection as completeness is that incompatible values cannot achieve co-actualization within the same being. But it appears that God may be possessor of incompatible values, and if this is true, his argument against the classical idea of perfection is thereby weakened.

The Past

Hartshorne seems comfortable with the idea of an infinite past. He maintains that process itself, as the over-all character of reality, does not emerge or become. And since divine states are dependent upon the world states which they synthesize, and since there is no beginning to the series of divine experient occasions, it follows that process is without beginning and, therefore, it recedes

into an infinite past. This means that there is no beginning to the world, just as it means there is no beginning to divinity. Both have always existed, albeit as emergent process.

Process, then, involves an infinite regress. Each divine experient occasion is dependent upon previous experient occasions, which are themselves dependent upon previous experient occasions--and so on ad infinitum. This creates problems for Hartshorne's process view. In the first place, it makes it difficult to understand how an infinite past may be added to; and if an infinite past cannot be added to, the doctrine that reality is process, an advance into novelty, would be fatally undermined. The process view maintains that reality is constantly being enriched, as novel items become; hence, the past would receive additions to its reality. But how may a beginningless series be susceptible to addition? One possible way would involve selecting a definite point within the series, and treating each subsequent point as an addition to the series. However, such a selection would be arbitrary--any point within the series could serve as a point from which to count subsequent points. Furthermore, the point selected would not be a genuine beginning, since it would have predecessors which could equally make the same claim. Combining the doctrine of an infinite past with the doctrine that reality is also a creative advance seems tantamount to claiming that infinity can be increased. But it is difficult to see

the coherence in the idea of "infinity plus one."

Another difficulty, also related to the problem of the past, concerns the status of experient occasions after they have become. Hartshorne argues that they do not lose their actuality in becoming past because they are preserved in their full actuality in the perfect memory of God. That is, God does not know past occasions in just their outline, even in their essential outline, but in their total, definite fullness. Hence, God's memory contrasts with non-divine memory, which is characterized by the inability to preserve each experience in its full definiteness. This would seem to imply that the past is as definite and vivid to God as the present is to us. Yet if this is true, where is the distinction, for God, between past and present? For us, the present is that which is immediately felt or experienced; as these experiences succeed one another, the predecessors lose their felt immediacy. By "felt immediacy" is meant the sensuousness of the present moment; the term assumes that there is a unique feeling quality, or feeling tone, which characterizes that experience and no other. The freshness, vividness and immediacy of our experiences fade. And is this not what is implied by a succession of experiences? If the sensuousness of the present fades for non-divine individuals, thus providing for a distinction between past and present, why wouldn't it also fade for God, who, according to Hartshorne, has a past as well as a present and a future? If God suffers no loss of actuality

in experiencing a succession of occasions, it becomes rather paradoxical to maintain that there is a divine past, for all divine experiences are equally vivid for God. Indeed, on Hartshorne's view, it sounds as if God does not really have a past, but only a present and a future. God's experiences succeed one another, but do not lose their actuality in the divine life; in this respect, predecessors are indistinguishable from successors. Presumably, then, the only basis for distinguishing between past and present in God is just the assertion that he has a succession of experiences. This may be a necessary condition for making a distinction between past and present, but it is difficult to understand how it can be a sufficient condition for making the distinction.

This problem is even more perplexing when considered in the light of Hartshorne's axiom that the concrete includes the abstract. On Hartshorne's own principles, there are grounds to argue that the relation between the past and the present is such that the present includes the past, and, therefore, that the past is <u>less</u> definite than (not equally definite with) the present. The considerations supporting such an inference are as follows: (1) each present experient occasion is a synthesis of antecedent, or past, occasions, and includes them in its unity; (2) but, since the concrete always includes the abstract, it follows that the present, as the inclusive item, is the concrete term of the relation, and the past is the abstract term;

(3) concreteness is distinguished from abstractness by possessing greater definiteness or determinateness;[6] (4) there would seem, then, to be a loss of definiteness as items move from the status of being present to the status of being past. It has been suggested above that this loss may be described as a diminishing of the felt immediacy of the present moment, as it is replaced by another, fresh moment, which would be characterized by its own unique felt immediacy. If God is not to be made an exception to these principles, it appears as though his experiences could not be fully preserved.

Should these objections have any force, they carry some disturbing implications for Hartshorne's doctrine of immortality. For example, individuals could not enjoy full preservation in the divine life, but only partial preservation. Whether this partial preservation, as nevertheless radically more preservative than that of which non-divine beings would be capable, would be sufficient for religious purposes is not clear. Certainly part of the force and attractiveness of Hartshorne's doctrine is that it describes a being who knows creatures as they are, and who preserves this knowledge without the slightest possibility of forgetfullness. One may be misunderstood by his fellows, or forgotten by them, but he is not, according to Hartshorne, misunderstood or forgotten by God.

Assessment and Conclusion

The aforementioned problems notwithstanding, Charles Hartshorne has formulated a provocative philosophical theology which attempts to move beyond the failures, and the achievements, of his predecessors. His views concerning God have shown that it is possible to consider the theistic question in a positive and comprehensive way, without relying solely on the traditional concepts of being and absoluteness. The result has been an expansion of resources with which to formulate the theistic position. In particular, Hartshorne's dipolar concept of God makes it possible for him to clear away many of the problems involved in maintaining the notion of an absolute, immutable deity who is nevertheless related to a world of process and relativity. Furthermore, the older critiques of theism, and many of the current ones, can be shown to be less than convincing to the extent that they fail to come to grips with a theism elaborated within a process context. It is to be hoped that theists who are more comfortable in traditional modes of thought will be stimulated to reconsider, and perhaps to reformulate, their views in the light of the criticisms made by Hartshorne from the process perspective.

But the importance of Hartshorne's theism extends beyond its capacity to engage philosophers and theologians in a fruitful dialogue regarding the meaning of divinity. The view which he has been articulating and defending deserves

attention because, in addition to its relevance to complex and subtle issues in philosophical theology, it also has importance for larger questions concerning the significance and meaning of life. It is especially relevant to the search for basic aims, beliefs, and aspirations. This contention requires some explanation.

Hartshorne has suggested that individuals live for the "glory of God,"[7] that is, for a reality so supreme that, in Anselm's words, "none greater can be conceived." Surely, this is in accord with the deepest feelings and intuitions of many individuals. For men do find it ennobling to think that their endeavors have an ultimate significance, that they count for something in the overall scheme of things, and that they are connected with something which is unsurpassable. The idea of a being who includes all experience within his own experience is commensurate with this. For Hartshorne, God is the one whose range of awareness is such that no endeavor is hidden from him. Because all endeavors may be understood as contributions to his life, God may be understood as the referent for all endeavors. Since only he is aware of and fully appreciates each and every act, what men do takes on a profoundly important significance when placed within Hartshorne's theistic perspective. The value which one may create is a genuine and everlasting contribution to the divine life. No one else could have created just that particular value. Hence, each individual has a significance and worth which acquires permanence and

which death cannot destroy. For his life, his achievements, his very worth, are immortal in God's memory.

There is a need for visions as broad as Hartshorne's, for they are what inspire and sustain men in the world. Men continue to seek wholeness in their way of understanding reality. They continue to search for the ideal most worthy of their commitments. Dissatisfied with characterizations of the world as fragmentary, and of individual endeavors as ultimately insignificant, they are likely to find dipolar theism an appealing alternative. To those who find themselves asking what Houston Smith calls "the overarching questions"[8] the thought of Charles Hartshorne stands as a worthy exemplar.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. ix.

[2]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 93.

[3]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, pp. 124-25.

[4]Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, p. 94.

[5]Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 20.

[6]Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, pp. 22-23.

[7]This suggestion was contained in an address delivered by Professor Hartshorne at Oklahoma State University, March 26, 1975, titled "Ways of Thinking About God."

[8]Houston Smith, "Death and Rebirth in Metaphysics," in Process and Divinity: The Hartshorne Festschrift: Philosophical Essays Presented to Charles Hartshorne, ed. by William L. Reese and Eugene Freeman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1964), p. 44.

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